

UNIVERSITIES

DURHAM,

IN THE AGE

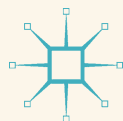
LONDON

OF REFORM,

AND KING'S COLLEGE

1800-1870

Matthew Andrews



Universities in the Age of Reform, 1800–1870

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Durham, London and King's College

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Matthew Andrews
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: The Age of Reform

INTRODUCTION

This book considers a crucial moment in the development of English higher education. During the Age of Reform, new and innovative ideas about the role and purpose of a university were moving at an unprecedented pace. Proposals for new institutions in all parts of the country were developing more quickly than at any point since the years of the Commonwealth. And, unlike the proposals made during the seventeenth century that uniformly failed, during the Age of Reform several attempts to create new universities were successful.¹ This included within a five-year period from 1828 to 1833 the opening of London University, King's College, London and Durham University. Each of these institutions, in very different ways, represented a radical departure from the higher education status quo. The creation of the federal University of London as a resolution to the problems caused by the opening of the two London colleges, and the consequent renaming of London University to become University College, London, followed in 1836.²

¹W.H.G. Armytage, *Civic Universities: Aspects of a British Tradition* (London, 1955), pp. 94–116.

²For clarity, throughout this book I shall use 'London University' to refer to the institution which was launched in 1825 and which admitted students from 1828. I shall use the title 'University of London' to refer to the federal university which was created in 1836

This created a landscape for higher education that remained in place until 1851 when Owens College opened in Manchester.

This brief period between 1828 and 1833 was witness to an unprecedented expansion of English higher education. The years between 1800 and 1870 more broadly form a pivotal ‘University moment’ during which a plethora of new higher education models were entertained across the country. For the first time, this meant there was a sustained English higher education sector, as for the first time there were other English universities besides the ancient establishments at Oxford and Cambridge.

Durham is the central node of my analysis and the heart of this book. That is not because it is the most important foundation of the period—both London University (later University College, London) and the federal University of London have a better claim to that title—but it is because it is the most neglected and misunderstood institution of the period. The aim of this book is rather to reinterpret this period in higher education by bringing forward a new understanding of what happened at Durham, to set primarily the London colleges in a different context and thereby create a different narrative about how higher education developed in the period. Although much of this book therefore focuses on events in Durham, it does use that analysis to create a narrative about a system of higher education in development rather than a series of disconnected institutional initiatives.

To place Durham at the heart of this has required considerable original research, which is not the case with the other institutions covered, which have been well researched and are amply covered in secondary literature. My research into Durham’s history has been grounded in a thorough examination of primary and secondary sources. Intensive use has been made of archival material, principally in Durham and Oxford, including previously unused sources. Parliamentary reports, local and national newspapers, and other primary printed sources have also been employed. An extensive and unique database of Durham University students has been created that includes over 6000 records, extending from the first entrants in 1833 to 1905. Statistics derived from these records have been compared to existing published information for other institutions, notably King’s College, London.

as a new and entirely separate foundation. As part of that settlement in 1836 ‘London University’ became ‘University College, London’, which title I shall use from that point on for the institution launched in 1825.

THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE AGE OF REFORM

Remarkable though this period is for the history of higher education in England, it has received relatively little academic interest. This is especially true at the level of the higher education sector, as the history of higher education has more traditionally been written as the separate histories of individual institutions. However, even in this respect, at the level of the institution, there remains a significant imbalance.

Both Oxford and Cambridge have been the subjects of ample, detailed and very wide-ranging historical research. As the oldest universities in England—indeed, as two of the oldest universities anywhere—an enormous variety of books about the universities and their constituent colleges have been produced over an extended period. These include recent multi-volume and detailed scholarly accounts of both places. *The History of the University of Oxford* is of note for its sheer breadth and scale: although it was published between 1984 and 2000, work on it had commenced in 1968.³ The series covered the University's development from the eleventh to the twentieth centuries in eight volumes of thorough research.⁴ *A History of the University of Cambridge* covered that institution's growth from its earliest foundation to 1990 over four volumes published between 1988 and 2004.⁵ New histories of the universities, and their constituent colleges, continue to appear annually based on the rich sources available in both primary and secondary materials. In relation to Oxford, this includes, by way of example, *The University of Oxford: A History* by L.W.B. Brockliss from 2016 and histories of both Oxford and Cambridge produced by G.R. Evans in 2010.⁶ This book is not intended to add greatly to our understanding of these two institutions, though it does help to locate some of the developments at Oxford and Cambridge in the nineteenth century in the wider context of the creation of the English higher education sector more generally.

³R. Evans, 'Aston, Trevor Henry (1925–1985)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004; online edn 2015).

⁴T.H. Aston (ed.), *The History of the University of Oxford* (8 vols, Oxford, 1984–2000).

⁵C.N.L. Brooke (ed.), *A History of the University of Cambridge* (4 vols, Cambridge, 1988–2004).

⁶L.W.B. Brockliss, *The University of Oxford: A History* (Oxford, 2016); G.R. Evans, *The University of Cambridge: A New History* (London, 2010); and G.R. Evans, *The University of Oxford: A New History* (London, 2010).

Although the volumes of academic research into Oxford and Cambridge far surpass that conducted into any other English university, London's new institutions, and especially University College, London and the University of London, have also received considerable attention. F.M.G. Willson's two substantial and very detailed books, *Our Minerva* and *The University of London, 1858–1900: The Politics of Senate and Convocation*, are good examples.⁷ Less detailed, but serving as excellent general introductions, are the two books by Negley Harte, *The World of UCL 1828–2004* and *The University of London 1836–1986*, the former written with John North.⁸ The earliest work on University College, London was the centenary history published in 1929 by Hugh Hale Bellot.⁹ Bellot had been appointed to the Department of History at University College, London in 1921, though in 1927 he moved to the University of Manchester. His history of the College remains the reference text for any historian interested in the College's first century.

As the developments in London are part of the accepted narrative concerning the positive development of English higher education, they are also covered in detail in numerous other places too. William Whyte, for example, goes into the London story in some detail in his recent book *Redbrick: A Social and Architectural History of Britain's Civic Universities*.¹⁰ This book is also one of a limited number which look at the general development of higher education rather than the progress of an individual institution alone. Robert Anderson's *British Universities Past and Present* also covers the foundation of the London colleges, though in less detail, but it is one of the best general introductions to the development of universities in the UK from about 1800 onwards.¹¹

The London colleges, like Oxford and Cambridge, also feature in works not dedicated to higher education; Rosemary Ashton's book *Victorian*

⁷F.M.G. Willson, *Our Minerva: The Men and Politics of the University of London* (London, 1995); F.M.G. Willson, *The University of London, 1858–1900: The Politics of Senate and Convocation* (Woodbridge, 2004).

⁸N. Harte and J. North, *The World of UCL 1828–2004* (London, 2004); N. Harte, *The University of London 1836–1986* (London, 1986).

⁹H.H. Bellot, *University College, London 1826–1926* (London, 1929).

¹⁰W. Whyte, *Redbrick: A Social and Architectural History of Britain's Civic Universities* (Oxford, 2015).

¹¹R.D. Anderson, *British Universities Past and Present* (London, 2006).

Bloomsbury is a prime example.¹² This work covers the intellectual developments in Bloomsbury during the nineteenth century and clearly locates the foundation of London University within the broader movements for reform in education, medicine and society. General histories of the nineteenth century are likely to cover the foundation of London University too, as well as reform at the older universities, for these institutions have grown beyond the confines of the history of higher education to become part of the historical narrative of the Age of Reform and the Victorian period.

Although not covered to the same extent as London University, King's College, London has also received a few serious academic investigations. The earliest was that written by F.J.C. Hearnshaw, Fellow and Professor of Medieval History at the College, for the centenary and published in 1929.¹³ A further history by Gordon Huelin, also Fellow of the College, was published in 1978 covering the 50-year period after Hearnshaw's book, while the most recent published work covered the period up to 2004.¹⁴ This latest history, written by Christine Kenyon Jones, manages to navigate the difficult territory between scholarly objectivity and institutional self-promotion better than some recent institutional histories that can tend to be excessively inward-looking.

While Oxford and Cambridge have been the subjects of many hundreds of academic investigations, London University has reached beyond the pages of purely institutional history to be given relevance in the broader themes of nineteenth-century development, and even King's College, London has received academic attention, the same interest has not been shown in Durham University. Quite the contrary is true: Durham has been easily dismissed by generations of historians and therefore its own unique story has been neglected. With only very few narrowly focused exceptions, there has been no serious and substantial research into the history of Durham University for over 80 years. It is around Durham University that this book attempts to introduce more information to the general discourse on nineteenth-century English higher education and universities in the Age of Reform.

¹²R. Ashton, *Victorian Bloomsbury* (London, 2012).

¹³F.J.C. Hearnshaw, *The Centenary History of King's College London 1828–1928* (London, 1929).

¹⁴G. Huelin, *King's College London 1828–1978* (London, 1978); C. Kenyon Jones, *King's College London: In the Service of Society* (London, 2004).

The earliest academic history of Durham University was written by Joseph Fowler and published in 1904 as part of the *College Histories* series.¹⁵ This work covered previous foundations, the first four Wardens, and developments in Newcastle. It is a source of useful information, but contains little by way of critical analysis or comparative study. This may in part be explained by Fowler's personal sympathies and closeness to the events he was writing about, for he was a student of the University, entering Hatfield Hall in 1858, and he stayed there for much of his career, including being appointed Vice-Principal of Hatfield Hall in 1870. He remembered, and was fond of, the first Warden, Charles Thorp. Fowler's work may in some respects be seen more as a primary source, for it contains first-hand recollections of the University from the mid-nineteenth century and records some of the memories of those who were involved from the start.

An enlarged and more rigorous history was produced by Charles Whiting for the University's centenary in 1932.¹⁶ Unlike Fowler, who was a theologian and Hebrew scholar, Whiting was Professor of History at Durham, as well as Vice-Principal of St Chad's College, and his more professional expertise is evident in his expanded and considered volume. In addition, Whiting makes greater use of the Thorp Correspondence, which was formally accessioned into the University Library in 1918, but which was accessible to and catalogued by Fowler. Although he does not shy away from the more complex elements of the University's history, including Thorp's legacy, his analysis relied heavily on the account provided by the Commissioners in 1862. Nevertheless, Whiting's book has since its publication been the authoritative volume on the University's history. And although a new history by Nigel Watson was published to coincide with the University's 175th anniversary, this was a less formal account.¹⁷ However, what Watson's book lacked in academic analysis, it compensated for with extensive and interesting photography and drawings.

Two other published authors since Whiting's book are worthy of mention. First comes Alan Heesom, for many years to be found amongst the senior staff of the University, including as a member of the History

¹⁵J.T. Fowler, *College Histories: Durham University—Earlier Foundations and Present Colleges* (London, 1904).

¹⁶C.E. Whiting, *University of Durham 1832–1932* (London, 1932).

¹⁷N. Watson, *The Durham Difference: The Story of Durham University* (London, 2007).

department, who delivered the Durham Cathedral Lecture in 1982 on the University's foundation. Published as a pamphlet by the Cathedral, Heesom provided extensive local and national context, and was the first serious and thoroughly researched attempt to locate the University's foundation within its broader political context.¹⁸ Heesom has also produced three important articles for the *Durham County Local History Society Bulletin* that cover the question of who thought of the idea of the University of Durham, and its political enfranchisement.¹⁹

The second modern historian to offer detailed consideration of the University's foundation is Elizabeth Varley.²⁰ Her biography of the last Prince Bishop of Durham, William Van Mildert, included an extensive chapter that looked at the prelate's engagement with Thorp and other members of the Chapter as they attempted to decide what their new institution should be and as they sought to recruit staff. Varley's work is, however, restricted to the brief but important period before the Bishop died in 1836.

As a collegiate university, Durham's colleges have also attracted the attention of institutional historians. These histories are, however, of an extremely variable nature and quality. Perhaps largely because of their comparatively recent foundations, the Durham colleges have not developed the same rich and scholarly body of works about them as can be found for the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge and which continue to be produced on an almost annual basis.²¹ Some of the Durham college histories, like *Doves & Dons*, the history of St Mary's College, are largely made up of reminiscences, extracts of letters and summaries from the archive.²² The finest is Henry Tudor's history of St Cuthbert's Society,

¹⁸A.J. Heesom, *The Founding of the University of Durham* (Durham, 1982).

¹⁹A.J. Heesom, 'Who Thought of the Idea of the University of Durham?', *Durham County Local History Society Bulletin*, 29 (1982), pp. 10–20; A.J. Heesom, 'The Political Enfranchisement of the University of Durham Part I: Failure, 1832–1867', *Durham County Local History Society Bulletin*, 50 (1993), pp. 47–58; and A.J. Heesom, 'The Political Enfranchisement of the University of Durham Part II: Success, 1867–1918', *Durham County Local History Society Bulletin*, 51 (1993), pp. 56–77.

²⁰E.A. Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops: William Van Mildert and the High Church Movement of the Early Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1992).

²¹R. Darwall-Smith, 'Review Essays. Oxford College Histories: Fresh Contributions', *History of Universities*, XXIX(1) (2016), pp. 135–43.

²²M. Hird (ed.), *Doves & Dons: A History of St Mary's College Durham* (Durham, 1982).

which manages to analyse as well as describe some of the events and developments it relays.²³

Many of these College and University historians, people who perhaps should have known better due to their proximity to the University, have published opinions on Durham's early years that are as clumsy as some external historians and provide further justification for the necessity of a book that examines the universities in the Age of Reform with particular focus on Durham. The science staff in 1931, for example, noted that 'no laboratories were built' when the University first opened, implying that all local knowledge of the first Chemistry Lecturer's laboratory had been forgotten.²⁴ Marilyn Hird, the editor of the history of St Mary's College from 1982, wrote that Durham was simply 'modelled on the ancient universities in its academic bias and its whole way of life'.²⁵ In 1984, Ernest Bettenson, the former Registrar of Newcastle University, pronounced that the Chapter simply founded the University in an attempt 'to keep as much of their wealth as possible out of the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners'.²⁶ In 1996, Edgar Jones, the historian of University College, noted that Durham was 'by reason of its ecclesiastical origins, an ailing institution'.²⁷

The early years of what became Newcastle University in 1963 are not only an important part of the development of Durham University but also help to illustrate the development of English higher education more generally. Newcastle University itself, however, has produced fewer histories than its parent. The two main works are those by E.M. Bettenson (1971) and Norman McCord (2006).²⁸ The more recent work provides a useful introduction, but, as might be expected of an official and corporate volume, places greater emphasis on celebration and progress than

²³H. Tudor, *St Cuthbert's Society 1888–1988* (Durham, 1988).

²⁴*The University of Durham (Durham Division) Department of Science: Conversazione* (Durham, 1931).

²⁵Hird, *Doves & Dons*, p. 8.

²⁶E.M. Bettenson, 'History of the Medical School', in G. Dale et al. (eds.), *Newcastle School of Medicine, 1834–1984: Sesquicentennial Celebrations: Proceedings 17–21 September 1984* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1985), pp. 10–17, at p. 10.

²⁷E. Jones, *University College Durham: A Social History* (Aberystwyth, 1996), p. 14.

²⁸E.M. Bettenson, *The University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne: A Historical Introduction 1834–1971* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1971); N. McCord (ed.), *Newcastle University: Past, Present and Future* (Newcastle, 2006).

on impartial consideration. Nevertheless, some of the misrepresentations contained within it are bizarre: that John Gibbins could describe Durham as ‘a child of the University of Cambridge’, for example, shows a complete lack of engagement with the University’s origins, as does his assertion that ‘its governors balked at the call to develop non-humanistic disciplines aimed at saving bodies and enhancing well-being rather than saving souls’.²⁹ These are shining examples of how historical facts sometimes cannot defeat deeply held local prejudices. Bettenson’s book is the better of the two.

Of more interest in the Newcastle context are the volumes produced from the sesquicentennial celebrations of the Medical School in 1984.³⁰ These two books contain both a useful repository of original texts and some thoughtful accounts of the Medical School. In 1890, Dennis Embleton, one of the lecturers at the Medical School, produced his own account of the School’s history and progress, including the Disruption of the early 1850s.³¹ Like Fowler’s work, however, his history must be approached with caution as he is inevitably partial to his own point of view—though this is also what makes his writings useful as a primary source.

THE AGE OF REFORM AND HIGHER EDUCATION

‘Historians’, we are told by Joanna Innes and Arthur Burns, ‘have variously employed the notion of an “age of reform”’ to describe events from the late eighteenth century into the mid-nineteenth century. While ‘parliamentary reform was, undoubtedly, *the* reform par excellence’, they continue, the reformers’ zeal extended to other allegedly ‘exclusive, corrupt, and oppressive institutions’, including the Established Church

²⁹J. Gibbins, ‘Origins to Armstrong College: From College of Physical Science to Armstrong College’, in McCord (ed.), *Newcastle University*, pp. 12–16, at p. 12.

³⁰G. Dale et al. (eds.), *Newcastle School of Medicine, 1834–1984: Sesquicentennial Celebrations: Proceedings 17–21 September 1984* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1985); G. Dale et al. (eds.), *Newcastle School of Medicine, 1834–1984: Sesquicentennial Scrapbook* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1985).

³¹D. Embleton, *The History of the Medical School Afterwards the Durham College of Medicine at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, for Forty Years 1832 to 1872* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1890).

and the universities.³² The local story of Durham University's creation spans both these national institutions, and is the necessary background and context for the creation first of London University and then King's College, London shortly after. These three institutions represent not only the initial steps in the creation of an English higher education sector beyond the binary form in which it then existed, but also demonstrate competing notions of reform during the Age of Reform.

In respect of Church reform, Richard Church's book on the Oxford Movement (1891) and Henry Liddon's biography of Edward Pusey (1893–1894) did much to create and sustain the stereotype of the pre-Tractarian High Church as being mere 'Church and King men' with 'high and dry' worship and theology.³³ Bishop Van Mildert and most of the Chapter of Durham were amongst the greatest archetypes of High Churchmanship and hence were easily portrayed as anti-liberal, anti-reform and even 'unspiritual, formal, unevangelical, [and] self-righteous'.³⁴ Yet Burns has argued that the pre-Tractarian High Church 'was of crucial significance' to 'mid-nineteenth-century Church reform' and was not 'an obstacle to its progress'.³⁵ Peter Nockles demonstrated similarly that old High Churchmen like Van Mildert possessed a distinctive, coherent and spiritual theology, and were drivers of reform while still opposing the greater liberalisation advocated by vocal Whig leaders.³⁶ The thrust of these revisionary approaches is to deepen and widen the concept of reform from a simple dichotomy of proponents and resisters to a more nuanced understanding of differing approaches to reform.

The idea that a university should be a rare and exceptional thing is perhaps so deeply rooted in the English psyche because for many centuries it sustained only two such institutions within its borders. Scotland, in contrast, possessed five universities in 1800.³⁷ How could a country like

³²A. Burns and J. Innes (eds.), *Age of Reform: Britain 1780–1850* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 1–3.

³³A. Burns, *The Diocesan Revival in the Church of England, c. 1800–1870* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 15–16; P.B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship, 1760–1857* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 6–7, 25.

³⁴R.W. Church, *The Oxford Movement: Twelve Years 1833–1845* (London, 1891), pp. 8–11.

³⁵Burns, *Diocesan Revival*, pp. 14–15.

³⁶Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, pp. 25–32.

³⁷St Andrews, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Marischal College and King's College at Aberdeen, which merged in 1860 following the Universities (Scotland) Act of 1858.

Scotland, with a much smaller population and far less wealth, maintain five universities? The question, however, is better turned around, for the anomaly was not Scotland, but England. The anomaly was that a country as populous and wealthy as England had only two universities. England had at times been home to other universities, including short-lived secessionist institutions at Northampton³⁸ and Stamford,³⁹ and a brief detachment of Oxford scholars in 1209 to Reading and Cambridge (the latter, of course, taking on a permanent character).⁴⁰ England also supported great schools, such as those at Salisbury and Lincoln, that might in other European countries have attracted the title of university.⁴¹

The Church was therefore not the only object of the reformers' zeal. Demand for the liberalisation of the English universities started in the eighteenth century and produced what William Whyte has accurately labelled 'a welter of books, articles, and pamphlets' advocating reform.⁴² The focus of concern in the early nineteenth century was that the two English universities had become the preserve of a narrow social and religious elite, where outmoded subjects were taught by over-worked tutors in the absence of a meaningful professoriate. In support of this argument, the wealth and waste of the English system was sometimes contrasted with the relative poverty and efficiency of the universities in Scotland.⁴³ The student population in Scotland had grown throughout the eighteenth century and embraced a broad social base, while

³⁸1260–65: Armytage, *Civic Universities*, pp. 36–38, D. Walmsley, *An Ever-Rolling Stream: The Ongoing Story of the Development of Higher Education in Northampton and Northamptonshire* (London, 1989), pp. 1–5.

³⁹1333–35: Armytage, *Civic Universities*, pp. 43–45; M. Smith, *Stamford Myths & Legends* (Stamford, 1998), pp. 15–28.

⁴⁰A.B. Cobban, *The Medieval English Universities: Oxford and Cambridge to c. 1500* (London, 1988), pp. 29–31, 33–34, 52–54; M.B. Hackett, *The Original Statutes of Cambridge University: The Text and its History* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 43–45.

⁴¹Cobban, *The Medieval English Universities*, pp. 27–29; H. Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* (2 vols, Cambridge, 2010), vol. 2, part 1, pp. 4–5.

⁴²A.J. Engel, *From Clergyman to Don: The Rise of the Academic Profession in Nineteenth-Century Oxford* (Oxford, 1983), p. 2; B. Simon, *The Two Nations and the Educational Structure 1780–1870* (London, 1974), pp. 84–87; Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 4; and D.A. Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 148–49.

⁴³K. Vernon, *Universities and the State in England* (London, 2004), p. 17.

the number of students at the two English universities had declined.⁴⁴ In Scotland the universities enjoyed what Robert Anderson termed ‘a golden age of intellectual progress’ which followed the legislative union with England in 1707. The Scottish universities not only retained their professional links but also developed and enhanced learning in these fields, especially in relation to medicine.⁴⁵ In England, professional education had moved out of the universities to the Inns of Court or the teaching hospitals.⁴⁶

Edward Gibbon offered a prime example of the type of criticism which came to dominate. Gibbon entered Magdalen College, Oxford in 1752 as a gentleman commoner, but upon his conversion to Roman Catholicism the following year was moved by his family to Lausanne, where he studied for five years. In his memoirs, first published in 1796, he celebrated his migration, which meant that he had avoided spending his formative years ‘steeped in port and prejudice among the monks of Oxford’. The 14 months Gibbon did spend at Magdalen College he declared to be ‘the most idle and unprofitable of my whole life’. The cause of this stupor he put down inter alia to an inefficient tutorial system and the absence of an active professoriate.⁴⁷ Although some modern historians have looked more favourably on pre-reform Oxford and Cambridge, following Gibbon it became a common view that, devoid of practical relevance or academic rigour, an English higher education for most students was more about applying a veneer of classical respectability than about a lively academic challenge.⁴⁸

⁴⁴R. Anderson, *Universities and Elites in Britain Since 1800* (London, 1992), pp. 17–25; P. Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 134–35.

⁴⁵R.D. Anderson, *European Universities from the Enlightenment to 1914* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 34–36; N.T. Phillipson, ‘Culture and Society in the 18th Century Province: The Case of Edinburgh and the Scottish Enlightenment’, in L. Stone (ed.), *The University in Society* (2 vols, London, 1974), vol. 2, pp. 407–48; and W. Rudy, *The Universities of Europe 1100–1914* (London, 1984), pp. 86–88.

⁴⁶Anderson, *British Universities Past and Present*, pp. 7–8, T.N. Bonner, *Becoming a Physician: Medical Education in Britain, France, Germany, and the United States, 1750–1945* (London, 1995), pp. 48–52.

⁴⁷E. Gibbon, *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Edward Gibbon, the Historian* (London, 1869; original edn 1796), pp. 24, 27, 49.

⁴⁸Anderson, *British Universities*, pp. 20–22; G. Midgley, *University Life in Eighteenth-Century Oxford* (New Haven, 1996), pp. ix–x; Simon, *Two Nations*, pp. 85–86; and P. Slec, ‘The Oxford Idea of a Liberal Education 1800–1860: The Invention of Tradition and the Manufacture of Practice’, *History of Universities*, VII (1988), pp. 61–87, at pp. 63–64.

The scorn of the critics, however, would sometimes run beyond the available facts. The *Edinburgh Review*, a Whig journal, carried a series of articles between 1808 and 1810 which were highly critical of the universities, yet, as it would later emerge, were not entirely factual.⁴⁹ Edward Copleston, the High Church intellectual and Provost of Oriel, took up the defence of Oxford in his *Three Replies to the Calumnies of the Edinburgh Review*, published between 1810 and 1811.⁵⁰ While Copleston supported the introduction of new examination statutes, developed the tutorial system at Oriel, helping to make it one of the most successful Oxford colleges, and also advocated the teaching of social and natural sciences, he still argued that philosophy, mathematics and divinity should form the only basis for a degree.⁵¹

In 1809, Richard Edgeworth, an Anglo-Irish educational writer and engineer, published his *Essays on Professional Education*, in which he argued for the benefits of a broader university curriculum. This greater diversity, he contested, would be more suited to the practical and contemporary needs of different professions: ‘ancient establishments have ... continued stationary’, he declared, with the result that ‘many studies and many dogmas, which have long since been exploded, continue nevertheless to make a customary part of university education’.⁵² The poet laureate Robert Southey praised Edgeworth for combating ‘the excessive abuse of classical learning in England’.⁵³

In his book *Phantasm of a University* published in 1814, Charles Kelsall argued that ‘the prime defect’ in the universities was that ‘little attention’ was ‘paid to the natural drift of the student’s genius’.⁵⁴

⁴⁹A. Briggs, ‘Oxford and its Critics, 1800–1835’, in M.G. Brock and M.C. Curthoys (eds.), *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume 6: Nineteenth-Century Oxford, Part 1* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 134–45, at pp. 134–35; Engel, *From Clergyman to Don*, pp. 16–18; Simon, *Two Nations*, pp. 87–90.

⁵⁰Engel, *From Clergyman to Don*, p. 17; W.R. Ward, *Victorian Oxford* (London, 1965), pp. 16–20.

⁵¹W.J. Copleston, *Memoir of Edward Copleston* (London, 1851), pp. 36–40.

⁵²R.L. Edgeworth, *Essays on Professional Education* (London, 1809), p. 26.

⁵³*Edinburgh Review*, 15(29) (1809), pp. 41–47.

⁵⁴C. Kelsall, *Phantasm of a University with Prolegomena* (London, 1814), p. 13. Kelsall’s eccentric book is given over in large part to a bewildering travel story of a group of young men educated according to his plan, as well as to numerous intricate drawings of his ideal university buildings. The review published in the *Augustan Review* provides an apposite summary: ‘This work is not deficient in good sense; but its utility is chiefly confined to the

He therefore promoted the idea that universities should adapt their curriculum 'whereby the student's career in the science or art for which he shows genius or inclination is best facilitated'. Those subjects most lacking from the university curriculum, he argued, included agriculture and political economy.⁵⁵

Not only did their critics argue that the curriculum was limited and the standards low, but the expense of studying at the ancient universities was prohibitive too. Only the rich could afford to attend an English university, unless by good fortune they secured a scholarship or attended in the menial roles given to 'sizar' students in Cambridge or 'servitor' students at Oxford.⁵⁶ Thomas Campbell, the initial mover in the foundation of London University, argued that even a father with an income of £1000 a year (a wealthy man) could 'hardly send one son to an English University' and that to 'send three sons, would cost him at the least 750l'.⁵⁷ Calculating accurate expenses was difficult in part because students were liable to pay a complex range of fees at both the older universities and the new institutions: tuition fees, caution money, admission charges, servant's fees and professor's fees were all potential charges. However, what Rothblatt called the 'soaring social expenses of a university education' could be even more considerable. Wine parties, breakfasts, gambling and sports, outdoor pursuits and expensive clothes, all supported by debt, were a significant problem at the ancient English universities.⁵⁸ John Collis, the Headmaster of Bromsgrove School, claimed that his total expenditure as a student at Oxford in the 1830s was a staggering £725 2s 7d—by comparison, the annual salary that a clerk or

first forty pages.' *Augustan Review*, 1(5) (1815), p. 467. William Whyte offers a more positive review: Whyte, *Redbrick*, pp. 1–7.

⁵⁵ Kelsall, *Phantasm of a University*, pp. 14, 118.

⁵⁶ Midgley, *University Life in Eighteenth-Century Oxford*, pp. 6–11; Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge*, pp. 415–16; and D.A. Winstanley, *Unreformed Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1935), pp. 201–3.

⁵⁷ *The Times*, 9 February 1825.

⁵⁸ Midgley, *University Life in Eighteenth-Century Oxford*, pp. 3–6; S. Rothblatt, *The Modern University and its Discontents: The Fate of Newman's Legacies in Britain and America* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 142–43; and S. Rothblatt, 'The Student Sub-culture and the Examination System in Early 19th Century Oxbridge', in Stone (ed.), *The University in Society*, vol. 1, pp. 247–303, at pp. 247–80.

coachman might expect was only £26.⁵⁹ As shocking as this figure was, he described this as ‘a low sum for Oxford. I should say the usual cost of a degree is 800l. at least; to very many it is as much as 1000l’.⁶⁰ Such figures were astounding, a considerable way beyond the reach of all but the richest few.

Collegiate living was considered by many to be the cause of much of this expense. James Yates, a Unitarian minister from Liverpool who had studied at both Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities, advocated domestic living to curb collegiate excesses.⁶¹ Universities should be in large towns, he advocated, where students may ‘either board and lodge with a professor for £500 a year or with a poor widow for £50’.⁶² The poet Thomas Campbell also argued for ‘the cheapness of domestic residence, and all the moral influence that results from home’ when he first publicly advocated a London University.⁶³ Campbell and Yates were supporting the tradition of residence practised in Scotland and in Europe. Their arguments were nevertheless dismissed by Copleston, who countered that ‘from the necessary absence of a young man throughout the day among a crowd of fellow students, in the midst of a large city, the control of domestic authority must needs be weakened in all cases, if not altogether evaded by any one who may be so inclined’.⁶⁴

In June 1831, William Hamilton also wrote of abuses at the English universities in the *Edinburgh Review*.⁶⁵ Like Gibbon before him, Hamilton argued that there had been a deterioration of standards at both universities and blamed this on the colleges and their ‘flagrant usurpation’ of the original rights of their central universities.⁶⁶

⁵⁹Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 63.

⁶⁰*Copy of all Evidence Taken by the Durham University Commissioners Under the Durham University Act, 1861* (London, 1863), q. 609, p. 30. (The statement is an extract from evidence given to the Oxford University Commission.)

⁶¹N.R. Tempest, ‘An Early Scheme for an Undenominational University’, *The Universities Review*, 32(2) (1960), pp. 45–49.

⁶²J. Yates, *Thoughts on the Advancement of Academical Education in England*, 2nd edn (London, 1827), p. 175.

⁶³*The Times*, 9 February 1825.

⁶⁴*Quarterly Review*, 32 (1825), p. 270.

⁶⁵E. Ashby, *Universities: British, Indian, African* (Cambridge, MA, 1966), pp. 20–21; Engel, *From Clergyman to Don*, pp. 19–22; and Simon, *Two Nations*, pp. 93–94.

⁶⁶*Edinburgh Review*, 53(106) (1831), p. 386.

This decline was manifested in educational inefficiency, poor scholarship, the abandonment of vitally important subjects, anachronistic curricula and unjustified religious exclusiveness. This was a matter of greater concern than institutional politics and power dynamics. As private corporations that had been privately endowed, the colleges could not be reformed by Parliament. If they dominated the university, they made the university take on their essentially private character. A distinction between the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge and their respective universities was therefore a vital element of the liberal case for reform, while the Tory view sought to demonstrate that the universities were nothing more than the aggregation of their colleges in the cause of the defence of the status quo.⁶⁷ Hamilton's contribution reinvigorated the criticisms of the universities that had been prevalent earlier in the century, but he did so amidst the heightened political and social tensions of 1831. Although, like others before him, aspects of his critique were exaggerated, the substance of his criticisms was now widely accepted.⁶⁸

THE ACCEPTED NARRATIVE OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY HIGHER EDUCATION

This period has quite rightly been recognised as the time when many of the classic debates about the role of higher education first shaped the universities that we can recognise today. Typically, the period has been defined by reform at Oxford and Cambridge, hastened and extended by Royal Commissions; the development of new forms of higher education in London that were influenced by European, Scottish and North American models; and the growth of technically and industrially orientated civic colleges (later to become universities) partly through the expedient of the University of London External Degree and the federal university model. This was a 'process of competing provision and bludgeoning criticism followed by pre-emptive emulation and reform', in the words of Harold Perkin.⁶⁹

⁶⁷R. Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics: Whiggery, Religion, and Reform 1830–1841* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 194–95.

⁶⁸Briggs, 'Oxford and Its Critics', pp. 141–45; Simon, *Two Nations*, pp. 91–92.

⁶⁹H. Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society 1780–1880* (London, 1969), p. 298; M. Sanderson, *The Universities in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1975), pp. xi–xii, 22–23, 26–32, 80; and Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 21.

Eric Ashby's description is similar. Since around 1800, he argued, Oxford and Cambridge had 'been reawakening to their responsibilities' and had introduced long overdue changes. But as the universities 'showed no sign of yielding' on some of the most critical issues, the Royal Commissions of the 1850s were needed to force through the reforms they persisted in obstructing.⁷⁰

ENGLAND'S FORGOTTEN THIRD WAY IN UNIVERSITY REFORM

Yet Durham University's place in the history of universities is still problematic. As an Anglican institution with many traditional aspects and that consciously adopted practices from Oxford and Cambridge, it has not fitted into the prevailing narrative regarding the development of English higher education in the nineteenth century.

Ashby praised London University for its 'broad spread of academic and professional studies', while he condemned Durham for being 'obsessively anglican' and having 'made such poor progress ... that there was talk in 1857 of closing it down'.⁷¹ Asa Briggs simply left Durham 'in the background' due to its 'clerical foundation' not fitting the 'simple narrative account of the development of English universities during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries'.⁷²

Michael Sanderson, at least, recognised Durham's attempt to pioneer engineering as a subject of university study, especially to appeal to its 'Northern *milieu*'. Still, however, he concluded that the University's 'origins were not especially noble' as the Chapter were simply attempting to forestall an attempt 'to dispossess it of funds' and hence it 'slipped into a poor imitation of Oxford and Cambridge'.⁷³ Perkin too asserted the University's foundation 'stemmed from larger fears of Church disestablishment and spoliation'.⁷⁴ William Whyte suggested that the foundation of the University was driven by 'fear that the State would sequestrate

⁷⁰Ashby, *Universities*, pp. 19–28.

⁷¹Ashby, *Universities*, pp. 19–28.

⁷²A. Briggs, 'Development in Higher Education in the United Kingdom', in W.R. Niblett (ed.), *Higher Education: Demand and Response* (London, 1969), pp. 95–116, at p. 97.

⁷³Sanderson, *Universities in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 32.

⁷⁴Perkin, *Origins of Modern English Society*, p. 298.

Church funds'.⁷⁵ Keith Vernon's remark was that the University was 'an attempt to divert some of the Cathedral's wealth' in order to avoid the scrutiny of a reforming government.⁷⁶

Within an unrevised understanding of High Church values, Durham has all too often been dismissed as an anachronistic reaction to the febrile atmosphere of reform in the early 1830s. Characterising the Chapter as High Church, stubborn anti-reformists had supported the argument that the motivation for the University's foundation was unambitious, self-serving and lacked the aspirational values found in other contemporaneous establishments, and especially London University. Vernon, for example, extolled the 'innovations' of London University and the attempt there to pioneer 'a new form of higher education', while dismissing Durham's 'educational poverty'.⁷⁷ Even Burns and Innes praised London University as 'the most ambitious product of this age of educational projects', in contrast to Durham, which was simply founded 'by a bishop and chapter who hoped in this way to defend their revenues from anticipated church reform'.⁷⁸

The person who suggested the University, Archdeacon Charles Thorp, always had it in mind that the project would 'preserve the Revenue to the church', so such comments are not without foundation.⁷⁹ But the analysis is too limited. Certainly, it fails to recognise the nuances and ambition of the development at Durham, but it also simplifies and therefore misunderstands what was happening elsewhere. This is the mistake made by Alan Bartlett and David Goodhew, who recognised the breadth of the initial vision for the University, yet ascribed the University's 'sad failure by the 1860s' to 'the vestiges of "Old Corruption", not the least being an anachronistic attempt at control' of the University by the Chapter.⁸⁰ Similarly, Brenda Pask attributed the failure to the 'autocratic behaviour' of the University's leadership and to the 'reluctance of the

⁷⁵Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 33.

⁷⁶Vernon, *Universities and the State in England*, p. 101.

⁷⁷Vernon, *Universities and the State in England*, pp. 63, 102.

⁷⁸J. Innes and A. Burns, 'Introduction', in Burns and Innes (eds.), *Age of Reform*, pp. 1–70, at p. 39.

⁷⁹[Bal] JP, IVA.6: Van Mildert to Thorp, 11 June 1831.

⁸⁰A. Bartlett and D. Goodhew, 'Victorian to Modern, 1832–2000', in D. Brown (ed.), *Durham Cathedral: History, Fabric, and Culture* (London, 2015), pp. 111–27, at p. 113.

canons to countenance loss of control'.⁸¹ Attributing Durham's failure to the management of the University repeats an all-too-easy analysis that relies on the verdict of a partisan Royal Commission in the 1860s.

In order to be understood correctly, the University must be studied in both its local and its wider context: in the momentous events of the early 1800s and as a response to the tumultuous educational, religious, political and social changes that were convulsing an increasingly agitated nation. Since its inception in 1831, Durham University has also shaped the City it inhabits arguably more than any other development, save only the arrival in 995 of the body of St Cuthbert and the establishment of the Cathedral itself.⁸² For the University is also a great local institution: the long-expected northern university. Ever since the foundation, the distinctive characters of both the University and City have been mutually shaped, as had been seen before in cities as diverse as Florence, Leiden and Edinburgh.⁸³

CONCLUSION

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

I shall argue that the Durham Chapter, led by Thorp, intended to establish a modern university that would benefit northern interests and that the clear failure to achieve these initial ambitions reflected the

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

⁸²S. Foot, 'Cuthbert and the Search for a Patron', in Brown (ed.), *Durham Cathedral*, pp. 9–25, at pp. 23–24; D. Pocock, *The Story of Durham* (Stroud, 2013), pp. 14–20.

⁸³T. Bender, *The University and the City: From Medieval Origins to the Present* (Oxford, 1988).

general issues of the developing higher education sector at least as much as it did the internal mismanagement and maladministration that was so publicly paraded in the early 1860s through the Royal Commission into the University's progress. This broader story crucially includes the fact, which has hitherto been given scant attention, that the University's foundation coincided with a 40-year period of limited growth for higher education throughout Europe: the early 1830s turned out to be probably the worst time in the entire century to found a university.

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CHAPTER 2

Bold Endeavours: London University, Its Imitators and Critics

The plan which I suggest is a great London University. Not a place for lecturing to people of both sexes (except as an appendage to the establishment), but for effectively and multifariously teaching, examining, exercising, and rewarding with honours in the liberal arts and sciences, the youth of our middling rich people, between the age of 15 or 16 and 20, or later if you please. By the middling rich I mean all between mechanics and the enormously rich.¹

Thomas Campbell, *The Times*, 9 February 1825

INTRODUCTION

At the dawn of the nineteenth century, London's population eclipsed every other European city: with nearly one million residents, it was almost twice the size of its nearest competitor, Paris, and more than ten times larger than any other city in the UK.² It was the wealthiest city in the world and was a major port with a global reach in both political and commercial terms.³ Yet even though it had been home to many renowned educational institutions for several centuries, including the

¹ *The Times*, 9 February 1825.

² P. Clark, *European Cities and Towns 400–2000* (Oxford, 2009), Table 7.2, p. 131.

³ M. Ball and D. Sunderland, *An Economic History of London 1800–1914* (London, 2001), pp. 3–5.

Inns of Court and the great teaching hospitals, and was known as an intellectual centre, London did not have a university.⁴ There were some people who had argued that London did have a university, in practice if not in name. In 1587, for example, William Harrison described three 'noble universities in England', including London.⁵ He based this assertion on the active work of the Inns of Court, which he stated had practices like the two universities. George Buck put forward much the same argument in 1615.⁶ Continuing throughout the eighteenth century, London was an active centre of adult education through public lectures including liberal arts, natural philosophy and mathematics. In March 1742, the opening of a London University was even announced, though this scheme amounted to nothing more formal than another series of public lectures.⁷ Nevertheless, while there were those willing to argue that, in some sense, there was a university in London, this was not true in any official way. For an increasingly influential body of radicals and progressives, this was an unsustainable situation which, when coupled with a growing dissatisfaction with the performance of Oxford and Cambridge, led inexorably to the conclusion that a new university should be founded in London as a matter of urgency.

There was a clear metropolitan focus to the discussion, but the need for a new institution had been emphasised by the reforming Acts of the late 1820s and early 1830s. Now admitted to the position of full citizens, Dissenters pressed their case for admission to the universities and professions. A settlement of some kind was inevitable; as Brent put it, the only question in the 1830s was over what form the settlement would take: 'whether religious diversity and doctrinal purity should be preserved by the maintenance of sectarian institutions, or whether a truly national establishment was a practical possibility'.⁸ While there was a strong liberal voice in the ancient universities that argued for the opening up

⁴Cobban, *The Medieval English Universities*, pp. 28–29; B. Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People? England 1783–1846* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 169–70.

⁵R. Holinshed, *The First and Second Volumes of Chronicles Comprising 1 The Description and Historie of England, 2 The Description and Historie of Ireland, 3 The Description and Historie of Scotland* (London, 1587).

⁶G. Buck, *The Third Universitie of England* (London, 1615).

⁷Armytage, *Civic Universities*, pp. 143–45; N.A. Hans, *New Trends in Education in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1951), pp. 136–50.

⁸Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, p. 185.

of those establishments and warned of the deleterious effect of not doing so, it was as yet insufficiently powerful to bring about significant change.⁹ One satirist lamented the lack of progress towards reform at Oxford in a lengthy poem published in 1834:

Oh! Oxford, Oxford, vainly still endow'd
With wealth and ease to lift thee from the crowd,
With opportunities too richly blest,
Why with slow step still lag behind the rest?
When wilt thou cease, with all thy pompous plan,
To waste on mummies, what was meant for man –
With all thy learning when wilt thou decide
That to be useful it must be applied?¹⁰

This debate between liberal reformers and defenders of the Establishment also brought out a key question for the future direction of higher education: were the universities meant to be places of academic excellence and intellectual enquiry or were they primarily the vehicles through which each successive generation was enculturated to the values, discipline and morals of the national culture? It was the former interpretation which dominated in the minds of liberal reformers and in part drove the desire to make sure that the national establishments (a phrase used by Dissenters to force home their argument) were open to all those equipped by prior education and enabled by their own abilities to advance the intellectual mission of the universities. The latter view prevailed in the opinions of those who saw Oxford and Cambridge as essential and integrated elements of the Established Church. This meant that academic excellence was not an essential element of an English university education.¹¹ As Robert Inglis, MP for Oxford, explained in a Commons debate on the admissions of Dissenters to Cambridge, ‘the Universities are not mere localities of lectures’, but ‘places of discipline and moral restraint’, and even more that ‘the experience of 6,000 years

⁹Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge*, pp. 83–96.

¹⁰G. Cox, *Black Gowns and Red Coats or Oxford in 1834: A Satire* (London, 1834), pp. 7–8.

¹¹Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 192–93.

has proved, that there is no necessary connexion between knowledge and moral discipline'.¹²

The result was the most significant and radically different new institution of the era, and the one which sent shock waves throughout all branches of the English Establishment: London University.¹³ William Whyte is right to describe it as 'the beginning of a new chapter in the history of British universities'.¹⁴

LONDON UNIVERSITY (UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON)

The first formal move in the foundation of the London University occurred when the poet and journalist Thomas Campbell, a graduate of the University of Glasgow, addressed an open letter to Brougham in *The Times* on 9 February 1825.¹⁵ Campbell had been formulating his plan for a university in London since a visit in 1820 to the recently founded University of Bonn. He had discussed his plans with intimate literary friends ever since. There is some reason to believe he was spurred to move from discussion to action by the arrival of Francis Gilmer in 1824, who visited Britain to recruit staff for the University of Virginia. For the new institution in the metropolis, Campbell looked to the examples of institutions in Scotland and Germany, with their professorial teaching and professional connections.¹⁶ Though the prime mover in the project was Campbell, it was Brougham who did much of the organising (at the expense of a deteriorating relationship with Campbell) and it was Brougham who secured the co-operation of Dissenters who were considering setting up a university of their own.¹⁷

¹² Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates*, HC Deb, 26 March 1834, vol. 22, c. 688.

¹³ W.H.G. Armytage, *Four Hundred Years of English Education*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1970), p. 103; Rothblatt, *The Modern University*, pp. 20–21; M. Vaughn, and M.S. Archer, *Social Conflict and Educational Change in England and France 1798–1848* (Cambridge, 1971), p. 53; and Whyte, *Redbrick*, pp. 39–40.

¹⁴ Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 36.

¹⁵ R. Ashton, *Victorian Bloomsbury* (London, 2012), pp. 26–27.

¹⁶ Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 14–16; N. Harte, and J. North, *The World of UCL 1828–2004* (London, 2004), p. 28.

¹⁷ Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 20–24, 30–32; J. Bennett, *The History of Dissenters During the Last Thirty Years (from 1808 to 1838)* (London, 1839), pp. 84–85; and M. Lobban, 'Brougham, Henry Peter (1778–1868)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004; Online edn 2008).

London University was to open higher education to those excluded from the ancient universities, to teach the subjects they neglected and to offer a higher education at a much lower cost. It was to be non-residential, which would help reduce costs as many students could live at home, in part to help avoid the question of religious tests and affiliation. Whether or not the founders intended to offer degrees is a point of some debate.¹⁸ Brougham declared to the House of Commons that there was no intention to offer degrees: ‘gross misapprehensions had gone forth’, he noted as he offered reassurance that ‘it was not intended that degrees should be given, fellowships or scholarships conferred; or, in short, any of those exclusive privileges be required, of which the two universities were at present in possession’.¹⁹ As it transpired, the first entrants in October 1828 did not even progress to take the certificates which were on offer, as for the most part they elected to take classes, but did not submit to examinations.²⁰ This may be connected to the youth of many of the first students of the general class: at least 30 of the first 300 were under 15 and two were only 11.²¹ This was in keeping with Campbell’s original view that most students of the University would finish their studies by 18 due to ‘their being obliged to go to business’.²²

The editors of *The Times* were not impressed by Campbell’s proposal: ‘crude in conception, and meagre in development’ was their initial verdict.²³ The University was more heavily attacked by the Tory press.²⁴ Grounds for objection included the threat to vested interests, especially from the two ancient universities and the London medical schools, the misappropriation of the title of a university, and the lack of religious affiliation. Edward Copleston, writing in the *Quarterly Review* in December 1825, noted that it was difficult ‘to discuss any measure, that is likely to have a wide influence upon society, with feelings altogether unbiased,

¹⁸ Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 47–49, 55–59.

¹⁹ *Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates*, HC Deb, 3 June 1825, vol. 13, c. 1033.

²⁰ Harte and North, *UCL*, pp. 66–67.

²¹ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 180; Bender, *The University and the City*, pp. 125–26.

²² T. Campbell, *Reprint of Mr. Campbell’s Letter to Mr. Brougham on the Subject of a London University* (London, 1825), p. 9.

²³ *The Times*, 9 February 1825.

²⁴ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 71; Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 39.

or with a tone perfectly sedate and impartial'.²⁵ Much of the hyperbolic attack on London University certainly helped to prove his point.

Some of its more vitriolic opponents gave London University the nickname 'Stinkomalee' due to the college erecting its new building, designed by William Wilkins, where once there had been a rubbish tip²⁶:

Then hasten, ye drapers, and tailors, and clerks,
Ye barbers and sweepers, and gay'prentice sparks,
Think what honours await in a first class degree,
From Reason's bright temple, in Stinkamolee!²⁷

For the controversial preacher Edward Irving, the new University was 'the Synagogue of Satan'.²⁸ Writing in the *Edinburgh Review*, the essayist Thomas Macaulay, whose father Zachary was on the Provisional Committee of the University, accurately lamented that 'in most of those publications which are distinguished by zeal for the Church and the Government, the scheme is never mentioned but with affected contempt, or unaffected fury'.²⁹

Durham was the only English university foundation of the nineteenth century to establish a residential college system, although residential halls were created elsewhere, including, for example, from the 1840s at St. Bartholomew's and the other London teaching hospitals.³⁰ Even though London University was non-residential, this did not mean that it was immune from halls either, as others stepped in to fill the vacuum.³¹ The Unitarians, for example, opened University Hall in 1849 to provide 'the accommodation and social advantages of college residence'.³² The

²⁵ *Quarterly Review*, 32 (1825), p. 257.

²⁶ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 35.

²⁷ Verse from *Stinkomalee* first published in *John Bull*, 25 December 1825; cf. Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 68.

²⁸ Harte, *The University of London*, p. 64.

²⁹ T.B. Macaulay, 'Thoughts on the Advancement of Academical Education in England', *Edinburgh Review*, 43 (1826), pp. 315–41, at p. 315.

³⁰ K. Waddington, *Medical Education at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, 1123–1995* (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 78–83.

³¹ Whyte, *Redbrick*, pp. 40–41.

³² Ashton, *Victorian Bloomsbury*, pp. 183–214.

University itself also anticipated that halls would eventually be needed when its reputation attracted ‘many pupils from the country and the colonies’ and hence ‘those means of private instruction, and domestic superintendence, may be adopted, which have been found in other places to be excellent substitutes for parental care’.³³

There is a temptation to consider the London University of the 1820s as an attempt to rectify the problems of Oxford and Cambridge (principally their outmoded curricula and exclusivity based on wealth and religion), but this would do the institution a disservice. It is true that deficiencies at the two ancient universities spurred on the institutions’ founders, though they were also attempting to create a new type of institution based on an alternative model of higher education. Oxford and Cambridge offered one particular conception of higher education, but the models being developed elsewhere in Europe and America were the great influencing factors for Campbell: ‘but if it be true that an university would be desirable in London’, he wrote, ‘let that important truth rest simply on its own foundations, and let it not be pettishly deduced as a corollary from charges adduced against Oxford and Cambridge’.³⁴

KING’S COLLEGE, LONDON

Even before London University opened to students in 1828 a counter-movement from within the Established Church was under way.³⁵ On 26 December 1827, *The Standard* recorded that ‘a rumour is very prevalent among the clergy, that it is intended to make application to the legislature for the endowment of a college in the metropolis, which, like the other great universities, shall be under the control, and dedicated to the purposes of, the Established Church’. ‘This establishment’, it was clarified, was ‘thought necessary in consequence of the determination of the planners and promoters of the Dissenters’ University’.³⁶ Or as it was put in the words of one satirical publication’s more sardonic poetry:

³³ *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*. 1826. Part III. Historical Register. (London, 1826), p. 331.

³⁴ Campbell, *Reprint of Mr. Campbell’s Letter to Mr. Brougham*, p. 7.

³⁵ Ashton, *Victorian Bloomsbury*, pp. 86–87.

³⁶ *The Standard*, 26 November 1827.

But, above all, O, bless this Royal College!
 Make it a hot-bed of such heavenly knowledge,
 As will suffice to guard the Church from evil,
 And frustrate Brougham, Bentham, and THE DEVIL!³⁷

The institution that was to become King's College grew swiftly from rumour to reality. George D'Oyly, the High Church Rector of Lambeth, published an open letter to Robert Peel in February 1828. In his letter, D'Oyly contested that while the new London University would go some way towards addressing the need for expansion of higher education, what was needed was a second university in London rooted firmly in Christian principles and the Established Church. (He also argued that the north of England needed a new university too.)³⁸ On 21 June 1828, the Duke of Wellington chaired the inaugural meeting to set about the college's foundation, ably supported and encouraged by no fewer than three archbishops and seven bishops.³⁹ Van Mildert personally supported the new College with a donation of £500 and later commended the institution to Thorp as offering some hints for what might be done in Durham.⁴⁰

From the start, King's College was to differ from the ancient universities in three important respects. First, it was established to offer practical instruction in the sciences as well as the arts and various branches of literature. The students were expected to take the certificates they obtained at the College and move forward into commercial or professional life (or on to either of the English universities to obtain their degrees). Second, no religious tests were to be imposed on students. Third, the College from the start had no intention of conferring degrees, which almost certainly facilitated the swift sealing of its charter on 14 August 1829.⁴¹ Although these three aspects of the proposed College marked it out as something entirely distinct from Oxford and Cambridge, like these two institutions, it too would offer an Anglican education.

³⁷ *Second Book: Lectures and Examinations for King's College Students, with Inaugural Address of the Duke of Wellington* (London, 1828), p. 8.

³⁸ Hearnshaw, *The Centenary History of King's College London*, pp. 35–40.

³⁹ A.B. Webster, *Joshua Watson: The Story of a Layman 1771–1855* (London, 1954), pp. 44–46.

⁴⁰ [DUL] TC, 68: Van Mildert to Thorp, 8 December 1831; Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 150.

⁴¹ Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, pp. 41–69.

YORK, LEEDS AND BATH

The establishment of both London University and King's College were unique only insofar as their foundations were actually realised, for they sparked would-be imitators as well as critics: from Bath to Liverpool and places in-between, local advocates put forward plans for their own university colleges.⁴² Indeed, some schemes were developed at the same time as London University and are properly understood as being contemporary attempts rather than simple imitations. The division in the metropolis that pitted members of the Establishment on the one hand against radicals and progressives on the other was played out in the provinces too. This means that although London University sparked a range of responses from local civic and ecclesiastical leaders, it was not taken as the only model to imitate.⁴³ What distinguishes the 1820s and 1830s in terms of the development of English higher education is the unprecedented wave of attempts to establish new institutions. In the centuries after the initial evolution of Oxford and Cambridge, several English towns and cities had at various times attempted to establish a university, but none succeeded. In several instances, however, the knowledge of these earlier attempts helped provide the spark to kindle renewed interest in a university foundation.

York was one such place. In 1617, a petition had been presented to King James I calling for the establishment of a university in the city. This attempt failed, as did at least one further attempt (and possibly more) in the years between 1647 and 1652.⁴⁴ In January 1825, preceding Campbell's open letter to Brougham in *The Times*, the *Morning Chronicle* reported that Earl Fitzwilliam had promised £50,000 'to found a third University in the neighbourhood of York' due to 'the overflow of students' at Oxford and Cambridge.⁴⁵ This story was picked up and widely reported in the national and provincial press, including the *Durham Chronicle*.⁴⁶ Some papers even added their own commentary

⁴² Armytage, *Civic Universities*, pp. 170–71.

⁴³ Whyte, *Redbrick*, pp. 31–33.

⁴⁴ J. Dronfield, 'Education in York', in A. Stacpoole (ed.), *The Noble City of York* (York, 1972), pp. 814–16; Philoprepos, *An Appeal to True Patriots for an University at York* (York, 1831), pp. 3–4.

⁴⁵ *Morning Chronicle*, 24 January 1825.

⁴⁶ *Durham Chronicle*, 29 January 1825.

concerning the pressing need for a third and more accessible English university. The *Globe and Traveller*, for example, took the opportunity to assert that what was needed was ‘the establishment of universities upon a footing entirely different from those of Oxford and Cambridge’. The existing universities, complained the paper’s editors, were too expensive and out of reach ‘even of persons of very good fortune, who happen to have large families’.⁴⁷

The attachment of William Fitzwilliam, the 4th Earl Fitzwilliam, an elderly prominent Whig politician and one of the richest men in the country, would have given the story weight and no doubt in part explains why the brief note was carried so extensively.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, little seemed to happen after the flurry of press interest and the *Yorkshire Gazette* later debunked it. ‘We have made inquiry into the affair’, the paper reported, ‘and cannot find that it has any other foundation than the proposed enlargement of the St. Andrewgate Grammar School.’⁴⁹

One plucky correspondent was determined that the matter would not rest there. Writing anonymously under the pseudonym Philoprepos, this individual composed a series of letters that appeared in the *New Times* and the *Yorkshire Gazette* between 1825 and 1827. Bizarrely, given the level of effort that was expended in the composition and later publication of the letters, the anonymous author did not live in York; in fact, they did not live in the north at all, but somewhere ‘far south of the Humber’. Despite being only an occasional visitor to York, Philoprepos lamented the city’s decline as the capital of the north and argued vehemently that, even after the establishment of London University, a second, northern university was needed, and nowhere could accommodate such an establishment better than York.⁵⁰ In October 1831, while still welcoming the publication of the series of letters from Philoprepos, the *Yorkshire Gazette* pronounced ‘that the time is now gone by’ as ‘the Dean and Chapter of Durham have determined to set apart a

⁴⁷ *The Globe and Traveller*, 25 January 1825.

⁴⁸ D. Wilkinson, ‘Fitzwilliam, William Wentworth (1748–1833)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004); E.A. Smith, *Whig Principles and Party Politics: Earl Fitzwilliam and the Whig Party 1748–1833* (Manchester, 1975), p. 29.

⁴⁹ *Yorkshire Gazette*, 5 February 1825.

⁵⁰ Philoprepos, *An Appeal to True Patriots for an University at York* (York, 1831); A.J. Peacock, ‘Notes and Queries: 1. A Nineteenth Century York University’, *York History*, 1 (1975), pp. 35–37.

considerable portion of their revenues for the foundation and endowment of a College'.⁵¹

A more detailed suggestion was made the following year for a university in nearby Leeds. This proposal was clearly made in imitation of London University. It was made by John Marshall, a Yorkshire flax spinner and Benthamite, who had been one of the founders of London University.⁵² In 1826, Marshall argued before the Leeds Philosophical Society that the benefits of an institution such as London University may apply equally to 'our large towns' and Leeds, 'which for its population, its intelligence, its public spirit, and its wealth, may justly be considered the capital of the North-eastern part of England', he felt, 'ought to take the lead in the introduction of every useful institution'.⁵³ This was a partisan description of the city, which was developing rapidly but in 1800 had been little more than a market town. Nevertheless, a plan similar to London University 'is practicable in our large towns as well as in London', Marshall asserted later. He added, somewhat optimistically, that there was 'every reason to believe that such an institution would support itself and that the fees of the students would be amply sufficient to pay the interest of the capital expended as well as the salaries of the professors and all current expenses'.⁵⁴ Leeds, however, would not gain a university college until 1874 with the opening of the Yorkshire College of Science as part of a later wave of civic colleges.⁵⁵

The west of England too felt the need for new establishments. A prospectus was published in 1839 for the establishment of Queens' College, Bath. Far from embracing the non-denominational outlook of London University, this proposal was distinctly evangelical. 'There is no man in the British Empire', the prospectus opened, 'who can deny or gainsay the damagingly rapid increase of Popery in this Island.'⁵⁶ Intended to be

⁵¹ *Yorkshire Gazette*, 29 October 1831.

⁵² A.N. Shimmin, *The University of Leeds: The First Half Century* (Cambridge, 1954), p. 3.

⁵³ *Leeds Mercury*, 21 January 1826.

⁵⁴ *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*. 1826. Part III. Historical Register (London, 1826), p. 169.

⁵⁵ Anderson, *British Universities*, pp. 73–74; D.R. Jones, *The Origins of Civic Universities: Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool* (London, 1988), pp. 55–58; Vernon, *Universities and the State in England*, pp. 102–5; and Whyte, *Redbrick*, pp. 110–18.

⁵⁶ *The Prospectus and Deed of Settlement of Queen's College Bath* (Bath 1839).

a prominent symbol of the strength of the Established Church, noticeably more so even than King's College, the College at Bath would have combated the growth of nearby Catholic colleges. The College would have acted as an auxiliary to Oxford and Cambridge, as well as providing a school for boys between seven and 16. However, despite the approbation of Queen Victoria and the unlikely acquiescence of Lord John Russell, normally a stalwart defender of equal rights for those of all religions, the College failed to gain sufficient support to become a reality.⁵⁷

ST BEES AND ST DAVID'S COLLEGES

While numerous attempts to found general and more practically orientated colleges of higher education failed in the early decades of the nineteenth century, other initiatives to deliver colleges in the more traditional area of clerical training were successful. Indeed, a pressing need for well-trained clergy had become critical towards the end of the eighteenth century, especially in those regions furthest from the pleasure, comforts and influence of the ancient universities and London, where graduates tended to cluster.⁵⁸ Yet even in the diocese of Canterbury, 25% of clergy in the final quarter of the eighteenth century came from so-called 'plebeian' backgrounds.⁵⁹ To help cater to this need for clergy, the Bishop of Chester, George Henry Law, founded a college at St Bees in Cumbria in 1816. St David's College was established at Lampeter by the Diocesan Bishop, Thomas Burgess, and it opened in 1827.

The college at St Bees, unlike the college at Lampeter, was founded exclusively to train clergy. Financed by the local Lowther family, the Earls of Lonsdale, the ruined chancel of the monastic church was restored to house the College and land was donated for a vicarage. This would be a

⁵⁷A. Frost, "This Sham University": Beckford, Goodridge and Queen's College, Bath', *Beckford Journal*, 15 (2009), pp. 47–53; Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 33.

⁵⁸N. Yates, 'An Opportunity Missed? The Provision of Education and Training for a Non-graduate Clergy: Comparative Case Studies of the Diocese of St David's and Sodor and Man in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', in T. Clemens and W. Janse (eds.), *The Pastor Bonus: Papers Read at the British-Dutch Colloquium at Utrecht, 18–21 September 2002* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 319–29; D. Dowland, *Nineteenth-Century Anglican Theological Training* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 1–8; T. Park, *St Bees College* (St Bees, 2008), pp. 1–17.

⁵⁹J. Gregory, 'Standards for Admission to the Ministry of the Church of England in the Eighteenth Century', in Clemens and Janse (eds.), *The Pastor Bonus*, pp. 283–95, at p. 288.

pioneering institution: the first Anglican college for the training of clergy outside the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The first Principal of the College, William Ainger, was appointed in October 1816 and by 1817, the repair work was completed and the College was ready to admit students.⁶⁰

St David's College had strong connections with County Durham. Thomas Burgess was presented by Bishop Barrington to a prebendal stall in Durham and then, in 1795, the parish of Winston near Barnard Castle.⁶¹ When he was made Bishop of St David's in 1803, Burgess was permitted to keep his stall in Durham, due to the poor income attached to his new bishopric, and so was required to spend part of each year in Durham.⁶² Burgess first raised the idea of founding a college in his new diocese to provide an economical training for the priesthood as early as his inaugural Charge of 1804, though the College did not open for another 23 years.⁶³ Difficulties in raising the necessary funds accounted in large part for the long gestation. The foundation stone for the building was eventually laid in 1822, with the college accepting its first students on St David's Day in 1827. Burgess, however, had already been translated to Salisbury in the spring of 1825 (giving up his Durham Prebend at the same time).⁶⁴ He was succeeded by John Banks Jenkinson, who maintained the northern connection as he was simultaneously Dean of Durham from June 1827.

These two new institutions were successfully established, but several others were discussed and never realised. Edward Harcourt, the Archbishop of York, had, for example, contemplated the establishment of some form of college for the preparation of ordinands during the 1820s, emulating his counterparts at Chester and St David's. Writing in 1826, James Yates made reference to the Established Church opening colleges to train clergy in areas too remote from Oxford or Cambridge. In his list Yates included St Bees, St David's and 'a third institution of a similar

⁶⁰Park, *St Bees*, pp. 22–26, 37.

⁶¹D.T.W. Price, *Bishop Burgess and Lampeter College* (Cardiff, 1987), p. 21.

⁶²Price, *Bishop Burgess*, p. 27.

⁶³F. Knight, *The Nineteenth-Century Church and English Society* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 112.

⁶⁴D.T.W. Price, *A History of Saint David's University College Lampeter, Volume One: To 1898* (Cardiff, 1977), pp. 3, 25–27.

kind', which he noted was 'said to be projected at York'.⁶⁵ Although he had not established a college, Harcourt had introduced new regulations for the training of Literates (non-graduates who passed a Diocesan bishop's examination for ordination) in his Diocese under 'tutors for orders'. Slinn recorded at least one mistaken reference to 'the Archbishop of York's Theological Institution' as early as 1821.⁶⁶ The scale of the work of one of the approved tutors even gave rise to a reference to 'the Clerical Institution at Wilsden': it was clearly an active cleric that could be mistaken for an institution.⁶⁷

GREENHOW'S PROPOSAL FOR AN ACADEMICAL INSTITUTION IN NEWCASTLE

On 5 April 1831, Thomas Greenhow, a prominent local surgeon who had trained at Edinburgh, delivered a lecture to the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne. In his presentation, he lamented that 'in no country in Europe are the means of obtaining a liberal and systematic course of academic instruction so sparingly supplied to youth as in England'. Oxford and Cambridge were 'purely *aristocratic* institutions' whose religious tests, expense and general dissipation effectively barred from entry a great number of potential students. Greenhow conceded that London University was 'in active and useful operation', but it was also distant, expensive and, in any case, London was 'the last place where a prudent father would be induced to entrust a youth from 16 to 18 or 19' he warned. The Scottish universities benefited from being nearer and cheaper, but were not national universities and so were not generally attended by English students, except as schools of medicine; they best served as models for new foundations in England. Given that 'the increasing wealth, population, and intelligence of the country' would demand greater access to higher learning and that none of the existing institutions (even London University) would be

⁶⁵Yates, *Academical Education*, p. 52.

⁶⁶S. Slinn, 'Archbishop Harcourt's Recruitment of Literate Clergymen. Part 1: Non-graduate Clergy in the Diocese of York, 1800–1849', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 80 (2008), pp. 167–87, at p. 186.

⁶⁷S. Slinn, 'Archbishop Harcourt's Recruitment of Literate Clergymen. Part 2: Clerical Seminaries for Literates in the Diocese of York, 1800–1849', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 81 (2009), pp. 279–309, at p. 296.

able to satisfy that demand, the only expedient remaining ‘to supply this lamentable deficiency’, he argued, was ‘to establish for ourselves a College or University in every way fitted for our purpose’.⁶⁸ Greenhow’s ideas were popular, a second paper was demanded and read to the Society on 7 June, and both the first and second papers were printed and widely circulated locally.

CONCLUSION

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

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⁶⁸T.M. Greenhow, *The Expediency of Establishing in Newcastle an Academical Institution of the Nature of a College or University for the Promotion of Literature and Science* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1831), pp. 4–7.

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CHAPTER 3

The Idea of Durham University

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

Charles Thorp, August 1831

INTRODUCTION

Almost since its foundation, Durham University has been dismissed as a reactionary institution founded only to preserve the Cathedral's wealth. This analysis persists to the present day. The 'university project was a diversionary tactic', Bob Gamble wrote as recently as March 2017, 'executed by the reactionary Durham ecclesiastical establishment in order to dissuade the state from the more extensive plundering of Church assets'.² This line of argument is now so frequently cited that the inherent flaw in its logic is overlooked: if the Chapter were simply interested in retaining their vast wealth, why go to all the trouble of founding something as difficult and expensive as a university? If nothing else, London University, which had first admitted students in 1828, demonstrated how hard it was to establish a university. While in all respects it was well suited to the needs of the dissenting and reforming groups that appeared to be in the ascendency in the late 1820s and early 1830s, when the Chapter took its

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

²B. Gamble, 'Archdeacon Charles Thorp, the University of Durham and the Brontës', *Durham County Local History Society Bulletin*, 81 (2017), pp. 5–29, at p. 8.

decision to found the long-anticipated northern university, London was struggling. Oxford and Cambridge, gilded by the wealth of generations and still fighting off attempts at reform from within and without, were simply incomparable in terms of scope and scale to anything even the rich Prebends of Durham could hope to create.

Founding a university was not an obvious way of preserving the Chapter's wealth. Why did they not instead establish a good, advanced school? Or a training college for northern clergy? Both such institutions were needed and would have been far easier to establish than a university. Importantly, such an endeavour would have avoided the sort of public scrutiny the Cathedral authorities otherwise wished to avoid. In an age when universities are spread throughout the country and many towns host two or even three such institutions, the enormity of the Chapter's decision to establish a university can easily be missed. The ambition to create a university requires more of an explanation than financial protectionism alone.

The political circumstances, and especially widespread anti-clericalism, were certainly the impetus for the University's foundation. But the concept of the Durham University that was born in those circumstances was neither a slavish imitation of Oxford or Cambridge, nor was it emulating the more radical London University. King's College was a nearer equivalent in numerous respects, especially in terms of Anglican affiliation, but Durham was always intended to be a degree-awarding university, which King's College was not.

The Durham University conceived in 1831 was to be an institution taking the best of both traditional and modern models of higher education: it was to be its own form of radical third way, both ancient and modern, reformed and thoroughly part of the Establishment. That idea of the university is the result of the two individuals most responsible for its foundation: Charles Thorp and William Van Mildert.

CHARLES THORP

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

and drowsy mediocrity'.³ Thorp was ordained deacon in Oxford three years later and he proceeded MA in 1806, BD in 1822 and DD in 1835.

Thorp was a clergyman of the old High Church tradition and succeeded his father to the living of Ryton in 1807. He lived there to the end of his life, despite gaining numerous other positions and being offered more valuable preferments, including the famously wealthy livings of Stanhope and Easington. He founded a Sunday School at Ryton and created additional chapels for his large parish.⁴ He was also an active Archdeacon of Durham, deputising for his predecessor, Richard Prosser, long before gaining the role officially. He held the 2nd stall in the Cathedral from 1829 to 1831, when he was presented to the richer 4th stall. Amongst the founders of the University, Thorp stands out as he came from the north. He almost certainly understood the region better than any other member of the Chapter. In 1835, for example, he foresaw correctly that County Durham would 'take a new character, and increase in numbers and wealth' due to the 'the discovery of the richest veins of coal'.⁵

Thorp quickly developed a close bond with Van Mildert when he was translated to Durham in 1826, a friendship that proved crucial in the University's first years and was sustained until the Prelate's death.⁶ When, for example, in March 1832 *The Times* marked Thorp out as the biggest pluralist of all the Durham Chapter, Van Mildert helped to restore his reputation during a debate in the Lords: the 'enemy's attempt has recoiled upon himself, & has added a feather to your reputation', Van Mildert assured the Archdeacon.⁷ Yet Thorp also made powerful enemies, including the Commissioners by whom he was condemned in the early 1860s. Joseph Fowler, author of the University's first history who was a student at Durham towards the end of Thorp's time as Warden, presented a warmer picture. Thorp was, he recalled, 'a bright,

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

⁴A *Short Sketch of the Life of the Venerable Charles Thorp, Archdeacon of Durham, Printed at the Daily Journal Office* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1862), pp. 7–8.

⁵[DUL] TC, 653: Church Commission: Minutes of Evidence, 10 April 1835, q. 326.

⁶A. Orde, 'William Van Mildert, Charles Thorp, and the Diocese of Durham', *Northern History*, XL(1) (2003), pp. 147–66, at p. 149.

⁷[DCL] VML, 236–27: Van Mildert to Thorp, 3 April 1832; *The Times*, 30 March 1832.

cheery, kindly, and dignified old gentleman, with more than a touch of the Northumbrian burr in his utterance'.⁸

Thorp was made the first Warden of the University—a title for Durham's senior officer appropriated from Durham Hall, Oxford—temporarily in 1831, but permanently in July 1833.⁹ He was not, however, the only man considered.¹⁰ In December 1831, for example, Thomas Gaisford, former Prebend, Dean of Christ Church and close friend of the Bishop, encouraged Van Mildert to think of giving the role to Charles Webb Le Bas, Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy at the East India College (a training school for the East India Company).¹¹ Nevertheless, from its first creation to his death in 1862, Durham was Thorp's University.

WILLIAM VAN MILDERT

Thorp could not establish an institution on his own: he needed powerful support. Fortunately, few patrons were more influential than William Van Mildert, Durham's Prince Bishop. His father, however, had been an unsuccessful gin distiller in Southwark.¹² Born on 6 November 1765 and educated at Merchant Taylors School, he failed to obtain one of the school's fellowships to St John's College, Oxford, and proceeded instead to Queen's College, Oxford, where he graduated with a BA in 1787, an MA in 1790, and a BD and DD in 1813. He was ordained on 18 May 1788, achieving a vocation he first expressed at the age of 13.¹³

G.F.A. Best concluded that Van Mildert was far too dry, intellectual and stubborn, but still described him as being recognised as 'in some

⁸Fowler, *College Histories*, p. 112.

⁹[DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 20 July 1835.

¹⁰[DUL] TC, 45: List of staff, September 1831. In this document, a suggested list of staff is given and the surnames Keble, Shepherd and Ogilvie are listed as options for the Principal. These are presumably John Keble (though could have been Thomas Keble, his brother) and Charles Atmore Ogilvie, Fellow of Balliol College, but the Shepherd referred to is unknown.

¹¹[Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Gaisford to Van Mildert, 26 December 1831.

¹²G.F.A. Best, 'The Mind and Times of William Van Mildert', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 14(2) (1963), pp. 355–70, at p. 358; C. Ives, *Sermons on Several Occasions, and Charges by William Van Mildert to Which is Prefixed a Memoir of the Author* (London, 1868), p. 3.

¹³Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, pp. 12–14.

sense, “the best of the bishops” during the 1820s. His rise to prominence ‘was a success story of the most respectable kind’ which had been sealed when he became Regius Professor of Divinity and Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, in 1813, a position he continued to hold briefly when he was elevated to the See of Llandaff in 1819. He was translated to Durham in 1826—a large step up the episcopal ladder that reflected the standing he had obtained.¹⁴

Van Mildert was a leading member of the Hackney Phalanx (sometimes also called the Clapton Group).¹⁵ This group of friends contained a number of prominent High Churchmen centred around Joshua Watson (who had shared a house with Van Mildert and was a close lifelong friend) and the cleric Henry Handley Norris.¹⁶ Tory in political outlook, members of the group were staunch defenders of the Established Church–State relationship, which they considered to be a single entity of Church and State under the King, ‘an organic union of two interrelated divinely-ordained powers’, and so they opposed any measures which they perceived would undermine the purity of this arrangement.¹⁷ The group was active in the early decades of the nineteenth century and was influential in the church appointments made by Lord Liverpool. As well as connections with Van Mildert and Durham University, the group’s associates included several men prominent in the foundation of King’s College, including George D’Oyly.¹⁸

In 1814, Van Mildert was asked to preach the prestigious Bampton Lectures before the University of Oxford. These lectures provide a clear insight into his conviction that nowhere was sound doctrine better preserved than in the Church of England. ‘Our trust in the continuance of this blessing’, however, ‘is still to be regarded as dependent upon our own earnest endeavours to preserve it unimpaired’, he warned his

¹⁴Best, ‘Van Mildert’, pp. 356–60.

¹⁵Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context*, pp. 14–22, 245; Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence*, pp. 22–23; A.B. Webster, *Joshua Watson: The Story of a Layman 1771–1855* (London, 1954), pp. 26, 29; and J. Wolfe, *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain 1829–1860* (Oxford, 1991), p. 24.

¹⁶Webster, *Joshua Watson*, p. 26.

¹⁷Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, pp. 63–67.

¹⁸Hearnshaw, *The Centenary History of King’s College London*, pp. 16–17.

audience.¹⁹ Van Mildert therefore adopted an entrenched stance against liberal Church reform.²⁰ And so, finding himself increasingly against the tide of events, his authority waned towards the end of his life.²¹ In January 1836, the year of his death, he wrote to Gaisford that the ‘Archbishop has communicated nothing to me for some time past, & I have no heart to write him’.²²

ANTICLERICALISM AND THE CHAPTER OF DURHAM

‘Bloody scenes now appear to be renewing in Paris’, Van Mildert wrote to Thorp in June 1832, ‘& who shall say how long it may be before we have such in London?’²³ This was not idle speculation. By the summer of 1832, the entire established order was under sustained literal attack. For at least the previous five years, political confusion, social unrest, ideological confrontation and religious revolution had gripped an increasingly agitated nation. Calls for radical change had been growing louder since the end of the eighteenth century and the fulfilment of some of the reformers’ key desires had been achieved by the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828, Catholic emancipation in 1829 and the Reform Act, which had been passed just days before Van Mildert wrote to Thorp.²⁴ These Acts were successive victories for liberal interests, radicals, Catholics and Dissenting Protestantism.

With the equilibrium of the Church–State relationship shifting, opponents of the Establishment sought opportunities to push their advantage as far as possible, while Churchmen formulated various defences for what remained of the status quo.²⁵ Its many critics argued that the Church

¹⁹W. Van Mildert, *An Inquiry into the General Principles of Scripture Interpretation*, 2nd edn (London, 1815), pp. 289–90.

²⁰R. Saunders, ‘God and the Great Reform Act: Preaching Against Reform, 1831–32’, *Journal of British Studies*, 53(2) (2014), pp. 378–99, at pp. 382–83.

²¹Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, pp. 19, 191.

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

²³[DCL] VML, 253–55: Van Mildert to Thorp, 8 June 1832.

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

²⁵O.J. Brose, *Church and Parliament: The Reshaping of the Church of England 1828–1860* (London, 1959), p. 1; Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, p. 26; and Webster, *Joshua Watson*, pp. 88–89.

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

On the back of desires to root out corruption, the journalist John Wade, a staunch Utilitarian, sold almost 50,000 copies of his *Extraordinary Black Book*, in which he attempted to 'show the manifold abuses of an unjust and oppressive system'.²⁶ In florid terms he assailed the whole edifice of the Tory establishment, including politicians, lawyers, municipal corporations, the East India Company and the military—in fact, almost all those in authority.²⁷ However, he reserved a special vehemence for his attack on the Established Church and especially the Bishops with their 'excessive greediness of filthy lucre'. With particular vigour, he condemned 'the rich diocese of Durham', where, he said, it was 'known begging subscriptions are had every year for the poor clergy and their families', highlighting not only the wealth of the Bishop but also his apparent disdain for the impoverished working clergy.²⁸ Wade was not alone in thinking that the Dean and Chapter of Durham were uniquely scandalous.²⁹ When (rather than 'if') reform came to meet them, the Durham Prebends, who occupied what were commonly called the 'golden stalls', were themselves convinced that they would be the first to be assaulted.³⁰

²⁶ J. Wade, *The Extraordinary Black Book* (London, 1832), p. v.

²⁷ Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, pp. 33–34; Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?* pp. 430–31.

²⁸ Wade, *Extraordinary Black Book*, pp. 27–28.

²⁹ A. Burns, 'English "Church Reform" Revisited', in A. Burns and J. Innes (eds.), *Age of Reform: Britain 1780–1850* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 136–62, p. 150; Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, p. 39; and Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?* pp. 524–25.

³⁰ [DUL] TC, 2: Durell to Thorp, 20 July 1831. The phrase 'golden stall(s)' was used interchangeably to refer either to the 11th stall (the richest) or all the stalls in general. This comment in *The Times* neatly summarises the use of the term: 'All the stalls at Durham may, from their value, be denominated golden; but the golden prebend *par excellence*, is the one held by Lord Barrington [the 11th].' *The Times*, 23 February 1829.

While many of the accusations against the Chapter were exaggerated, they were not without foundation.³¹ Durham was indeed the richest see in the Church of England (save perhaps for Canterbury) and pluralism and non-residence were commonplace.³² The Cathedral's enormous wealth was a by-product of the rapid industrialisation of the north-east. While the management of agricultural land was largely passive (but still lucrative), there was a more proactive approach to urban and industrial possessions as well as the exercise of mineral rights.³³ While the Bishop and Chapter were not insensible to the situation of the poorer clergy and the need for *some* reform, they supported only limited measures and those too slowly.³⁴

As social, industrial and religious reform continued to change the north-east, it became an increasingly radical region, leaving the Chapter as an isolated pocket of conservatism.³⁵ A few notorious incidents emphasised this contrast. Following the Peterloo Massacre in August 1819, for example, Henry Phillpotts (Durham Prebend, Rector

³¹A. Bartlett and D. Goodhew, 'Victorian to Modern, 1832–2000', in D. Brown (ed.), *Durham Cathedral: History, Fabric, and Culture* (London, 2015), pp. 111–27, pp. 112–13; Brose, *Church and Parliament*, p. 9; and W.B. Maynard, 'Pluralism and Non-Residence in the Archdeaconry of Durham, 1774–1856: The Bishop and Chapter as Patrons', *Northern History*, 26(1) (1990), pp. 103–30, at pp. 103–4.

³²R. Lee, 'Class, Industrialization and the Church of England: The Case of the Durham Diocese in the Nineteenth Century', *Past & Present*, 191 (2006), pp. 165–88, at pp. 168–69; Maynard, 'Pluralism and Non-residence in the Archdeaconry of Durham', pp. 105–8; A. Orde, 'Ecclesiastical Estate Management in County Durham During the Eighteenth Century', *Northern History*, XLV(1) (2008), pp. 159–71, at p. 171; and A. Orde, 'From the Restoration to the Founding of the University, 1660–1832', in Brown (ed.), *Durham Cathedral*, pp. 97–109, at p. 106.

³³A.J. Heesom, *The Founding of the University of Durham* (Durham, 1982), p. 11; Maynard, 'Pluralism and Non-residence in the Archdeaconry of Durham', p. 106; Orde, 'Ecclesiastical Estate Management'; and Orde, 'From the Restoration to the Founding of the University', pp. 104–6.

³⁴G.F.A. Best, *Temporal Pillars, Queen Anne's Bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Church of England* (Cambridge, 1964), pp. 274–76; Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, pp. 38–39; Lee, 'Class, Industrialization and the Church of England', p. 168; Maynard, 'Pluralism and Non-residence in the Archdeaconry of Durham', pp. 114, 126; and Orde, 'William Van Mildert, Charles Thorp, and the Diocese of Durham', p. 149.

³⁵Lee, 'Class, Industrialization and the Church of England', p. 169; R. Lee, *The Church of England and the Durham Coalfield, 1810–1926: Clergymen, Capitalists and Colliers* (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 21; and Pask with Brown, 'Post-Reformation Clerical Scholarship', pp. 475–76.

of Stanhope and later Bishop of Exeter) published a vindication of the government for supporting the local magistrates who had used cavalry to quell the demonstration. At best, their actions were reckless, but in any case the military intervention led to the deaths of as many as 15 protestors. Phillpotts' stance ran counter to general public sympathies. In his infamous pamphlet, described by the historian Geoffrey Best as 'eloquent, abusive, and brilliantly partisan', Phillpotts attacked those local radicals and Whigs who sought an enquiry into what they perceived as the government's attempt to whitewash the magistrates' actions. Amongst his targets, Phillpotts especially criticised the well-known MP for County Durham, John Lambton (also known as Radical Jack).³⁶

An even more infamous episode that again involved Phillpotts was the libel action brought by the Durham Chapter against John Williams, the editor of the radical newspaper the *Durham Chronicle*.³⁷ The case concerned Williams' editorial on the Cathedral's decision not to toll a funeral bell on Queen Caroline's death in 1821. While George IV had wanted no public acknowledgement of his estranged wife's passing, the bells of most churches rang out nevertheless. Williams did not spare his vitriol: the Church was 'at war with the spirit of the age', he declared, and continued that the Durham clergy, like 'beetles who crawl amidst its holes and crevices', made 'the very name of our established clergy odious till it stinks in the nostrils'.³⁸ Although Williams was eventually convicted, the trial, where he was defended by the highly influential Whig politician Henry Brougham, became of national interest and was considered a triumph for the radical cause.³⁹

Such high-profile public disputes marked out the Durham Cathedral clergy as arch-conservatives and staunch supporters of the Establishment. These essentially local disagreements, however, took on

³⁶Best, *Temporal Pillars*, pp. 245–46; Burns, 'English "Church Reform" Revisited', p. 147; Heesom, *The Founding of the University of Durham*, pp. 15–17; and E. Pearce, *Reform! The Fight for the 1832 Reform Act* (London, 2003), pp. 11–12.

³⁷Best, *Temporal Pillars*, pp. 246–50; W. Fordyce, *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1857), vol. 1, pp. 340–41; Heesom, *The Founding of the University of Durham*, pp. 18–20; and Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, pp. 110–11.

³⁸*Durham Chronicle*, 18 August 1821, quoted in *Trial of John Ambrose Williams for a Libel on the Clergy Contained in the Durham Chronicle of August 18, 1821*, 2nd edn (Durham, 1823), p. 27.

³⁹*Edinburgh Review*, 37(74) (1822), p. 351; Pearce, *Reform!* pp. 7–9.

a national dimension when in November 1830, following the collapse of Wellington's government, Lambton's father-in-law, Earl Grey, became Prime Minister.⁴⁰ Grey brought Lambton, now Lord Durham, into his Cabinet with Brougham now as Lord Chancellor.⁴¹ With radicals in the ascendancy, the fears of the Durham Chapter seemed entirely legitimate.⁴²

In addition to these political disputes, the north-east was turning away from the Established Church towards Dissenting Protestantism, especially Methodism, to a greater extent than anywhere in the country outside of Cornwall.⁴³ Robert Lee's judgement on this migration was that Nonconformity simply offered a more 'robust, down-to-earth embrace' than Anglicanism's 'party disagreements and internal power struggles'.⁴⁴ Michael Sadgrove, Dean of Durham from 2003 to 2015, likewise noted the 'rift' between the industrialised masses and the Chapter's 'history, traditions and great wealth'.⁴⁵ The Cathedral and Diocese struggled to respond to their new industrial circumstances.⁴⁶ While Van Mildert praised the building of 14 new churches, and the fact that eight more were under construction, this was utterly inadequate to meet the needs of the vast expansion and urbanisation of the population.⁴⁷ The result was that, by the 1850s, Methodism was spoken of as the established religion of the Durham Dale, and Nonconformity dominated; the House of Lords thought the north-east was an area of 'spiritual desolation'.⁴⁸

To make matters even worse, the Cathedral establishment was increasingly isolated from the rest of the region's clergy.⁴⁹ Their social

⁴⁰Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?* pp. 411–20.

⁴¹Orde, 'From the Restoration to the Founding of the University', p. 107.

⁴²Heesom, *The Founding of the University of Durham*, p. 20.

⁴³Lee, *The Church of England and the Durham Coalfield*, p. 18; W.B. Maynard, 'The Ecclesiastical Administration of the Archdeaconry of Durham, 1774–1856' (PhD thesis, Durham University, 1973), pp. 444, 461.

⁴⁴Lee, *The Church of England and the Durham Coalfield*, p. 28.

⁴⁵M. Sadgrove, *Landscapes of Faith: The Christian Heritage of the North East* (London, 2013), p. 190.

⁴⁶Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, pp. 523–26.

⁴⁷Maynard, 'The Ecclesiastical Administration of the Archdeaconry of Durham', p. 450.

⁴⁸Maynard, 'The Ecclesiastical Administration of the Archdeaconry of Durham', pp. 448, 456; Sadgrove, *Landscapes of Faith*, p. 191.

⁴⁹Lee, *The Church of England and the Durham Coalfield*, pp. 24–26.

exclusivity, emphasised by the continued practice of sumptuous dinners that each Prebend was required to host during their period of so-called 'hospitality residence', was insult added to the injury of the disparity in wealth: some parochial livings in the Diocese brought in an average of only £73, compared to the Dean and Chapter's combined revenues of £28,000.⁵⁰ Their status was equally incomparable. Among the 13 members of the Dean and Chapter at the time of the University's foundation, there were four Bishops,⁵¹ one future Archbishop of Canterbury,⁵² and two close relatives of Prime Ministers.⁵³ Posterity has recognised all but three of these Prebends with an entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.⁵⁴

Nevertheless, the Prebends were not without their supporters. One individual, derisively described by Owen Chadwick as a 'hopeful pamphleteer', argued that the Prebends were exemplary 'for learning and eloquence', were 'honourable to themselves and to the Church', and held '*soirees*' that were 'so temperately enjoyed as seldom to rob the coming day of its first hour'.⁵⁵ His view, however hopeful it may have been, was certainly in the minority.

While perhaps the best-known target, attacks on Durham were but part of a broader anti-clerical sentiment. During the winter of 1830–1831, there was increasing clerical unpopularity, mostly linked to demands to reduce tithes, leading to threats and physical intimidation.⁵⁶ During 1831–1832, the Bishops were under attack again, this

⁵⁰J.T. Fowler, 'Residence Dinners in Durham', *Notes and Queries*, 10(3) (1905), pp. 1–2; Maynard, 'Pluralism and Non-residence in the Archdeaconry of Durham', pp. 106–7; and P. Mussett, 'Hospitality Residence at Durham Cathedral', *Transactions of the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland*, NS 6 (1982), pp. 67–70.

⁵¹In June 1831, Jenkinson was Bishop of St David's (1825–40), Sumner was Bishop of Chester (1828–48), Phillpotts was Bishop of Exeter (1830–69) and Gray was Bishop of Bristol (1827–34).

⁵²Sumner (1848–62).

⁵³Jenkinson was the cousin of Robert Banks Jenkinson (Lord Liverpool) and Wellesley was the younger brother of Arthur Wellesley (Duke of Wellington).

⁵⁴Those without entries are Wellesley, Durell and Ogle.

⁵⁵Luchnos, *Durham in the Year 1831* (London, 1834), pp. 9, 12, 15. Luchnos is presumably from the Greek *lúchnos*, meaning a light or lamp, which is used as a description of John the Baptist (John 5:35).

⁵⁶Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence*, p. 11.

time for their opposition to the passage of the Reform Bill. When the Bill failed in the House of Lords, much of the resulting public rage was directed against the Episcopacy. This was because when the Lords had rejected the Bill in October 1831 by 199 votes to 158, there were 21 bishops in the majority (sufficient to swing the vote), with only two voting in favour of reform (the Whigs Bathurst of Norwich and Maltby of Chichester).⁵⁷

The outcry spilled over into violence. Three days after the vote, a mob of 8000 paraded through Carlisle and burnt an effigy of the bishop at the market cross⁵⁸; an effigy of Van Mildert was burnt at the Castle gates and he feared that 'it was intended and still is to watch an opportunity of doing me personal violence'⁵⁹; the Archbishop of Canterbury was jeered at and chased from the streets⁶⁰; and in October, the Bishop's Palace at Bristol was razed to the ground alongside prisons and 45 houses during terrible riots.⁶¹

Amidst this rebellion and convulsion, the Reform Act was eventually passed, though only after Earl Grey resigned as Prime Minister and forced William IV to consent to appointing new Lords should that become necessary to secure a majority for the Act's safe passage. The tactic worked. When the Lords passed the Third Reading of the Bill in June 1832, there were only 22 dissentient votes, including not a single bishop.⁶²

For many conservative Anglicans, there was a millennial feel in the air during the early 1830s.⁶³ This sense of urgency—of *panic*—can be seen clearly in the correspondence flying between members of the Chapter in the summer of 1831 and the apparent haste in which the University

⁵⁷A. Briggs, *Age of Improvement 1783–1867*, 2nd edn (Harlow, 2000), p. 218; Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?* pp. 421–22; and Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 145.

⁵⁸Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, p. 27.

⁵⁹[DUL] TC, 61: Van Mildert to Thorp, 2 November 1831.

⁶⁰Briggs, *Age of Improvement*, p. 219; Pearce, *Reform!* p. 203; and Saunders, 'God and the Great Reform Act', p. 389.

⁶¹Briggs, *Age of Improvement*, p. 219; Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?* p. 421; and Pearce, *Reform!* pp. 204–6.

⁶²Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?* pp. 421–22; Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 147.

⁶³Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, pp. 35–36; Saunders, 'God and the Great Reform Act', pp. 379–80, 384–85, 396.

was established.⁶⁴ It is in this national context, at a decisive moment in the history of both Church and State, during the volcanic heat of the reform debate (in which the young William Gladstone perceived ‘an element of the Anti-Christ’) that the idea of founding the University came forward.⁶⁵

These calls for church reform led inevitably to political interventions. Earl Grey established the first commission of enquiry into church revenues in 1832 in order to discover what needed to be reformed.⁶⁶ However, in 1833, before the commission had reported, the Church Temporalities (Ireland) Bill was introduced to Parliament. This Bill proposed a radical reorganisation of the Established Church in Ireland, leaving the funds thus released to the discretion of Parliament through a new body to be called the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.⁶⁷ It was an abomination to Van Mildert, and he was far from the only churchman shocked by the extensive changes it proposed.⁶⁸ Though the Bill, which gained Royal Assent, was stripped of its most objectionable aspects, it still suppressed ten bishoprics.⁶⁹

When Robert Peel returned as Prime Minister at the end of 1834, after William IV dismissed the Whig Ministry under Lord Melbourne, conservative Anglicans felt a sense of relief.⁷⁰ But reform was not off the agenda; it was simply in more friendly hands. Thus, in January 1835, following discussions with Archbishop Howley and Charles Blomfield, Bishop of London, Peel established the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Their purpose included the investigation of ways in which to use church revenues more productively.⁷¹ But Peel’s ministry did not last and in

⁶⁴It was less than a year between the Chapter resolving to establish the University (28 September 1831) and Royal Assent being given to the Durham University Act (4 July 1832).

⁶⁵Saunders, ‘God and the Great Reform Act’, pp. 378–79.

⁶⁶Best, *Temporal Pillars*, p. 293; Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, pp. 40–41.

⁶⁷Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, pp. 54–60; Saunders, ‘God and the Great Reform Act’, pp. 382–83; and Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, pp. 183–87.

⁶⁸Best, *Temporal Pillars*, p. 293.

⁶⁹Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, p. 60.

⁷⁰Best, *Temporal Pillars*, p. 295.

⁷¹Best, *Temporal Pillars*, pp. 296–98; Brose, *Church and Parliament*, pp. 120–35; Burns, ‘English “Church Reform” Revisited’, p. 148; and Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, pp. 101–6.

April 1835, the Commission passed into the hands of a Whig ministry.⁷² Once again, the conservative clergy feared a forced reorganisation by radicals.

WHO THOUGHT OF DURHAM UNIVERSITY?

The immediate cause of the University's foundation was Greenhow's proposal for the college in Newcastle. If realised, this institution would have embodied ideas and principles that Thorp and Van Mildert implacably opposed. While there is no list of those who attended Greenhow's lecture, as a Trustee of the Literary and Philosophical Society, it is likely that Thorp would have received a copy of the proposal.⁷³ He was certainly aware of it. On the same day as an article was published in the *Newcastle Courant* about Greenhow's proposal, Thorp wrote to Van Mildert:

I would fain bring before you the project of a University to be attached to our College.⁷⁴ A slight extension of the establishment and a few Professorships founded by the body in the Cathedral would effect the object. It would give to the Dean and Chapter strength of character and usefulness, preserve the Revenue to the church and to the north, and prevent the establishment of a very doubtful academic institution which is now taking root in Newcastle. I trust you will not think me a projector beyond what the times require.⁷⁵

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

⁷²Best, *Temporal Pillars*, pp. 299–300.

⁷³Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 149; R.S. Watson, *The History of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne (1793–1896)* (London, 1897), p. 51. However, Van Mildert forwarded Thorp a copy of the pamphlet on 8 December 1831 and commented that 'probably you are already acquainted with' it; almost certainly he was, but that Van Mildert was uncertain is interesting. Cf. [DUL] TC, 68: Van Mildert to Thorp, 8 December 1831.

⁷⁴The College is the name given to the Cathedral Close and by extension the residents thereof, i.e. the Dean and Chapter.

⁷⁵[Bal] JP, IVA.6: Van Mildert to Thorp, 11 June 1831.

Although it seems certain that it was Thorp who moved the University's foundation, this does not mean that the idea was entirely novel. In 1982, Alan Heesom explored the question of who first thought of the idea of Durham University. While he concluded that it was Thorp, he noted a possibility that the idea could have originated earlier.⁷⁶ This refers to a remark made by the poet Robert Southey in the April 1829 edition of the *Quarterly Review*, concerning the intention of an anonymous 'excellent lady' to found 'a northern university', which he implied would be in Durham.⁷⁷

Hugh Norwood suggested that Southey's 'excellent lady' was Anne Colberg.⁷⁸ Colberg had been the housekeeper and companion of the late Bishop of Durham, Shute Barrington, and she had become wealthy through money left to her in his will.⁷⁹ The Prebendary Stephen Gilly had married Anne's niece, Jane, and the three of them lived together in Durham. Norwood's idea is that Gilly was the University's projector, and he intended to use Colberg's money. However, Norwood failed to establish a connection between Southey and Gilly, and hence any connection with Colberg's wealth is conjectural.

Van Mildert's modern biographer, Elizabeth Varley, offered the view that Southey might have been referring to the Church itself rather than an individual.⁸⁰ This suggestion, however, does not take account of Southey's original mention of a northern university, which appeared in the January edition of the *Quarterly Review*. In this earlier aside, Southey clearly referred to people, i.e. a 'Noble Earl' as well as 'a munificent lady in Yorkshire' who had 'recently offered to subscribe 50,000*l* towards the endowment of an university *in that county*'.⁸¹ The Earl is quite possibly William Fitzwilliam, who in 1825 had promised £50,000 'to found a third University in the neighbourhood of York'.⁸²

⁷⁶Heesom, 'Who Thought of the Idea of the University of Durham?', p. 16.

⁷⁷*Quarterly Review*, 39 (1829), p. 389.

⁷⁸H. Norwood, 'Founding Colleges in the 1830s: At Durham and in Piedmont', *Durham County Local History Society Bulletin*, 66 (2003), pp. 43–56.

⁷⁹H. Norwood, 'The Curious Will of Bishop Barrington of Durham', *Northern History*, 39(2) (2002), pp. 284–90.

⁸⁰Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 150.

⁸¹*Quarterly Review*, 39 (1829), p. 127.

⁸²*Morning Chronicle*, 24 January 1825.

Varley's conclusion is that 'precisely who was the first to see the Durham possibility' remains unanswerable, but this analysis unfairly robs Thorp of his status as the prime mover for the University given that the development was started by his letter of 11 June 1831.⁸³

WHY DURHAM UNIVERSITY?

That the new institution should be a university was something Thorp advocated from his first letter, though Van Mildert did not initially support the idea: 'so high-sounding a title as that of an University had doubtless better be avoided', he confided to Gaisford on 9 August 1831.⁸⁴ However, the Archbishop, William Howley, had been positive from the start about the 'noble and beneficent project'.⁸⁵ Even so, Van Mildert's concern had not waned come the new year, and on 5 January 1832, he warned Thorp that 'styling ourselves an University' would be 'of great difficulty, &, I fear, full of dangers & perplexities', most likely because of the experience of London University and the danger of the claims of both institutions competing.⁸⁶ There was no suggestion at this stage that there might be opposition from Oxford or Cambridge. Yet, Van Mildert changed his view after a conversation with Howley, who had clearly been exceptionally persuasive:

Respecting our being constituted a University, with the power of conferring Degrees and Faculties, I am inclined to think with the Archbishop, not only that nothing short of this will answer the existing expectation of the public, and of the Northern Counties especially, but that some of our main object may fail without them.⁸⁷

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

In addition, only a university would bring fulfilment to the long-held desire for a northern counterpart to Oxford and Cambridge. The want of 'some Academical Institution for the completion of professional

⁸³Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, pp. 150–51.

⁸⁴[ChCh] TGL, 62: Wellington to Gaisford, 3 June 1829.

⁸⁵[DUL] TC, 21: Howley to Van Mildert, 16 August 1831.

⁸⁶[DCL] VML, 211–13: Van Mildert to Thorp, 5 January 1832.

⁸⁷[DUL] TC, 77: Van Mildert to Thorp, 14 January 1832.

Education ... has, more or less, been a subject of complaint, from Cromwell's time to the present', Van Mildert reminded Gaisford:

It is even now murmured, (as Durell informs me) in Northumberland, as a matter expected from the College of Durham. [Lord] Grey is well known to have viewed this long ago as a thing that ought to take place. The notion is evidently afloat that some sort of College or University must be set on foot in the North of England, & I have little doubt that the present year will not pass away without the attempt being made in some other Northern County, if not anticipated here, & probably under auspices & patronage of a powerful kind, & most adverse to those views & principles which we entertain.⁸⁸

And yet other institutions could have been useful too; so why a university and not, say, a grand college? Examples later in the century, including Owens College in Manchester, showed the impact that a college could have in meeting the modern, commercial and industrial interests of its home region.⁸⁹ In early August 1831, Gaisford wrote to Thorp and urged him to take a less adventurous route and create 'a superior school, and place whence the poorer candidates for orders might acquire instruction'.⁹⁰ Gaisford had the Athenaeum Illustre in Amsterdam in mind. He assured Van Mildert that it was 'abundantly furnished with pupils, and has had some of the most eminent men which Holland has produced as professors ever since the time of its foundation – and yet it has not the power of conferring any degrees'.⁹¹ It would eventually become the University of Amsterdam in 1877.⁹²

Nevertheless, this model would not satisfy Thorp or Van Mildert. After so long, a body as wealthy and powerful as the Chapter of Durham could not have established a grand school or something like the new colleges at St David's in Wales or St Bees in Cumbria. This was not because Van Mildert disapproved of such institutions; in fact, he gave £500 to St David's and founded an open scholarship there of £16

⁸⁸[ChCh] TGL, 70: Van Mildert to Gaisford, 16 August 1831.

⁸⁹Anderson, *Universities and Elites*, pp. 5–6.

⁹⁰[DUL] TC, 10: Gaisford to Thorp, 4 August 1831.

⁹¹[Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Gaisford to Van Mildert, 26 December 1831.

⁹²D.K.W. Van Miert, *Humanism in an Age of Science: The Amsterdam Athenaeum in the Golden Age, 1632–1704* (Leiden, 2009), p. 3.

a year which he had named after himself.⁹³ St Bees, too, had its right and proper place serving the Church. When, for example, Van Mildert tightened up clerical entry standards in the mid-1820s, he announced that he would only accept as ordinands (with as few exceptions as possible) men from Oxford, Cambridge or St Bees, where examinations were rigorous.⁹⁴

However, rather than seeing the University as the fulfilment of centuries of waiting, or as part of the broader development of higher education in the period, historians have tended to emphasise its foundation as a means of preserving the Church's wealth in the face of imminent and radical reform.⁹⁵ True enough, both Van Mildert and Thorp understood that their view of the Established Church was under attack and that such times required a swift, decisive and bold response. Yet, simply protecting income was insufficient motivation for so grand a scheme as a university. Both men absolutely intended their new institution to be of genuine value to the north and the Church. Not all the Prebends were of this view. David Durell, who held the 8th Stall, had written to the Bishop accepting that the University would require 'sacrifices', but that he regarded 'these as a premium to be paid to insure the remainder'.⁹⁶ Although Van Mildert was pleased that Durell showed 'the best disposition to effect the object', he was disappointed that it was 'rather as a peace-offering to the public than for its own sake'. 'I incline to view it in both lights', the Bishop assured Thorp.⁹⁷

A NORTHERN UNIVERSITY

The legitimate use of the Cathedral's endowment was a central issue in the University's foundation, which was not an issue for either the London University or King's College as neither institution relied on an

⁹³ *British Magazine*, 6 (1834), p. 445; D.T.W Price, *A History of Saint David's University College Lampeter, Volume One: to 1898* (Cardiff, 1977), p. 60.

⁹⁴ [DCL] VML, 1–2: Van Mildert to Thorp, 5 May 1826; Lee, 'Class, Industrialization and the Church of England', pp. 67–68; and Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 119.

⁹⁵ Sanderson, *The Universities in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 32; Vernon, *Universities and the State in England*, p. 101; and Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 33.

⁹⁶ [DUL] TC, 2: Durell to Thorp, 20 July 1831.

⁹⁷ [DUL] TC, 5: Van Mildert to Thorp, 27 July 1831.

existing endowment. To Thorp and Van Mildert, endowments were local funds, linked as much to their geographical as to their political or religious origins.⁹⁸ So the potential redistribution of Church funds concerned them, in part because it might mean that the Chapter's endowment would be diverted 'to purposes foreign to our northern interests'. To be of practical value to the north meant that the new institution would need to cater for the professional, commercial and industrial needs of a rapidly industrialising and expanding population. It was by doing so that Thorp hoped to make the Chapter 'useful to our generation'.⁹⁹

The practical outcome of this vision meant the development of professional disciplines such as medicine and engineering. Thorp felt that Greenhow's proposed institution was 'very doubtful', for example, not because of the subjects that would be taught there (apart from a concern about the exclusion of theology), but because its instruction would be outside the effective influence of the Church. To Thorp and Van Mildert, a university was a moral and ecclesiastical community as much as an academic one.

In response to the concerns about the expense of an education at the older English universities, Thorp was determined that an education at Durham would be less financially demanding than at Oxford or Cambridge. With its greater economy and more practical studies, the University was intended for a new audience. 'I do not expect or wish that our nobility or richer clergy should be content with a Durham education', thought Thorp, 'but I look to a large field of usefulness among the rising families of our towns, mines and manufactures – at that class of young men who fly to Edinburgh, to Geneva, to France, to the instruction of the county town, & who might be advantageously educated there'.¹⁰⁰ This was very similar to the middling rich who Thomas Campbell had described as the intended audience for London University: all those 'between mechanics and the enormously rich'.¹⁰¹ In this respect, London and Durham were not so far apart.

Speed was now an essential part of Thorp's proposal, as the number of university schemes seemed to be increasing month by month.

⁹⁸Best, *Temporal Pillars*, p. 340; Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, pp. 139–40; and Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, pp. 187–88.

⁹⁹[DUL] TC, 19: Thorp to Gaisford, 16 August 1831.

¹⁰⁰[DUL] TC, 17: Thorp to Gaisford, 11 August 1831.

¹⁰¹*The Times*, 9 February 1825: Proposal of a Metropolitan University; T. Bender, *The University and the City: From Medieval Origins to the Present* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 121–22.

It was generally felt that once a new university had been established, there could not be another. Newcastle was not the only competitor close to home. The Archbishop of York, Edward Harcourt, was known to be interested in a similar scheme for York. This concerned Van Mildert sufficiently for him to warn Thorp ‘that there shd. be no similar project started as from Bishopthorpe, likely to compete with us for public favour’.¹⁰² He reiterated his concerns in a letter to Gaisford a few days later:

A plan for a thing like the London University is now actually proposed at Newcastle, & something similar is likely to be brought forward next month at York. The minds of the northern people have long been bent upon this: & when King’s College, London, was first set on foot, the [Archbishop] of York intimated to me that we must contemplate a similar design for his Province ... I fear too, that our Northern Liberals reckon much upon the countenance of the present [government] (of Earl Grey & [Lord] Brougham especially) in patronizing their plans at Newcastle & elsewhere, to the neglect & detriment of the Church.¹⁰³

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

I think it right to say that a school, however desirable, will neither answer the conservative purpose we have in view, nor satisfy the just claims of the north upon our large revenues. Neither do I think that a Northern Collegiate or Academical establishment can be long delayed seeing the great want there is of such an institution, and the ardent desire which manifests itself in several places, York, [Newcastle], & as we hear Liverpool, to obtain it.¹⁰⁴

To Thorp and Van Mildert, the choice was clear: either they would be first with their own institution or someone else would found an establishment of dubious merit, probably outside of the control of the Established Church. ‘We may have such an institution upon good or

¹⁰²[DUL] TC, 12: Van Mildert to Thorp, 6 August 1831. Bishopthorpe Palace was the residence of the Archbishop of York.

¹⁰³[ChCh] TGL, 70: Van Mildert to Gaisford, 9 August 1831.

¹⁰⁴[DUL] TC, 19: Thorp to Gaisford, 16 August 1831.

bad principles', wrote Thorp, 'in our hands or those of our adversaries. The choice is with us to mould it as we please, - or leave the work to other men.'¹⁰⁵

AN ANGLICAN UNIVERSITY

In the same way as the source of the University's funds meant that in Thorp's mind it would be compelled to address the needs of the north, it also meant that it had to be an Anglican university. The staunch Anglicanism of the University made the admission of Dissenters one of the fundamental issues during its foundation.¹⁰⁶ It was, in Van Mildert's phrase, 'the grand question'.¹⁰⁷ Practice at the old universities was well established. Oxford had effectively barred Roman Catholics from entering the University in 1581 and Dissenters in 1661, while Cambridge was slightly more permissive in allowing such students to matriculate but not graduate.¹⁰⁸ At King's College, London, while regular students had to make no profession of faith, they were still required 'to attend the prescribed course of religious instruction, and to be present at divine service performed within the walls of the College'.¹⁰⁹ Only regular students, as members of the College, could obtain certificates, though occasional students were otherwise allowed to attend courses. In Ireland, Trinity College, Dublin, had permitted the entry and graduation of Catholic students since 1794. Nevertheless, it remained an intensely Anglican institution, and imposed religious tests for scholarships and teaching posts until 1873.¹¹⁰

Van Mildert conceded access to the University on the Cambridge pattern and made it clear that there was no possibility of discussion on

¹⁰⁵[DUL] TC, 19: Thorp to Gaisford, 16 August 1831.

¹⁰⁶Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 163.

¹⁰⁷[DUL] TC, 84: Van Mildert to Thorp, 6 June 1832.

¹⁰⁸C. Harvie, *The Lights of Liberalism: University Liberals and the Challenge of Democracy 1860-86* (London, 1976), pp. 257-58; Sanderson, *Universities in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 41-42; Simon, *The Two Nations*, p. 85; L. Stone, 'The Size and Composition of the Oxford Student Body 1580-1909', in L. Stone (ed.), *The University in Society* (2 vols., London, 1974), vol. 1, pp. 3-110, at p. 7; Whyte, *Redbrick*, pp. 4-5; and D.A. Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 83-96.

¹⁰⁹Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, p. 51.

¹¹⁰Anderson, *British Universities Past and Present*, pp. 95-98; T.W. Moody, 'The Irish University Question of the Nineteenth Century', *History*, 43(148) (1958), pp. 90-109, at p. 93.

the issue. ‘This conformity to the Church of England’, he laid down, ‘appeared no more than what ought to be expected, in an institution founded and supported by such a body as the Dean and Chapter’. There could be no compromise; he ‘would rather withdraw from the concern, and decline being constituted visitor of the institution’ than concede to granting degrees to anyone other than Anglicans.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, groups of Dissenters continued to lobby for full and unfettered access to all the University’s privileges.¹¹²

Van Mildert wanted to ensure that the Chapter’s endowments were only used for the purposes of the Established Church, but there was an even more fundamental issue. The new University had to be Anglican because Thorp and Van Mildert considered an English Bachelor of Arts degree to be as much an ecclesiastical as an academic award. Van Mildert told Thorp that ‘the self-styled London University’ should ‘be opposed on that strong ground of its expressly disclaiming religious instruction in Church of England principles, which I should contend ought to be considered as an absolute disqualification for such privileges [as being styled a university and granting degrees] as actually carry with them certain ecclesiastical as well as academical rights’.¹¹³ Just as in Van Mildert’s conception the State was fundamentally entwined with and reflected the Established Church, so too were the English universities. In Van Mildert’s view, an English University and English degrees were fundamentally Anglican concepts; it was simply a category error to propose a non-Anglican university in England. Oxford and Cambridge were the peculiar preserve of the Church of England and so academic degrees in England had become the peculiar preserve of the Church of England too.¹¹⁴ As Bellot observed in his history of University College, London, when London University attempted to obtain degree-awarding powers, it became a matter of serious concern that ‘a Christian state should authorise an avowedly irreligious body to distribute titles hitherto recognised as badges of a Christian Education’.¹¹⁵ In 1834, Sir Charles Wetherell, the legal representative of the University of Oxford in their

¹¹¹ *Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates*, HL Deb, 22 May 1832, vol. 12, c. 1215.

¹¹² Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 39–42.

¹¹³ [DUL] TC, 77: Van Mildert to Thorp, 14 January 1832.

¹¹⁴ F.W.B. Bullock, *A History of the Training for the Ministry of the Church of England in England and Wales from 1800 to 1874* (St Leonards-on-Sea, 1955), p. 27.

¹¹⁵ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 240.

petition against the proposal to grant a Charter to London University, argued that the Crown simply could not grant a Charter to a body in England to make it a university and to grant degrees without it also being required to come under the direct authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury as Visitor.¹¹⁶

Van Mildert and Thorp were acutely aware of the need to connect the Chapter and the new University ‘as to make one inseparable from the other’ if they were to be successful in using the creation of the latter to preserve the existence of the former.¹¹⁷ Van Mildert, however, went even further; for him, the creation of the new institution was not simply a means of defending the foundation at Durham, it was a means of defending the entire Established Church:

There can be no doubt that the Chapter of Durham [would] be the very first object of attack; & as upon the issue of that attack [would] probably depend the existence of all other similar bodies, it does certainly become a matter of general as well as individual interest, to consider how the evil may be warded off.¹¹⁸

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

THE DURHAM COLLEGIATE MODEL

Durham was the only new English university of the nineteenth century to establish a residential college system, although residential halls were created elsewhere, including, for example, from the 1840s at St Bartholomew’s and the other London teaching hospitals.¹¹⁹ Even though London University was non-residential, this did not mean that it was immune from halls either, as others stepped into fill the vacuum.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶C. Wetherell, *Substance of the Speech of Sir Charles Wetherell Before the Lords of the Privy Council, on the Subject of Incorporating the London University* (London, 1834).

¹¹⁷[ChCh] TGL, 70: Van Mildert to Gaisford, 2 September 1831.

¹¹⁸[ChCh] TGL, 70: Van Mildert to Gaisford, 16 August 1831.

¹¹⁹K. Waddington, *Medical Education at St Bartholomew’s Hospital, 1123–1995* (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 78–83.

¹²⁰Whyte, *Redbrick*, pp. 40–41.

The Unitarians, for example, opened University Hall in 1849 to provide ‘the accommodation and social advantages of college residence’.¹²¹ Towards the end of the nineteenth century at Manchester, quasi-collegiate halls were established too.¹²²

However, the University was not simply imitating Oxford by opening a college; it was supporting one side of a contemporary debate, that is, whether students should live with their own families or under the controlling influence of corporate and collegiate life. James Yates, for example, proclaimed ‘an English parlour as a fitter place to acquire kind feelings and virtuous manners than a Gothic refectory, and a family as a better residence for every student, who can afford it than, a college’.¹²³ Establishing a collegiate structure was in part an ideological choice: it was about the enculturation of students into the habits of academic life and specifically the virtues of Anglican gentlemen. Nevertheless, a simple practical reason for the establishment of a residential college was that without such a facility, the University would be unable to attract students from beyond the City of Durham as the City simply presented too small a recruitment base. This was not such a concern in London or later in Manchester. Not only that, but descriptions of Durham City in the early 1800s presented it as decidedly poor, remote and wretched. Constrained by its medieval street pattern, the city’s narrow alleys developed a reputation for disease and vermin.¹²⁴ Thus, a college was in part a necessary, practical expedient, in the much the same way as halls of residence in the mid-twentieth century allowed universities to be established in places that were likewise too remote or too small to sustain a university population without attracting students from other places.¹²⁵

University College was therefore established at the opening of the University and housed in Durham Castle, the Bishop’s ancient fortress

¹²¹R. Ashton, *Victorian Bloomsbury* (London, 2012), pp. 183–214.

¹²²H.S. Jones, ‘Student Life and Sociability, 1860–1930: Comparative Reflections’, *History of Universities*, XIV (1998), pp. 225–46, pp. 240–41; Whyte, *Redbrick*, pp. 256–57.

¹²³Yates, *Thoughts on the Advancement*, p. 177.

¹²⁴D. Pocock, *The Story of Durham* (Stroud, 2013), p. 95; M. Roberts, *Durham: 1000 Years of History* (Stroud, 2003), p. 114.

¹²⁵W. Whyte, ‘Halls of Residence at British Civic Universities, 1870–1970’, in J. Hamlett, L. Hopkins, and R. Preston (eds.), *Residential Institutions in Britain, 1725–1950: Inmates and Environments* (London, 2013), pp. 155–66, at p. 158.

and palace, from July 1837.¹²⁶ Chevallier called the Castle ‘a grand old place with a baronial Hall nearly as large as that of Trinity’, but added prophetically that without ‘some money to keep it’, it would ‘be like a present of an elephant to a day labourer’.¹²⁷ The building did provide the University with as impressive a setting as any university in the country, but Chevallier’s fears that the Castle would be a financial drain were well founded.

Some local residents were decidedly nervous about the influx of students and their potentially rowdy and amorous behaviour.¹²⁸ Whiting quotes the recollections of Miss Elizabeth Hayes, ‘an old Durham resident’:

I remember well, when the university was talked of as a thing likely to be, how a Mrs Fox, grandmother of the Reverend Henry Fox, bemoaned it, and said what an anxiety it would prove to all mothers with daughters.¹²⁹

As Mrs. Fox feared, the daughters of the town did provide a major attraction for the young gentlemen of the University. According to the Junior Tutor, William Palmer, the feeling was mutual:

The people are quite wild, the ladies especially about the gown. There being few young men in Durham, they declare that they will begin to dance at one in the day if necessary; but Academical beaux they will have! On the other hand the students are no less enchanted.¹³⁰

Concern about student rowdiness was not unique to Durham. In London, when it was proposed that King’s College would be erected in Regent’s Park, one correspondent to *The Times* complained that students were generally ‘inconsiderate, rude and mischievous’. If the building was to go ahead, the correspondent pronounced, its presence would be ‘far

¹²⁶[DUL] TC, 216b: Thorp to Lord Melbourne, 5 March 1836; *Order in Council for Appropriating Durham Castle to the Use of the University of Durham* (London, 1837); R. Brickstock, *Durham Castle: Fortress, Palace, College* (Durham, 2007), p. 1; and Roberts, *Durham*, p. 31.

¹²⁷[DUL] CC, 12: Chevallier to Corrie, 11 March 1836.

¹²⁸Rothblatt, *The Modern University*, pp. 143–48.

¹²⁹Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 32.

¹³⁰R.S. Wheeler, *Palmer’s Pilgrimage: The Life of William Palmer of Magdalen* (Oxford, 2006), p. 41.

more turbulent, and vastly more mischievous, than the bears, the kangaroos, the wolves, and the tiger-cat in the adjacent menagerie'.¹³¹

Heavy drinking, socialising and bringing back strangers to their rooms were common student pastimes, but sporting activities and outdoor pursuits were not neglected either. Hunting was initially one of the favourite activities and a pack of beagles was kept in University College until 1874.¹³² Rowing flourished from the start and University students were crucial in the firm establishment of the Durham Regatta.¹³³ Cricket, archery, boxing and wrestling were popular too.¹³⁴ The Choral Society offered a more refined pastime and the singers occasionally ventured beyond the bubble of the Durham peninsular; in March 1854, for example, they travelled some 20 miles to provide the music at the installation of the new organ in Billingham.¹³⁵ There was even an Architectural Society for a while, and John Luke Clennell was one of a group of students to start a quarterly journal in the mid-1840s.¹³⁶

In Michaelmas Term 1846, University College was joined by a second residential body: Bishop Hatfield's Hall. The first Principal and instigator of the Hall, David Melville, later wrote that it had been at best 'but a permitted experiment, which had to prove by its success the wisdom of its design'.¹³⁷ Melville designed Hatfield to be much more economic than a traditional college. This was a direct response to the perceived failings of University College, which had only been partially successful in its attempt to limit student expense. Indeed, Melville wrote that it was his experience as a resident tutor in University College which spurred him to make his proposal. Writing in 1866, he recorded that his idea came about through a disagreement over buying bread:

¹³¹ *The Times*, 24 December 1828.

¹³² J. Henderson, 'The University College Beagles 1859–63', *Durham University Journal*, 22(6) (1920), pp. 201–4, at p. 203.

¹³³ A.A. Macfarlane-Grieve, *A History of Durham Rowing* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1922), pp. 13–17.

¹³⁴ Wheeler, *William Palmer*, p. 41.

¹³⁵ Fordyce, *County Palatine of Durham*, vol. 2, p. 309.

¹³⁶ Fowler, *Durham University*, p. 151; W.B. Scott, *Autobiographical Notes of the Life of William Bell Scott* (London, 1892), p. 198.

¹³⁷ D. Melville, *A Practical Question About Oxford Considered in a Letter to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone* (London, 1850), p. 22.

I remember the butler complaining one day that some men got into college their own bread, and did not draw college rations. On inquiry I found this was done by them, being poor men, to save their pockets; and it struck me that to talk of the social advantages of a college life after the Oxford type for these men, was a delusion, whilst for a young University to sacrifice to this both their economy and their comfort, was a wrong.¹³⁸

There is also an even more personal explanation for Melville's motivation, as he had graduated from Brasenose in severe financial difficulties following his father's bankruptcy.¹³⁹

The key elements of Melville's plan were that the Hall would let all rooms furnished, that all meals would be taken in common, and that the cost of board and lodging would be kept as low as possible.¹⁴⁰ The Hall was an instant success. Melville's reports to Senate showed that the Hall returned a surplus in its first term of £62.13.10¼, which increased to £73.5.10½.¹⁴¹ Although still less than a year old and on top of the £1216.12.7½ already spent on fitting out the original buildings, by March 1847 the Senate agreed to ask for designs for a new building for the Hall.¹⁴² Melville later asserted that Thorp had opposed the plans for this building, stating that when he 'moved for additional accommodation', Thorp replied that 'had he foreseen the proportions to which we were growing, we never should have existed at all'.¹⁴³

News of Hatfield's success spread beyond Durham. When in 1848 Charles Marriott, Fellow of Oriel and a former Principal of Chichester Theological College, advocated a new hall for Oxford which would cost a student between £65 and £80 a year, when £200 was quite common, he had Hatfield in mind.¹⁴⁴ While nothing came of the suggestion at that

¹³⁸ *Special Report from the Select Committee on the Oxford and Cambridge Universities Education Bill* (London, 1867), Appendix 2(B): Melville to Shirley, 15 January 1866.

¹³⁹ J. Dimpleby, *A Profound Secret* (London, 2004), p. 30; A. Moyes, *Class of '46: The Story of the Original Students of Hatfield Hall* (Durham, 2004), p. 54.

¹⁴⁰ A. Moyes, *Hatfield 1846–1996* (Houghton-le-Spring, 1996), p. 4.

¹⁴¹ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 31 December 1846, 23 March 1847.

¹⁴² [DUL] Senate Minutes: 23 March 1847; Moyes, *Hatfield*, pp. 9–11; and M. Roberts, *The Buildings and Landscapes of Durham University* (Durham, 2013), p. 58.

¹⁴³ *Special Report of from the Select Committee on the Oxford and Cambridge Universities Education Bill* (London, 1867), p. 280.

¹⁴⁴ W.R. Ward, *Victorian Oxford* (London, 1965), p. 140.

point, Hatfield's example was later used to inform the arrangements for Keble College.¹⁴⁵

A third Hall was briefly attempted: named after the first post-Restoration Bishop of Durham, Cosin's Hall operated between 1851 and 1864. This new Hall, however, struggled to recruit sufficient students to be viable and in 1856, the Senate agreed to move the Hall to Archdeacon's Inn and to let the houses which had previously been occupied by the Hall.¹⁴⁶ The arrangements for its management were further changed in 1858, so that Cosin's Hall was made something of an affiliated Hall of University College. A former student of the Hall, Scudamore Powell, recalled there being only six or seven students in residence in 1861.¹⁴⁷ As the number of students dwindled and the loss made by the Hall escalated, there seemed little hope for the future and it was closed in 1863.¹⁴⁸

CONCLUSION

The early decades of the nineteenth century witnessed what has long been regarded as a pivotal moment in the development of higher education. Within England, the narrative of the period has been set around two ways, as represented by Oxford and Cambridge on the one hand and London University on the other. The former were traditional bastions of the Anglican Establishment and were criticised for being exclusive, elite, expensive and offering only an ineffectual education for most practical purposes. The latter was acclaimed by its supporters as the English university radically reinterpreted for a different class of people seeking a more practical form of higher education. But to discern only two forms of higher education developing within the universities of the early nineteenth century is to deny the complexity of what was happening at Durham, which neither simply adopted the traditional forms of its elder sister institutions nor embraced all the radical developments of

¹⁴⁵G. Rowell, "Training in Simple and Religious Habits": Keble and Its First Warden', in M.G. Brock and M.C. Curthoys (eds.), *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume 7, The Nineteenth Century, Part 2* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 171–92, at pp. 172–73.

¹⁴⁶[DUL] Senate Minutes: 29 April 1856.

¹⁴⁷S. Powell, 'Reminiscences of Cosin's Hall', *Durham University Journal*, 22(1) (1918), pp. 8–9.

¹⁴⁸[DUL] Senate Minutes: 9 June 1863.

London University. Instead, Durham picked elements of both: its academic courses included a traditional English Bachelor of Arts, but also a vocational course in theology and practical training in civil engineering that were taught by an active professoriate based on the Scottish model, for example, while its residential structure was the collegiate model of Oxford and Cambridge. Durham was a third way.

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CHAPTER 4

Establishing the New Universities

Two principles are laid down. The first is, that the ‘granting degrees flows from the Crown;’ and the second is, that if ‘a University be erected, the power of granting degrees is incidental to the grant.’ ... It is the concession of this power [to grant degrees] that constitutes the direct purpose and the essential character of a University.¹

Sir Charles Wetherell, April 1834

INTRODUCTION

How could a university be founded? How did an institution gain the right to grant degrees? Did something called a university have the automatic right to confer degrees? Who needed to sanction the use of university title? In the 1820s and 1830s, there were no clear answers to these questions.² The foundation of London University had fuelled a debate about the concept of a university which spread across the pages of journals, newspapers and books. It went beyond questions of sovereignty (who had the right to establish a university), to questions of admission (who should have the right to attend a university), questions of academic awards (who should be entitled to earn a degree) and questions of curriculum (which subjects should be taught in a university for an institution to hold that title).

¹Wetherell, *Substance of the Speech*, pp. 79–80.

²Rothblatt, *The Modern University*, pp. 249–50.

Rather than a series of discrete initiatives, the university foundations of the 1820s and 1830s were tangled together in a complex web of interest and competition. The claims of one influenced the approach of another, to an extent which has not hitherto been fully examined. The success of each competing institution was also influenced by the parties and individuals which were in the political ascendancy at any given time: what, politically speaking, was an opportune moment for one institution to press its case could be a disadvantageous moment for another.

UNIVERSITY TITLE

Throughout Europe, the foundation of universities had been a papal prerogative and some institutions, including St Andrews Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities, had explicitly sought papal authority to legitimise their activities.³ In 1824, the Cambridge classical scholar George Dyer recorded that ‘the Pope, who could do so many other things, certainly talked in his Bulls of giving the power of erecting Universities’.⁴ In England, after the Reformation, this privilege became a royal prerogative instead of a papal one. Dyer, however, did not attempt to veil his anti-Catholic bias: ‘it must be more agreeable to an English University’, he wrote, ‘to receive privileges through the medium of its own civil government than of a foreign ecclesiastical despotism’.⁵ Yet the granting of such privileges was an incredibly rare event in England.⁶

There were examples of the contested use of the title ‘university’ to describe an institution of higher education. In September 1828, the trustees of Anderson’s Institution, founded in 1796 through the will of John Anderson, Professor of Natural Philosophy at the University of

³Armytage, *Civic Universities*, pp. 53–54; G.D. Henderson, *The Founding of Marischal College Aberdeen* (Aberdeen, 1947), pp. 25–29; R. Lowe and Y. Yasuhara, *The Origins of Higher Learning* (Abingdon, 2017), pp. 158, 166–67; and H. Malden, *On the Origin of Universities and Academical Degrees* (London, 1835), p. 147.

⁴G. Dyer, *The Privileges of the University of Cambridge; Together with Additional Observations on Its History, Antiquities, Literature and Biography* (2 vols, London, 1824), vol. 1, p. 387.

⁵Dyer, *The Privileges of the University of Cambridge*, p. 395.

⁶Malden, *Origin of Universities*, p. 1. However, the creation of a new university was apparently not so novel that Malden felt any need to mention Durham’s foundation in his book.

Glasgow, agreed to adopt the name of Anderson's University from the point at which they occupied new buildings they were at that point constructing on George Street in Glasgow.⁷ The trustees did not, however, possess any legal right to the title and did not attempt to grant degrees. Despite this lack of formal entitlement, the title was only dropped some 50 years later in 1877, when it was changed to Anderson's College, Glasgow. This followed an attempt by the trustees to obtain a more official status for their institution through, at first, a campaign for a Royal Charter and then subsequently, when that campaign failed, a private Bill of Incorporation. The Senatus of Glasgow University objected to this Bill, citing concerns about the creation of a rival university in the city and a second institution able to grant degrees. Dropping the use of university title was part of the compromise between the trustees and members of the Senatus.⁸ This institution (following numerous mergers) eventually did gain formal university status when it became the University of Strathclyde in 1964.⁹

Nevertheless, although examples of the unauthorised (and strongly disputed) use of the university title existed, there was recognition that formal use of the title should be sanctioned in some way by the state.¹⁰ The call James Yates made in 1826, for example, was for 'a national University to be instituted under the patronage of the Government with a Royal Charter and with the usual privilege of conferring Degrees'.¹¹

LONDON UNIVERSITY (UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON)

London University, the institution that was to become University College, London, was founded on 11 February 1826 by the signing of a Deed of Settlement.¹² This represented rapid progress since Campbell's open letter to Henry Brougham in *The Times* had been published nearly exactly one year earlier. During that time, Brougham had

⁷J. Butt, *John Anderson's Legacy: The University of Strathclyde and Its Antecedents 1796–1996* (East Linton, 1996), p. 41.

⁸Butt, *Anderson's Legacy*, pp. 74–79.

⁹Butt, *Anderson's Legacy*, p. 167.

¹⁰J.W. Adamson, *English Education 1789–1902* (Cambridge, 1964), pp. 90–91.

¹¹Yates, *Thoughts on the Advancement*, p. vi.

¹²*The Deed of Settlement of the University of London* (London, 1826).

taken up Campbell's call to establish a university in London, there had been a series of numerous private and public meetings of a Provisional Committee, the potentially competing plan for a Dissenters' University had been aligned with Campbell's proposal, and land for a new building had been purchased with Wilkins appointed architect¹³—and all this despite considerable opposition from Tories and other bastions of the Establishment.¹⁴

The opposition from Robert Southey, one of London University's many detractors, was typical. He remarked that 'there was a curious and threefold impropriety in assuming the title of University for a *single* college, which the *crown* had not created, and from which the science of *divinity* was specially excluded!' 'Mr. O'Connell', he continued, had 'just as much right to institute an Order of Knighthood, as this Council to erect a University'.¹⁵

Southey's argument for a 'threefold impropriety' was not beyond objection. As Henry Malden, an early professor at London University, noted, for 'many persons who have taken their notion of the word merely from the English universities, it is commonly supposed that a university necessarily means a collection and union of colleges'.¹⁶ Such an argument is clearly shown up to be wrong, argued Malden, by citing not only the continental universities but also those in Scotland.

While the notion that a university needed to have within it several colleges was clearly the product of a myopic Anglocentric worldview, the accusation that the University had not obtained appropriate official recognition carried more weight. This was because, despite the general view that a university needed some form of sanction from the state, London University was established as a joint stock company and without a charter. This helpfully meant that it was outside direct state intervention, but unhelpfully raised queries about its official status.¹⁷

¹³Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 20–32; Harte, *The University of London*, pp. 61–63.

¹⁴W. Whyte, *Redbrick: A Social and Architectural History of Britain's Civic Universities* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 35–41.

¹⁵*Quarterly Review*, 39 (1829), p. 128. The reference is to Daniel O'Connell, the Irish MP who lobbied vigorously for Catholic emancipation.

¹⁶Malden, *Origin of Universities*, p. 11.

¹⁷Harte, *The University of London*, p. 22; Rothblatt, *The Modern University*, p. 250; and Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 41.

There had even been some doubt amongst London University's promoters about whether the institution should adopt the university title. In April 1825, Campbell noted that it had been suggested the institution should be called a 'School' because there was no intention 'to ask for a power of conferring degrees'. At that point, Campbell had no intention of abandoning the title. A university was, he argued, 'not a place for getting degrees, but for getting instruction as universally as possible'.¹⁸ In July, however, he announced it would go by the title 'College' in order to ensure the favour of some unnamed individuals it was 'thought expedient to conciliate'.¹⁹ Nevertheless, despite Campbell's comments, the name changed back to University and that was the title formally adopted by the Provisional Committee steering the institution into existence.²⁰ In May 1825, Brougham moved a Bill for incorporation of a college, but he was powerfully opposed by Robert Peel and the endeavour withered.²¹

As a joint stock company, shares for the new institution went on sale in 1825, causing the nascent University's critics much amusement. The political cartoonist George Cruikshank portrayed Brougham hawking shares around Lincoln's Inn: 'Who'll buy? very cheap, very fine', he called out.²² The lack of respectability this caused lingered on for many years. In 1834, for example, a group of 100 leading physicians, including all the medical staff at King's College, London, petitioned against the grant of a charter to University College. Their first complaint was that 'the London University resembles in no respect the ancient universities of England':

that it is a joint-stock association, founded and supported by money subscribed in shares, which may be bought and sold in the market like those of canals, gas-works, and other speculative undertakings; and consequently,

¹⁸T. Campbell, *Reprint of Mr. Campbell's Letter to Mr. Brougham on the Subject of a London University* (London, 1825), p. 9.

¹⁹*The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*. 1825. Part II. *Original Papers* (London, 1825), p. 1.

²⁰Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 48–49.

²¹Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 48–49, 216–18; Hearnshaw, *The Centenary History of King's College London*, p. 67.

²²The cartoon is reproduced in N. Harte and J. North, *The World of UCL 1828–2004* (London, 2004), p. 33.

that it is impossible to foresee into whose hands the important privilege now sought for might at any time pass, in right of purchase.²³

The reference to canals and gas-works might have been a gibe, but the fear that degree-awarding powers and university title could be sold to the highest bidder was more damaging.

Despite the sneering of the critics, the initial response was promising and by the end of August 1825, 1500 shares had been taken up at £100 per share with a promised dividend of up to 4%.²⁴ Securing the money from subscribers for the shares they had agreed to take up, however, proved harder and reminders for payment were sent to shareholders throughout 1825 and 1826. By February 1827, after much harassing of shareholders and the creation of 200 additional shares, the University had raised £33,675.²⁵ This was far below what had been stipulated in the Deed of Settlement, where it had been thought necessary to raise a minimum of £150,000 and up to £300,000.²⁶ Despite these financial setbacks, work on Wilkins' grand building on Gower Street had commenced the previous October. At the end of April 1827, a foundation stone was laid. This was undertaken by the Duke of Sussex, the ninth child of George III, and included a prayer offered by Edward Maltby, the Whig preacher of Lincoln's Inn amongst other titles. A grand dinner for 470 guests concluded the day's events.²⁷ This was perhaps a surprisingly establishment affair for such an avowedly secular college, but it does help demonstrate that the University's anti-religious and anti-establishment bias is easily misunderstood and exaggerated by removing it from its context 1820s context.

Maltby's prayer over the foundation stone also provided the start of an intriguing and eventually important connection between London University and Durham University, for Maltby was to become Bishop of Chichester in 1831 before his translation to Durham in 1837, where he would become ex officio the University's second Visitor after Van Mildert. His connections with the radical founders of London University later proved critical in securing Durham's charter.

²³ *Medical Gazette*, 14 (1834), pp. 147–51.

²⁴ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 32; Harte and North, *UCL*, pp. 32, 37.

²⁵ Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 32–33.

²⁶ *Deed of Settlement*, p. 1; Harte and North, *UCL*, p. 32.

²⁷ Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 35–37; Harte and North, *UCL*, pp. 40–41; and Willson, *Our Minerva*, pp. 29, 47, 54.

Not only had the University been established as a business, but it conducted itself as a business. The Deed of Settlement was devised to defend the rights of those who had invested in the University, and it was these proprietors who were members of the University, not the staff or students.²⁸ Subscribers could send one student to the University for each share purchased and would be charged lower rates for tuition.²⁹ So Campbell advocated an ingenious financial scheme, whereby parents should borrow the £100 necessary to buy a single share and become a subscriber because, he argued, ‘any creditable person can borrow money at 5 per cent’. At that rate, the effective cost would be £5 per year, and at the end of their son’s studies, the shares could be sold.³⁰ The whole scheme had the feeling of a business endeavour.

What of Southey’s third objection: the absence of divinity? Theology had been considered essential to a university education and hence its absence from London University was controversial. As Thomas Macaulay wrote:

‘But an University without religion!’ softly expostulates the Quarterly Review.—‘An University without religion!’ roars John Bull, wedging in his pious horror between a slander and a double-entendre. And from pulpits and visitation-dinners and combination-rooms innumerable, the cry is echoed and reechoed, ‘An University without religion!’³¹

But London University had never intended either to be against religion or in favour of atheism. At one point, the University had even considered the appointment of a professor of Divinity.³² But it proved impossible for the University to combine completely open admission to all students with any plan of theological teaching or religious discipline.³³ The secular position the University adopted was therefore intended to be a neutral one: it was by not aligning itself with any denomination or faith that the University’s Provisional Committee intended to realise its ambition to be accessible to anyone regardless of their religious views.

²⁸Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 190–91.

²⁹*Deed of Settlement*, p. 6; Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 50.

³⁰Campbell, *Reprint of Mr. Campbell’s Letter to Mr. Brougham*, pp. 9–10.

³¹Macaulay, ‘Thoughts on the Advancement’, p. 318.

³²Whyte, *Redbrick*, pp. 40–41.

³³Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 200–1.

William Wilberforce was amongst those who thought that the absence of religion from the curriculum was ‘abominable’ and ‘evil’, and he took the matter up with the University. But the response was adamant: ‘if you reflect on the composition and plan of our London University’, he was told, ‘you will perceive how impossible it is to have our doors open to all, and yet teach even the most general system of Christianity’. Furthermore, as the University would not be residential, like Oxford and Cambridge, it would not take students away from their families and it was therefore unnecessary for them to supply a religious education. Therefore, religion was not ignored; rather, it was relocated to the home setting and entrusted to a student’s parents, guardians or landlords.³⁴

KING’S COLLEGE, LONDON

The institution with the most straightforward status was King’s College. As already noted, King’s College had no intention of conferring degrees and nor did it reach for the title of a university. These two issues caused the greatest difficulty for London University’s attempt to obtain formal recognition, but as King’s College faced no such difficulty, it received a charter on 14 August 1829.³⁵ This was considerably under two years since *The Standard* had published the article stating that there was a rumour of the institution’s foundation.³⁶ It was only little more than a year since the Duke of Wellington had chaired the inaugural meeting and established a provisional committee. The speed with which the charter had been obtained was a considerable achievement.

From the outset, the provisional committee of the College were determined that they would receive the official sanction of a charter. Without it, they would be of equal status to London University and would not obtain the character of a self-governing, national corporation and independent legal entity that only a charter could provide. However, like London University, King’s College intended to raise funds in part through the sale of shares. Like London University, these would cost

³⁴ Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 55–56; R.I. Wilberforce and S. Wilberforce, *The Life of William Wilberforce* (5 vols, London, 1839), vol. 5, pp. 256–57.

³⁵ Hearnshaw, *King’s College London*, pp. 41–69.

³⁶ *The Standard*, 26 November 1827.

£100 per share and offered a dividend of up to 4%, but the ambition was only to raise £100,000 rather than a minimum of £150,000.³⁷

Accordingly, on 1 August 1828, the Bishop of London, William Howley, as Chair of the provisional committee, was asked to approach Robert Peel as Home Secretary to ascertain 'whether the Government [would] be disposed to grant a charter of incorporation to King's College'.³⁸ This he did, but on 8 August, having been nominated by the King in Council, he was elected Archbishop by the Chapter of Canterbury. Howley was replaced as Bishop of London by Charles Blomfield, who was translated from Chester. Blomfield then carried on the work that his predecessor had started in guiding the development of the charter, which led to the slightly peculiar situation that Howley ended up approving the draft charter, proposed members of Council, and suggested College officers for submission to the Home Office. The proposed Charter was submitted in February 1829 and by May, the government had confirmed its agreement.³⁹

Unlike the attempt by London University to gain a charter, which had been fraught with difficulties and delays, the process for King's College was almost entirely straightforward. There were two broad reasons for this. First, the charter sought by King's College did not raise awkward questions about the status of the institution. Crucially the College did not seek a university title or the power to award degrees. This meant that there could be no concerns raised by either Oxford or Cambridge about a metropolitan competitor, or that the medical schools and teaching hospitals need fear a competitor able to award degrees working in the capital and attracting students away from their own provision. It also meant that London University could not complain of unequal or unfair treatment.

In addition, it was important that the College would not ask any questions concerning its students' religious opinions, either on entry or at any other point. The absence of religious tests meant that the College would be open to dissenters and any other students, while the conduct of the College would still be within the doctrines of the Church of England. This latter point especially marked the College's difference

³⁷ Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, p. 42.

³⁸ Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, p. 68.

³⁹ Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, pp. 67–69.

from London University, for the teaching of theology would be an essential part of the College's curriculum. There could therefore be no objection to the charter either on the grounds of religious exclusiveness or the absence of theology from the disciplines provided.

The second broad reason that helped the College's swift acquisition of a charter was that the request was made to a government much more in sympathy with the College's ecclesiastical affiliations than the non-aligned approach of London University. Charles Manners-Sutton, the Archbishop of Canterbury, had secured the services of the Prime Minister, the Duke of Wellington, who had been in office since January 1828, to chair the inaugural meeting in June, and had already acquired consent from King George IV for the new college to be given royal patronage and the title of King's College. Peel, who returned as Home Secretary alongside Wellington, also attended the meeting and pledged a large subscription.⁴⁰ When the draft Charter was presented to the government for approval the following year, its swift sealing is hardly surprising given the King's approbation from the start and the role played by both Peel and Wellington in launching the inaugural committee which had produced it.

DURHAM UNIVERSITY AND THE ACT OF PARLIAMENT OF 1832

By 1831, there were two prominent English models: London University's approach as a joint stock company and the more traditional approach of King's College, which had obtained a charter. The former had every intention of becoming recognised as a university and to award degrees, but its ambition was frustrated by a lack of formal recognition and an unfriendly ministry in government, while the latter was by design a college only.

Durham adopted a third approach, for it was not to be a joint stock company, seeking funds through the sale of shares, but nor did it attempt to secure its identity through a charter—at least, not at the very first stage. This approach was the result of a practical necessity as, quite separately from the issue of how a university could be founded and recognised, the Dean and Chapter had to secure the use of their large endowments for the purposes of their new university. Unlike the murk that surrounded the granting of degree-awarding powers, it was clear

⁴⁰ Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, pp. 40–42.

that this would require an Act of Parliament. This was necessary because, unlike the new colleges in London, Durham University would be established through the use of an existing endowment.

The early fortunes of Durham, London and King's College ebbed and flowed in relation who held political power nationally. Unfortunately for Durham, there had been a Whig ministry under Earl Grey in power since November 1830. Under such inauspicious circumstances, the Act would not have been sought were it not the only means by which the Chapter's land could be appropriated. However, there was no alternative. Just before Christmas 1831, therefore, the Chapter agreed that Thorp should 'communicate with Mr Walters of Newcastle, respecting the proposed Bill for the Enfranchisement of property at South Shields, for the Endowment of the University'.⁴¹ The Bill's object was not to found the University, but to secure the use of the Chapter's property for that purpose. Van Mildert introduced the Bill to the House of Lords in May 1832 and emphasised this point; it would, he said, empower 'the Dean and Chapter of Durham to appropriate a portion of their revenues, by the sale of certain leasehold property, to the endowment of a University at Durham'.⁴²

The Bishop's great anxiety was that the Bill might be used as a precedent for external meddling in the Chapter's property and for the redistribution of Church endowments more generally. As early as 27 July 1831, Van Mildert expressed his fears to Thorp: perhaps an Act of Parliament would be necessary, he wrote, 'but I [should] rather it were not'. 'If it once gets into the [House] of Commons, Messers Hume and Co. will be for cutting up root & branch, instead of lopping off a sufficiency for the supplies', he prophesied.⁴³ Like a dark cloud hanging over his every action, the treatment of their Bill preyed on the Bishop's mind. What may be the Bill's 'fate in the Commons, it is difficult to conjecture in such times as these', he wrote in May 1832, '[Lord] Durham's evil surmises & grumblings may just furnish a text for Mr Hume & other radicals to descant upon, & we must not be surprised at any

⁴¹[DUL] COB: Chapter Meeting, 12 December 1831. William Clayton Walters was a prominent local barrister.

⁴²*Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, HL Deb, 22 May 1832, vol. 12, c. 1210.

⁴³[DUL] TC, 5: Van Mildert to Thorp, 27 July 1831.

uncourteous treatment at their hands'.⁴⁴ The Bishop told Thorp that he did 'still tremble for the whole undertaking, when the [government] & [Parliament] are to sit in judgement upon us',⁴⁵ and shortly before the Bill was first presented to the Lords, where he felt there would be 'little or no opposition', he again told Thorp that he dreaded the 'fiery furnace of the House of Commons' and the 'incendiaries' that would be found there. Still, he recognised that an Act of Parliament was the only way 'to bind my successors' to the plan, and so he persevered.⁴⁶

Indeed, the Bill did not go unnoticed by those incendiaries Van Mildert wished to avoid. Speaking in the Commons on 24 July 1832 in a debate on the Tithes Composition (Ireland) Bill, Richard Shiel, MP for County Louth in Ireland and co-founder with Daniel O'Connell in May 1823 of the original Catholic Association,⁴⁷ used the example of the University to demonstrate that the property of the Established Church was owned by the State and could therefore be redistributed by the State. Gleefully, he noted that 'on the abstract question of Church property ... it was not necessary to resort to abstract speculations'. Instead, he could refer to 'the Bill for the Establishment of an University at Durham, out of the estates of the Dean and Chapter'. This he declared was nothing 'but an interference with Church property, and a diversion of it from the purposes to which it was now devoted'. To employ the endowment of the Dean and Chapter for 'the institution of professorships of mathematics, and of chemistry, and natural philosophy, and of Latin and Greek, and of the Oriental languages' was surely beyond the power of the existing Prebends, he argued, as 'they had but life interests' and according 'to churchmen' could not 'rob their successors' by binding the endowment to the University.⁴⁸

Edward George Stanley, at the time Chief Secretary for Ireland, but later the 14th Earl of Derby and Prime Minister, replied to these accusations by stating that the 'appropriation had been made for ecclesiastical purposes', specifically 'a university for the purpose of bringing up the youth in the north of England to the service of the Church of

⁴⁴[DUL] SC, A/1: Van Mildert to Smith, 24 May 1832.

⁴⁵[DCL] VML, 225–26: Van Mildert to Thorp, 10 January 1832.

⁴⁶[DUL] TC, 7: Van Mildert to Thorp, 29 July 1831.

⁴⁷Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?* p. 384.

⁴⁸*Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd series, HC, 24 July 1832, vol. 14, c. 696.

England'.⁴⁹ Thorp orchestrated a more detailed defence outside of Parliament. The August 1832 edition of the new *British Magazine*, founded and edited by Hugh James Rose, who would the following year become the first Professor of Divinity at Durham, defended the University from 'Mr Shiel's detestable attack':

If the Church keeps its property, it is to be denounced as over rich. If it *gives* any thing of its own free will to a public purpose, then they argue that such gifts shews that Church property is public property, and may be plundered.⁵⁰

A letter from Walters appeared in the next edition: using the Chapter's property for the University would, he declared, withdraw 'no part of the founder's bounty out of the circle in which he placed it'.⁵¹ 'The substance of the petition', he argued in a separate printed pamphlet, was 'that one estate might be exchanged for another, which could not be effected without the authority of Parliament'.⁵² The nature of the foundation and constitution of the Cathedral Church of Durham did include the provision of education, and for centuries the Cathedral had maintained a school, he continued. Henry VIII's foundation of the Chapter, which had incorporated the lands, revenues and the educational purpose of Durham College, Oxford, gave them not simply the right but also the duty to engage in higher learning. Through their Estate Bill, all the Chapter were proposing to do was increase their contribution towards education and divert it towards a new project. 'I should not have written this', added Walters, 'had Mr Shiel been the only person who had erred in this matter, but I find many well-disposed laymen have made the same observation, as well as some of the clergy.'⁵³

This is where the existence of Durham College, Oxford was crucial: the connection between that thirteenth-century foundation and the nineteenth-century University became more than an historical footnote. The assumption by the newly founded Chapter in the sixteenth century

⁴⁹ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd series, HC, 24 July 1832, vol. 14, c. 717.

⁵⁰ *British Magazine*, 1 (1832), p. 598.

⁵¹ *British Magazine*, 2 (1832), p. 51.

⁵² [DUL] TC, 651: Statement from William Clayton Walters, July 1832.

⁵³ *British Magazine*, 2 (1832), p. 51.

of the aims of Durham College became both the defence and rationale for the use of the Chapter's funds to establish the University. Thorp felt sufficiently strongly about the connection to launch a search amongst the Cathedral muniments for material relating to the College. The work was undertaken by a theology student named Joseph Stevenson who produced (anonymously) *Some Account of Durham College, Oxford* in 1840.⁵⁴ So, while the College's existence was a part of the background to the University's conception, its greater importance became its strategic use to legitimise the use of the Chapter's funds. As Thorp explained, since they were 'the legitimate successor of Durham College', the Chapter were simply applying funds that had been 'temporarily merged ... to their original uses'.⁵⁵

The Bishop's management of the debate was exemplary, the arguments deployed secure, and so the Bill was passed and received Royal Assent on 4 July. The Act went into detail on the officers and governance of the University, permitting the appointment of a 'Warden or Principal' and 'Professors and Readers in such Branches of Learning and Sciences, of such Tutors, Students, and other Officers and Persons' under 'such Scheme and Regulations as the said Dean and Chapter of *Durham* ... shall ... order and prescribe'. The 'Government ... shall be ... vested in the said Dean and Chapter' and the Bishop would be Visitor.⁵⁶

Despite the presence of these details, the Act did not establish the University. Instead, it gave authority to the Chapter to found and govern the new institution, and allowed their land in South Shields, valued at around £80,000 and producing in the region of £3000 per year, to be used for that purpose.⁵⁷ It was on 4 April 1834 that the Chapter recorded their use of the authority given them in the Act: 'the Academical Institution or College or University, established by an Act of Chapter of the 21st September 1831, be constituted a University', they agreed in a mesmerising act of retrospective enforcement.⁵⁸ By April 1834, staff had been appointed and students admitted. Indeed,

⁵⁴ *Forerunners of the University: An Exhibition to Mark the 150th Anniversary of the University of Durham* (Durham, 1982), p. 5.

⁵⁵ [DUL] TC, 593: Thorp to Earl Grey[?], 1 December 183[1?].

⁵⁶ 2 & 3 William 4, cap. 19, known as the Durham University Act 1832.

⁵⁷ Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 37.

⁵⁸ [DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 4 April 1834.

the University (operating under that title) had opened on Monday 28 October 1833.⁵⁹ For Durham, however, the question that remained was whether the Act of Parliament alone was sufficient to put the University's status beyond doubt.

THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

By the mid-1830s, Durham and London Universities shared an anxiety about their status that was not the case at King's College. Although it was inauspicious for Durham, it was for London's authorities a friendly Whig ministry led by Earl Grey which was returned to power in November 1830. The University's Council wasted little time, therefore, and a petition for a charter was brought forward in early 1831 seeking 'Incorporation as an University, with all the privileges incident to that title', but without explicit reference to granting degrees.⁶⁰ Whether the title of university inherently conferred the right to award degrees therefore became a critical question. Although London University had earlier disclaimed the desire to award degrees, this petition spurred opposition from Oxford and Cambridge, the great London teaching hospitals and, through the Bishop of London, King's College not specifically because it sought to grant formal use of the title 'university', but because it now appeared that the Council of London University were seeking the power to award degrees. Despite continuing negotiations into 1835, the situation was effectively stalemate, and so the petition for a Charter remained in abeyance.⁶¹

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

⁵⁹Fowler, *College Histories*, p. 27.

⁶⁰Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 219–21.

⁶¹Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 215–46; Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 200–2; and Harte, *The University of London*, pp. 22–23.

were awarded certificates by their College, which enabled them to proceed to examinations and hence degrees of the University of London. This compromise effectively settled the distinction between a university and a college: the former was a degree-conferring body, while the latter was not. The independent university thus formed was a pragmatic resolution, which not only created a new university but also ensured the way was open for University College, London to receive official recognition through a Charter, which was sealed in November 1836.⁶²

DURHAM UNIVERSITY AND THE ROYAL CHARTER OF 1837

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

The Warden [Thorp] is regularly at bay for he can find nobody to speak of the University as founded and the Chapter are all beginning to find that something must be done – but nobody knows what – it is impossible to say what the Warden's thoughts are upon the subject – his mind seems to be something like a quicksand.⁶³

This was not simply a bureaucratic matter, for the ambiguity had been damaging recruitment. In April 1835, Thorp admitted that there had 'been some check lately' on new entrants, which he attributed 'to an apprehension about the intention of the chapter as to degrees, and the situation of the university'.⁶⁴

Durham's petition for a Charter was entwined with the debate about higher education in London. However, unlike London University's attempt to secure a Charter, when Durham raised its petition, it had already been granted an Act of Parliament, and in that Act it had been named a university. Was that sufficient to assume degree-awarding

⁶²Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 227–48; Harte and North, *UCL*, pp. 80–81; and Willson, *Our Minerva*, pp. 6–17.

⁶³Wheeler, *Palmer's Pilgrimage*, p. 39.

⁶⁴[DUL] TC, 653: Church Commission: Minutes of Evidence, 10 April 1835, q. 320.

powers? There was no clear answer. For his part, Thorp had wanted a Charter from the outset, but had been persuaded that it was not an immediate priority or politically expedient. As early as 1 October 1831, the Chapter minuted that ‘the Bishop of Durham be consulted ... as to the expediency of obtaining a Charter’.⁶⁵ Van Mildert counselled caution. On 10 January 1832, he wrote in frustration to Thorp that he did ‘still harp upon Degrees but do not remove any of the difficulties & perplexities we have to encounter’.⁶⁶ His fear was that a Charter granted to Durham would ease the passage of one for London University:

A Charter, I am informed, is actually proposed for the London University, & only waits the Great Seal, which it is not to be suffered the Keeper of the Royal Conscience⁶⁷ will have any scruple in affixing. Whether this fresh movement by favour of the [London University] may have been quickened by the expectation of a similar grant being applied for by the Durham Body, is matter for conjecture. It certainly bodes us no good. Unless Oxford & Cambridge interpose some remonstrance the thing is virtually done - & probably no interposition on their part [would] prevent it. It will not be wise in us, however, to step forward in expressing any disapproval, nor is it likely the opportunity will be offered of our doing so.⁶⁸

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

Like the Bishop, Walters urged caution: ‘at present I see nothing you want from the Crown by a Charter except the power to grant degrees’, he told the Warden, ‘and surely it is premature to ask for this’. The priority should be ‘the private statutes by which the University is to be governed’, he advised.⁶⁹

⁶⁵[DUL] COB: Chapter Meeting, 1 October 1831.

⁶⁶[DCL] VML, 225–26: Van Mildert to Thorp, 10 January 1832.

⁶⁷The identity of this person is not explicit, but it may be Lord Melbourne, then Home Secretary, who took a leading role in handling negotiations over the Charter. Cf. Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 220–21.

⁶⁸[DCL] VML, 247: Van Mildert to Thorp, 26 April 1832.

⁶⁹[DUL] TC, 649: Walters to Thorp, 6 June 1832.

In December 1833, Thorp, on behalf of the Chapter, expressed his continuing disquiet to Van Mildert. ‘The University being now open for the reception of students’, he noted, ‘the Dean and Chapter are anxious to ascertain the place and value of the Degrees in due time to be conferred by virtue of the Act of Parliament which constitutes Durham a University’.⁷⁰ Little more seems to have happened, however, as the debate about London obscured Durham’s own and independent claim, and an unsympathetic Whig government remained in power. This situation changed in December 1834 when Peel became Prime Minister. In March 1835, Van Mildert held discussions with Peel, after which he wrote positively about the prospects of the University and the Chapter to Joshua Watson, declaring he had ‘laid a foundation ... for obtaining a royal charter for our University’.⁷¹ Van Mildert gave Thorp a similarly upbeat assessment: Peel ‘seems quite disposed to favour our views’ concerning a Charter, he assured the Warden.⁷² Sir Charles Wetherell, the former Attorney-General, High Tory and vehement anti-reformist, whose appearance to open the assizes at Bristol was the immediate cause of the riots there in October 1831⁷³ and who had acted for Oxford University in their opposition to the Charter for London University, was called upon to assist with the preparation of a Charter for Durham.⁷⁴ Accordingly, Walters drew up a draft statute for the University for comment by Wetherell.⁷⁵

Yet this period of optimism was all too brief. In April 1835, Peel resigned. His premiership was the last to be put in place by the monarch against the wishes of Parliament. In November 1834, William IV asked him to form a government due to the King’s hostility towards the policies of his existing ministers in religious and Irish affairs. Although Peel had attempted to lead a minority government and had done so not entirely without success, including passing the Dissenters’ Marriage Bill

⁷⁰[DUL] TC, 137: Thorp to Van Mildert, 5 December 1833.

⁷¹E. Churton (ed.), *Memoir of Joshua Watson*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1863), p. 213.

⁷²[DUL] TC, 187: Thorp to Van Mildert, 7 March 1835.

⁷³J. Eagles, *The Bristol Riots: Their Causes, Progress, and Consequences by a Citizen* (Bristol, 1832).

⁷⁴[DUL] TC, 187: Thorp to Van Mildert, 7 March 1835.

⁷⁵[DUL] OSHDB, CA4/3c: Draft statute for the University of Durham for the opinion of Charles Wetherell, 18 May 1835.

and the English Tithe Bill in the face of strong opposition from Whig, Radical and Irish MPs, his first tenure as Prime Minister inevitably ended only a few short months after it began. The Whig Lord Melbourne returned to government and this ended the brief period during which Van Mildert saw hope for the Chapter and University, and indeed for the entire Established Church.

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

Durham's constitution was unique and peculiar, which reflected the fact that it was essentially a private enterprise rather than a public one. The concepts of private and public are of course complex, but the status of Durham as a university under the governorship of the Dean and Chapter contrasted clearly with the character of Oxford and Cambridge as national and public institutions, the joint stock companies of London University and King's College in London, and the new federal University of London, which was, in effect, a department of government.⁷⁶ In Scotland too, the Crown and public interests held significant sway over the internal operation of the universities, including the appointment of professors.⁷⁷ In all these other instances, the public university had a status distinct from the private colleges which were connected with them and which through personal patronage and endowment, it was argued, were not subject to the same legitimate public intervention as the universities.

In the matter of the Charter, with a Whig ministry returned to power and uncertainty about what the Ecclesiastical Commission might

⁷⁶Willson, *Our Minerva*, pp. 46–47.

⁷⁷R.D. Anderson, 'Scottish University Professors, 1800–1939: Profile of an Elite', *Scottish Economic & Social History*, 7 (1987), pp. 27–54, at pp. 29–33.

recommend for the future of cathedral chapters, the Bishop's counsel now tended towards reserve and general forbearance. 'I should have had great pleasure in forwarding the views of the Chapter & of the University of Durham, with regard to an application to Government for a Charter enabling them to confer Degrees', Van Mildert told Jenkinson, the Dean of Durham, in December 1835, 'if I thought this a favourable juncture for making the attempt.' 'It will be more prudent to wait even some months longer ... than to risk a defeat, (or perhaps something worse than a defeat,) by putting ourselves forward prematurely'.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Van Mildert suggested that the Archbishop of Canterbury and Charles Wetherell might again be consulted.

In January 1836, the Chapter submitted their request for advice to Wetherell and emphasised their desire to obtain a Charter for the University to 'be placed beyond all cavil or suspicion'. Two issues made the need pressing: not only 'the nearer approach of the students to the period for claiming their degrees, but also by the publication of a design for establishing by Charter a new University in the Metropolis'. The Chapter were concerned that if the new University of London were founded with the power to grant degrees to students from the colleges in London, then they too would be required to send their 'students to examination for degrees at that establishment'.⁷⁹

Wetherell concurred that the plan for 'constituting a Metropolitan Board' was a potential hindrance for Durham's petition. It would be 'a great inconvenience', he wrote, if 'the Students of Durham, should in any event be embraced in the Metropolitan Plan'. More optimistically, he advised that 'Durham University is clearly founded as such, and is so termed in the Act' and hence they had good grounds to press their case to be formally recognised by a Charter as 'a substantive Individual University'. 'And I think the Petition [should] allege', he continued, 'that it was the true intent and meaning of the Act, that the Power of granting degrees [should] be conceded to the Body, and that the endowment [granted by the Act] was in truth made in the faith of the Body obtaining that Privilege'.⁸⁰ Thorp concurred; it was their 'duty to

⁷⁸[DUL] OSHDB, CA4/3c: Van Mildert to Jenkinson, 30 December 1835.

⁷⁹[DUL] OSHDB, CA4/3f: Application to Charles Wetherell for an opinion respecting a Charter for the University of Durham, 9 January 1836.

⁸⁰[DUL] TC, 198: Advice from Charles Wetherell, 24 January 1836.

petition the Crown for the Charter in the expectation of which this work was undertaken and has been carried on'.⁸¹

With these questions unresolved, the University suffered the loss of its greatest ever patron when Van Mildert died on 21 February 1836. The mood in the University was dark indeed: the brief bright period of Peel's ministry had given way to Lord Melbourne's Whig premiership, London University was poised to undertake its conversion into the chartered University College and obtain the benefit of degrees under the authority of a Charter for a new metropolitan university, their own claims remained unrecognised, and now their great champion was lost. Temple Chevallier, the University's first Registrar, Professor of Mathematics and Reader in Hebrew, summed up the mood:

It is a severe visitation to many here both in a public & in a private point of view. For myself I feel the loss much; as in all transactions in which I was engaged with him, his liberality was quite beyond what could have been expected. That fountain is dried up.⁸²

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

Before the end of February 1836, Thorp had written to Lord Melbourne: 'the right of degrees is perhaps inherent in a University instituted by the highest authority of the nation—but in order to quiet doubts it is desirable to have a Charter or a declaration on the part of the Crown Lawyers that a Charter is unnecessary'.⁸³ In March, Wetherell added his 'personal opinion (which is the orthodox one) ... that "the word University" carries degrees'.⁸⁴

The Charter was held up again. This time it was delayed because members of the government supported the old claims of Dissenters to take degrees at the University. Earl Grey wrote to Thorp and pressed him to admit Dissenters 'not only to education but to honours'.⁸⁵ Thorp was

⁸¹[DUL] TC, 201a: Thorp to Unknown (possibly Sir Thomas Spring Rice as Chancellor of the Exchequer), 27 February 1836.

⁸²[DUL] CC, 11: Chevallier to Corrie, 24 February 1836.

⁸³[DUL] TC, 214: Thorp to Lord Melbourne, 27 February 1836.

⁸⁴[DUL] TC, 226: Interview with Sir Charles Wetherell, 17 March 1836.

⁸⁵[DUL] TC, 229: Earl Grey to Thorp, 22 March 1836.

deeply concerned. His view matched exactly that which Van Mildert had held: that not only would opening the University to Dissenters be a misappropriation of Church funds, but that such a radical departure from the perceived status quo would bring about ‘very serious and perplexing questions’ in relation to the government of the University by the Dean and Chapter, and its relations with the universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Dublin.⁸⁶

Thorp wrote to the Home Secretary, Lord John Russell, in March 1836 and advised him that the petition for a charter would be presented soon and, following Wetherell’s advice, assured him that it would simply pray for the University’s incorporation and the power to hold property.⁸⁷ The petition was submitted on 23 April, but after good initial progress, including a request for payment of the fee for the Charter to be sealed, the process was halted by Russell.⁸⁸ Chevallier suggested that this delay had been caused by a motion from Hedworth Lambton, the local MP for Durham Northern and Lord Durham’s brother, ‘to the effect that no further endowment should be granted to the University unless all degrees were thrown open to Dissenters’.⁸⁹

Russell had long supported the repeal of all restrictions which barred those outside of the Church of England from any secular privileges. In 1827, during the debate on the repeal of the Test Act, he stated that he was ‘guided by the principle that the subjects of these kingdoms ought not to suffer civil penalty, hardship, or inconvenience on account of their religious belief’. Only Lord Melbourne had prevented him from bringing forward a Bill to allow Dissenters access to the older English universities in December 1836.⁹⁰ It was clear that he would not willingly accede to a Charter for Durham that entirely excluded from degrees anyone who was unwilling to subscribe to the Articles of the Church of England. With the Whig government unwilling to move in the matter of the Charter and the University not giving way on the admission of Dissenters, an impasse had been reached.

⁸⁶[DUL] TC, 232: Thorp to Earl Grey, 25 March 1836.

⁸⁷[DUL] TC, 236: Thorp to Lord John Russell, 30 March 1836.

⁸⁸[DUL] DCO, 5: Chaytor to Russell, 1 June 1836.

⁸⁹[DUL] OSHDB, CA4/3w: Chevallier to Jenkinson, 30 April 1837.

⁹⁰R. Russell (ed.), *Early Correspondence of Lord John Russell 1805–40* (London, 1913), pp. 42, 72.

The new Bishop appointed to succeed Van Mildert could have not been a greater contrast. Edward Maltby was translated from Chichester to become the first reformed Bishop of Durham. It is hard to imagine an appointment that Thorp would have found more terrifying. Maltby had been heavily influenced during his time at Norwich Grammar School by the Headmaster, Samuel Parr, who although himself an Anglican clergyman was both a Whig and a friend of Dissenters.⁹¹ This influence meant that Maltby was almost unique in being a Whig Bishop, and who had been one of only two Bishops to vote in favour of the Reform Bill in October 1831.⁹² He was also a founding and active member of the Senate of the University of London, and, as already noted, he had laid the foundation stone of the new building on Gower Street for London University in April 1827.⁹³ He had been dogged by scandals due to his openness to Dissenters and Roman Catholics, and he counted Russell and Brougham among his friends—he even shocked his new diocese by not wearing the traditional full-bottomed wig.⁹⁴ Chevallier reacted with acquiescence in a letter to his friend George Elwes Corrie: ‘Maltby is to be elected on Saturday week—quantum mutatus!’⁹⁵

All hope for the infant University now lay with the new Bishop. Thorp wrote to Maltby in December 1836 and complained bitterly that while a Charter had just been granted to London University, their own Charter was still refused them. ‘We owe nothing to His Majesty’s Ministers’, he brooded, ‘seeing they have not only joined in intercepting our promised endowment but have now granted a Charter to London [University] whilst they withhold or suspend our own. Digest the matter as we may it is impossible not to feel this as a great and undeserved hardship’.⁹⁶

As 1837 dawned, Thorp and the other members of Senate were becoming increasingly anxious. No longer acting through the Bishop,

⁹¹E.A. Varley, ‘Maltby, Edward (1770–1859)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004; online edn 2008).

⁹²A. Briggs, *The Age of Improvement 1783–1867*, 2nd edn (Harlow, 2000); Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 145.

⁹³Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 36; Willson, *Our Minerva*, pp. 29, 47, 54.

⁹⁴C.J. Stranks, *This Sumptuous Church: The Story of Durham Cathedral* (London, 1993), p. 86.

⁹⁵[DUL] CC, 12: Chevallier to Corrie, 11 March 1836.

⁹⁶[DUL] TC, 270: Thorp to Maltby, 15 December 1836.

perhaps as they were unclear whether Maltby could be trusted to take their side, and increasingly forthright, an exasperated memorial was sent by the Senate to Russell on 29 April. This memorial laid out their manifold disappointments: 'since the Dean and Chapter have faithfully on their part, established and endowed the University, as fully as they were enabled to do by that Act [of Parliament of 1832], it devolves on the Crown to complete the undertaking by grant of a Charter', they demanded.⁹⁷ The admission of Dissenters was not raised in the memorial. There was increasing desperation for the Charter to be granted as the time was 'fast approaching when degrees must be conferred', Chevallier warned the Dean: 'it is essential that ambiguity [should] be removed as to the power of the Univ. to grant degrees before such a step is taken: & for that purpose a charter is of the greatest importance'. While the Chapter maintained that they possessed the right to confer degrees 'under the Act of Parliament', it was to avoid objections being raised that 'a charter [would] be indisputable, & [would] at once be acquiesced in by all who are interested'.⁹⁸ Thorp explained to Maltby that the University would 'proceed to confer' degrees 'whether the Charter be granted or not', but that the perception of those degrees would 'be materially altered' if not 'confirmed by the authority of a Royal Charter'.⁹⁹

In the end, far from making 'glorious havoc' of all the 'well digested constitutional principles' of the University, it was Maltby's influence, through his connections to the Whig government, that finally persuaded Russell to put aside his objection to the Charter. Supported by Earl Grey, Maltby persuaded his friend Russell that while he agreed with him that the University should be open to all students without religious tests, nevertheless the existence of these tests had been the basis upon which the Act of Parliament was passed. It was therefore wrong to withhold the Charter now: what had been written had been written. At long last, Russell conceded. 'Upon considering the reasons contained in your Lordship's letter of the 11th inst. & your Lordship's earnest solicitations

⁹⁷[DUL] TC, 605: Memorial of the Senate to Lord John Russell.

⁹⁸[DUL] OSHDB, CA4/3w: Chevallier to Jenkinson, 30 April 1837.

⁹⁹[DUL] OSHDB, CA4/3x: Thorp to Maltby, 2 May 1837. The Chapter had agreed that it would go ahead to grant degrees on the basis of the Act of Parliament alone on 13 June 1835.

on this subject', Russell wrote to Maltby, 'I have come to the conclusion that the Charter may now be completed.' The Home Secretary would not let the moment pass, however, without restating his opposition to religious tests and providing the Senate, through the Bishop, with a clear warning:

I have always understood from Lord Grey that he had expressed most strongly to the late Bishop Van Mildert his opinion, that the proposed exclusive regulations were inexpedient ... And I shall always consider myself at liberty to endeavour by every means in my power to effect the abolition of restrictions, which in my view impair the efficacy & narrow the scope of the new University in the North of England.¹⁰⁰

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

The other members of Senate reacted with pleasure and relief. Henry Jenkyns, the first Professor of Greek and Classical Literature, recorded his joy at the news and urged Thorp to pay 'all due civilities to the [Bishop], & [Lord] Grey, &', he added reluctantly, 'I suppose [Lord] John [Russell] must be included in the list, though he little deserves it'.¹⁰¹ Chevallier wrote to his friend Corrie that while he welcomed 'this tardy sacrifice to justice', it was not 'such as to conciliate much gratitude', especially as the concession was 'accompanied with an intimation that he will use all his efforts to remove here & elsewhere the obstacles which oppose his disputing friends being made gentlemen'. Nevertheless, the change in Russell's 'counsels comes very opportunely to relieve us from the dilemma, which, as I told you, we seemed likely to be placed' about whether to proceed to grant degrees without a

¹⁰⁰[DUL] TC, 292b: Russell to Maltby, 13 May 1837.

¹⁰¹[DUL] TC, 293: Jenkyns to Thorp, 25 May 1837.

Charter.¹⁰² ‘Glad as we shall be to see you again’, Jenkyns told Thorp, ‘we do not press for [your] return, unless the Charter is in [your] portmanteau’.¹⁰³

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

DURHAM UNIVERSITY AND THE ROYAL WARRANT OF 1837

Russell did not wait long before attempting the abolition of restrictions at Durham, just as he had said he would. This was the practical implication of his view that all universities should be national establishments open to all members of the civic nation.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰²[DUL] CC, 21: Chevallier to Corrie, 27 May 1837.

¹⁰³[DUL] TC, 293: Jenkyns to Thorp, 25 May 1837.

¹⁰⁴Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 196–98.

On 1 January 1838, Russell forwarded to Maltby a warrant which had been signed by Queen Victoria on Boxing Day 1837.¹⁰⁵ This warrant gave the authorities at Durham the right 'to issue certificates ... for degrees in the University of London'. It was the first such warrant issued and would have made Durham the third institution, after King's College and University College, able to send students forward for London degrees.¹⁰⁶ Russell's intention was to ensure that any student who completed his studies at Durham, but who felt unable to take the religious oath and so could not graduate, could nevertheless gain a degree from London, where no such restrictions existed. 'Having at Your Lordships earnest request advised His late Majesty to grant a Charter', he reminded the Bishop, 'I now ask your Lordship to use your influence with the University to promote the issue of certificates' for London degrees.¹⁰⁷ Whether Maltby was simply being naïve and genuinely did not anticipate any issues, or hoped to downplay the new regulation and thereby reduce the chance of a negative response, he forwarded the warrant to Thorp, stating that he was 'not aware that any objection is likely to be made' to it and so assumed that the University would 'be desirous of giving it full effect'.¹⁰⁸ One other interpretation may be possible: Russell's letter conceding the Charter clearly indicated his intention to find some way of admitting Dissenters to Durham degrees. Might Maltby have made a deal with Russell: that in return for allowing the Charter to be sealed, he would use his influence as Bishop to secure access for non-Anglican Durham students to London degrees? This is speculation, but it would help explain both how Russell's seemingly implacable opposition was turned and the speed with which the warrant was produced.

Thorp was furious. To his mind, the warrant was an attempt to bring Durham under the authority of the University of London. Indeed, it 'appeared so objectionable' to him that he 'abstained from submitting it to Senate hoping that it might not become a public document' and

¹⁰⁵ *Documents Relating to the Establishment of Durham University and of University College Therein* (Durham, 1902): Warrant of Queen Victoria, p. 42.

¹⁰⁶ Harte, *The University of London*, p. 96.

¹⁰⁷ *Documents Relating to the Establishment of Durham*: Russell to Maltby, 1 January 1838, p. 43.

¹⁰⁸ [DUL] TC, 308: Maltby to Thorp, 5 January 1838.

instead pressed the Bishop unsuccessfully for it to be withdrawn.¹⁰⁹ The Senate eventually received the warrant on 30 January, over a month before it was received by the Senate of the University of London.¹¹⁰ At first, Durham's Senate postponed discussion of the matter, presumably for the same reason as had made Thorp reluctant to submit it to them at all. On 22 March, the Senate agreed that it was willing to permit students 'to present themselves for' London degrees, but that this would only be 'provided that the privileges of this University, as an independent body, are not violated'.¹¹¹

The Senate had two main concerns. First, in order to obtain a London degree, the warrant required the Durham authorities to issue students with a certificate that confirmed they had 'completed the Course of Instruction which the ... University of London ... shall have determined'.¹¹² Therefore, in order to issue the certificate, the course at Durham would have to follow that of the University of London: not only would this be a fatal blow to their independence, and make them the subordinate body, but it would also exclude theology as a necessary component of the Arts course.¹¹³ Durham had actually advanced further than London, too. Students had already graduated from Durham, while at London the curriculum was still being formed and the first examinations had not yet been held. As a member of London's Senate, in July 1838 Maltby expressed his concern that London was 'likely to become the laughing-stock ... to other learned bodies in the country' if they did not conclude their plans with haste.¹¹⁴ The first students for the London BA would not graduate until 1839, when 17 men sat and passed the examinations (two years later than the first graduates from Durham and with only three more graduates).¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹[DUL] TC, 324: Thorp to Maltby, 23 November 1838.

¹¹⁰[DUL] Senate Minutes: 30 January 1838; [SHL] University of London Minutes of Senate: 7 March 1838.

¹¹¹[DUL] Senate Minutes: 22 March 1838.

¹¹²*Documents Relating to the Establishment of Durham*: Warrant of Queen Victoria, p. 42.

¹¹³Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 203–5; Willson, *Our Minerva*, pp. 75, 96–111.

¹¹⁴[SHL] University of London Minutes of Senate: 11 July 1838.

¹¹⁵Willson, *Our Minerva*, p. 179.

Subordination to any other institution would have been bad enough, but the second main concern was that the Senate viewed the University of London as nothing more than an irreligious wing of government. This opinion was widely held and with justification.¹¹⁶ From its formation in 1836 until its Charter was revised in 1858, for example, the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and all 36 Fellows of the Senate of the University of London were appointed by the Crown and therefore the government.¹¹⁷ *The Times* condemned the fact that ‘this “University,” as it is most absurdly miscalled, is as completely under the thumb of the Government as any of the clerks in the Treasury are’. ‘None but a despot to the backbone’ should acquiesce in such meddling from government in higher education, the paper concluded.¹¹⁸

Durham’s Senate proposed an alternative scheme: that London should simply accept ‘the certificate of examinations for degrees having been passed’ at Durham as sufficient to confer a degree.¹¹⁹ This, they argued, would ‘secure the privileges of this University from infringement’.¹²⁰ Far from improving, however, the situation deteriorated when the London Senate insisted that it would only accept certificates where a student had also passed the London matriculation examination at the start of his course. Even Maltby found this requirement unhelpful. On 20 June, he gave notice to London’s Senate, in his capacity as a member of that body, of his intention to bring forward a motion stating that ‘Candidates for a Degree, who shall be Students of the University of Durham, need not pass the Matriculation Examination’.¹²¹ While this view accorded with that of Durham’s Senate, it appears that Maltby had acted independently.¹²²

¹¹⁶Ashby, *Universities*, p. 24; Harte, *The University of London*, p. 98; Vernon, *Universities and the State in England*, pp. 60, 62, 69; Whyte, *Redbrick*, pp. 51–52; and Willson, *Our Minerva*, p. 46.

¹¹⁷Willson, *The University of London*, p. 13. The Vice-Chancellor was not a Crown appointment per se, but was elected annually by the Fellows from amongst their number, all of whom were Crown appointments.

¹¹⁸*The Times*, 16 December 1836.

¹¹⁹[DUL] Senate Minutes: 22 March 1838.

¹²⁰[DUL] Senate Minutes: 9 May 1838.

¹²¹[SHL] University of London Minutes of Senate: 20 June 1838.

¹²²[DUL] Senate Minutes: 4 July 1838.

The London authorities carried on regardless and proceeded to draft regulations that treated Durham in the same way as King's College and University College.¹²³ Durham's Senate received the regulations on 12 September, along with a letter from Maltby attempting to offer reassurance. Maltby seems to have been caught between his desire to secure the right of progression to London degrees and his wish to retain Durham's independence. He had tried to impress on London's Senate that to require Durham students to pass the London matriculation exam was 'contrary to the practice of independent Universities in receiving students from one another'. This did little to placate the Senate, which instructed Chevallier to write to the Senate of the University of London to express 'their surprise at the manner in [which] the name of the Univ. of Durham' had been 'introduced into the Regulations not only without any formal concurrence ... but when the Warden & Senate ... had expressly objected to' it.¹²⁴

The continuing argument brought tensions between the Warden and the Bishop to new heights, as each accused the other of dishonesty (in thinly veiled terms). As requested by Durham's Senate, Maltby wrote to London's Vice-Chancellor, John Lubbock, relaying their concerns. Nevertheless, the Bishop added that he did 'frankly confess' that he did 'not clearly see the force of these objections'. While Maltby admitted that he had been 'in error in supposing there was no other objection to the acceptance of the Queen's letter', he contradicted Thorp's account by claiming he had 'consulted the Warden on the subject', after being asked to do so by Russell, and that Thorp had indicated that there would be no significant issues. 'This conversation passed in the time of vacation; and it either slipped his memory, or he did not consider it sufficiently formal to communicate to the Senate', Maltby concluded.¹²⁵

Still Thorp maintained that the warrant had been 'issued without application on our part, and without previous notice' and added 'that the very terms of Lord J. R. accompanying letter, intimating the exercise of your Lordship's good offices with the University in order to facilitate its acceptance' indicated that there had been no prior conversation. The most Thorp allowed was that 'it may have happened that your Lordship

¹²³[SHL] University of London Minutes of Senate: 1 August 1838, 15 August 1838.

¹²⁴[DUL] Senate Minutes: 12 September 1838.

¹²⁵[DUL] TC, 322: Maltby to Lubbock, 20 November 1838.

in conversation mentioned the degrees of London before the Warrant came forth' and, if the Bishop had done so, Thorp admitted he may have said that this would be beneficial for those students who could not take Durham's religious oath, yet he could not recall such a conversation and 'the expression of any opinion in my official capacity, or of any formal opinion at all, I am bound in justice to myself with the utmost deference distinctly to distain'. 'Your Lordship, I venture to think', he continued, 'assigns in your recollection to an earlier period those communications which took place after the arrival of the Warrant, and before it came under our view'.¹²⁶ Maltby's reaction has been lost, but Thorp was clearly agitated and wrote again to the Bishop concerning the Warrant in quick succession on 26, 27 and 28 November. In these letters he continued his remonstrance with the Bishop and remarked that he did not 'suppose that a Queen's Warrant would be founded upon a conversation'.¹²⁷

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

On 16 January 1839, London's Senate relented and agreed to remove the name of the University of Durham from their regulations.¹²⁸ On 28 January 1839, Durham's Senate agreed that their objections had been 'sufficiently obviated by the proposed alterations'.¹²⁹ On 13 February 1839, London's Senate received confirmation from Russell that he approved the changes too—and with that, the name of the University of Durham was removed and the matter was not discussed again in London's Senate.

¹²⁶[DUL] TC, 324: Thorp to Maltby, 23 November 1838.

¹²⁷[DUL] TC, 326: Thorp to Maltby, 27 November 1838.

¹²⁸[SHL] University of London Minutes of Senate: 16 January 1839.

¹²⁹[DUL] Senate Minutes: 28 January 1839.

Whiting provides only a brief commentary on this episode and Fowler does not record it at all. Yet it is both the necessary final chapter in the story of Durham University's official creation and a demonstration of the extent to which the University's first few years were a struggle against the desires of unsympathetic government ministers and competing claims of the London institutions. Durham's brief appearance as an institution able to send students forward for London degrees gave rise to a persistent misunderstanding that this actually happened. Sheldon Rothblatt, the eminent historian of higher education, made multiple errors when he wrote that 'for a brief moment in the 1830s [Durham] students read for the new London degree while Durham awaited degree conferring authority from the Privy Council'.¹³⁰ More recently, Whyte likewise falls into the same trap by mistakenly assuming that Durham prepared candidates for London degrees.¹³¹

CONCLUSION

The surge of interest in creating new universities from the mid-1820s meant that there was a need to examine the processes by which such institutions could be founded. This was a not simple question of governance, but involved a complex web of competing institutional and political interests. The founders of Durham did want their institution to be a university and to award degrees, and the same was the case at London, and this made their foundations more complicated than King's College, which had no such ambition.

But the prevailing political situation was crucial too. Both London and Durham suffered from political opposition at key points when they were attempting to gain recognition through a charter. London's attempt to gain a charter initially suffered because of political opposition from Peel, but was eventually supported by a friendlier Whig administration. In 1941, Hughes applauded Van Mildert: 'to have founded a university after the manner of a great medieval churchman would have been no mean achievement in any age', he noted, 'to have done so in 1831–3 when the radical wolves "Hume and Co." were howling at

¹³⁰Rothblatt, *Modern University*, p. 244.

¹³¹Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 50.

the door of the ecclesiastical sheepfold was something of a miracle'.¹³² What should be added is that to obtain a Charter from Lord John Russell for an avowedly Anglican institution that imposed religious tests, and then to successfully defend the University from a warrant that would have subordinated the University to London's Senate and effectively brought it under government control too, was a feat of equal measure.

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¹³²E. Hughes, 'The Bishops and Reform; Some Fresh Correspondence 1831–33', *English Historical Review*, LVI(CCXXIII) (1941), pp. 459–90, at p. 460.

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CHAPTER 5

Recruitment of Academic Staff

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

William Van Mildert, 29 October 1833

INTRODUCTION

As had been examined in the previous chapter, issues of legal status were not always settled when new institutions opened. London University admitted its first students to the medical course on 1 October 1828, while it was still only a joint stock company. Other courses commenced during the year.² At King's College, a grand ceremony presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury marked its opening. This prelate-heavy event took place on 8 October 1831, the same day on which the House of Lords had thrown out the Reform Bill, with the episcopacy receiving the main part of the blame for the Bill's failure.³ Durham University

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

²Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 76.

³Hearnshaw, *The Centenary History of King's College London*, pp. 93–96.

came into practical existence more quietly when, on Monday 28 October 1833, the entrance examination was held for the first students.⁴ The *Durham Advertiser* marked the occasion as follows:

Next Monday, the examination for students for the Durham University will take place, and we may consider that as the official and real commencement of an institution which promises to be fraught with the highest advantages to society ... To the city of Durham the institution will be highly advantageous. It will bring a greater number of visitants, as well increase the permanent residents; and add not a little to the interest which our city already possesses for strangers. For these benefits the citizens will be indebted to the much-vilified clergy of the establishment; and, we have no doubt, they will have the good feeling and good sense to evince that gratitude to their benefactors which is justly their due. Looking forward with much interest to the new era which is dawning upon us we most heartily wish success and perpetuity to the University of Durham.⁵

In many important respects, everything seemed favourable for the University's future. 'Everything seems propitious', said the poet Robert Surtees.⁶

Van Mildert and Thorp were also trying to build a University populated by staff of the highest academic calibre, though the concept of an academic profession was still ill-defined and contested.⁷ Yet excellence alone was not enough, for the staff of the University were recruited from those already known to the Bishop, Warden or their network of friends; Gaisford was Van Mildert's especially trusted confidant. This ensured that the University became a clearly Hackney Phalanx institution, as well a home for local talent, realising the ambition to make Durham both a true reformed and northern university as well as a home of High Church Anglicanism.

However, despite exerting considerable time and effort to find trusted and able men, not all the initial appointments were successful. In addition, such was the desire to realise a particular idea of a university that using networks and patronage alone became exclusionary. As Tamson

⁴Although they were examined on Monday 28 October 1833, the students signed the University Admissions Register on Friday 25 October 1833.

⁵*Durham Advertiser*, 25 October 1833.

⁶G. Taylor, *A Memoir of Robert Surtees* (London, 1852), p. 440.

⁷Engel, *From Clergyman to Don*, pp. 14–16.

Pietsch observed respecting the recruitment of staff to universities in the British Empire towards the end of the nineteenth century, but which applied equally to the way in which staff were recruited to Durham in the 1830s, this meant that the ‘contours’ of Durham’s world were mapped ‘by the density and reach of personal connections’.⁸

THE DURHAM PROFESSORIAL MODEL

At first, the only staff member in the University was Thorp. He had been made Warden formally in July 1833, but had served in that capacity since being appointed by Van Mildert in November 1831 ‘*pro tempore*, at least’.⁹ After the Warden, the most high-ranking positions, in order of seniority, were the Professors in Divinity and Ecclesiastical History, Greek and Classical Literature, and Mathematics. The appointment of the two Professors in Divinity and Greek were the most complex not simply because of their status, and hence the particular importance of securing the services of the most able men possible, but also because it was the intention to attach these two professorships to Stalls in the Cathedral, much along the lines of Christ Church, Oxford.¹⁰ This arrangement meant that the appointments had to be made by the Bishop rather than the Chapter. However, as Van Mildert grew older and his health deteriorated, his ability to engage with his duties suffered. These troubles in part explain why the appointment of the Professors of Divinity and Greek were still being discussed less than a week before the first students took up residence.¹¹

In addition to the three Professors, a broad academic body was appointed, including a series of Readers in Law, Medicine, Hebrew and Oriental Languages, History and Polite Literature, Moral Philosophy, and Natural Philosophy. Although these would not be full-time appointments, they ranked just beneath the Professors in the institutional hierarchy. Below the Readers, two Lecturers were appointed in Chemistry and

⁸T. Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars: Universities, Networks and the British Academic World, 1850–1939* (Manchester, 2013), p. 61.

⁹[DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 20 July 1835; [Bal] JP, IVA.6: Jenkinson to Van Mildert, 29 November 1831.

¹⁰Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 36–37, 57.

¹¹[DCL] VML, 328–29: Van Mildert to Thorp, 22 October 1833.

Mineralogy, and Modern Languages.¹² Finally, with the addition of two Tutors who taught the students in Arts, the first edition of the Calendar listed 12 members of academic staff and 42 students, an impressive—though expensive—ratio of three-and-a-half students to each member of staff.

Durham did not follow the professorial model of the older English universities, which was the subject of calls for reform to make the professors central to the teaching and academic activities of the universities rather than peripheral to private tutors.¹³ Both Oxford and Cambridge each had about 20 professors, but their contribution to the formal examined curriculum was strictly limited. The impact of each professor was dependent largely on the industry of the current incumbent, as his main work was to provide additional lectures, which were sometimes simply not delivered, on subjects that would not be examined.¹⁴ Some professors did very little at all, especially those in less well-endowed Chairs, but even the Cambridge Lady Margaret Professors on £1000 a year failed to deliver any lectures for almost a century.¹⁵ This contrasted strongly with the Scottish system. In 1800, there were 72 professors across the five Scottish universities, who taught just under 3000 students as ‘virtually’ the ‘sole constituents’ of the academic profession. These professors delivered content integral to the curriculum and responded to the changing needs of their students, in part because they were largely dependent on student fees for their income and not endowments, as was the case at Oxford and Cambridge. Reliance on student fees meant that Scottish professors’ incomes varied enormously: the 1826 royal commission estimated that the gross income of the highest-paid professor, Thomas Hope, the Professor of Chemistry at Edinburgh, was a staggering £2213, while ten other professors earned in excess of £1000. Nevertheless, despite the rich earnings of a few, the median income was

¹²[DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 20 July 1833.

¹³Engel, *From Clergyman to Don*, pp. 35–36.

¹⁴A.J. Engel, ‘Emerging Concepts of the Academic Profession at Oxford 1800–1854’, in Stone (ed.), *The University in Society*, vol. 1, pp. 305–51, at pp. 305–6; Slee, ‘The Oxford Idea of a Liberal Education’, pp. 68–69; and Ward, *Victorian Oxford*, p. 108.

¹⁵Anderson, *British Universities Past and Present*, pp. 17–19; Anderson, ‘Scottish University Professors’, p. 27; Ward, *Victorian Oxford*, p. 108; and Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge*, p. 155.

£335 and two professors at the colleges in Aberdeen received less than £100—the sort of salary even a curate might expect.¹⁶

A pattern based on the Scottish model was instituted at both King's College, London and London University. At King's College, the professors were not paid a stipend, but instead received three-quarters of the fees from students attending their lectures.¹⁷ At London University, although for the first two years of operation the professors were guaranteed an income of £300 per annum, they were afterwards likewise reliant on income from student fees.¹⁸ However, even despite this limited initial guarantee, the earliest appointments were made to men who were both younger and generally less prestigious than had been hoped. A high staff turnover was another result of this.¹⁹ This situation was blamed on insufficient remuneration; it was fateful, for example, that Thomas Arnold withdrew from consideration for the Chair in Modern History at London University in favour of the better-paid appointment as Headmaster of Rugby School.²⁰ Despite recruiting men of unproven records for the professorships, numerous holders of the Chairs still resigned their appointments, so dissatisfied were they by their low income and lack of assured remuneration.²¹

The professorial model at Durham followed the Scottish pattern too, a development which has received little attention from historians. Thorp always intended that the Professors would work, but Van Mildert was confused: 'what, after all, are to be the duties of the Professor[s]? ... and wherein will they differ ... from those of the Tutors and Censors?'²² Van Mildert had by all accounts undertaken his duties as Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford with care and diligence.²³ Even so, given that 'neither in Oxford or Cambridge are any specific duties laid upon' the

¹⁶Anderson, 'Scottish University Professors', pp. 27, 34–35.

¹⁷Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, p. 89.

¹⁸Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 99.

¹⁹Whyte, *Redbrick*, pp. 65–66.

²⁰A.J.H. Reeve, 'Arnold, Thomas (1795–1842)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004; online edn 2014).

²¹Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 37–47.

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

²³Ward, *Victorian Oxford*, p. 52.

professors, the Bishop struggled to understand what they would do in Durham.²⁴ Thorp explained that they would ‘have the charge of the studies in their respective departments and work as at Glasgow and the foreign Universities, and as they did at Oxford in old times’.²⁵ Thorp had also been influenced by the experience at St David’s College, where Jenkinson told him ‘the Principal, Vice Principal, & Tutors, are all called Professors’, but despite this, the Dean assured him, ‘they are in fact all working, & hard working, Tutors, more so than either Oxford or Cambridge’. The Professors at Durham ‘must not therefore be a sleeping, nor even a superintendent, Partner’ with the tutors acting as their ‘assistants & subject to his direction’.²⁶ The Durham model was also much like that which William Hamilton had advocated for Oxford in the *Edinburgh Review* in June 1831, in which he called for ‘a tutorial system in subordination to a professorial’ model that he regarded ‘as affording the condition of an absolutely perfect University’.²⁷

‘The Divinity & Greek Professors should on all accounts, for the credit, as well as the effectiveness of the Institution, be persons of first rate qualifications’, Jenkinson urged Van Mildert.²⁸ The Bishop agreed absolutely. Yet, given the University’s recent creation, uncertain future and remote northern location, there were many reasons why this might be hard to achieve—just as London University had discovered. Fortunately, for as many as were dissuaded, others were attracted by the High Church ethos and the prospect of rich remuneration, which included the possibility of one of Durham’s Golden Prebends.

The formal and constitutional position of the Professors was agreed when the Chapter approved initial statutes on 4 April 1834, which they affirmed on 20 July 1835. By these statutes, a Senate was established, which consisted of the Warden, the three Professors, the two Proctors (an additional post held by staff in another substantive position) and one member of the Convocation nominated annually by the Dean and Chapter. The earliest minutes of the Senate date from 19 January 1836, though the minutes of University College Council note that their

²⁴[DUL] TC, 68: Van Mildert to Thorp, 8 December 1831.

²⁵[Bal] JP, IVA.6: Thorp to Van Mildert, 10 December 1831.

²⁶[Bal] JP, IVA.6: Jenkinson to Thorp, 9 November 1831.

²⁷*Edinburgh Review*, 53(106) (1831), p. 398.

²⁸[Bal] JP, IVA.6: Jenkinson to Van Mildert, 29 November 1831.

meeting held on 20 January 1835 was a meeting of Senate instead of the Council. It is therefore possible that the Senate started meeting after its initial foundation in April 1834, but that it did not formalise its business until January 1836.

TUTORS, READERS, LECTURERS AND FELLOWS

Next in seniority after the Professors were the two Tutors, and both came with excellent academic credentials. The Senior Tutor, Thomas Peile, had even been in contention for a professorship. He had been ‘powerfully recommended by Mr King, the President of Queen’s, and Wordsworth, Master of Trinity’ to Van Mildert for the Greek Chair.²⁹ Peile was a Cambridge man and this perhaps explains why the Bishop was unfamiliar with him. He had matriculated at Trinity College in 1824 and was awarded the Davies Scholarship in 1825, the Members’ Prize for Latin prose in 1827 and the second Chancellor’s Medal for classics in 1828. He graduated with a BA in 1828 as eighteenth wrangler (out of 33) in the Mathematical Tripos and was bracketed second in the first class of the Classical Tripos. He was elected to a Fellowship at Trinity College in 1829 and proceeded to his MA in 1831. He was the Headmaster of Liverpool Collegiate School from 1829 to 1833. In June 1833, he visited Van Mildert at his London residence to discuss ‘Durham Tutorships or Professorships’. Van Mildert found him ‘a very prepossessing young man’, who came ‘well and highly recommended’.³⁰ Nevertheless, Peile was not offered the professorship, probably because of his youth and relative inexperience, but perhaps also because he was less well known in Van Mildert’s network.

While it seemed that the Junior Tutor, William Palmer, was not considered for a higher role, he was no less able than Peile. He matriculated from Magdalen College, Oxford in 1826 and was elected to a demys-hip (scholarship) and obtained the Chancellor’s prize in 1830. He graduated with a BA in 1831, achieving first-class honours in classics, was elected to a Fellowship in 1832, won the University essay prize in 1833 and proceeded MA in 1836. Though Palmer remained in Durham, after the first academic year he was succeeded as Tutor by Charles Whitley.

²⁹[DUL] TC, 118: Van Mildert to Thorp, 30 March 1833.

³⁰[DUL] TC, 135: Thorp to Van Mildert, 25 June 1833.

Whitley's standing will be adverted to later as he was a candidate for the Mathematical Chair and was appointed as the Reader in Natural Philosophy as well as Junior Tutor.

The Readers and Lecturers were part-time appointments or, as Whitley described them "allied powers" rather than actual members of staff.³¹ Given their status, few of these original staff impacted much upon the University, but one significant exception is relevant: James Finlay Weir Johnston. Johnston was the University's first lecturer in Chemistry and Mineralogy, being listed in the Prospectus of July 1833.³² Born in Paisley in 1796, Johnston was the eldest son of a local merchant. He went up to Glasgow University at 21 and graduated with an MA in 1826. Despite supporting himself at university by tutoring, he featured in the prize lists 11 times.³³ After graduating, he moved to Durham, where he opened a private school and through marriage, in 1829, gained a sufficient income to abandon his teaching and concentrate on his chemical studies and research. He first enquired about a 'chair of Chemistry' at the University in January 1832³⁴ and later submitted a bundle of glowing testimonials for consideration.³⁵ At the time, he had been working with the great Swedish chemist Jöns Jacob Berzelius. He had also been heavily involved in the formation of the British Association and was one of its leading figures, having been appointed to the local committee of the Association in Edinburgh, as well as to the Chemistry and Mineralogy Sub-committees.³⁶ Hence, he was already well known when the University first admitted students; it was to Johnston, for example, that a correspondent to *The Lancet* made their appeal in December 1833 for the establishment of an English Journal of Chemistry.³⁷

³¹C. Darwin, *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, F. Burkhardt and S. Smith (eds.) (21 + vols, Cambridge, 1985–), vol. 1, pp. 426–28; Whitley to Darwin, 5 February 1835.

³²[DUL] TC, 652: Prospectus, 20 July 1833.

³³R.A. Baker, 'The Art of the Soluble: Science and Scientists at Durham', *History of Universities*, XIV (1995/96), pp. 201–24, at p. 204.

³⁴[DUL] DCI: Johnston to Thorp, 27 January 1832.

³⁵Baker, 'Art of the Soluble', p. 205.

³⁶*Report of the First and Second Meetings of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* (London, 1833), pp. 46–47; J. Morrell and A. Thackray, *Gentlemen of Science: Early Years of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 23, 142–44.

³⁷*The Lancet*, 21(537) (1833), pp. 444–45.

Unlike most of the rest of the staff at the University, Johnston was a Presbyterian, but his excellent scientific achievements outweighed this disadvantage and as he was a well-known local figure, Thorp would have judged him trustworthy and diligent. ‘The Lecturer in Chemistry, a man of 100 Testimonials, is a Presbyterian’, Gilly wrote to Brougham, ‘pretty well this for electors, who according to the Times Newspaper are “Brutes & Bigots”.’³⁸ The general academic staff were not in fact required to subscribe any religious oath, as was required of students wishing to proceed to a degree, though in practice most were firmly Anglican. Rather than religion, the clear link uniting all the early appointments was a desire to recruit the most talented staff available from either High Church Anglicans or local and trusted men.

The first Calendar also listed six ‘Junior Fellows’ and three ‘Senior Fellows’, though these original designations were only used briefly.³⁹ In 1839/40, the Dean and Chapter revised the scheme and established six Fellows as positions for undergraduates to aspire to, much like the Oxford model.⁴⁰ Without such inducements beyond the BA, it was felt that the University would struggle to attract talented students. By an Order of Council in June 1841, following a recommendation of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, this was increased to 24. The standard Fellowship was worth £120 per year, but ten of the awards were termed Senior Clerical Fellows and were augmented by an additional £30 per year. The Fellowships could be held for a maximum of ten years. Entry to a Fellowship was by election in the Michaelmas Term and any individual seeking a Fellowship would have to be successful in one of the three elections following his admission to the BA degree. The electoral body was the Warden, the members of the Senate and up to four existing Fellows. Once elected, the Fellows were expected to proceed to the MA degree.

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

³⁸[UCL] Brougham Papers, 45,965: Gilly to Brougham, 22 July 1833.

³⁹*Durham University Calendar* 1833, p. 6.

⁴⁰Engel, ‘Emerging Concepts’, p. 308; Engel, *From Clergyman to Don*, p. 36.

JOHN CARR

The first Professor of Mathematics, and the only local man to be appointed to a Chair in the new University, was the Headmaster of Durham School, John Carr. Entering Trinity College, Cambridge, as a Scholar in 1803, he graduated with a BA in 1807 as Second Wrangler and an MA in 1810, and was made a Fellow in 1808. Adam Sedgwick, who was also a Fellow of Trinity, recorded in 1811 when Carr left to become Headmaster of Durham School that he was ‘too valuable a man to be easily replaced’.⁴¹ To his position at Durham School, which carried only a small salary, Carr added in 1818 the living of Brantingham in the East Riding of Yorkshire.⁴² Both positions were in the patronage of the Dean and Chapter, and the Headmaster was one of those local worthies who received a regular invitation to the Prebends’ hospitality residence dinners.⁴³ Carr was therefore very well connected with the Cathedral clergy. He put himself forward for the professorship in December 1831, very soon after the Chapter’s decision to found the new institution was made public.⁴⁴ ‘Although during the twenty years I have been in your service my time and attention have been principally directed to other subjects’, he admitted, ‘yet I can assure the Chapter that during the whole of that period I have not failed ... to give up a considerable portion of my leisure hours to Mathematical Science.’⁴⁵

However, despite his connections, Carr was not appointed without at least some consideration of other candidates. In fact, there was a tide of applications, and Van Mildert remarked that there would ‘be no lack of offers for the Mathematical Chair’.⁴⁶ In January 1832, for example, the Chapter received an approach from Henry Moseley.⁴⁷ Moseley had been appointed to the Professorship of Natural and Experimental Philosophy

⁴¹J.W. Clark, *The life and letters of the Reverend Adam Sedgwick* (2 vols, Cambridge, 1890), vol. 1, p. 115.

⁴²Clark, *Adam Sedgwick*, p. 115.

⁴³J.T. Fowler, ‘Residence Dinners in Durham’, *Notes and Queries*, 10(3) (1905), pp. 1–2, at p. 1.

⁴⁴[DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 24 December 1831.

⁴⁵[DUL] DCI: Carr to Chaytor, 24 December 1831.

⁴⁶[DCL] VML, 218–20: Van Mildert to Thorp, 7 January 1832.

⁴⁷[DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 7 January 1832.

at King's College, London a year earlier and he had subsequently added the role of Chaplain, which came with a small salary of £105 per year.⁴⁸ It is not clear why he was interested in moving away from London, but it is quite plausible that he was seeking a more secure income.

Another such application, also received in January 1832, came from Miles Bland, formerly Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge.⁴⁹ Bland was powerfully supported by all the Heads and most of the Professors at Cambridge, as well as Bishops and others.⁵⁰ Van Mildert seemed persuaded: 'I begin to think there cannot be a better candidate', he confided to Thorp.⁵¹

Nevertheless, Carr's application prevailed: he had solid academic credentials, was known to the Chapter and was well respected locally. He therefore became the University's first professorial appointment and was the only one of the three Professors to be listed in the preliminary arrangements agreed by the Chapter on 20 July 1833.⁵² It was agreed that he would receive £300 as Professor, plus £100 as a Senior Fellow.⁵³

Before his work could begin, Carr died unexpectedly on Wednesday 30 October 1833, only two days after the start of the first term. His passing was marked by two weeks of official mourning at the University.⁵⁴ The *Durham Advertiser* carried a poem written in his honour.⁵⁵ The poet Robert Surtees wrote of the 'honoured end of my poor friend John Carr', whose death he said had 'thrown a gloom on the general feeling' of the new University.⁵⁶ But, as James Raine, the Cathedral Librarian, remarked rhetorically, although Carr's death was a sad loss, 'who will take upon him to arraign the dealings of the almighty?'.⁵⁷ The Almighty must have had some plan in mind, but it certainly made for an inauspicious start.

⁴⁸Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, pp. 90, 112.

⁴⁹[DUL] DCI: Bland to Chaytor, 4 January 1832.

⁵⁰[DUL] DCI: Bland to Thorp, 26 January 1832.

⁵¹[DCL] VML, 225–26: Van Mildert to Thorp, 10 January 1832.

⁵²[DUL] TC, 652: Prospectus, 20 July 1833.

⁵³[DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 20 July 1833.

⁵⁴*Gentleman's Magazine*, November 1833, p. 472.

⁵⁵*Durham Advertiser*, 15 November 1833

⁵⁶Taylor, *Robert Surtees*, p. 440.

⁵⁷J. Raine, *A Brief Account of Durham Cathedral with Notices of the Castle, University, City Churches*, &C (Newcastle, 1833), p. 143.

HENRY JENKYNs

The remaining two professorships were appointed by the personal nomination of the Bishop, because of the intention of connecting these positions to Stalls in the Cathedral. Gaisford thought that the idea of annexing Stalls was perilous: as early as August 1831, he warned Van Mildert that ‘the whole scheme would be ruined by endowing working offices so amply’.⁵⁸ The Bishop tended to agree and was alarmed when Thorp suggested that each Professor should fund his own Reader out of the proceeds of his Stall, fearing that this might ‘tempt an idle man to accept the office ... knowing that he can well afford to remunerate the Reader handsomely, and then pocket the remainder of the proceeds of his Prebend, to enjoy almost a sinecure’.⁵⁹ The question of annexation would have to wait, however, while the Bishop set about filling the professorships with men of the highest academic ability, appropriate religious inclinations and, wherever possible, by those who were recommended to him by his extended network of friends.

Finding the right men took time; in fact, it took almost two years. A list of potential staff was first drawn up in around September 1831. It included four candidates for the Divinity Chair and six for the Greek Chair.⁶⁰ Many other names were discussed in correspondence. One candidate who the Bishop favoured early on was Edward Churton, someone who was well known in Van Mildert’s circle of friends. In 1830, Churton was appointed Curate to the Rector of Hackney, John James Watson, the brother of Joshua Watson and a core member of the Hackney Phalanx. Churton’s position within the inner circle of the Hackney Phalanx was reinforced in 1832 when he married John Watson’s eldest daughter, Caroline. Academically, however, Churton was successful rather than remarkable. He had entered Christ Church, Oxford, as a commoner in 1818 and gained his BA in 1821 (being placed in the second class for

⁵⁸[DUL] TC, 24: Van Mildert to Thorp, 18 August 1831.

⁵⁹[DUL] TC, 30: Van Mildert to Thorp, 26 August 1831.

⁶⁰[DUL] TC, 45: List of staff, September 1831. In most cases, only surnames were included, which has left the identity of some of the candidates uncertain. Likely identities are: John Davison of Oriel College, Oxford; Edward Parr Greswell of Corpus Christi College, Oxford; John Keble; a fourth name that is unclear for Divinity; and Thomas Gaisford of Christ Church, Oxford; Renn Dickson Hampden of Oriel College, Oxford; John Otley of Oriel College, Oxford; C.J. Plumer, Van Mildert’s Chaplain; and Henry Arthur Woodgate of St John’s College, Oxford for the Greek Chair.

classics) and then his MA in 1824. After Oxford, he was an assistant master at Charterhouse and was ordained as a priest in 1827. In November 1831, Gaisford advised Van Mildert that although Churton had ‘enough of natural talent, and of acquired learning’, he lacked ‘that discretion without which talent ... may be mischievous’.⁶¹ Van Mildert heeded Gaisford’s warning and Churton was not approached about the professorship, though in 1835 the Bishop appointed him as Rector of Crayke in the North Riding of Yorkshire.

Gaisford first mentioned William Mills as a potential candidate in November 1831, but it was not until June 1833 that Van Mildert renewed his enquiries.⁶² Mills was Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford and was Dr. White’s Professor of Moral Philosophy. This particular professorship included the Dean of Christ Church amongst its electors.⁶³ The Bishop was about to offer Mills the role when Thorp passed on some concerns about his suitability from the current Sub-Dean, Samuel Smith. Smith was Gaisford’s predecessor in the Deanery at Christ Church and he would therefore have been one of the electors who appointed Mills.⁶⁴ Van Mildert wavered and waited anxiously for further comment from Thorp.⁶⁵ Eventually, however, the Bishop was satisfied as to Mills’ suitability and on 2 July he wrote offering him the professorship,⁶⁶ for ‘£400 at least’.⁶⁷ Mills, however, declined by return of post: ‘another University disappointment’, grumbled Van Mildert.⁶⁸

The Bishop next turned his attention to Henry Jenkyns and again asked Gaisford for his opinion. Gaisford had married Jenkyns’ sister, Jane Catherine, in May the previous year, but still the Bishop trusted that he would give ‘an honest opinion, notwithstanding any personal bias’.⁶⁹ Jenkyns had been educated at Eton College before proceeding

⁶¹Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 166.

⁶²[Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Gaisford to Van Mildert, 27 November 1831; [DUL] TC, 584: Thorp to Van Mildert, 14 June 1833.

⁶³*Oxford University Calendar* 1833, p. 41.

⁶⁴[DUL] TC, 135: Thorp to Van Mildert, 25 June 1833.

⁶⁵[DUL] TC, 136: Thorp to Van Mildert, 28 June 1833.

⁶⁶[DCL] VML, 299: Van Mildert to Thorp, 3 July 1833.

⁶⁷[DUL] TC, 135: Thorp to Van Mildert, 25 June 1833.

⁶⁸[DCL] VML, 300–1: Van Mildert to Thorp, 8 July 1833.

⁶⁹[DCL] VML, 300–1: Van Mildert to Thorp, 8 July 1833.

as a Scholar to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in 1813. In 1816, he was placed in the first class for his final examinations for both Classics and Mathematics—an outstanding result—and graduated with a BA in 1817 and an MA in 1819. He was elected to one of the highly prestigious Fellowships at Oriel College in 1818, under Copleston as Provost, and although he was never a tutor, he did help with the running of the College, acting as Treasurer in 1831.⁷⁰ He was well respected outside Oxford and shortly before he was offered the Chair at Durham, he was also a potential candidate for Principal of King's College, London (a post he was not attracted to) and for Principal of St Mary's Hall, Oxford.⁷¹

Jenkyns' appointment was confirmed only shortly before the start of the first term. Yet when he wrote to Van Mildert on 19 October 1833, little more than a week before the first students arrived, he still asked for more time to consider his position. He was concerned that 'succession to a predendal stall' remained uncertain and he also wanted to 'be more thoroughly acquainted ... with the services required'. He therefore proposed coming to Durham to undertake further inquiries and would then finally decide whether or not to accept.⁷² Jenkyns duly travelled north and on 28 October 1833, he wrote to Van Mildert to confirm his acceptance. By this point, his enthusiasm had taken over and even before his formal appointment, he entered into his new duties by examining students for admission that very morning.⁷³

HUGH JAMES ROSE

Van Mildert spent the greatest amount of time considering the most senior position. 'I am still balancing between Mr Le Bas & Mr Rose for the Divinity Professorship', he told the Warden in January 1832, 'or (in case of their declining it) Mr Greswell'.⁷⁴ All three men were respected

⁷⁰R. Brent, 'The Oriel Noetics', in Brock and Curthoys (eds.), *History of the University of Oxford: Volume 6*, pp. 72–76; Evans, *University of Oxford*, pp. 246–47; and K.C. Turpin, 'The Ascendancy of Oriel', in Brock and Curthoys (eds.), *History of the University of Oxford: Volume 6*, pp. 183–92.

⁷¹A.S. Havens, 'Henry Jenkyns on the Thirty-Nine Articles: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Anglican Confessionalism' (MA thesis, Durham University, 1982), pp. 34–36.

⁷²[Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Jenkyns to Van Mildert, 19 October 1833.

⁷³[Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Jenkyns to Van Mildert, 28 October 1833.

⁷⁴[DCL] VML, 218–20: Van Mildert to Thorp, 7 January 1832.

and well-known scholars and were also, most importantly, known to Van Mildert and his inner circle. Elected Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge in 1801, by January 1832, Charles Webb Le Bas was the Dean and Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy at the East India College, Haileybury. He was associated with the Hackney Phalanx and contributed to the *British Critic* and the *British Magazine*; both titles were staunchly High Church and the *British Critic* had briefly, in 1811, been edited by Van Mildert after it had been purchased by Joshua Watson and Henry Handley Norris.⁷⁵ With the right sort of ecclesiological principles, he was a strong candidate.

Edward Parr Greswell had been made Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in 1823 and was younger than Le Bas by almost 20 years. In 1832, the majority of his successful theological career lay in front of him. Although over a year later he was still under consideration by Van Mildert, the Bishop was disinclined to approach him: 'though there can be no doubt of his high scholarship', he wrote, 'I am not equally assured of his theological attainments, nor of his aptitude for lecturing, and I have been told that he is much of a recluse in his habits'.⁷⁶ This latter comment echoed Gaisford, who had told the Bishop that in his view, Greswell was 'a very learned man and in industry indefatigable—but his habits are retiring'.⁷⁷

On 21 June 1833, Van Mildert offered the Divinity Chair not to Le Bas, Rose or Greswell, but to John James Blunt, Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge.⁷⁸ He too was High Church and the Bishop had been impressed by his Hulsean Lectures; in 1831, he had spoken on the veracity of the historical books of the Old Testament, while in 1832, he addressed the principles for the proper understanding of the Mosaic writings.⁷⁹ Van Mildert also regarded several of his articles in the *Quarterly Review* highly, and his *Sketch of the Reformation in England* (1832) had given the Bishop 'a most favourable opinion of his talents for popular writing, as well as his solid acquirements, his judgement, temper, and taste'.⁸⁰

⁷⁵Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 48.

⁷⁶[DUL] TC, 132: Van Mildert to Thorp, 24 May 1833.

⁷⁷[Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Gaisford to Van Mildert, 26 December 1831.

⁷⁸[DUL] TC, 135: Van Mildert to Thorp, 25 June 1833.

⁷⁹[DUL] TC, 132: Van Mildert to Thorp, 24 May 1833.

⁸⁰[DUL] TC, 135: Van Mildert to Thorp, 25 June 1833; vol. 1, f132: Van Mildert to Thorp, 24 May 1833.

Christopher Wordsworth, the Master of Trinity College and another elder of the Hackney Phalanx, assured the Bishop that Blunt was ‘much esteemed’ in Cambridge. Blunt declined the offer, much to the Bishop’s surprise, explaining to Van Mildert that he had ‘formed ... plans of life’ which meant that he could not take on the role; this rejection threw Van Mildert ‘into sad perplexity’.⁸¹

Soon after this disappointment, the Bishop offered Hugh James Rose the position through their mutual friend, Joshua Watson.⁸² The Bishop had already used Watson in June to solicit Rose’s view on a move north.⁸³ Rose was not, however, favoured by all those close to the Bishop and crucially Gaisford did not support his candidature. ‘Learning’, he told Van Mildert in January 1832 respecting both Rose and Greswell, ‘probably they both possess enough & to share—but that is not the only qualification necessary to enable persons to fill the office with advantage.’⁸⁴ Gaisford did not elaborate on what he felt they lacked, but his disinclination to support Rose for the professorship would have carried great weight with Van Mildert and no doubt contributed to Rose initially being overlooked in favour of Blunt.

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

⁸¹[DUL] TC, 132: Van Mildert to Thorp, 24 May 1833; [Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Blunt to Van Mildert, 1 July 1833; and [DCL] VML, 299: Van Mildert to Thorp, 3 July 1833.

⁸²[Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Rose to Van Mildert, 16 July 1833.

⁸³J.W. Burgon, *Lives of Twelve Good Men* (London, 1888), p. 182.

⁸⁴[Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Gaisford to Van Mildert, 5 January 1832.

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

the German church from a dead scholastic orthodoxy (though he later changed his opinion). Rose responded in further publications, as did Pusey, creating what Pusey called the ‘German war’.⁸⁶

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

From 1829 to 1833, Rose served as Christian Advocate at Cambridge, with some of the fruits of his preaching being published in 1831 as *Eight Sermons Preached before the University of Cambridge*. This work was dedicated to Joshua Watson. Alongside his Hackney Phalanx affiliations, Rose was also an early supporter of the Tractarians; indeed, it was Rose who convened the Hadleigh Conference when he hosted Hurrell Froude, William Palmer and Arthur Percival at his vicarage in Suffolk in July 1833.⁹⁰ This is widely regarded as the start of the Oxford Movement.⁹¹ The Oxford Movement quickly became one of the most important British religious parties of the nineteenth century. The theology of the Movement was laid out in a series of ‘Tracts for the Times’, which expressed concerns about lay interference in purely ecclesiastical matters and re-stated the unique position of the Established Church as against other denominations, including affirming its Apostolic roots. Rose had founded the *British Magazine* in 1832, which would

⁸⁶D.M. Thompson, *Cambridge Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 56–57; Webster, *Joshua Watson*, pp. 95–96.

⁸⁷Church, *The Oxford Movement*, pp. 85–87.

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

⁸⁹*British Critic*, 1 (1827), pp. 175–211; Valone, ‘Hugh James Rose’s Anglican Critique’.

⁹⁰This is William Patrick Palmer (1803–1885) of Worcester College, Oxford, and not William Palmer (1811–1879) of Magdalen College, Oxford, who was the first Senior Tutor of the University.

⁹¹Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, pp. 70–71; Church, *The Oxford Movement*, pp. 84–89; and Webster, *Joshua Watson*, pp. 101–2.

become a significant voice for the Tractarians (as members of the Oxford Movement were also called), though he would later distance himself from them.⁹²

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

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

ANNEXATION OF STALLS FOR THE PROFESSORS

Jenkyns and Rose accepted their new duties on the understanding that in due course, their positions would in some form be annexed to Stalls in the Cathedral, but both men also harboured fears that the promised endowment might never be made. On these grounds, they were at first anxious only to agree to the conditional acceptance of their roles, leaving

⁹²Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context*, pp. 290–92.

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

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

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

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

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

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

some room for their departure should the promised endowment fail. In the interim period, the Chapter agreed that both Professors would receive an annual salary of £500, plus a portion of the tuition fees paid by students.⁹⁹ To give a comparison, the first Principal of King's College, London, William Otter, was paid £800, so these salaries were reasonable, if not luxurious.¹⁰⁰

It was always intended that the revenues of the Dean and Chapter would be used for the University, but on the important question of how Stalls would be annexed to the two senior professorships, there was much less unanimity. Van Mildert felt the urgency of concluding the discussion in order to facilitate his negotiations with potential Professors, but as the University prepared to admit the first students, there was still no agreement.¹⁰¹ Settling initial salaries for the Professors bought some time for further discussion, but by February 1834, a conclusion seemed just as elusive as ever. The Bishop put forward two possibilities: either to nominate three specific Stalls to be annexed to the Warden and the two senior Professors, and then assign them as they became vacant; or to simply assign the first three Stalls that became vacant, whichever three Stalls those might be. The Bishop's preference was for the former course and he suggested that the 11th Stall should be attached to the Warden, the 1st Stall to the Professor of Divinity, and the 3rd Stall to the Professor of Greek. As the 11th Stall was well known to be the richest, Van Mildert added that this would clearly mark the Warden out as standing 'very next ... to the Deanery itself'.¹⁰² Thorp felt that it 'would be quite unfair' if the Bishop bound himself to give over the first three Stalls that fell vacant, as this would leave him with no possibility of offering personal preferment until a fourth Stall was vacated. On these grounds, he also favoured the Bishop's proposal and agreed that 'if the eleventh stall is to belong to the University', then 'it should go to the Warden'.¹⁰³

The Chapter concurred with the Bishop's proposal too. However, in order to bind Van Mildert's successors to it, parliamentary approval was once again required. This raised all the same concerns as with the

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

¹⁰⁰Anderson, *British Universities*, p. 18; Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, pp. 83–84, 89.

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

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

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

first University Bill in 1832. Although their new Bill was again a Private one, the Sub-Dean, Smith, who then held the 11th Stall, was concerned that their enemies in Parliament might attempt ‘declaring it to relate so much to a Publick Establishment that they will change its character and treat is as a Publick Act’. While Smith greatly feared ‘the temper of both Houses, especially of the H. of Commons’, he was also concerned about the Lords and especially Brougham, the Lord Chancellor: ‘look at the Woolsack as well as to many others’, he cautioned.¹⁰⁴ Still, the Bill could not be avoided and so a petition was presented to the House of Lords on 21 March 1834, though (much to Van Mildert’s annoyance) the Chapter’s seal could not be added until 4 April.¹⁰⁵

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

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

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

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

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

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

by the expedient of elevating the current incumbents to a See (or other royal appointment). This might appear as little more than paranoia, but the political situation in 1834 remained tense and Rose feared the possible actions of a reforming Whig government. To counter any concern about the potential meddling of unfriendly politicians in the University's business, the Bishop became convinced that 'the patronage of the University offices' had to be retained 'exclusively in the hands of the Bishop', though he hoped that this could be achieved without 'barring the prerogative of the crown'.¹⁰⁸

Thorp did not share the Bishop's concerns. He argued that 'if there be danger of an occasional misuse of patronage, there is a countervailing advantage in leaving to the Crown that interest in the University which in the natural course of things it will possess'.¹⁰⁹ This response shocked an already agitated Van Mildert. Unless the Crown prerogative was barred, he told Thorp, he was entirely convinced 'that future evil, and at no distant time, may be contemplated; and of a very formidable kind'. The Bishop continued to accuse the Warden of vacillating. 'I cannot but think that your opinions in this respect have undergone some considerable change', he remarked angrily, and he reminded Thorp that it was his 'observation that the present Ministry would assuredly avail themselves, with eagerness, of any opportunity to get hold upon any of the University Offices'. Van Mildert could see only potential conspiracy and disaster: 'What if Dr Arnold were to replace yourself, or Sidney Smith our Professor Rose?'¹¹⁰ he asked Thorp rhetorically, echoing fears he had been fed by Rose earlier when he told the Bishop that he trembled 'to think what a person like Dr Arnold, thrust into the Chapter on advancement of any member ... might do, to liberalize' the University.¹¹¹ Thorp responded sharply; he 'did not attach any weight to an apprehension in my view altogether visionary'. Besides, the Warden argued, 'if the Government desire the command of the University, they

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

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

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

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

will best secure it through the Deanery', as the Deanery had remained a Crown appointment long after the right to collate to the Stalls had passed to the Bishop.¹¹² Their disagreement over the barring of the Crown Prerogative strained relations between Van Mildert and Thorp, though Varley's view that it meant that Van Mildert 'could no longer be confident that Thorp's vision of the University chimed with his own' is exaggerated.¹¹³

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

ROSE'S DEPARTURE

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

Rose's principal concern was the period he was expected to be resident. At Rose's insistence, the course for Divinity students (those students who were studying towards the Licence in Theology) was to

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

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

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

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

last eight months rather than six months, as was required for the Arts course.¹¹⁶ Although this was Rose's own plan, he also maintained that due to his poor health, he could not personally be resident throughout the year; he argued that it would necessary for him to quit Durham during the winter.

Rose also insisted that two lecturers or Professors, and in due time a third, would be necessary to cover the work. 'I am quite sure that no justice can be done to Clerical Education by one man', he told Jenkyns. He therefore pressed for an assistant to 'be appointed immediately' and it seems that Van Mildert consented. Rose also sought to enlist Jenkyns' assistance and asked him to deliver 'one course for one term only (the Epiphany Term) on the Criticism & Interpretation of the Greek Text'.¹¹⁷ 'They overwork me here', Rose complained to Watson in February 1834, 'for while my brother Professor has two Lectures a week, I have seven days' lectures, and the Sunday evening lecture is a very distressing one.'¹¹⁸ Such a workload was certainly unusual compared to the expectations placed on professors at Oxford and Cambridge, but in the Scottish universities, as well as the new London colleges, professors could lecture for five days a week, in some instances for three or four hours a day.¹¹⁹

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

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

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

¹¹⁸Rose to Watson, February 1834, quoted in Burgon, *Twelve Good Men*, pp. 187–88.

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

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

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

the [Bishop's] death, both we & the [University] stand in a most awkward position.'¹²²

Rose quit Durham after the Epiphany Term, which ended on 19 March: 'I leave this beautiful place with great regret; uncertain as it is whether I shall ever return', he wrote to Newman.¹²³ His lectures in the Easter Term were taken by his brother, Henry John Rose. While Thorp at least claimed that he wished to retain Rose, he was also concerned that they had already 'gone too far in the endeavour to secure' his services.¹²⁴ For his part, Van Mildert advised the Chapter that he would 'refrain purposely from offering any opinion of my own on the measures to be adopted' to secure Rose's services, but that it would give him 'great satisfaction to find that regulations can be framed, which may ensure to the University the continued services of Mr Rose, consistently with a due regard to the future as well as the present welfare of our Institution'.¹²⁵

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

The permanent separation was put beyond doubt when Rose wrote to Van Mildert on 4 October 1834: 'my connexion with the University of Durham is now closed', he confirmed. While 'no situation either in my own University, or in the world at large, would have had the same attraction for me as the Professorship at Durham', Rose continued, he regretted that this had 'been made impossible ... by the arrangements

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

now made'.¹²⁹ Such a claim is clearly preposterous: Rose was reluctant to take up the role, was unhappy while in residence and quit almost as soon as he could.

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

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

TEMPLE CHEVALLIER

While the disputes with Rose played out, it should not be forgotten that, following Carr's unexpected death, the University remained without a Professor of Mathematics. A replacement for Carr did not come quickly and from 1833 to 1835, the Professor's duties were undertaken by Charles Whitley, the Reader in Natural Philosophy and Junior Tutor. Whitley had entered St John's College, Cambridge, as a Scholar in 1826 and graduated with a BA in 1830 as Senior Wrangler in the Mathematical

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

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

¹³¹[DCL] VML, 430–31: Van Mildert to Thorp, 24 September 1834.

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

Tripes and in the Second Class of the Classical Tripos. He became a Fellow of his College in 1831 and obtained his MA in 1833. In 1831, he had briefly acted as Mathematical Tutor at Jesus College.¹³³ No less a luminary as the astronomer and mathematician George Airy attested that Whitley was an ‘excellent mathematician’.¹³⁴ Whitley had expressed an interest in professorships at Durham as early as January 1832, before taking the Readership in Natural Philosophy.¹³⁵ When Carr died, he once again declared himself a candidate for the vacant professorship.¹³⁶

Although Whitley stayed at the University for the remainder of his life and played a prominent role in its development, he was again overlooked, this time by a different Cambridge scholar: Temple Chevallier. Like Rose and Jenkyns, Chevallier’s academic record was impeccable and he ranked amongst the most able of his generation. In October 1834, when he moved to Durham, Chevallier was a Tutor at Catharine Hall, Cambridge.¹³⁷ He had first entered the University in 1813 when he matriculated at Pembroke Hall, from the Grammar School at Ipswich.¹³⁸ He enjoyed a glittering academic career at the University as a student and then a Fellow. He won the Bell Scholarship in 1814, coincidentally second alongside Hugh James Rose, and graduated with a BA in 1817 as the second Wrangler and the second Smith’s prizeman. Elected quickly to a Fellowship at Pembroke Hall in 1819, the following year he graduated with an MA and moved to Catharine Hall as Fellow and Tutor. In his work as Tutor at Catharine Hall, he taught across mathematical and classical subjects, and proved equally adept at both disciplines. Catharine Hall was a small college, but it maintained high academic standards and the prestige of its Fellowships had grown throughout the first part of the nineteenth century.¹³⁹ In 1821, 1822 and 1825, Chevallier served

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

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

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

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

¹³⁷St. Catharine’s College from 1860.

¹³⁸Pembroke College from 1856.

¹³⁹E.E. Rich, ‘The Nineteenth Century’, in E.E. Rich (ed.), *St. Catharine’s College Cambridge 1473–1973: A Volume of Essays to Commemorate the Quincentenary of the Foundation of the College* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 164–247, at p. 202; O. MacDonagh,

as one of the two moderators (examiners) in the Mathematical Tripos and was the Hulsean Lecturer for 1826 and 1827. He took the historical types contained in the Old Testament, and the proofs of divine power and wisdom as derived from the study of astronomy, as his subjects. It has been argued that his Hulsean Lectures inspired William Whewell's more famous work on the study of astronomy and physics as evidence for the existence of 'a creating and presiding Intelligence' in the Bridgewater Treaties.¹⁴⁰ Chevallier, like Whewell, was part of that body of nineteenth-century science that (suitably for a Cambridge man) took Newton as their role model in uniting 'an ardent love for the promotion of science with feelings of piety and reverence to God'.¹⁴¹ William Whewell was briefly considered by Van Mildert for the Divinity Chair, but he stood 'so very high in Science', thought the Bishop, that he could 'hardly suppose he can much have turned his mind to any regular course of Theological Study'.¹⁴²

This appointment marked a change in direction, as there were no substantial existing connections between Chevallier and Durham or between Chevallier and Van Mildert's circle of trusted friends. The tensions with Rose might have tended towards greater inwardness in future appointments, and Van Mildert certainly seemed inclined to do so. 'I confess, after what has passed respecting Mr Rose', the Bishop told Thorp in October 1834, 'I incline to think that it may be almost better at once to fill up the vacant office with one already known to the Chapter, (not only as to talents & attainments, but also as to disposition & temper).'¹⁴³ But such an approach would not match Thorp's expectation. The Chapter, not the Bishop, was responsible for the appointment of the Professor of Mathematics, which in practice meant Thorp. The Warden still had

'The Nineteenth-Century College; Rise, Decline and Resurgence', in Rich (ed.), *St. Catharine's College*, pp. 248–65, at pp. 252–55.

¹⁴⁰G.F. Browne, *St. Catharine's College* (London, 1902), p. 219; W. Whewell, *Astronomy and General Physics Considered with Reference to Natural Theology* (London, 1833), p. 1.

¹⁴¹T. Chevallier, *On the Proofs of Divine Power and Wisdom Derived from the Study of Astronomy* (Cambridge, 1827), p. 83.

¹⁴²[DCL] VML, 444–6: Van Mildert to Thorp, 25 October 1834.

¹⁴³[DCL] VML, 444–46: Van Mildert to Thorp, 25 October 1834.

high ambitions and so he sought out a highly regarded and eminent individual for the role.

Chevallier's move north happened suddenly. On 31 October 1834, he sent a letter to his intimate friend, George Elwes Corrie¹⁴⁴: 'unless some little bird of the air shall have told you the secret', he wrote, 'you will be surprised to receive a letter from me with the present date'. He continued:

A few weeks ago, I had a communication from the Warden of the University here, offering me the Mathematical Professorship, which will be filled up this time next year; and wishing me to see the place & plans before I made up my mind. While I was debating the point, I had another letter from him, requesting me to take the lectures of the Divinity students for this time, Rose having resigned the Professorship.¹⁴⁵

It was the Divinity Chair which interested Chevallier, not the Mathematical one, and it was only because he felt that lecturing the Divinity students 'offered a prospect of the theological department' that he had 'determined to undertake the charge'.¹⁴⁶ He assured Corrie that the only circumstances in which he might consider the Mathematical Professorship was if he saw 'a fair prospect of obtaining at the same time some parochial duty: for after having been so long engaged in a parish, I do not mean to secularize myself so completely as I should do in that case'. Although remembered more for his scientific work, Chevallier described the study 'of the sacred writings' as affording 'the highest pleasure to every mind':

It satisfies the understanding: it delights the imagination: it engages the affections. It speaks of subjects of vital interest to every soul of man; by which every one is required to regulate his life, and by which he will be judged at the great day.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴They met at Catharine Hall, where Corrie was also a Fellow and Tutor. In 1838, Corrie was appointed Norrisian Professor of Divinity, and Master of Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1849. He graduated as the last Wrangler in the same year in which Chevallier was second Wrangler.

¹⁴⁵[DUL] CC, 2: Chevallier to Corrie, 31 October 1834.

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

¹⁴⁷Chevallier, *Proofs of Divine Power*, p. 176.

If he were offered the Divinity Professorship, however, he would willingly forgo the parish connection ‘as the studies themselves will be more professional, & there is also a Sunday lecture to the young men, [which] is equivalent to a sermon’.¹⁴⁸ This was the same Sunday lecture that Rose had found ‘very distressing’.¹⁴⁹

After moving to Durham, Chevallier pressed his case for the Divinity Chair. This persistence irritated Van Mildert. ‘It is quite impossible for me yet to determine, or even to think upon a Successor to the Divinity Chair’, he told Thorp in early December 1834, ‘& unless some relief can be afforded me, my present state of suffering will make it impossible for me to set about it’, he added.¹⁵⁰ Later that month, the Bishop’s despair had only worsened: ‘most willingly [would] I at once transfer the patronage of the Office to the Chapter’, he told Thorp, ‘so as to rid myself of the plague & responsibility, for which I find myself now growing wholly unfit’.¹⁵¹ Chevallier’s patience was wearing thin too, and in February 1835, he told Corrie that he had ‘declined the Mathematical Professorship; & know no more about the Divinity Professorship than the man in the moon’.¹⁵²

Just as it seemed that Durham was about to lose the services of another Professor, in May 1835 Chevallier was given the charge of the parish of Esh. Evidently untroubled by concerns over pluralism, this satisfied his desire for a parochial charge and eased his move into the Mathematical Chair. He embraced his new role at Esh, even though it was a challenging parish which included the Roman Catholic seminary at Ushaw and a large population of Roman Catholics with it. He later rejected a parish in Durham City and remained at Esh until his death in 1873.¹⁵³

Having settled the parish appointment, Chevallier was officially made Professor of Mathematics in July 1835 and was granted a stipend of £400 per year.¹⁵⁴ ‘The Readership in Hebrew with the Stipend of £50’

¹⁴⁸[DUL] CC, 2: Chevallier to Corrie, 31 October 1834.

¹⁴⁹Rose to Watson, February 1834, quoted in Burgon, *Twelve Good Men*, pp. 187–88.

¹⁵⁰[DCL] VML, 453–54: Van Mildert to Thorp, 1 December 1834.

¹⁵¹[DCL] VML, 457–59: Van Mildert to Thorp, 23 December 1834.

¹⁵²[DUL] CC, 5: Chevallier to Corrie, 12 February 1835.

¹⁵³[DUL] CC, 34: Chevallier to Corrie, 17 October 1838.

¹⁵⁴[DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 20 July 1835.

and ‘the Office of Registrar of the University with a Stipend of £10’ were added in November 1835.¹⁵⁵

SETTLEMENT OF THE PROFESSORIAL POSITIONS

As already noted, Van Mildert was inclined to be cautious in finding Rose’s replacement. Therefore, rather than admit ‘any entire stranger’, he thought of asking Jenkyns to move from the Greek to the Divinity Chair, and then filling the Greek Chair with Thomas Piele, one of the Senior Fellows.¹⁵⁶ The Bishop had in fact originally considered Piele for the role, before appointing Jenkyns instead.¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, he told Thorp that he could ‘give no pledge yet, but only throw out hints for cogitation’. The Chapter urged the Bishop to make an appointment to replace Rose, but Van Mildert found himself ‘utterly unable to do’ so and begged Thorp: ‘Pray, help me, if you can.’¹⁵⁸ Van Mildert therefore asked the Chapter to put in place temporary arrangements for the Divinity students.¹⁵⁹ The situation rested there for almost a year as Jenkyns and Chevallier shared the duties of the Divinity Professor.

Jenkyns was not immune to concerns about the annexation of Stalls, but, unlike Rose, he remained comparatively sanguine over the lack of progress. Jenkyns would eventually obtain a Stall, but this preferment did not occur until October 1839. Part of the explanation for his determination to remain at the University in the short term seems to lay simply with Jenkyns’ temperament: he was much less inclined to dispute than Rose. Unlike Rose, he was always one step away from the centre of controversy, acting as an arbitrator, not an agitator.¹⁶⁰ A more Machiavellian explanation is also possible. With Carr’s death and Rose’s resignation, Jenkyns appreciated his importance to the University. ‘I do trust that the present Chapter will not separate, without sealing some code of statutes for me however short’, he told Thorp in early November 1834. He added ominously that if no such statutes were passed, then

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

¹⁵⁶[DCL] VML, 444–46: Van Mildert to Thorp, 25 October 1834.

¹⁵⁷[DUL] TC, 118: Van Mildert to Thorp, 30 March 1833.

¹⁵⁸[DCL] VML, 440–41: Van Mildert to Thorp, 15 October 1834.

¹⁵⁹[DCL] VML, 438: Van Mildert to Thorp, 11 October 1834.

¹⁶⁰Havens, ‘Henry Jenkyns’, p. 43.

‘shaken as we are already, I am sure we shall fall to pieces’.¹⁶¹ Was this an innocent observation or a threat of resignation? Whether encouraged by Jenkyns or not, the Chapter agreed to guarantee the ‘Stipends of the Professors of Greek and Divinity ... from the Funds appropriated to the maintenance of the University, as well as the Stipends of the other Professors and Tutors’,¹⁶² and the University’s statutes were then passed on 21 November.¹⁶³

In September 1835, Van Mildert finally offered the Divinity Chair to Jenkyns.¹⁶⁴ Jenkyns, however, was concerned that this move would disadvantage him in relation to the annexation of Stalls. By the time the Bishop made this proposal, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were actively reviewing cathedral dignities, and significant but unknown changes were expected. Van Mildert warned Jenkyns that the annexation of the Stalls had been ‘so far taken out of [his] hands’ that he was not able to ‘answer for its eventual result’.¹⁶⁵ There was a second problem too: as Greek Professor, Jenkyns had been promised the 3rd Stall, which was then held by Richard Prosser, while the Divinity Professor was promised the richer 1st Stall, then held by Thomas Gisborne. As Jenkyns had to wait until a Stall was vacated by preferment or death, it was material that Prosser was 88 while Gisborne was a mere 77 years old. In the natural order of things, this meant that he was more likely to gain the Stall intended for the Greek Professor before that intended for the Divinity Professor.¹⁶⁶ Jenkyns therefore felt it safer to continue to retain the Greek Chair formally, even while undertaking the duties of the Divinity Professor.

Nevertheless, although the formal appointment had not been made, Jenkyns was now the *de facto* Divinity Professor. This left Chevallier with what he called ‘the incongruous offices of Mathematician & Hebrew lecturer’ and a sense of frustration: ‘an able man’, Chevallier said of Jenkyns, ‘but wants unction: has never had the charge of a parish’.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶¹[Bal] JP, IVA.2: Jenkyns to Thorp, 11(?) November 1834.

¹⁶²[DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 15 November 1834.

¹⁶³[DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 21 November 1834.

¹⁶⁴[Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Van Mildert to Jenkyns, 28 September 1835.

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

¹⁶⁶[Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Jenkyns to Van Mildert, 5 October 1835.

¹⁶⁷[DUL] CC, 9: Chevallier to Corrie, 21 November 1835.

Corrie concurred: 'too much of your [Bishop]'s school to possess much "unction"', he fancied.¹⁶⁸

Meanwhile, the Ecclesiastical Commission continued to cause great uncertainty for Chapters. Anxious cases were put forward to retain dignities, to understand local arrangements and to recognise existing commitments. The Chapter at Durham were more anxious than most, concerned not only with the future state of the Chapter itself but with the University too. In January 1836, the Warden and Senate appealed to the Commissioners concerning the proposed annexation of Stalls. While noting that the attempted Bill in 1834 had been withdrawn, they fully believed that it would 'have been again brought forward last year but for the appointment of the Ecclesiastical Commission'. The delay 'thus occasioned', they complained, was 'obviously most prejudicial to the well-being of the University', especially, they emphasised, as the 'state of uncertainty', which 'would be felt seriously even by an old establishment', pressed 'far more seriously on one which is still in its infancy'.¹⁶⁹

Van Mildert died the following month, but the new Bishop, Maltby, intended to honour the agreements entered into by his predecessor respecting the Stalls as he had honoured the intention to secure a Charter. In June 1836, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners recognised the undertaking entered into by Van Mildert and agreed a specific exemption to the suppression of the Stalls for Jenkyns, so that he would be appointed to the 3rd Stall when it was vacated by Prosser. Nevertheless, the Commissioners recommended that Durham should be left with only four Stalls. With the continuing uncertainty about the funds available to the University, there was little choice but to maintain the temporary arrangement by which Jenkyns covered Divinity while formally retaining the Greek Chair. In March 1839, it was noted that the Divinity Chair was left vacant 'for want of endowment'.¹⁷⁰

Nothing could now happen until Prosser or Gisborne died. It was Prosser who obliged on 8 October 1839, thus releasing the 3rd Stall which he had held since 1804. Maltby installed Jenkyns into the Stall allocated for the Greek Professor in October 1839. Jenkyns was now a member of the Chapter, though he continued to formally retain his

¹⁶⁸[DUL] CC, 10: Corrie to Chevallier, 28 November 1835.

¹⁶⁹[DUL] OSHDB, CA4/3h: Communication to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, 9 January 1836.

¹⁷⁰[DUL] TC, 336: Thorp to Maltby, 9 March 1839.

position as Professor of Greek. As late as March 1840, the Senate reaffirmed the plan that the 1st Stall should be annexed to the Divinity Professor and the 3rd Stall to the Greek Professor. However, now the intention for the 11th Stall was that it should be used for the general funds of the University, not be given to the Warden.

Instead of holding the 11th Stall, the Dean was now to be the Warden.¹⁷¹ A petition was drafted for the Wardenship to be annexed to the Deanery, and hence for Thorp to become Dean upon the next vacancy.¹⁷² Not long after this resolution, in July 1840, Jenkinson died. Maltby no doubt influenced the decision to appoint George Waddington as his successor, as in 1833 he had preferred Waddington to a prebendal stall in his Diocesan Cathedral as the Bishop of Chichester. Waddington was installed in the Deanery at Durham on 26 September 1840.

The matter of future annexation and the endowment of Stalls was finally settled in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners Act, which gained Royal Assent on 11 August 1840, and by an Order in Council dated 4 June 1841, which brought in (with some modifications) the recommendations of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners contained in their Fourth Report from June 1836.¹⁷³ By this settlement, the Wardenship would be annexed to the Deanery upon Thorp standing down, but that until then, he would receive an annual salary of £500. This was the first salary Thorp had drawn as Warden, having previously undertaken the role gratuitously, benefiting as he did from his other positions, including the 4th Stall. As Thorp had been expecting the 11th Stall, promised him by Van Mildert, he felt aggrieved that his just expectations had been ignored while Jenkyns' had been honoured.

As Jenkyns was in the 3rd Stall, at its full value, the Order in Council annexed this Stall to the Divinity Professor when was appointed to the role permanently in January 1841. At the next vacancy, however, the alterations to regulate the income of the Stalls would be made and the 3rd Stall would be worth £1000, like the other remaining Stalls. Thus, the permanent endowment to the Professorship of Divinity was the 3rd Stall, at the reduced income of £1000 a year, and a proportion of fees from the students.

¹⁷¹[DUL] Senate Minutes: 24 March 1840.

¹⁷²[Bal] JP, IVB.[B]: Draft petition, date uncertain but between March and July 1840.

¹⁷³3 & 4 Victoria, cap. 113, known as the Cathedrals, Dean and Chapters, or Ecclesiastical Commissioners Act 1840.

By the same Order, it was agreed that Chevallier's Chair should be expanded and retitled Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy, with an annual salary of £700. It was also agreed that the Professorship of Greek and Classical Literature should be annexed to the 11th Stall, which was vacant following Smith's death in January 1841, but at the reduced standard rate of £1000.

The Greek Professorship and 11th Stall were eventually by John Edwards, who was installed in June 1841. There is a startling contrast between the initial appointments under Van Mildert and this appointment made under Maltby. Whereas Van Mildert had endeavoured to recruit men of the very highest calibre, the appointment of John Edwards indicated that his successor held much lower ambitions. John Mitchinson, a schoolboy in Durham and later Bishop of Barbados, recalled that Edwards was 'academically ... undistinguished' in comparison to Jenkyns, who he held in high esteem 'as a relic of a more magnificent past' who had survived 'far on into a parsimonious and utilitarian present'.¹⁷⁴ The possibility of rich remuneration that had tempted Rose and Jenkyns north had been taken away by the reforms of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the initial optimism which pervaded the University had quickly evaporated too. Edwards was not of the same calibre as men like Rose, Jenkyns or Chevallier—or, indeed, Maltby, who was himself a highly regarded Greek scholar. After being educated at the Grammar School in Huntingdon, where his father was Headmaster, Edwards was admitted scholar to St John's College, Cambridge in 1806. He migrated to Jesus College and graduated with a BA in 1810 and an MA in 1813; his university career was unremarkable. He was ordained as a deacon in 1811 and served as curate of Brampton, Hunts until 1814, when he became Rector of South Ferriby, Lincs, though he never resided there. In 1821, he moved to become Curate-in-Charge of Warboys, Hunts, and Assistant Master at Harrow School. He was appointed Headmaster of Bury St Edmunds School in 1828. In 1825, Edwards dedicated his one published work to Maltby. He died 1 April 1862, during the heat of the Royal Commission on the University.

¹⁷⁴[Pem] Mitchinson Paper, 85: Memoirs of John Mitchinson.

CONCLUSION

Probably above all other things, the success of a university depends on the ability and energy of its staff. This is crucial to understand the ‘relief’ Van Mildert expressed in having ‘placed the three chief officers at my disposal in the hands of persons on whom I can so entirely rely’.¹⁷⁵ Yet his relief was short-lived. The very next day, Carr died, and in less than a year he would receive Rose’s acrimonious resignation. But although some of the early appointments were not successful, the initial round of recruitment still brought to Durham not only a series of eminent individuals, but also a talented group who would shape the University over the next three decades.

Despite his initial misgivings, Chevallier, for example, would never leave Durham, even though he had opportunities to do so. He was even considered for the Professorship of Divinity at Cambridge in 1842.¹⁷⁶ As Professor of Mathematics (to which Astronomy was added in 1841), Registrar, and in most other capacities possible (he was even suggested by Jenkyns as head of the college) he shaped Durham more than anyone else besides Thorp and Van Mildert.¹⁷⁷ Jenkyns, despite his eminence as a scholar, was largely an introvert who served through hard work and diligence more than creativity and flair, as did Chevallier.

So, despite all the manifest disappointments of the University’s first decade, by the middle of 1841, when its operations and endowment had been settled, the institution had a Warden who could not have been more dedicated to his charge and two Professors of genuinely outstanding ability. There was also considerable stability amongst the senior staff from the second academic year onwards: Jenkyns served from 1833 to 1864, Chevallier from 1834 to 1872 and Edwards from 1841 to 1862. They were in turn supported by men of similarly high attainment such as Whitley and Peile. The recruitment methods used also ensured that the University was populated largely by High Church clerics or local men of ability known to members of the Chapter. This was a northern university, an Anglican university and, despite Maltby’s moderating but still respectful influence, also a High Church university. It was also a

¹⁷⁵[Bal] JP, IVB.[C]: Van Mildert to Jenkyns, 29 October 1833.

¹⁷⁶[DUL] CC, 63: Chevallier to Corrie, 15 November 1842.

¹⁷⁷[DUL] TC, 238: Jenkyns to Thorp, 31 March 1836.

reformed university, for despite the difficulties that had and would ensue, the ground was still laid for the development of academic and professional courses of the highest quality under the guidance of men of the first rank of their day.

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CHAPTER 6

What to Teach

A chartered and endowed College [at Oxford or Cambridge], strong in its wealth and in its degrees, does not find it necessary to teach what is useful, because it can pay men to learn what is useless.¹

Thomas Macaulay, 1826

INTRODUCTION

The breadth and nature of the subjects to be taught at Durham, London and King's College was a significant departure from the liberal education in Arts that dominated academic life at Oxford and Cambridge. Insulated by their endowments and intimate establishment links, the older universities had not needed to follow student demand in the subjects they taught, and so the preliminary Arts faculty had subordinated the higher professional faculties of Law, Medicine and Theology.² Meanwhile, the Dissenting Academies had embraced emerging subjects,

¹Macaulay, 'Thoughts on the Advancement', p. 327.

²Ashby, *Universities*, p. 20; A. Engel, 'The English Universities and Professional Education', in K.H. Jarausch (ed.), *The Transformation of Higher Learning 1860–1930* (Chicago, 1983), pp. 293–305; and O. Pedersen, *The First Universities: Studium Generale and the Origins of University Education in Europe* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 271–73.

including commercial disciplines, and new methods of teaching.³ London University and King's College, London had both adopted a professionally orientated curriculum more like that of the Scottish, American and continental European universities. What made the attempt at Durham novel was the intention to deliver the old and well-understood, if frequently criticised, English liberal education BA degree in a residential setting alongside separate and radical innovations in professional education through discrete courses leading to specific awards.

The senior staff of Durham, led by Thorp himself, sensed the changing needs of a rapidly industrialising and expanding society for advanced professional studies.⁴ 'The original scheme which was mine', Thorp recalled, he argued showed:

that the Founders contemplated a liberal & enlarged system of education ... The object was, - not merely the instruction of youth, but the elevation of science & literature in the minds of a population then undergoing a great social change.⁵

Thorp was also fully aware of the criticisms made of the narrow curriculum at Oxford and Cambridge. Nevertheless, so embedded was the traditional university curriculum in English thinking that attempts to address these issues were highly controversial. In 1827, the *British Critic*, a conservative High Church journal, scorned London University for 'another ingenious device for eking out an University'. 'A College of Medicine is to be added', it recorded, 'are there then no hospitals, and is there no medical education already in London?—or do the projectors conceive that in England a day-school and a hospital will make an University?'⁶

³N.A. Hans, *New Trends in Education in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1951), pp. 54–62; H. McLachlan, *English Education Under the Test Acts: Being the History of the Nonconformist Academies, 1662–1820* (Manchester, 1931), pp. 209–11; and I. Parker, *Dissenting Academies in England* (Cambridge, 1914), pp. 132–36.

⁴R. Lowe, 'The Expansion of Higher Education in England', in Jarausch (ed.), *Transformation of Higher Learning*, pp. 37–56; H. Perkin, 'The Pattern of Social Transformation in England', in Jarausch (ed.), *Transformation of Higher Learning*, pp. 207–18.

⁵[DUL] DDR: Thorp to Baring, 22 March 1862.

⁶*British Critic*, 1 (January 1827), pp. 175–211, at p. 203.

Advocates in the older universities urged an expansion of the subjects taught for the BA rather than new courses. Charles Daubeny promoted chemistry at Oxford, with some success, though he had to cancel his lectures in 1839 due to lack of attendance.⁷ At Cambridge, Adam Sedgwick, William Whewell and Robert Willis argued for the better integration of the arts and sciences.⁸ Sedgwick asked Cambridge men ‘to think more justly on any of the subjects of academic learning, and to combine moral and religious habits of thought with those severe physical studies’.⁹ Whewell argued that science was ‘an essential part of a liberal education’ because scientific knowledge was ‘as requisite to connect the educated man with the future, as a thorough acquaintance with ancient literature is to connect him with the past’.¹⁰ Nevertheless, they faced a considerable opposition to the inclusion of studies from the evolving scientific disciplines in the traditional Arts curriculum.¹¹ There was little consensus on how additional subjects should be incorporated and concerns about outmoded curricula were mingled inconsistently with demands for the inclusion of professional studies.¹² By 1867, in an address to the University of St Andrews, John Stuart Mill could still advocate a much broader curriculum for the BA beyond ‘the limits of ... the classical languages and mathematics’ while, on the separate and more contentious issue of specifically professional studies, declaring that a university should not attempt ‘to make skillful lawyers, or physicians, or engineers’.¹³

Thorp emphasised that the original ambition for the University was ‘not merely the instruction of youth, but the elevation of science & literature in the minds of a population then undergoing a great

⁷G.L.E. Turner, ‘Experimental Science in Early Nineteenth-Century Oxford’, *History of Universities*, VIII (1989), pp. 117–35, at pp. 122–25.

⁸A. Buchanan, *Robert Willis (1800–1875) and the Foundation of Architectural History* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 38–43.

⁹A. Sedgwick, *A Discourse on the Studies of the University*, 4th edn (Cambridge, 1835), p. viii.

¹⁰W. Whewell, *On the Principles of English University Education*, 2nd edn (London, 1838), pp. 41–42.

¹¹G.R. Evans, *The University of Cambridge: A New History* (London, 2010), pp. 282–86.

¹²Engel, ‘Emerging Concepts’, pp. 322–23.

¹³J.S. Mill, *Inaugural address delivered to the University of St Andrews* (London, 1867), pp. 5–10.

social change'.¹⁴ This was the same desire he had expressed from mid-1831 onwards to found a great northern university that would meet the long-held ambition of the north. The practical result of this ambition was that at its opening, the University offered two courses, leading to a BA and a Licentiate in Theology (LTh). It was also intended that professional students in medicine would prepare students for the Licence of the Society of Apothecaries (LSA). A course in Civil Engineering leading to the University's own award of the Academical Rank of Civil Engineer followed in 1837. To understand the institution, it is necessary to appreciate that all these courses were equally important aspects of the original vision.

However, despite these grand intentions to reform the traditional understanding of what was taught in an English university, historians have tended to dismiss Durham's early academic ambitions and focus instead on developments at King's College, but most especially London University. Michael Sanderson, for example, described Durham as 'a specifically Anglican arts-oriented university with no interest in industrial science'.¹⁵ W.H.G. Armytage stated the University was merely 'forced by the pressures of the time to make provisions for professional training'.¹⁶ While Keith Vernon's verdict was that Durham managed only 'a sop towards modernity in the form of a school of engineering ... which failed conspicuously to prosper'.¹⁷ It is true that engineering did not prosper, but it is an error to assume that this was because there was no desire to make provision for professional learning. While the causes of Durham's decline will be examined later, this chapter will explore the original scope, scale and ambition of the University's curricula. Durham was intended to be a multi-functional university, with a strikingly contemporary mixture of academic and vocational programmes, delivered as separate courses, by a professoriate that actively led the studies in their respective fields. This was to be no mere cloistered experience for privileged students, nor was it simply preparation for work; it was a radical response to the demands of northern society.

¹⁴[DUL] DDR: Thorp to Baring, 22 March 1862.

¹⁵M. Sanderson, *The Universities and British Industry 1850–1970* (London, 1972), p. 3.

¹⁶Armytage, *Civic Universities*, p. 176.

¹⁷Vernon, *Universities and the State in England*, pp. 101–2.

THE COURSE IN ARTS

Durham University developed ambitious courses in professional studies, but the BA degree remained the core ‘academical course’ for students. At first, and for many decades afterwards, the majority of the University’s students studied for the BA: of the 56 students admitted in the first academic year, 48 were students in Arts and the remaining eight were students in Theology. Although there were lectures in a range of subjects, including Modern Languages and Chemistry, these disciplines were not originally examined as part of the requirements for the BA. Nevertheless, the subjects for possible examination under the heading of ‘Mathematical & Physical Sciences’ followed the broader Cambridge model than the more limited Oxford practice.¹⁸ Under Chevallier’s guiding influence, Astronomy was soon listed as an optional subject of examination for the BA and under Johnston, Chemistry was added in 1848.¹⁹

Durham craved equality with Oxford and Cambridge, and for many years the University Calendar stated that the ‘regular course of general academical education’ was ‘similar to that’ given in the older universities. Admission was achieved by passing a matriculation examination which covered the rudiments of the Christian religion, Greek, Latin, arithmetic and mathematics. This was an innovation in England, as the practice had yet to be universally adopted by the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, which perceived such tests as an attempt by the University to restrict who they could admit.²⁰ Entrance exams had, however, been instituted in Scotland at Marischal College and St Andrews in the early 1820s.²¹ Like Oxford and Cambridge, Durham restricted the Arts course to those between 15 and 21: the average age of the first cohort was 18, and it stayed high throughout the nineteenth century.²² Students at London University, by contrast, were generally younger, with many under 15 and

¹⁸Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge*, pp. 157–60.

¹⁹[DUL] Senate Minutes: 9 March 1847, 15 June 1847.

²⁰Ashby, *Universities*, p. 25; S. Rothblatt, ‘Failure in Early Nineteenth-Century Oxford and Cambridge’, *History of Education*, 11(1) (1982), pp. 1–21, at p. 11; and Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge*, pp. 154, 167–68.

²¹D.J. Withrington, ‘Ideas and Ideals in University Reform in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain: A Scottish Perspective’, *The European Legacy*, 4(6) (1999), pp. 7–19, at p. 13.

²²Figures for 1833/34 are based on 30 out of 48 Arts entrants; until 1905/6, the date of birth is known for 359 out of 2528 Arts entrants and their average age was between 19 and 20.

two of the original intake only 11.²³ A limited age restriction for entry was brought in at London in 1831, but even this was only for Junior Students in Latin, Greek and Mathematics, who it was recommended (not required) should be at least 15. Those who were under 15 could still be admitted, but only following an examination, a stipulation that was necessary as students were not normally expected to pass an examination before commencing study.²⁴

Teaching at Durham was spread over three terms of eight weeks—called Michaelmas, Epiphany and Easter—and students were required to present a certificate from the Registrar to prove that they had kept the term. At Oxford, the academic year nominally consisted of four terms (Michaelmas, Hilary, Easter and Trinity).²⁵ Durham's pattern more closely followed the three terms at Cambridge (Michaelmas, Lent and Easter).²⁶ At both places, however, a series of standard exceptions and alternate practices had built up around the formal regulations in the Calendar. A Durham student in Arts was required to have kept at least nine terms by residence and to have passed at least 12 terms since admission before a grace was passed conferring a degree. This normally meant that students followed a course of instruction for a minimum of three years, as was the general practice at Oxford and Cambridge. Durham also adopted the practice of waiving the rules for higher members of the aristocracy, who were permitted to graduate as soon as they had passed their examinations.

Many regulations adopted Oxford practices, but the examination system introduced a new concept to British higher education, which has remained an integral feature ever since: the external examiner. These external examiners were recruited from Oxford and were an essential part of the strategy to demonstrate the equivalence of Durham awards. 'By their assistance the same standard of attainments has been fixed for a certificate which is observed on the like occasion in' Oxford, the Calendar for many years proudly proclaimed.²⁷ In addition to the desire to demonstrate equivalence, the introduction of external examiners

²³ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 180.

²⁴ *London University Calendar 1831*, p. 1.

²⁵ *Oxford University Calendar 1833*, p. 94.

²⁶ *Cambridge University Calendar 1833*, p. 9.

²⁷ *Durham University Calendar 1842*, p. 8.

followed the accepted principle in the older English universities that teaching and examining duties should be separated: the colleges taught and the university examined. The Oxford regulations stated that ‘no person can examine a Candidate of the same College or Hall with himself’,²⁸ and at Cambridge a detailed cycle of nominations ensured that examiners were drawn from different colleges.²⁹ Durham was far too small for sufficient separation to be introduced between examiners and teachers, and hence the only option was to import examining staff.

However, the principle was not followed in Scotland, where the concept of federal institutions on the London model never displaced the unitary university, despite being floated in the Universities (Scotland) Act of 1858.³⁰ But even in Scotland, the practice of external examiners was eventually adopted in the late 1850s.³¹ The University of London founded in 1836 also instituted external examiners. Where the Durham and London external examiner models differed was that in London the examiners were appointed to examine students sent to them from the colleges, and so were all technically London examiners. The London model was explicitly based on the Cambridge practice, and the 1836 Charter even referred to the ‘Board of Examiners’ performing ‘all the functions of the examiners in the Senate House of Cambridge’. At Durham, the internal examiners from the University were supplemented by the external examiners from Oxford, who were there not to ensure consistency within Durham, but between Durham and Oxford.

Examinations were held at the end of every year, with two internal examiners joined by one external examiner for the first two years and two for the final year. Students seeking honours were examined on paper and viva voce, while pass students, the students of lesser ability, were examined on paper alone. By the 1830s, the general national move from oral to written examinations was nearly complete. The process started first at Cambridge, with a gradual shift away from viva voce assessment starting in about 1772 through to new regulations in 1828, which required all

²⁸ *Oxford University Calendar* 1833, p. 99.

²⁹ *Cambridge University Calendar* 1833, p. 15.

³⁰ S. Rothblatt, ‘Historical and Comparative Remarks on the Federal Principle in Higher Education’, *History of Education*, 16(3) (1987), pp. 151–80, at p. 178.

³¹ Anderson, *British Universities Past and Present*, p. 110.

papers to be printed as well as for answers to be written.³² While pedagogic practice did play its part in this transition, it was also a practical response to the difficulties of examining a growing student population: it is a necessary part of an oral examination that examiners can only examine one student at a time.³³

Like their contemporaries at Cambridge and Oxford, Durham students were examined separately in 'Classical and General Literature' and in 'Mathematical and Physical Sciences'. At Cambridge, classification started in 1753 with ranking by merit in the Senate House Examinations (later called the Mathematical Tripos). Designed to engage students with their studies, it also introduced considerable exam anxiety.³⁴ Three classes were used: Wrangler (the top of which was the Senior Wrangler), the Senior Optimes and the Junior Optimes (the bottom of which was the wooden spoon).³⁵ In each of these three classes, the students were ordered by merit.³⁶ Oxford later introduced its own classification system, at first using only a single class that was limited to a maximum of 12 students, then with two classes in 1807: a first class and a second class. From 1809, this second class was divided by a line into two, with the names above the line being students whose performance was superior to those below the line. A third class was used for students who had passed but not received honours. Oxford changed its practice again in 1825 when the divided second class was dropped in favour of four distinct classes (three for honours), and again in 1830 when the number of classes rose to five (four for honours).³⁷

The listing of students by merit at Durham, Thorp noted, was 'pushed' by the 'Cambridge men' on the Chapter, though the classification system Durham adopted was more like the Oxford model.³⁸

³²C. Stray, 'From Oral to Written Examinations: Cambridge, Oxford and Dublin 1700–1914', in R. Lowe (ed.), *The History of Higher Education* (5 vols., London, 2009), vol. 4, pp. 159–207, at p. 170; Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge*, p. 158.

³³Stray, 'Examinations', pp. 188–90.

³⁴Rothblatt, 'Failure in Early Nineteenth-Century Oxford and Cambridge', pp. 6–8.

³⁵C. Stray, 'The Wooden Spoon: Rank (Dis)order in Cambridge 1753–1909', *History of Universities*, XXVI(1) (2012), pp. 163–201.

³⁶*Cambridge University Calendar 1833*, p. 182.

³⁷*Oxford University Calendar 1833*, pp. 101–2; Stray, 'Examinations', p. 179.

³⁸[Bal] JP, IVA.2: Thorp to Jenkyns, 31 July 1834.

Durham students were placed in classes from 1 to 4 for each of the two areas of examination; for ‘those students not judged worthy of distinction’ in the first four classes, a single classification was given. The number of these additional classes was left to the examiners’ determination, which resulted in degrees being classified to the seventh or even eighth class. The use of the eighth class was not uncommon, though occasions like the Easter Term 1839 examinations, when four of the 11 graduating students were given this classification, were fortunately rare.

The desire to demonstrate equivalence with the Arts courses at Oxford and Cambridge limited the potential for radical departure at Durham. Nevertheless, under Johnston’s guidance, Chemistry, which had been taught since the opening of the University, became a voluntary subject of examination for Arts students in 1848.³⁹ The role of Chemistry in the early University is therefore worth exploring since it illustrates the difficulties of integrating a new field of study into the Arts curriculum, while still demonstrating the importance attached to such disciplines by the University’s higher authorities. The fact that this level of importance was attached to Chemistry also demonstrates the extent to which Durham was a reforming university, since science too had its reform movement during the period from the 1830s to the 1850s.⁴⁰

Johnston was supplied with a laboratory in a room behind the Bishop’s Registry on Palace Green.⁴¹ The provision of the laboratory was funded in part by the ‘additional fee’ that the ‘laboratory pupils’ paid in return for instruction.⁴² In a diary entry from 1839, Johnston records a typical day in his lab:

I am writing a little book to be entitled, ‘Outlines of Organic Chemistry’, and to this having breakfasted &c by 9 AM I devote 2½ hours. At half past 11, I go to lecture which occupies me till about ½ past one. I then prepare an organic analysis as far as to be ready for the combustion and come home to dinner at 3. I return to my laboratory, finish my combustion and weighings by 7, and after tea make my calculations and write up my days work.⁴³

³⁹[DUL] Senate Minutes: 9 March 1847, 15 June 1847.

⁴⁰G.A. Foote, ‘The Place of Science in the British Reform Movement 1830–1850’, *Isis*, 42(3) (October 1951), pp. 192–208.

⁴¹Fowler, *College Histories*, p. 65.

⁴²*Durham University Calendar 1842*, p. 14.

⁴³[DUL] Johnston’s Journal: 5 May 1839, p. 6.

In November 1837, it was agreed that gas should be introduced to the Castle for the first time and ‘that Mr Johnston should be allowed to have five gas burners in his lecture room and laboratory’.⁴⁴ At that date, gas burners were not used for heating in experiments: Robert Bunsen, at the University of Heidelberg, was not to invent his eponymous burner until the mid-1850s. Gas burners in 1837 would have given flaring, smoky, luminous rather-yellow light. Sometimes they were ‘bats-wings’, flattened tubes so that the flame spread out.⁴⁵ As the burners would most likely have been used for lighting, it does suggest that the laboratory was well used into the evenings and on dark days; although natural light might have sufficed to be working in his lab at 7 pm in May, if Johnston kept the same hours in winter, he would certainly have needed the illumination.

To encourage talented students to study at Durham, the University at first offered up to 20 positions as ‘students of the Foundation’. The students who held these Foundation scholarships received free admission, tuition, £30 towards their Board, and lodging.⁴⁶ Nomination to the Foundation scholarships originally rested as private gifts with the Dean and Prebendaries in rotation according to seniority, with the Dean getting double nominations.⁴⁷ This system was gradually opened up and during the 1840s, some scholarships were awarded competitively on examination performance, starting with the new Dean, Waddington.⁴⁸ In December 1853, the Tutors asked for all the Foundation scholarships to be ‘disposed of by the result of examinations’, noting testily that a previous application had ‘been rejected’ by the Dean and Chapter ‘without any statement of reasons’. The Senate, however, were not inclined ‘to interfere in a matter upon which the Dean and Chapter have already pronounced their opinion’.⁴⁹ Though more of the scholarships were

⁴⁴[DUL] Senate Minutes: 28 November 1837.

⁴⁵This information concerning gas burners of the 1830s has been provided by Professor David Knight.

⁴⁶[DUL] COB: Chapter Meeting, 20 July 1833. The Chapter had agreed the package for these students in February 1832, but, concerned by the institution’s financial situation, the Chapter agreed that they would be charged tuition and room rent in July 1834. Cf. [DUL] COB: Chapter Meetings, 20 February 1832 and 21 July 1834.

⁴⁷[DUL] COB: Chapter Meeting, 20 February 1832.

⁴⁸Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 79.

⁴⁹[DUL] Senate Minutes: 13 December 1853.

subsequently thrown open, some personal nominations persisted until November 1860, when all the Foundation scholarships were opened to public competition through examination.⁵⁰

THE COURSE IN THEOLOGY

Although the majority of Anglican clergy had passed through the liberal education at Oxford or Cambridge, this education was not theological.⁵¹ Writing in 1839, for example, the future Archbishop of Canterbury, Archibald Tait, recoiled at the thought of the ‘crowds of young men’ who were ‘unwillingly forced to seek such instruction in the metropolis, or at Durham, or on the continent’ due to inadequate provision at Oxford and Cambridge.⁵² Indeed, the absence of professional ministerial training at the older universities provoked continued agitation for improvement from within both the Church and universities well into the mid-nineteenth century.⁵³ At Oxford in 1840, for example, Gaisford urged the establishment of a ‘quasi-degree’ for candidates in Theology, and he was perhaps influenced by the establishment of the divinity course at Durham.⁵⁴ Newman described the scheme’s promoters as being ‘jealous of Durham’ as well as of the new theological colleges in Chichester (1839) and Wells (1840).⁵⁵ A start was eventually made to rectify the absence of lectures in support of ministerial preparation at Oxford and Cambridge in the early 1840s, but even these developments were

⁵⁰Durham University Calendar 1861, p. 15; [DUL] Senate Minutes: 29 November 1859.

⁵¹Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence*, pp. 132, 164. The first reliable figures are for 1834–43, which show that 82% of clergy were graduates of Oxford (39%) or Cambridge (43%).

⁵²A.C. Tait, *Hints on the Formation of a Plan for the Safe and Effectual Revival of the Professorial System in Oxford* (Oxford, 1839), p. 24.

⁵³D. Inman, *The Making of Modern English Theology: God and the Academy at Oxford 1833–1945* (Minneapolis, 2014), pp. 43–103.

⁵⁴W.R. Ward, *Victorian Oxford* (London, 1965), p. 110.

⁵⁵I.T. Ker, T. Gornall, G. Tracey, and F.J. McGrath (eds.), *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman* (32 vols., Oxford, 1978–2008), vol. VII: Newman to F. Rogers, 25 November 1840, p. 449; cf. Newman to J.W. Boden, 14 December 1840, p. 459.

controversial and limited.⁵⁶ Cambridge instituted a Voluntary Theological Examination in 1842, for example, but did not provide any instruction.⁵⁷

During the nineteenth century, the ordained ministry also faced similar pressures for expansion, as did other professions, which included the demands of an increasing population and the need to improve the quality of parochial provision. In these respects, the development of clerical training was much like the reforms in medicine, law, engineering and other professional areas.⁵⁸ The general professionalisation of vocational occupations and the intransigence of Oxford and Cambridge help to explain the development of the theological colleges, starting with St Bees and St David's Colleges, but later expanding rapidly throughout the country and not just the remote extremities.⁵⁹ In addition, although the various Church parties of the early nineteenth century had profound differences, groups as diverse as the Evangelicals, the Hackney Phalanx and (a little later) the Tractarians could find common ground in their desire to bring about a spiritual renewal among the clergy of the Established Church through improvement in clerical preparation.⁶⁰

Against this background, the University was amongst the earliest institutions to pioneer new forms of professional clerical training through the development of the LTh. Durham quickly gained a strong reputation for its theological course. Despite his criticism of the University, Tait at least noted 'the praiseworthy labours of the Theological Professor at Durham', for example.⁶¹ The curriculum was initially developed by Rose during his brief tenure as Professor of Divinity. He did not lack ambition: 'might not Durham be made a grand Theological School', he suggested to Watson, 'where, even after the Universities, they who could afford it might go for a year or two?'.⁶² Although many of Durham's

⁵⁶ Dowland, *Nineteenth-Century Anglican Theological Training*, pp. 182–84; Ward, *Victorian Oxford*, p. 110; and Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge*, pp. 168–74.

⁵⁷ D.A. Winstanley, *Later Victorian Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1947), p. 148.

⁵⁸ Dowland, *Theological Training*, pp. 5–7; F. Knight, *The Nineteenth-Century Church and English Society* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 13–15.

⁵⁹ Dowland, *Theological Training*, pp. 180–91; Inman, *Modern English Theology*, pp. 45, 79–80.

⁶⁰ Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence*, p. 23.

⁶¹ Tait, *Revival of the Professorial System in Oxford*, p. 26.

⁶² Rose to Watson, 27 September 1833, quoted in Burgon, *Lives of Twelve Good Men*, p. 184.

BA graduates would enter holy orders, the express purpose of the divinity course was to allow students to qualify for ordination, so the Licence would only be granted after students passed both the final examination and were granted a satisfactory testimonial as to their moral character. Both the documents were granted under the University seal and both were required to be awarded the Licence. Unlike the Arts course, the divinity course did not seek to emulate the older English universities as those institutions offered no equivalent course.

Rose's main motivation in coming to Durham, he told Newman, was that 'the duties of the Professor will so much lie in the formation of the clergy'.⁶³ However, this may in part explain the tensions which eventually led to his departure; while he perceived Durham as 'a grand Theological School', the divinity course was but one part of the University's academic offering. Hence, when Rose demanded longer terms and additional staff, he was also, in effect, creating an intolerable imbalance between theology and other aspects of the University.

Admission to the course was open to graduates who held a BA from Durham, Oxford, Cambridge or Dublin, while others could be admitted between the ages of 21 and 26 provided they first passed an entrance examination in Greek, Latin and Theology. The final examinations tested students in the liturgical practice as well as the Articles of the Church of England, and also covered the criticism and interpretation of the New Testament, the ecclesiastical history of the first three centuries and of the Church of England, and English composition—important, of course, for the writing of sermons. Graduate students were required to study for one year, while non-graduates were only permitted to take the final examination after two years (between 1841 and 1846, three years were necessary). At first, graduates with a Durham BA were also required to study for two years, the same period as non-graduates, but this disadvantage was soon dropped and Durham graduates were likewise entitled to sit the final examinations after one year.⁶⁴

Given the lack of a central controlling bureaucracy within the Church to sanction qualifications as meeting the necessary expectations of ordinands, the approval of individual bishops was of great importance.⁶⁵

⁶³Newman, *Letters and Diaries*, vol. IV: Rose to Newman, 20 August 1833, p. 30.

⁶⁴Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 259–60.

⁶⁵Dowland, *Theological Training*, p. 187.

Gaining the approbation of the Episcopate for the divinity course and confirmation of their willingness to accept Durham graduates for ordination was therefore vital for the University's hopes of success. In December 1833, Thorp asked Van Mildert to enquire 'whether the Degree with Testimonials' from Durham would 'be regarded by the Archbishops and Bishops as the Degrees and Testimonials of Oxford and Cambridge are regarded with reference to Holy Orders' and similarly to learn their view on accepting non-graduate students of the divinity course.⁶⁶ Van Mildert first sought the view of the Archbishops and the Bishop of London. While the Archbishop of York, Vernon Harcourt, had a positive experience of students from St Bees and so would accept non-graduate as well as graduate students with the Licence in Theology, the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Howley, and the Bishop of London, Charles Blomfield, confirmed only that they would accept graduate students with a Licence, but would make no promises about the non-graduate divinity students.⁶⁷ Receiving only limited enthusiasm for accepting non-graduate divinity students was a disappointment, but more positively the three most senior clerics of the Church of England had given their support to the University by agreeing to accept Durham graduates of the divinity course on an equal footing with graduates of Oxford and Cambridge who had taken the divinity course.

Buoyed by this support, Van Mildert wrote to the remaining Bishops in early February 1834.⁶⁸ By the end of the month, Rose recorded with satisfaction that 'twenty-four out of the twenty-six Prelates have agreed to accept the full education' offered at Durham for candidates for ordination.⁶⁹ This included Edward Maltby, who wrote a positive reply agreeing to accept for ordination graduates from the Arts course and even going so far as to say that he thought by doing so, he had the 'chance of securing a better stock of really professional knowledge, than is at present supplied by our Universities'.⁷⁰

The two objections came from Edward Grey, Bishop of Hereford and younger brother of the Prime Minister, and George Murray, the Bishop of Rochester, who sent in the last reply. While Grey avowed that

⁶⁶[DUL] TC, 137: Thorp to Van Mildert, 5 December 1833.

⁶⁷[DUL] TC, 139: Howley to Van Mildert, 7 January 1834.

⁶⁸[DCL] VML, 367–68: Van Mildert to Thorp, 30 January 1834.

⁶⁹Rose to Watson, February 1834, quoted in Burgon, *Twelve Good Men*, p. 187.

⁷⁰[DUL] TC, 161: Maltby to Van Mildert, 13 February 1834.

he did not doubt ‘the probable utility’ of the University, still he could not ‘hold out any assurance whatever’ that he would accept awards from Durham as equal to those ‘of the ancient and long-tried Universities of the realm’.⁷¹ Murray disapproved because he did not want to ‘encourage the inferior orders of the people to aspire to stations for which there are already too many candidates in the classes immediately above them’.⁷² Van Mildert did not take their refusals lightly. ‘To admit our Graduates merely as admissible to become Candidates for Ordination, seems to involve no very fearful responsibility’, the Bishop remarked sarcastically to Thorp on the stance taken by the Bishop of Hereford. Though Grey wanted to have ‘more experience of the working’ of the University before he could reach a final judgement, Van Mildert felt that this did ‘in effect’ throw ‘an obstacle in the way of its working at all, in as much as without some well-grounded expectation of becoming admissible to Ordination’, students would be less likely to seek entry to the University in the first place.⁷³ He wrote a lengthy reply to Murray objecting that the Dean and Chapter were not establishing a ‘Theological Seminary’ only, but an institution with a ‘wider range’ and ‘general public utility’ that it was hoped would attract the ‘many, very many, persons, not fairly to be classed among those inferior orders whom I suppose you to mean’.⁷⁴ The two refusals were an annoyance, but the majority of Bishops responded broadly in the University’s favour. By comparison, the non-graduate theological colleges founded throughout the nineteenth century received much more mixed and often unfavourable reactions from among the episcopacy, and negative attitudes towards the colleges persisted even into the twentieth century.⁷⁵

THE COURSE IN MEDICINE

It was originally intended that the University would offer a course in medicine. This was against Gaisford’s advice: ‘it strikes me to be perfectly absurd to attempt making such a provincial town as Durham a

⁷¹[DUL] TC, 153: E. Grey to Van Mildert, 11 February 1834.

⁷²[DUL] TC, 168a: Murray to Van Mildert, 19 February 1834; Yates, ‘An Opportunity Missed?’, p. 328.

⁷³[DCL] VML, 374–75: Van Mildert to Thorp, 13 February 1834.

⁷⁴[DUL] TC, 169: Van Mildert to Murray, 22 February 1834.

⁷⁵Dowland, *Theological Training*, pp. 151–76.

school either of law or medicine. If there are readers appointed in either of these branches they will be sinecures ab initio, and continue so', he warned.⁷⁶ Gaisford's opinion normally held great sway with Van Mildert, but the Bishop assured Thorp that he remained 'quite disposed' to retain Readers in both disciplines.⁷⁷

Though Gaisford's advice proved quite correct, elsewhere medicine was a fast-developing discipline. By the 1830s, the medical profession and medical education were in a process of transition and rapid growth. During the first half of the century, for example, the traditional boundaries between the three medical orders of physician, apothecary and surgeon became less distinct, though they had not yet disappeared, and there was a growing desire to obtain formal qualifications.⁷⁸ The Scottish universities had significant and highly successful medical schools, most especially at Edinburgh, that not only attracted students from England but were also taken as the model for the development of medical schools in North America.⁷⁹ In London, University College had established a medical school which largely maintained the viability of the institution (alongside its junior department).⁸⁰ Why should Durham not seek to emulate these institutions?

The education and training expected of a medical practitioner was evolving slowly too. While the simple and often very limited model of apprenticeship had been superseded by formal examinations, in England,

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

⁷⁷[DCL] VML, 211–13: Van Mildert to Thorp, 5 January 1832.

⁷⁸Bonner, *Becoming a Physician*, pp. 166–75; J.F. Kett, 'Provincial Medical Practice in England 1730–1815', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 19(1) (1964), pp. 17–29, at p. 17; F.J.W. Miller, 'Glancing Back: Teachers and Students 1834–1934', in G. Dale et al. (eds), *Newcastle School of Medicine, 1834–1984: Sesquicentennial Celebrations: Proceedings 17–21 September 1984* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1985), p. 18; M. Sanderson, *The Universities in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1975), pp. 80–81; and S.E.D. Shortt, 'Physicians, Science, and Status: Issues in the Professionalization of Anglo-American Medicine in the Nineteenth Century', *Medical History*, 21(1) (January 1983), pp. 51–68, at p. 62.

⁷⁹Bonner, *Becoming a Physician*, pp. 40–43; W.J. Reader, *Professional Men: The Rise of the Professional Classes in Nineteenth-Century England* (London, 1966), p. 35.

⁸⁰Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 143; Vernon, *Universities and the State in England*, p. 64; and C. Newman, *The Evolution of Medical Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1957), p. 13.

unlike in Scotland, responsibility for these examinations resided almost entirely outside of the universities.⁸¹ The most prestigious practitioners, the physicians, obtained a licence from the Royal College of Physicians. Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians had to hold a degree from Oxford or Cambridge, yet these degrees did not provide medical training, but assured that physicians would be classically educated gentlemen.⁸² The examination for a Licence of the College, for example, was conducted in Latin until 1830. Fortunately for the physician's patients, many men subsequently went on to give themselves a firmer grounding in medical practice than was required for their degree or Licence.⁸³ While physicians were graduates, they were still usually men of lower social standing, and the majority continued to labour at a social disadvantage throughout their careers.⁸⁴ Lady Chettam, in George Eliot's *Middlemarch* from 1830, remarked that she preferred her 'medical man more on a footing with the servants'.⁸⁵

Men intending to become surgeons obtained their training through 'walking the wards' in one of the London hospitals, though very little by way of systematic medical education was provided.⁸⁶ Time in the hospital would therefore be supplemented by attendance at a private anatomy school and by apprenticeship to an existing practitioner.⁸⁷ The surgeons sought their professional recognition through Membership of the Royal College of Surgeons (MRCS). The requirement for the MRCS was that a student should have spent at least six years in training, attending courses in anatomy, botany, chemistry, materia medica, and the theory

⁸¹ Bonner, *Becoming a Physician*, pp. 39–42.

⁸² Harte, *The University of London*, p. 61; Newman, *Evolution of Medical Education*, p. 5; and Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge*, pp. 152, 160–66.

⁸³ Newman, *Evolution of Medical Education*, pp. 9, 12, 47–49.

⁸⁴ R. Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind: A Medical History of Humanity from Antiquity to the Present* (London, 1997), pp. 348–52; W.G. Runciman, *Very Different, But Much the Same: The Evolution of English Society since 1714* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 75–77; and G.G. Turner, *The Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine 1834–1934* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1934), p. 6.

⁸⁵ G.E. Eliot, *Middlemarch, Volume 1* (London, 1852), p. 107.

⁸⁶ Newman, *Evolution of Medical Education*, p. 35.

⁸⁷ Kett, 'Provincial Medical Practice', p. 19; J.R. Bradford, 'University College London and Medical Education', *The Lancet*, 209(5412) (May 1927), pp. 1093–97, at p. 1094.

and practice of physic and also to include attending surgical practice in a recognised hospital.⁸⁸ The surgeon was thought to be a skilled operator, not an educated professional, and (in a time before anaesthetic) swiftness and dexterity were the prime desiderata.⁸⁹ A university degree was therefore an irrelevance.⁹⁰

The role of the Society of Apothecaries (also known as the Apothecaries Hall) was formalised by the Apothecaries Act of 1815, which gave the Society responsibility for licensing practitioners. The award the apothecaries aimed for was the LSA. In addition to attending classes in chemistry, botany and anatomy, candidates had to serve an apprenticeship of not less than five years.⁹¹ The more ambitious student would attempt to pass both 'College and Hall', meaning they qualified as a surgeon and an apothecary.⁹²

There was therefore no single or universally recognised qualification which granted entry to medical practice. This state of affairs persisted in part due to the long tradition of mutual animosity between the different medical associations.⁹³ However, the eminent importance of public health gave the government an interest in the reform of the medical profession. The Apothecaries Act represented the first step in the formal regulation by the State of medical practice in England, but further legislation came with the passing of the Anatomy Act in 1832, which encouraged the establishment of medical schools.⁹⁴ It would, however, be more than 40 years after the passing of the Apothecaries Act, and a further 17 Bills in Parliament,⁹⁵ before the Medical Act of 1858 established a unified medical register and created the General Medical Council; even

⁸⁸Bradford, 'Medical Education', p. 1094; L.P. Le Quesne, 'Medicine', in F.M.L. Thompson (ed.), *The University of London and the World of Learning 1836–1986* (London, 1990), pp. 125–45, at pp. 126–27; and Porter, *Greatest Benefit to Mankind*, pp. 316–17.

⁸⁹Newman, *Evolution of Medical Education*, p. 17.

⁹⁰Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge*, p. 152.

⁹¹Regulations of the Apothecaries' Hall, in Dale et al. (eds.), *Sesquicentennial Scrapbook*, p. 8.

⁹²Turner, *Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, p. 8.

⁹³Newman, *Evolution of Medical Education*, p. 130.

⁹⁴Porter, *Greatest Benefit to Mankind*, pp. 317–18, 355.

⁹⁵Harte, *The University of London*, p. 61.

then, unlicensed practice remained not only legal but could also still be a route to successful practice.⁹⁶

Persuaded by these rapid developments in the medical profession, the growing demand for a medical education, and the visible success at other institutions, but despite Gaisford's pleading, one of the original members of the academic staff was a Reader in Medicine: William Cooke M.D. of the University of Edinburgh. His appointment was on a similar basis to that of Johnston: what Whitley called an 'allied power'. Described by contemporaries as suave and well adapted to scientific pursuits, his appointment was listed in the first Prospectus.⁹⁷ He had moved to Durham from Ealing, in Middlesex, sometime after 1806, and had been physician to the *Infirmiry for the Sick and Lane Poor of the County of Durham* at Allergate in Durham since 1822.⁹⁸ Cooke offered his services to the Infirmiry gratuitously, which is an indication of how successful he was as one of the City's four physicians in private practice.⁹⁹

The *British Magazine* announced that Cooke's first lecture would be delivered on 12 November 1833 and would be 'continued on alternate days, at one o'clock'.¹⁰⁰ The topic was anatomy and physiology and would be delivered in a course of 50 lectures during the Michaelmas and Epiphany Terms. The first edition of the Calendar adds that on each Friday at two o'clock, there would be 'Demonstrations, in allusion to the previous Lectures, explaining the application of Anatomy to the Practice of Surgery and Pathology'. This Calendar also sets out an ambitious and eminently practical set of 'principal subjects' including 'the Structure and Functions of the Vital Organs; the Brain and the Nervous System; the Component Parts of the Blood; the Absorbent System; the Muscles, and their Functions; the Heart and the Blood Vessels; the Thoracic, Abdominal, and Pelvic Viscera; the Organ of Hearing, Voice, Taste, and

⁹⁶Porter, *Greatest Benefit to Mankind*, pp. 355–56; Turner, *Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, pp. 8–9.

⁹⁷[DUL] TC, 652: Prospectus, 20 July 1833; *The Durham Directory and Almanac for 1858* (Durham, 1858), p. 32.

⁹⁸J. Burnley, 'Cooke, Sir William Fothergill (1806–1879)', rev. B. Bowers, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004; online edn 2011); Cross, *Bonnet's Durham*, p. 34.

⁹⁹W.M. Parson and W.M. White, *History, Directory and Gazetteer of the Counties of Durham and Northumberland: Volume 1* (Leeds, 1827), p. 208.

¹⁰⁰*British Magazine*, IV (1833), p. 469.

Smell; the Foetal Circulation; the Teeth, etc., etc.’.¹⁰¹ Cooke’s lectures were enhanced by ‘a complete osteological collection ... wax models and graphic representations’, which were provided by his son.¹⁰² Without easy access to bodies for dissection, such teaching aids were vital to the success of any medical school—and he is presumably holding just such a model in Boeut’s drawing. Even after the Burke and Hare murders of 1828 led to the subsequent passing of the Anatomy Act 1832, which expanded the legal supply of medical cadavers, the lack of refrigeration constrained practical anatomy lectures to the winter months.

An undated scheme of the ‘Medical Lectures’ produced by Cooke, which most likely relates to the 1833/34 academic year, provided some additional detail of the intended syllabus for medical students.¹⁰³ The first course in the Michaelmas Term would cover the structure and functions of the human frame: anatomy and physiology. In the next term (incorrectly labelled after the Oxford practice as the Hilary Term), Cooke intended to continue with the diseases of the human frame: pathology and nosology.¹⁰⁴ Finally, the third course in the Easter Term would cover the treatment and care of diseases: *Materia Medica*¹⁰⁵ and therapeutics. ‘Medical students’, it was added, would be furnished with ‘a syllabus of each Course of Lectures’.¹⁰⁶

The descriptions in the Calendar and in the scheme of lectures demonstrate that the intention was to offer a course which would enable students to satisfy the requirements of the LSA, as was similarly practised at King’s College and London University.¹⁰⁷ There was demonstrable interest in such a professional course and, ‘enquiries having been made’, the *Durham Advertiser* confirmed that the University intended to seek ‘recognition ... as a School of Medicine’ from the Apothecaries Hall.¹⁰⁸ The first calendar stated two fees for Cooke’s course: one for ‘Medical

¹⁰¹ *Durham University Calendar 1833*, pp. 18–19.

¹⁰² *Durham University Calendar 1842*, p. 12.

¹⁰³ [DUL] TC, 630: Medical Lectures.

¹⁰⁴ I.e. the classification of disease.

¹⁰⁵ I.e. the study of drugs used in the treatment of disease.

¹⁰⁶ [DUL] TC, 630: Medical Lectures.

¹⁰⁷ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 145; Hearnshaw, *The Centenary History of King’s College London*, pp. 113–14.

¹⁰⁸ *Durham Advertiser*, 1 November 1833, 8 November 1833.

Students and Practitioners' and one for 'Amateurs'.¹⁰⁹ It was also noted that Cooke's weekly 'Anatomical Demonstrations' would be of general interest, but were 'intended more especially for the benefit of the Professional Student'.¹¹⁰ It is clear that the intention was to offer a practical and professional medical course.

There is no record of how many people attended Cooke's lectures or how many (if any) counted themselves as 'medical students'. Cooke delivered lectures in 1834 'upon Anatomy and Physics' and in 1835 'upon comparative Anatomy', but this was a significant reduction over the ambitious plans laid out in 1833.¹¹¹ In 1836, Cooke's lectures were 'illustrative of Paley's Natural Theology',¹¹² which indicated Cooke's diversion into more general lectures as Arts students were required to take examinations in Paley's Evidences. Cooke's public lectures also tended more towards matters of accessible general interest which Van Mildert hoped to attend himself.¹¹³ After 1836, there is no record of Cooke providing any academic lectures for students, and 1837 is the last year in which there is a record of him delivering public lectures. The medical venture in Durham City petered out sometime before Cooke resigned his post at the University (and his work at the Infirmary in Allergate) in March 1842.¹¹⁴ The wax models had been briefly displayed in a 'biological museum' on Palace Green, but Fowler recorded that they seemed to 'have ceased to exist in 1840–41',¹¹⁵ which is shortly after Cooke stopped lecturing and shortly before he quit the city. This makes the teaching of medicine in Durham City a short-lived affair, lasting only from 1833 to probably no later than 1837 and certainly not beyond March 1842.

THE COURSE IN CIVIL ENGINEERING

Students were first admitted to Durham's course in civil engineering in the Epiphany Term of 1838. Their aim was to achieve the Academical Rank of Civil Engineer. While Chevallier felt that the establishment of

¹⁰⁹ *Durham University Calendar 1833*, p. 19.

¹¹⁰ *Durham Advertiser*, 8 November 1833.

¹¹¹ *Durham University Calendar 1836*, p. 11.

¹¹² *Durham University Calendar 1836*, p. 11.

¹¹³ [DCL] VML, 415–16: Van Mildert to Thorp, 27 May 1834.

¹¹⁴ [DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 19 March 1842.

¹¹⁵ Fowler, *Durham University*, pp. 103–4.

this course would enable civil engineering to ‘take the rank in society which its importance demands’, the risk was in fact that the low esteem in which most engineers were held would damage the University’s already fragile standing.¹¹⁶ Yet civil engineers had achieved national prominence as demand for their services had grown to meet the needs of an ever-expanding array of industrial activities. This was especially true in the north-east. For many years, this was articulated in the University’s Calendar:

The extensive public works of this country, and the vast national interests involved in them, seemed to require that the Civil Engineer should have an education expressly adapted to his profession. And the University of Durham was considered, from its local position, to have peculiar facilities for combining, with the requisite instruction in science, a practical insight into all the ordinary operations of Civil Engineering and Mining.¹¹⁷

Through offering a professional vocational education, the course in civil engineering was a radical departure from the long-established model of English higher education and because of this, it must be considered the most important academic development at Durham in its early years.

Despite the growing technical complexity of civil engineering, in the early nineteenth century scientific activity was still largely undertaken by the landed gentry and the professional classes as a hobby; as described by David Knight, ‘scientific research was still simply *recherché*’. It was only towards the end of the century that academic science had evolved, with duly erected boundaries between defined disciplines.¹¹⁸ The early professionalisation of science was driven in part by the formation of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1831, which had been created following persistent attacks on the perceived deficiencies of the Royal Society, which had been accused of being more interested in the wealth of potential members than their scientific accomplishments.¹¹⁹ From the outset, the Association was concerned with the applicability of science to commercial and practical uses: ‘to the object of bringing theoretical science in contact with that practical

¹¹⁶[DUL] DDR: Chevallier to Maltby, 25 November 1837.

¹¹⁷*Durham University Calendar* 1838, p. 8.

¹¹⁸D. Knight, *The Age of Science* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 3–7.

¹¹⁹ Foote, ‘The Place of Science in the British Reform Movement’, pp. 196–200.

knowledge on which the wealth of the country depends', as it was put by Charles Babbage.¹²⁰ The newly developing colleges also embraced scientific activity and the industrial applications of scientific knowledge. London University had intended to establish a department of Engineering, but this had not happened due to difficulties with the academic staff; a chair in Civil Engineering was not appointed until 1841.¹²¹ The civil engineering course at King's College followed closely after that of Durham, being announced in April 1838 by Hugh James Rose, who was then Principal.¹²² A prospectus was issued three weeks later and the first students were admitted in October 1838.¹²³ It is possible that the course was influenced by Rose's brief time at Durham. It may also not be a coincidence that the fee for the course at King's was set at £10 10s a term, the same as at Durham.¹²⁴ The curricula were similar too, although at King's, students were admitted at 15¹²⁵ rather than 16, as was the case in Durham, and included a course on electricity delivered by Charles Wheatstone, the co-developer of telegraphy, who lectured at the College until about 1840.¹²⁶

Chevallier, Whitley and Johnston were the driving forces behind the new course. What they shared was not only a desire to advance scientific knowledge, but more especially the application of science for practical purposes. Johnston returned on numerous occasions to the value of applying scientific discoveries to practical and commercial interests: 'the progress of knowledge forbids us to cling pertinaciously to old opinions and processes', he urged.¹²⁷ The idea of a course for engineers was probably discussed within the University from the time of its opening in 1833, if not before. The earliest certain proposal is contained in

¹²⁰Babbage addressing the second meeting of the Association: *Report of the British Association*, p. 107.

¹²¹Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 135–36, 266; W.O. Skeat, *King's College London Engineering Society 1847–1957* (London, 1957), p. 98.

¹²²Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, p. 147; Skeat, *KCL Engineering Society*, pp. 98–99.

¹²³Skeat, *KCL Engineering Society*, p. 99.

¹²⁴Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, p. 147; Skeat, *KCL Engineering Society*, p. 100.

¹²⁵*Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal*, I (1838), p. 231.

¹²⁶S.P. Thompson, 'Wheatstone, Sir Charles (1802–1875)', rev. B. Bowers, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004; online edn 2011).

¹²⁷J.F.W. Johnston, *The Economy of a Coal-Field* (Durham, 1838), p. 65.

a printed paper marked ‘Private’ and dated 19 December 1836. It was written by an anonymous author from outside the University, who proposed founding a ‘Hall or College for Mining and Civil Engineering students’.¹²⁸ As ‘the three largest colliery establishments in the world’ were ‘within seven miles of the City of Durham’, the University’s location was perfect, the author argued, and the ‘scientific eminence’ of the staff was ideal too. If these were not sufficient reasons, then the author reminded the University’s authorities that their very existence was dependent on the Chapter’s wealth derived from ‘mining property’.¹²⁹ No further steps were recorded for almost a year until, at the first meeting of the new academic year in 1837, the Senate asked Chevallier and Whitley ‘to prepare a statement ... for the formation of a class of students intended for the Profession of Civil Engineer, and to lay the same before the Senate at its next weekly meeting’.¹³⁰

One week after it had been requested, the plan was duly presented to the Senate.¹³¹ By the end of November, this draft had been debated, revised, printed and circulated to members of the Convocation, which approved it at a meeting on 22 November.¹³² Less than a week later, the Senate agreed the first set of examinations for Engineer Students to be held in October 1838.¹³³ Johnston was given ‘the charge of instructing the Students’ under the superintendence of Chevallier.¹³⁴ The first seven engineer students matriculated in January 1838 (out of 13 new students that term) and they were granted a special dispensation to discount the Michaelmas Term to allow the academic year 1837–1838 to be counted in full.

Chevallier and Johnston published an article in July 1838 concerning the new course. ‘It has long been a subject of regret’, they wrote, ‘that no institution existed in England in which young men might receive an education which should peculiarly fit them for the higher branches

¹²⁸[DUL] TC, 658: Proposal for a Hall or College of Mining, 19 December 1836. Given the similarities between this proposal and the ideas he put forward in the mid-1850s, as discussed in Chapter 6, it is possible that Nicholas Wood was the author.

¹²⁹[DUL] TC, 658: Proposal for a Hall or College of Mining, 19 December 1836.

¹³⁰[DUL] Senate Minutes: 24 October 1837.

¹³¹[DUL] Senate Minutes: 31 October 1837.

¹³²[DUL] Convocation Minute Book: 22 November 1837.

¹³³[DUL] Senate Minutes: 28 November 1837.

¹³⁴*Durham University Calendar 1842*, p. 13.

of the profession of Civil Engineer.’ ‘The University of Durham’, they declared, would be ‘the first public body ... to supply this deficiency’.¹³⁵ Though the new initiative was to all intents and purposes a degree, the University did not feel able to use that title: ‘as such a degree did not exist’, Chevallier later recalled, ‘at any other University’ it would have been ‘too strong a measure for a small body like us to take upon ourselves to create a degree’.¹³⁶ Instead, Durham offered students the post-nominal designation ‘C.E.’. Nevertheless, the entry requirements were demanding, as were the examinations.¹³⁷ The nearest contemporary equivalent, the engineering course at King’s College, was not a degree either, but that institution did not have degree-awarding powers. When King’s College resolved the matter of certificates for its course in 1840, it settled on the even more cumbersome title of Diploma of Associate in the Department of Civil Engineering and Science applied to the Arts and Manufactures.¹³⁸

The Durham course encompassed a broad range of subjects, including both practical and theoretical mathematics and engineering, such as Algebra, Surveying and Material Mechanics, as well as elements of the Arts course.¹³⁹ Students were even required to study Latin, Greek or a modern European language, a subject in which the new University had appointed a lecturer, James Hamilton, who was also Scottish and one of the ‘allied powers’ like Johnston. This inclusion may be due to Chevallier’s influence, himself a modern linguist, as he also examined students in German, French and Italian.¹⁴⁰ Though the maths content in the second and third years remained high, more practical subjects were

¹³⁵T. Chevallier and J.F.W. Johnston, ‘Education of Students in Civil Engineering and Mining in the University of Durham’, *London and Edinburgh Philosophical Magazine and Journal of Science*, 13 (1838), pp. 1–8, at p. 1.

¹³⁶*Copy of All Evidence Taken by the Durham University Commissioners Under the Durham University Act, 1861* (London, 1863), q. 426, p. 18.

¹³⁷A. Guagnini, ‘Worlds Apart: Academic Instruction and Professional Qualifications in the Training of Mechanical Engineers in England, 1850–1914’, in R. Fox and A. Guagnini (eds.), *Education, Technology and Industrial Performance in Europe 1850–1939* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 16–41, at p. 18.

¹³⁸Skeat, *KCL Engineering Society*, p. 99.

¹³⁹[DUL] Senate Minutes: 28 November 1837.

¹⁴⁰A. Klottrup, “...Astrorum Acerrimus Indagator...” Temple Chevallier and Durham 1834–1873’, *Durham University Journal*, 78(1) (December 1985), pp. 11–21, at p. 14.

incorporated in higher proportions than in the first year. These practical subjects included Integral Hydrostatics and Hydraulics, the Construction of Machines and Instruments, Pneumatics, Surveying, Levelling and the Use of Instruments, Practical Mapping and Architectural Drawing, Theory of Perspective and Projections, the Steam Engine, Optics and Optical Instruments as well as Astronomy and Astronomical Instruments.¹⁴¹ In February 1838, the Senate agreed £20 for the purchase of instruments for the ‘class of Civil Engineers’,¹⁴² which was soon followed by a further grant of £30.¹⁴³

Prizes were also offered for practical skills. William Taylor, one of the first students, won the prize ‘for the best plan of Kepier Colliery from actual survey’ in 1838.¹⁴⁴ Students were not kept in the classroom. Charles Grey recorded that ‘in January, 1843, Mr Beanlands took us and taught us levelling and laying down sections’. Grey also noted that in April 1843, ‘I took levels and plans from Mungywell to the castle, and drew plans and sections which I was required to show to, and explain to, the Warden and Senate, on the 9th May, for the purpose of laying water pipes’.¹⁴⁵ Johnston recorded organising an excursion for the engineering students in his journal: on 20 June 1839, he ‘set out on a short Geological excursion into Teesdale with some of the Engineer students during which we experienced much kindness and attention from Mr Stag the lead company’s agent at Middleton’.¹⁴⁶ Nor was the practical application of theoretical knowledge left out of the examination syllabus; typical questions required students, for example, to calculate ‘how many tons of water should a ten horse engine raise 9 feet in 6 hours? and find the length of a waste weir to discharge this quantity in 5 hours’ and to ‘describe the common methods for laying foundations in deep water and the general nature and construction of such methods’, including giving ‘examples in this or other countries’.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴¹ *Durham University Calendar 1842*, pp. x–xii.

¹⁴² [DUL] Senate Minutes: 13 February 1838.

¹⁴³ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 22 May 1838.

¹⁴⁴ *Durham University Calendar 1842*, p. 67.

¹⁴⁵ C.G. Grey, *The Story of His Official Life* (Dublin?, 1907?), p. 1.

¹⁴⁶ [DUL] Johnston’s Journal: 30 June 1839, p. 14.

¹⁴⁷ *Durham University Calendar 1843*, pp. 51–52.

Chevallier wrote to Maltby with a copy—indeed, *on* a copy—of the new regulations and expressed his hope that ‘the facilities’ they offered ‘both for the theoretical and practical studies connected with engineering and mining may be attended with good effects’:

The great national works in daily progress, and the immense amount of capital involved render it essential that the first studies of those who shall be engaged in the direction of those works should be such as to qualify them to form a sound and independent judgment. And I consider it to be also a consideration of no slight moment that the profession of Civil Engineer should take the rank in society which its importance demands, and, as a preliminary step, that those who aspire to the highest stations should receive the education of Christian Gentlemen.¹⁴⁸

The launch of Durham’s new course did not go unnoticed. The first volume of the *Civil Engineer and Architect’s Journal* noted that the ‘progress of professional education’ had received a ‘sudden impulse’ by the launch of the new course, which, it was hoped, would ‘augment its real value and its estimation in public opinion’. The *Journal* continued that ‘the University of Durham has been the first to include among its faculties courses of Civil Engineering and Mining and this example has been pursued in London by University and King’s Colleges’. In fact, some reckoned the foundation of classes in civil engineering in Durham and London to be of equal importance for the future success and prestige of the profession as the creation of the Institution of Civil Engineers itself.¹⁴⁹

However, the *Journal* recorded two reservations: first, the course was expensive, requiring £100 per year, and so could only be of benefit to the ‘richer classes’; and second, and more importantly, any academic course of lectures, even one as comprehensive as that to be offered in Durham could only provide part of the education needed to produce an engineer:

So in the present case, after a student has passed three years in the college, he must consider his education but half complete, and should be articulated for at least three years more to some man of business, who would give him the opportunity of perfecting himself in the technicalities of his profession.

¹⁴⁸[DUL] DDR: Chevallier to Maltby, 25 November 1837.

¹⁴⁹*Civil Engineer and Architect’s Journal*, I (1838), pp. vi, 246.

Nevertheless, the future prospects for the venture were most propitious if links to ‘men of business’ could be established.¹⁵⁰

The Senate was acutely aware of the need to gain the support and encouragement of professional civil engineers if the course was to have any hope of succeeding, in the same way as the Bishops needed to be willing to receive Durham men for ordination. But the task was far greater than persuading leading mining and civil engineers to recognise the course on offer at Durham, and was more difficult than persuading a defined and relatively small group of bishops of the value of the University’s education, as it required a loosely connected and diverse range of professional engineers to adopt an entirely new concept of training for their profession. They had to be persuaded that an academic course was a legitimate way of developing professional skills and knowledge. As the country which had industrialised before any other, by the late 1830s there was in Britain a well-tryed and deeply rooted industrial tradition. The existing practices of civil engineers had enabled the new economy to expand rapidly and had supported the development of the world’s leading manufacturing and industrial base. The case for change was hardly compelling.

To help in the process of acceptance, the new engineering course copied the use of external examiners which had been pioneered for the Arts examinations. By bringing in these external examiners, it was hoped that the course could ensure its practical relevance and more easily gain professional recognition. This was not an easy task. ‘I am at a nonplus to find some good practical as well as theoretical mathematician to aid in examining our engineer students in June’, Chevallier confided to his friend Corrie. ‘There are but 4 men to examine: but we wish to set the style of examination for future years; & to have examiners whose names will carry weight’, he emphasised.¹⁵¹ Corrie could not help on this occasion, though the three external examiners appointed for the Easter Term examinations in 1840 (the first set of final examinations) were certainly men whose names would carry weight. Sir John Rennie was a Fellow of the Royal Society and engineer to the Admiralty from 1831.¹⁵² James Forbes, Professor of Natural Philosophy at Edinburgh, was also a Fellow of the Royal Society as well as a founding member of the British Association and

¹⁵⁰ *Civil Engineer and Architect’s Journal*, I (1838), p. 66.

¹⁵¹ [DUL] CC, 47: Chevallier to Corrie, 21 March 1840.

¹⁵² A. Saint, ‘Rennie, Sir John (1794–1874)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

was, with Johnston, on the Local Committee in Edinburgh.¹⁵³ Nicholas Wood was a local mining engineer (he was born within Thorp's parish at Ryton). He had not received a university education, but had been trained as a colliery manager at Killingworth, where he formed a lasting friendship and professional association with George Stephenson. Later on, Wood became the founding President of the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers and promoted stronger ties with the University.¹⁵⁴

The external examiners' insights into the content of the course would be absolutely necessary if the students produced by Durham were to stand any chance of being valued in the professional—and, above all, *practical*—world of civil engineering. Such acceptance would not come easily as the University faced stiff competition from premium pupillages and apprenticeships. The essential element of both these routes was practical experience. A premium pupillage involved three years' practical experience in different aspects of engineering from drawing, through workshops, to the commercial office. The fees for these pupillage positions were expensive (between £100 and £300 per year) and competition for places at the most prestigious firms was intense. Apprenticeships offered a cheaper and more accessible route into the profession, but while there were no or very low fees, the training period lasted up to seven years and competition for places was at least as demanding as it was for a premium pupillage. An apprenticeship was also less likely to lead to a senior position.¹⁵⁵ The very ambiguity of this system helped maintain it: progression was possible for men of little means precisely because the lack of a formal route opened up numerous possibilities for progression for a man with ingenuity and imagination.¹⁵⁶

CONCLUSION

In retrospect, it appears that in the early nineteenth century, there should have been an overwhelming case for curriculum reform in the universities and the development of professional studies as an

¹⁵³ *Report of the British Association*, p. 46; R.N. Smart, 'Forbes, James David (1809–1868)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004; online edn 2012).

¹⁵⁴ R.M. Birse, 'Wood, Nicholas (1795–1865)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004; online edn 2010).

¹⁵⁵ Guagnini, 'Training Mechanical Engineers in England', pp. 24–25.

¹⁵⁶ Reader, *Professional Men*, pp. 123–24.

integral part of their purpose. It is therefore striking that a powerful combination of reactionary views in the universities and vested interests in the professions successfully managed to restrict significant reform at Oxford and Cambridge for decades and to hold back the development of new institutions. This was in no small part due to the conceptual triumph of liberal education as the essential development of cultivated individuals and the related removal of professional studies to a system of vocational apprenticeship outside the universities. Each side in turn denigrated the other: professional studies had little value when seen through the lens of liberal education, and vocational training was viewed as merely practical preparation for work from the perspective of the more intellectual Arts curriculum. In the English context at least, David Watson's assertion that 'Universities have always had an intimate relationship with the "professions"' is, excepting only perhaps the priesthood, simply wrong.¹⁵⁷

Some opponents of change in the old universities, even into the twentieth century, held that any subject which was of benefit to industry, business or commerce had little place in the intellectual realms of a university—using this, for example, as an argument in favour of teaching Latin and Greek, and against teaching French and German, because the latter supported international trade while the former did not.¹⁵⁸ It was not until the early 1900s that the new universities, such as Liverpool, Leeds and Sheffield, engaged enthusiastically and successfully with the professions. By this point, however, many old and emerging professions had gained their own status through legislation that granted them the unique right of determining entry to their profession, leaving the universities to play at best a subordinate role in delivering courses that matched the expectations of the professional bodies. These bodies might have found it desirable to secure the added status (especially scientific status) imparted by a university degree, but it was clear that by the start of the twentieth century, the balance of power lay with the professions.¹⁵⁹

Thorp's commitment to the delivery of professional courses in emerging subjects did not wane after the initial attempts described in this

¹⁵⁷D. Watson, 'Foreword', in B. Cunningham (ed.), *Exploring Professionalism* (London, 2008), pp. vii–viii, at p. vii.

¹⁵⁸S. Rothblatt, *The Revolution of the Dons* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 256–57.

¹⁵⁹Engel, 'English Universities and Professional Education', pp. 302–5.

chapter, for throughout his time as Warden, he innovated and changed his approach to the development of new disciplines. He frequently partnered with other individuals and associations in the north-east, including at Newcastle in relation to medicine and engineering, as will be covered in Chapter 7, but also within Durham itself. He was, for example, the prime mover in the creation of the Durham Diocesan Training School for Masters, which opened in 1839. It was one of the earliest colleges of its kind, but was still Thorp's second attempt.¹⁶⁰

Durham's failure, then, was not due to its disregard for the times or a leader who was reluctant to innovate; in fact, it was almost the opposite—that even though the University attempted to deliver what educational reformers and some elements of the professions desired, forces beyond the Warden and Senate's control meant that the chances of success were slim. Whatever faults there were within the University—and, as will be seen, there were indeed several key failures—there was no limitation of ambition or intent to reform what was taught in the universities through the innovation of discrete courses addressing contemporary and professional disciplines—an approach that extended even to theology and practical preparation for ministry.

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¹⁶⁰I. Booth, *College of St Hild and St Bede, Durham* (Durham, 1979), pp. 4–5, 210–12, 217; K.R. Wilkinson, 'The Durham Diocesan Training School for Masters 1839–1886' (MED thesis, Durham University, 1968), pp. 28–29.

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CHAPTER 7

Higher Education in Newcastle

We have no feeling with respect to [the proposed College of Mining], except that of strengthening it, and doing it good; we do not wish to exercise control over local management; we do not wish to assume the responsibility of management, or interfere in any way with the direction of its affairs; but if we can be of use to you, we shall be very happy.¹

Charles Thorp, April 1853

INTRODUCTION

Alongside the development of new universities and university colleges, the nineteenth century is notable for the establishment of new specialist colleges in professional areas. This included the development of theological colleges for preparing ordinands, colleges for training schoolteachers and new medical schools in London as well as provincial English towns.² The association of both University College and King's College with the development of English medical education is well documented and

¹*Transactions of the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers 1852–3 Volume 1*, 2nd edn (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1860), p. 221.

²For theological training, see Dowland, *Nineteenth-Century Anglican Theological Training*; for teacher training, see Adamson, *English Education*, pp. 123–54; for medicine, see Armytage, *Civic Universities*, pp. 169–71; and Bonner, *Becoming a Physician*, pp. 166–75.

recognised as part of the prevailing narrative of how higher education developed in the age of reform.³ Durham, however, has been portrayed as standing aloof from such professional studies. This is an inaccurate portrayal for two reasons: first, as has been demonstrated in the previous chapter, Durham did engage in the development of professional studies in engineering, medicine and theology, though success was limited only to theology; and second, Durham University played an important but overlooked role in the development of professional education in nearby Newcastle.

Thomas Greenhow's 1831 proposal for a college may have eventually come to nothing, but the story of higher education in Newcastle did not end there. A year after Greenhow delivered his lecture to the Literary and Philosophical Society, medical instruction began in the city. The College of Medicine that evolved from this experiment entered into a relationship with the University in 1852. Controlled residential living was also attempted for a short time in connection with the College, but without success. Nor was the idea of a college devoted to the physical sciences, mining and engineering forgotten for, again in 1852, Thorp and Chevallier worked with Nicholas Wood, the President of the newly formed North of England Institute of Mining Engineers, who had been an external examiner on Durham's own engineering course, to develop just such a proposal. These developments are direct parallels with the University's own attempt to establish courses in medicine and engineering in the 1830s.

Progress in Newcastle demonstrates two important but normally overlooked factors in Durham University's growth to the 1850s. The first is that Thorp and other members of the Senate were personally committed to delivering their ambitions for a broader, professional education in the north-east. Thorp's desire to support northern interests had not waned; in fact, he continued to explore new and different ways to deliver on those ambitions. The scale of Thorp's original ambitions was therefore no mere 'sop towards modernity'.⁴ He could be sagacious in exploring alternative routes to achieve his desired ends, although ultimately success eluded him.

³Le Quesne, 'Medicine'.

⁴Vernon, *Universities and the State in England*, p. 101.

Second, the University's difficulties in establishing new and vocational courses were not unique. Even with the backing of the leading professional associations in the north-east, professional higher education was either riven with dissent and difficulty, as was the case with medicine, or could not be realised at all, as was the case with engineering. This is instructive because it shows that there were complications during the period that affected all types of initiative, whatever their origin, and not just Durham alone.

A COLLEGE FOR MEDICINE

Although not large by comparison with other cities, and hence containing only a small population of general practitioners and apprentices, Newcastle had a history of medical associations, including a Company of Barber Surgeons dating from 1442, and the more recent Philosophical and Medical Society of 1786.⁵ Medical instruction was first offered in 1832/32 and 1833/34 by a group of two physicians and four associates in Bell's Court; they were all practitioners, both part-time and voluntary.⁶ Their classes were designed to supplement rather than replace the apprenticeship system.⁷ The students were all part-time too; amongst them was John Snow, who would go on to become one of the most famous medics of the nineteenth century noted for his work on cholera and his practice in anaesthesia.⁸

⁵G. Dale, 'Newcastle's Medical Schools', in D. Gardner-Medwin et al. (eds.), *Medicine in Northumbria* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1993), pp. 211–23, at pp. 211–12; D. Embleton, *The Newcastle Medical Society One Hundred Years Ago* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1891); D. Embleton, *The History of the Medical School Afterwards the Durham College of Medicine at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, for Forty Years 1832 to 1872* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1890), pp. 7–8; McCord (ed.), *Newcastle University*, pp. 16–18; G.G. Turner, 'A Short History of the Durham University College of Medicine', *Durham University Journal*, 12(1) (1896), pp. 8–10, at p. 8; and C.E. Whiting, *University of Durham 1832–1932* (London, 1932), pp. 118–19.

⁶Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, p. 8.

⁷Dale, 'Newcastle's Medical Schools', p. 211; Turner, *The Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, p. 16.

⁸Turner, *The Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, p. 20; Dale, 'Newcastle's Medical Schools', p. 211; Armstrong Davison, 'John Snow', in Dale et al. (eds.), *Newcastle School of Medicine*, p. 7; and Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, p. 10.

After the success of their first two years, the lecturers rented the Hall of the Company of Barber Surgeons and, on 1 October 1834, formally opened the Newcastle upon Tyne School of Medicine and Surgery.⁹ The School soon gained the recognition of both the Society of Apothecaries and the Royal College of Surgeons, and made steady progress, averaging 34 students per year from 1834 to 1844. The School declined somewhat over the next six years to an average of 22 students in the winter term (when dissections were possible) and only 15 in the summer.¹⁰

These developments in Newcastle mirrored those in other provincial English cities. By 1834, there were 13 English medical schools outside London, which complemented the strength of Scottish medical education (at the same point there were five medical schools in Glasgow alone) and started to create a counter to the dominance of the metropolis in medical education. These provincial English medical schools followed a familiar pattern, with enterprising local physicians offering lectures and training that they intended would satisfy the requirements of the College of Surgeons and Apothecaries Hall.¹¹

Perhaps in part because of this reduction in student numbers during the late 1840s, a conversation about connecting the School at Newcastle with Durham University was under way by June 1850.¹² In August, Dennis Embleton, one of the lecturers and proprietors of the School, stayed with Thorp at Bamburgh Castle and outlined a potential scheme which he ‘perceived was favourably received’ by the Warden.¹³ By the end of the year, a joint committee of the University and the School was formed to progress matters.¹⁴

At about the same time, the School was forced to quit the Barber Surgeons’ Hall as it was to be demolished to make way for a new railway.¹⁵ John Dobson, the local architect responsible for much of

⁹Turner, *The Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, p. 23.

¹⁰Dale, ‘Newcastle’s Medical Schools’, pp. 212–13; Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, p. 120.

¹¹Bonner, *Becoming a Physician*, pp. 168–69.

¹²[DUL] Senate Minutes: 11 June 1850; Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 124.

¹³Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, p. 50.

¹⁴[DUL] Senate Minutes: 3 December 1850; Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 123–24.

¹⁵Dale, ‘Newcastle’s Medical Schools’, pp. 213–14.

the design of nineteenth-century Newcastle, designed a replacement building in an Italianate classical style at Rye Hill.¹⁶ Thorp laid the foundation stone in February 1851. After the ceremonial proceedings, members of the University, the School and the Barber Surgeons' Company all dined together, further symbolising their increasingly close and cordial relationship.¹⁷

In April 1851, however, a bitter quarrel erupted amongst the staff of the School over the election of a surgeon to one of the Newcastle Poor Law Union's districts. Incredibly, this argument became so heated that in June it led to the School's dissolution.¹⁸ The episode became known as 'the Disruption' and, for a brief period, resulted in two competing medical schools.¹⁹ These were the Newcastle upon Tyne College of Medicine and Practical Science, which retained a minority of the students and became known colloquially as the Rye Hill College because it occupied the new building, and the Newcastle upon Tyne College of Medicine, with the majority of the students under the leadership of Embleton.²⁰ Dobson's new building having been occupied by their rivals, during 1851/52 Embleton's supporters were forced to use the gardener's house in the grounds of the old Barber Surgeons' Hall—this being the only building that remained after the demolition.²¹

However, despite its insalubrious habitation, by October 1851 Embleton's College had received recognition from both the Society of Apothecaries and the Royal College of Surgeons. In January 1852, the University of London was empowered to receive certificates from students of the College too.²² To brighten its prospects further, in the

¹⁶ *Illustrated London News*, 25 January 1868.

¹⁷ Dale, 'Newcastle's Medical Schools', pp. 214–15.

¹⁸ Lecturers of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine and Surgery, *A brief statement of the facts connected with the disruption of the late Medical School in this town* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1851); Turner, *Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, pp. 38–39; and Dale, 'Newcastle's Medical Schools', p. 215.

¹⁹ Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, p. 57.

²⁰ Dale, 'Newcastle's Medical Schools', p. 215; Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, p. 51; Turner, *Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, pp. 43, 54.

²¹ G. Dale, 'The Newcastle Medical School Buildings', in Dale et al. (eds.), *Newcastle School of Medicine*, pp. 27–34, at p. 30; Turner, *Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, pp. 55–58.

²² Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, p. 53.

same month Embleton also completed negotiations with the University about its connection. So the College became ‘The Newcastle-upon-Tyne College of Medicine in connection with the University of Durham’.²³ This made it the only English provincial medical school with a formal university relationship.²⁴ While the College remained a separate body under its own Council, it agreed to abide by academic and residential regulations that enabled students to proceed to Durham awards. To further bind the two institutions together, Embleton, who was formally Registrar of the College, became the University’s Reader in Medicine—a long-delayed replacement for Cooke.

The new regulations required students to spend one year resident in Durham and to pass an examination similar to that of the first-year students in Arts (hence those who already held the BA were exempted), before proceeding to an examination in the medical sciences after a further three years in a college in connection with the University.²⁵ The end result of these studies was the Licence in Medicine, which gave the same professional standing as qualifications obtained through the Royal College of Surgeons, and the Society of Apothecaries.²⁶ The first such awards were made to John Dickinson and William Young in June 1856; both men later received the Bachelor of Medicine, and Dickinson joined the inaugural Anglican Universities’ Mission to Central Africa.²⁷

A residential aspect to the connection had been discussed as early as June 1850, when the Senate agreed that the medical students should be ‘under the moral and religious superintendence of an officer to be subject to the control of the University’.²⁸ Alongside the academic connection, therefore, the new regulations stated that students had to reside ‘in some College, Hall, or House’.²⁹ Originally, both the academic and residential aspects of the College’s activities were to be accommodated in Westmorland House, a dignified residential mansion next to the Literary

²³Turner, *The Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, p. 61.

²⁴Bettenson, *The University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, p. 15.

²⁵*Durham University Calendar 1853*, pp. 9–10, xxvii–xxix.

²⁶Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, p. 53.

²⁷I. Conacher, *A Tyneside Martyr to Medicine* (Kendall, 2012).

²⁸[DUL] Senate Minutes: 11 June 1850.

²⁹*Durham University Calendar 1853*, p. 10; Title VIII, Section IV, paragraph 3.

and Philosophical Society which the College had purchased in 1852. The building was named after the Earls of Westmorland, who had had a town house called Westmorland Place nearby. The Earls of Westmorland were of the Neville family and hence the name Neville Hall was chosen.

However, it quickly became apparent that Westmorland House was impractical; such lack of foresight is probably indicative of how desperate the College was to move out of the gardener's house.³⁰ As a result, a new academic building was built in the garden of Westmorland House on Orchard Street and was opened by Thorp in October 1852. This left the House for residential purposes alone. Even with this compromise, however, it was agreed that a site away from the centre of town would be preferable and so the title Neville Hall was transferred to the newly built 1 Leazes Terrace. Westmorland House was sold to the Mining Institute, which promptly demolished it.³¹

William Greenwell was made Principal of Neville Hall with an annual salary of £100, the same amount as had been awarded to Melville as Principal of Hatfield in 1847.³² Greenwell was a local man and a graduate of the University, proceeding a BA in 1840, an LTh in 1842 and an MA in 1843. After a rather unremarkable academic career, Greenwell held various positions in the University, including as Bursar (1844–1847) and Chaplain (1846–1847) of University College. As a Durham graduate and existing staff member, Thorp would have felt he could be trusted.

At first, the prospects for the Hall were promising. It opened in October 1852 with a medical tutor alongside Greenwell and 11 students, which increased to 14 students in 1853/54. The domestic arrangements followed the Hatfield pattern and the Treasurer of the Rye Hill College commented that the Hall 'was as much a hall as any in existence at Durham'.³³ Despite the number of students dipping to 13 in 1854/55, it was reported to the Senate in October 1854 that Neville Hall was 'too small to accommodate a sufficient number of students', and so enquiries were made 'with a view of obtaining a larger house'.³⁴

³⁰Dale, 'Newcastle's Medical Schools', p. 217.

³¹Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, pp. 54–56.

³²[DUL] Senate Minutes: 15 June 1847.

³³*Transactions of the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers 1853–4 Volume 2* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1854), p. 96.

³⁴[DUL] Senate Minutes: 24 October 1854.

These investigations were slow, but by April the following year, the Senate was actively considering the purchase of houses at Rye Hill. However, the College authorities were not keen on this option. 'The houses at Rye Hill would be inconveniently distant from the Lecture Rooms', they argued, and so the idea was dropped in favour of hiring the neighbouring property on Leazes Terrace.³⁵ They did not say so, but no doubt locating the Hall so close to their rival's College would not have endeared them to the plan either. The expansion proved unnecessary as the number of students in 1855/56 increased only to 15.

Greenwell did not stay long and he was replaced in May 1854 by another Durham graduate, James Raine.³⁶ Born in Durham in 1834, Raine attended Durham Grammar School and the University, graduating BA in 1851, LTh in 1853 and MA in 1854. He was elected a Fellow in 1852 and served briefly as Chaplain of University College in 1854.

In February 1855, the Senate received the accounts of the Hall and noted that it was in debt by £254.11.11½. A committee of enquiry was formed under Chevallier to investigate.³⁷ The minutes of the Senate, laconic as always, gave little away about what this committee discovered, but in January 1856, the Senate agreed 'that steps should be taken ... with the view of closing Neville Hall'.³⁸ The authorities of the College of Medicine were alarmed about this prospect, fearing what this meant for their own reputation, and senior staff from the College visited the Senate the following month.³⁹ To show their commitment to the connection, the Senate at first pondered diverting '£100 a year ... for two years for a Medical Tutor to superintend the education at Newcastle of medical students belonging to the University', but it was eventually agreed 'that in lieu of the payment of £100 a year to the Principal of Neville's Hall, four scholarships of £25 for medical students of the University of Durham be given for three years'.⁴⁰

Throughout the Hall's brief existence, student numbers were buoyant, with those formally matriculated with the University rising from

³⁵[DUL] Senate Minutes: 1 May 1855.

³⁶[DUL] Senate Minutes: 30 May 1854.

³⁷[DUL] Senate Minutes: 20 February 1855.

³⁸[DUL] Senate Minutes: 22 January 1856.

³⁹Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 128.

⁴⁰[DUL] Senate Minutes: 19 February 1856, 25 February 1856.

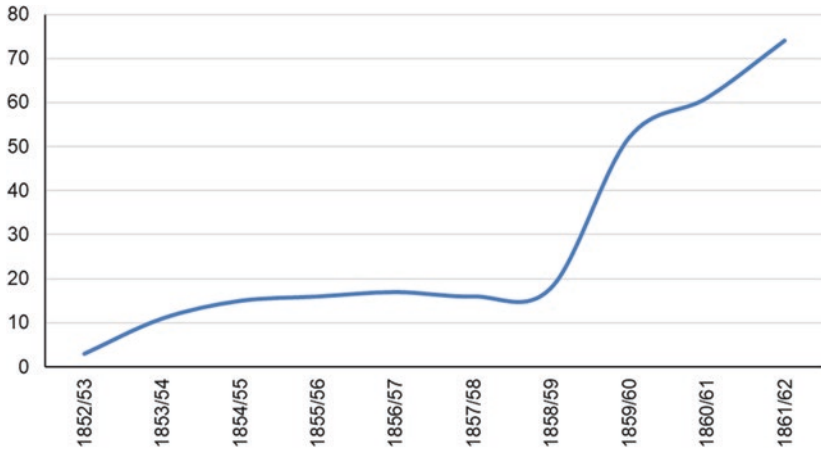


Fig. 7.1 Students 1852/53–1861/62 (Newcastle only, Medicine) (Source as listed in the University Calendar)

three to 16. Nevertheless, this was insufficient to make the Hall economically viable—nor did the residential model suit the older, more professionally orientated students of medicine. Costs were once again a factor, as it was cheaper to live in lodgings or to stay at home, an option made easier by the College’s Orchard Street site being right next to the central station.⁴¹ The College also blamed the Hall’s failure on the disruption.⁴²

Soon after the Hall closed, the number of students at the College surged following the establishment of the General Medical Council in 1858 and the introduction of a statutory requirement for formal education in order to register for medical practice. A further boon came with the reunification of the rival schools in May 1857 (Fig. 7.1).⁴³

The impact that these shifts in medical education, both nationally and locally, might have had on the fortune of the Hall was never tested.

⁴¹Turner, *The Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, p. 64.

⁴²Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 128.

⁴³Bettenson, *The University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, p. 15; Turner, *The Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, p. 69; and Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 129–30.

A COLLEGE FOR MINING AND ENGINEERING

At first, Durham's ambitious course in Engineering was popular, but five years after it started, recruitment declined and then stopped altogether. Eight students started the course in 1837/38 and a further 15 started the following year, but the last student was admitted in 1847/48 (Fig. 7.2).

In May 1850, the Senate admitted that 'the Class of Civil Engineers' was 'no longer existing'.⁴⁴ Completion rates were even worse: between June 1840 and June 1843, only ten students completed the course and achieved the Academical Rank of Civil Engineer. A further student obtained his award in January 1853. Four students admitted to study engineering instead graduated in Arts.

Despite this rapid demise, it is hard to conceive what more the University could have done to have ensured success. It engaged leading industrial figures to work as external examiners, it promoted the scheme in relevant national journals, the staff involved (Chevallier, Whitley and Johnston) were well known locally and respected in national scientific circles, and the course included a substantial practical element. However, signs that the course would struggle were visible early on. After the fulsome praise offered in its first edition, the preface to the second edition of *The Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal* noted ominously that 'an engineer would rather have in his employment a working man than a college diplomatist'.⁴⁵ Indeed, the profession was reluctant to embrace qualifications. Even in 1870, the Institution of Civil Engineers noted that it was 'not the custom in England to consider *theoretical* knowledge as absolutely essential'.⁴⁶

An opportunity arose to resurrect the idea of a course in engineering in the early 1850s. Shortly after it was founded in 1852, the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers made just such an attempt. In April 1853, Nicholas Wood, the Institute's President and one of the University's external examiners, raised the possibility of founding a college of mining. Such colleges were by now almost commonplace elsewhere in Europe. The pre-eminent institution was the Freiberg Mining

⁴⁴[DUL] Senate Minutes: 14 May 1850.

⁴⁵*Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal*, II (1839), p. v.

⁴⁶*The Education and Status of Civil Engineers, in the United Kingdom and in Foreign Countries* (London, 1870), pp. viii–ix.

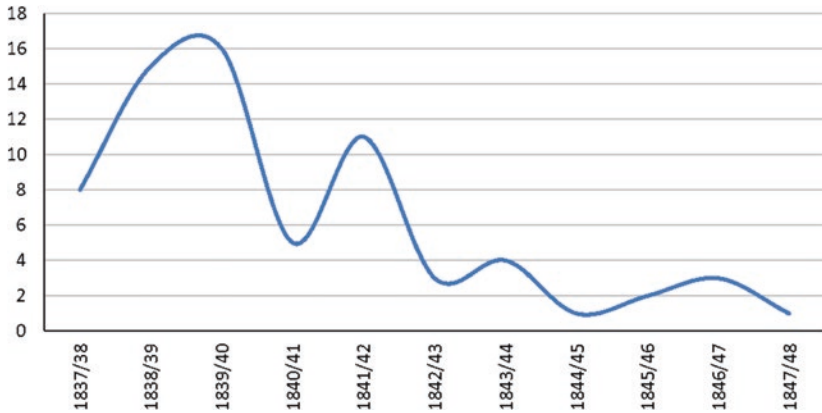


Fig. 7.2 Entrants 1837/38–1847/48 (Durham only, Engineering) (Source [DUL] DUR: Admission Book 1833–1896)

Academy, which had been founded in 1766. Situated in a major mining district, the Academy was government-funded and offered classes in mining and metallurgical processes.⁴⁷ The idea of such college in the north-east ‘had for some time engaged the attention of the mining and manufacturing interests of this district’, Wood noted.⁴⁸ Indeed, amongst those already advising Wood was Lyon Playfair, teacher of chemistry applied to the arts and agriculture in the Government School of Mines and of Science Applied to the Arts in Jermyn Street.⁴⁹ Playfair

⁴⁷G.W. Roderick, and M.D. Stephens, ‘Mining Education in England and Wales in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century’, *Irish Journal of Education*, 6(2) (1972), pp. 105–20, at p. 106.

⁴⁸*Transactions Volume 1*, p. 217.

⁴⁹The institution on Jermyn Street had a complex history. The Museum of Economic Geology opened in 1841 and moved from Craig’s Court to Jermyn Street in May 1851, when it reopened as the Museum of Practical Geology. Its resources were used for, and was co-located with, the new Government School of Mines and of Science Applied to the Arts, which opened in November 1851. This title changed in 1857 to the Government School of Mines and in 1863 to the Royal School of Mines. It eventually moved and become a constituent part of the Imperial College of Science and Technology. Cf. H.J.T. Ellingham, *Centenary of the Imperial College of Science and Technology: A Short History of the College 1845–1945* (London, 1945), pp. 5–9.

had just published a lecture on industrial education in Europe and was considered the national authority.⁵⁰ Wood had also contacted Thorp to discuss ‘the propriety of a connection with the University of Durham’. Although the College could be established without this relationship, such a connection, Wood argued, would lend the proposed institution a beneficial ‘moral and religious character’. Wood reported that Thorp had supported the scheme entirely, and that included making awards to the students of the proposed College up to and including the BA without reference to their religious principles.⁵¹ Thorp reported just as positively to the Senate, noting that the scheme might also have the benefit of ‘bringing all parties at Newcastle to act together for that purpose’ and thus bring the medical school’s disruption to an end.⁵²

However, while the Institute regularly discussed the proposed college, little actual progress was made. In February 1854, Wood reported on a similar initiative in Cornwall: ‘it was only necessary’, he goaded the Institute’s membership, ‘for them to put their shoulders to the wheel in order to carry out the object successfully’.⁵³

Part of the reason for the delay was the medical school’s disruption. As only one of the two colleges could be attached to the mining college, Wood thought that this ‘presented an obstacle in the outset’.⁵⁴ The impact of these quarrels surfaced during a meeting of the Institute in March 1854. Richard Burdon Sanderson, a teacher of Botany and Vegetable Physiology as well as Treasurer at the Rye Hill College, complained that insufficient attention had been given to ‘the existence already in this town of a College of Practical Science’. He complained that the proposed college could not ‘assume the title of a College of Practical Science’ since it would ‘give rise to two institutions having the same name’. He also complained about the proposed connection with the University. The Rye Hill College was still freshly wounded from its competitor’s connection with Durham; ‘we felt and expected ... that we should be put ... upon the same footing’ but had ‘found the University

⁵⁰L. Playfair, *Industrial Instruction on the Continent* (London, 1852).

⁵¹*Transactions Volume 1*, pp. 220–21.

⁵²[DUL] Senate Minutes: 1 March 1853.

⁵³*Transactions Volume 2*, p. 51.

⁵⁴*Transactions Volume 1*, p. 217.

quite indisposed to do so', he declared.⁵⁵ To have a new college in Newcastle which not only appropriated part of their name but also established the very connection with Durham which they had been denied was more than could be politely accommodated.

Wood remained adamant. While he conceded that adopting the name of College of Practical Science 'entrenched a little upon the title of another institution', he stated his expectation that the Practical Science element of Rye Hill College could be incorporated with the Institute's proposed college in some way. However, the main point which all desired was for the disruption to end and for the colleges to reunite so that, as another member present phrased it, 'they might go on harmoniously together, in conjunction with other institutions in the town, for the good of the public'.⁵⁶

Deliberations were proving glacial, but in January 1854 the Institute published *Suggestions for the Establishment of a College of Practical Mining and Manufacturing Science at Newcastle-upon-Tyne*. In this concise pamphlet, the Institute argued for the creation of a degree-awarding college in Newcastle to teach students the principles of mining and manufacturing sciences. Although it was admitted that such knowledge had 'by individual effort, and the stimulus of necessity been carried to a considerable pitch of perfection', it relied 'upon the energy and perseverance of isolated individuals' and so a more systematic approach was required. The College would be aimed at 'pupils intended to be managers of mines, and of the subordinate departments of mining, and also of those meant to be employed in the Mechanical, Chemical, or Manufacturing Works of the district or elsewhere'. Over two or possibly three years (this was yet to be agreed), students would study theoretical subjects such as Mathematics alongside practical studies such as Applied Mechanics, Surveying and the Working of Mines.⁵⁷

The pamphlet made no mention of the University, which must have been a deliberate act. It is possible that the omission was out of sympathy for the Rye Hill College or simply through fear that the University's

⁵⁵ *Transactions Volume 2*, pp. 79, 95–96; *The British Medical Directory for England, Wales, and Scotland for 1854*, p. 53; and *Medical Times and Gazette*, 25 September 1858.

⁵⁶ *Transactions Volume 2*, p. 98.

⁵⁷ *Suggestions for the Establishment of a College of Practical Mining and Manufacturing Science at Newcastle-upon-Tyne* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1855).

religious affiliation would have put off potential supporters who may have anticipated the imposition of religious tests on students. Although it was not raised by Wood, despite his role as external examiner, the University's failed course in engineering may have also been felt to be a liability.

The Institute next printed 500 copies of a Prospectus, complete with an elevation and ground plan.⁵⁸ Despite the appearance of an architect's drawing, there was little additional information and the Prospectus in fact repeated much of what had been published in the Suggestions. However, it still did not make any mention of the University.

Little further progress was made after the publication of this Prospectus. Wood was over-optimistic about the possibility of government funding, despite the well-meant warnings of influential individuals. Robert Stephenson urged caution as early as April 1853; he argued that they should 'throw overboard entirely any consideration of Government aid'.⁵⁹ Without government funds or sufficient local support, in June 1859 the committee responsible for promoting the College reported 'that it was hopeless to expect to be able to raise the necessary funds to establish, endow, and support a College of an entirely independent character, and unconnected with any other institution'.⁶⁰

It was only once the attempt to found an independent college had been attempted and failed that the Committee approached the authorities at Durham once again to see 'if it were practicable to engraft upon that University the proposed College'. The two medical colleges had also now reunited, and so that local rivalry was no longer an issue. The result was another pamphlet, published in 1859 around six years after the first discussions with the University. This proposal included one substantial compromise for the Institute, specifically that the proposed College would be established at Durham, even though its essential independence would be maintained. Nevertheless, the tone of the pamphlet was optimistic: 'looking at the manner in which the authorities of the University of Durham have met the subject', it recorded, 'there can be

⁵⁸ *Prospectus of a College of Practical Mining and Manufacturing Science, Proposed to be Established at Newcastle-upon-Tyne* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1855). Cf. *Transactions of the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers 1855-6 Volume 4* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1856), p. xiii.

⁵⁹ *Transactions Volume 1*, p. 223.

⁶⁰ *Transactions of the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers 1858-9 Volume 7* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1859), p. 169.

no apprehension that any difficulty will exist in the requisite details for completing the arrangement'.⁶¹ Chevallier also accompanied Wood to London to seek the support of the Home Secretary, George Cornewall Lewis.⁶² But there was no progress, for, as with the Institute's independent proposal, there was insufficient general support for the scheme. On a national level, there were other competing proposals, and several regions vied for attention too in the formation of such a college, including the Midlands and South Wales.⁶³ There was already a college established in Cornwall, as well as the Government institute on Jermyn Street. Despite Thorp's support and the leadership of the most relevant local professional body, the College remained as out of reach as ever.

CONCLUSION

No longer attempting to establish new and professional courses entirely under its own aegis, Thorp was now working in partnership with local professional leaders and practitioners to support their own endeavours. Nevertheless, although he was doing so in a new way, he was simply returning to his original ambition of bringing useful professional education to the north of England.⁶⁴ 'Such an extension of the University is no new thought', the Warden reminded those gathered for the inauguration of the College of Medicine's connection with Durham in October 1852.⁶⁵ Thorp also worked closely with Wood and the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers to support their proposed college; his desire to ensure that the University proved beneficial to them extended even as far as waiving religious tests for the BA. These attempts show highlight Thorp's creativity, something which historians have not previously appreciated. His actions throughout the 1850s demonstrate that he had not given up on developing the University, nor was he content

⁶¹ *Proposed College of Mining, Engineering, and Manufacturing Science, in the North of England* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1859).

⁶² [TNA] GB-0066/HO 45/7196: Wood to Lewis, 12 March 1861.

⁶³ *Transactions of the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers 1854-5 Volume 3* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1855), p. 342.

⁶⁴ Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, p. 51.

⁶⁵ C. Thorp, *An Address Delivered at the Inauguration of the New Building of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne College of Medicine in Connection with the University of Durham* (Gateshead, 1852), [NUL] GB-0186/University Archives/16/2/1, p. 3.

to lead a second-rate institution focused on theology; rather, they show he was an experimenter, ready and willing to seize opportunities and, above all, someone who was as firmly fixed on the benefits of professional higher education as anyone else in the region. These developments presaged the eventual establishment of the College of Physical Science and an even closer union with the College of Medicine in the 1870s, and would have, in effect, created a multi-campus university with faculties of Theology and Arts based in Durham (Education might be added too, in the form of the teacher training colleges which benefited from ties with University staff) and Physical Science and Medicine in Newcastle.⁶⁶

However, the timing was inopportune, for the events of the disruption meant that in forming a connection with one of the rival colleges of medicine, the University was picking sides in a local dispute (whether that was Thorp's intention or not). This disruption also caused difficulties for the Mining Institute's own attempt to found a college of physical science. Thorp wanted to reconcile the two colleges, and the University's regulations for medical students anticipated connecting other colleges (perhaps even the Rye Hill College) as they were framed in general and not specifically for the College of Medicine. Neville's Hall was even permitted to admit students from other colleges. However, the rival College vigorously opposed the University's connection with the College of Medicine, both in public and in private, and their own attempts at affiliation were rebuffed as Thorp urged them to reunite instead.⁶⁷ Perhaps without these local schisms, the University might have developed both medicine and physical sciences in Newcastle, in co-operation with local professional interests, alongside the Arts and Theological provision in Durham. Yet, as has been seen, while local politics no doubt hindered these developments, progress elsewhere was also slow during the 1850s and so trends beyond the north-east also affected the ability of these schemes to flourish. Whatever the cause, the end result was that Durham faced the 1860s with a declining student population and with a connection to one medical college, but without an operational course in engineering either in Durham or Newcastle.

⁶⁶I. Booth, *College of St Hild and St Bede, Durham* (Durham, 1979); A. Lawrence, *St Hild's College 1858–1958* (Darlington, 1958); and Wilkinson, 'The Durham Diocesan Training School for Masters'.

⁶⁷Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, pp. 50–51; Turner, *The Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, pp. 54, 61.

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CHAPTER 8

Growth and Decline

The great and increasing population of the North of England, and its remoteness from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, have long pointed out the expediency of establishing in that part of the kingdom an Institution which should secure to its inhabitants the advantages of a sound yet not expensive academical education.¹

Durham University Calendar for 1836

INTRODUCTION

Given the strong interest in university reform from 1800 onwards and the number of proposals for new institutions that emerged during the same period, it might be assumed that the story of higher education in the nineteenth century is one of continued growth. The truth is much less consistent.

Far from heralding an era of expansion, England's new institutions founded in the Age of Reform struggled. The expected interest in modern academic studies at a higher level simply did not materialise and the founders of the new universities faced significant recruitment shortfalls that placed their young institutions in jeopardy. There is, then, a stark contrast between the clear ambition which led to the establishment of

¹*Durham University Calendar* 1836, p. 3. This is the opening text of the first full University Calendar, which remained the same until well into the twentieth century.

institutions (remembering also that many more were projected and never founded) and the general failure and near-collapse of these institutions in their early decades.²

STUDENT RECRUITMENT IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Higher education across Europe, including England, did not expand consistently throughout the nineteenth century.³ Robert Anderson has shown that universities from Scotland to Russia experienced the same broad trend of growth in the period up to about 1830 (the years following the Napoleonic Wars), followed by stagnation until the mid-1860s and then renewed growth from 1870 until the eve of the First World War.⁴ According to one analysis of enrolments, there was even a decline in the rate of admission to English universities between 1821 and 1861. The number of students enrolling in 1831 was lower than that in 1821 (Fig. 8.1).⁵

The general pace of change accelerated from about 1870 onwards, though Oxford and Cambridge preceded this expansion by a few years with a surge that started in the late 1860s. From about the middle of the century too, the middle classes showed an increasing interest in the growing number of public schools able to prepare their sons for careers in the civil service, the military or the Church.⁶ Owens College, which almost collapsed in the 1850s, expanded rapidly in the 1870s. This increase gave the College's leaders sufficient optimism to forecast the enrolment of 2000 students.⁷ This hope proved fanciful, but the available statistics demonstrate that while there had been considerable growth between about 1810 and 1830, the decisive shift in the evolving higher

²For example, proposals in Bath, Leeds and Liverpool.

³Anderson, *European Universities*, pp. 119–37.

⁴Anderson, *European Universities*, pp. 124–26; Reader, *Professional Men*, pp. 142–45.

⁵M. Greenwood, 'University Education: Its Recent History and Function', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 98(2) (1935), pp. 1–33. Greenwood's figures excluded female students for ease of comparison across the century; he therefore calculated the rate of entry as a proportion of the male population aged 15–25.

⁶Anderson, *Universities and Elites*, p. 33; Simon, *The Two Nations*, pp. 302–3, 318–20; and G. Sutherland, 'Secondary Education: The Education of the Middle Classes', in G. Sutherland et al. (eds.), *Education* (Dublin, 1977), pp. 137–95, at pp. 137–59.

⁷Ward, *Victorian Oxford*, p. 283.

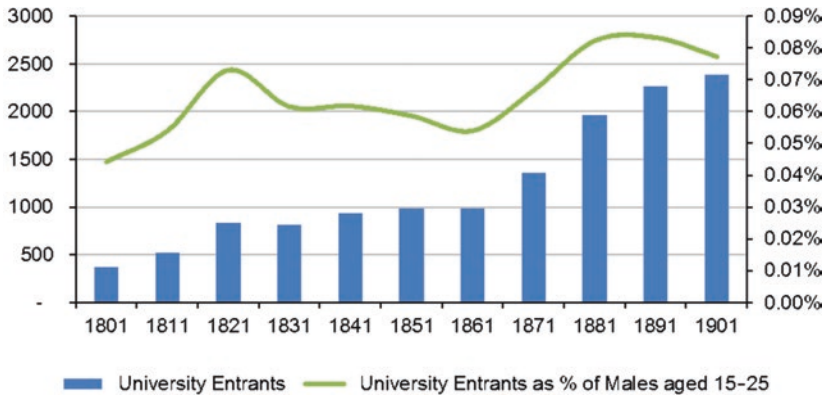


Fig. 8.1 Participation rates in English universities 1801–1901 (male students only) (*Source* Greenwood, ‘University Education’, p. 7)

education sector occurred from about 1870 onwards: between 1871 and 1881 alone, there was a 44% increase in admission to university. This was a trend experienced internationally too, as the universities in various parts of the British Empire experienced growth from the 1870s as part of increasing Victorian globalisation (Fig. 8.2).⁸

Though the expansion from 1870 onwards marked the start of rapid and persistent growth, one constant throughout the nineteenth century was that Oxford and Cambridge remained not only considerably larger but also one step ahead of their new rivals. Even by 1903, 72% of all male university students entered Oxford and Cambridge.

These figures tell the bleak story of the significant difficulties that beset all new institutions of higher learning during the nineteenth century. Even London University and King’s College, London—institutions normally feted for breaking the Oxbridge duopoly—conspicuously failed to prosper at first.⁹ This is despite the advantage they enjoyed of being based in London with easy access to key facilities and potential students. Both colleges, unlike Durham, were also open to all without religious tests—a key demand of Dissenters and others, who decried being

⁸T. Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars: Universities, Networks and the British Academic World, 1850–1939* (Manchester, 2013), pp. 5, 24–28.

⁹Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 60.

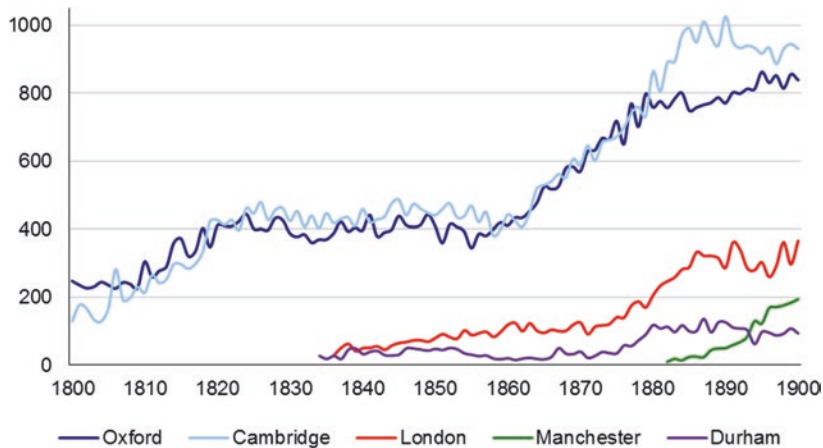


Fig. 8.2 Entrants to English universities 1799–1903 (male students only) (*Source* Greenwood, ‘University Education’, p. 6)

locked out of English higher education—and neither insisted on an expensive mode of residential living. However, by the mid-1830s, the decline in the number of students at London University was a matter of public debate.¹⁰ The institution’s financial difficulties were considerable and mounting, even to the extent that ‘bailiffs’ were reported to have chased ‘the Professor of Modern History round the quadrangle’ after seizing ‘the air-pump, the exhausted receiver, and the galvanic batteries’.¹¹ London University, which had spent £2580 on library books in 1828–1829, sacked the first librarian in 1831 for lack of funds and dropped expenditure to an average of only £51 per year between 1832 and 1875.¹²

As early as January 1832, Van Mildert confidently asserted that London University was ‘manifestly on the decline’.¹³ He was not alone in doing so. By February 1833, there were serious suggestions that the institution could not continue ‘upon its present footing’.¹⁴ By 1846, now re-titled University College, the situation was little improved. Brougham bemoaned

¹⁰ *Morning Chronicle*, 25 April 1834.

¹¹ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 177.

¹² K.E. Attar, ‘“The Establishment of a First-Class University Library”: The Beginnings of the University of London Library’, *History of Universities*, XXVIII(1) (2014), pp. 44–65, at pp. 44–45.

¹³ [DUL] TC, 77: Van Mildert to Thorp, 14 January 1832.

¹⁴ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 178.

that 'his anticipations of its success had not been realized, or anything like realized', and he berated his fellow citizens, who despite having complained for 'a century' of the want of a university in London persisted in sending their sons 'to be corrupted at Oxford or Cambridge'.¹⁵ The early decades of King's College were much the same and by the mid-1850s, 'a general air of poverty and depression brooded over the dingy scene' at the Strand.¹⁶

Even by the mid-nineteenth century, new institutions were suffering.¹⁷ In 1865, Queen's College, Birmingham was declared bankrupt and closed, with its theology department later reopening as a theological college and its medical school merged into rival Sydenham College.¹⁸ In Manchester, Owens College was in a very dangerous state just a few years after its foundation: the number of ordinary students almost halved from 62 in 1851/52 (the first full year of the College's operation) to 33 in 1856/57. In 1856, the first Principal of Owens College, Alexander Scott, reflected on the College's diminished intake of ordinary students and advised the trustees that it was their 'duty ... to persevere till the value of the college became matter of experience, and a demand was created which did not then exist'. He suggested that the College establish a school to help create a group of potential students; meanwhile, Joseph Greenwood, the Professor of Greek and Latin, suggested that it would have been better if the College had simply been a school in the first place rather than a college at all. Greenwood also held that its unsectarian nature had limited its likely supporters.¹⁹ In July 1858, the *Manchester Guardian* called the College a 'mortifying failure', bemoaning that only 'eight years ago' it had been hoped it 'would form the nucleus of a Manchester University'. The newspaper's editorial attributed the difficulties to the curriculum on offer: 'first, the College supplies a kind of education which is not wanted; and, secondly, it does not supply the education which is wanted'.²⁰ Henry Roscoe, the Professor of Chemistry, described the College at that time as being 'nearly in a state of collapse'.²¹

¹⁵ *The Times*, 21 May 1846.

¹⁶ Hearnshaw, *The Centenary History of King's College London*, p. 206.

¹⁷ Armytage, *Civic Universities*, p. 220; Briggs, 'Development in Higher Education', pp. 95–116, at pp. 110–13.

¹⁸ Whyte, *Redbrick*, pp. 96–97.

¹⁹ J. Thompson, *The Owens College: Its Foundation and Growth and Its Connection with the Victoria University, Manchester* (Manchester, 1886), p. 155.

²⁰ *Manchester Guardian*, 9 July 1858.

²¹ W.H. Chaloner, *The Movement for the Extension of Owens College Manchester 1863–73* (Manchester, 1973), p. 1.

Back in London, the story of disappointing beginnings continued. The Royal School of Mines, founded in 1851 as the Government School of Mines and of Science Applied to the Arts, was deeply unsuccessful; until 1869, it produced no more than six Associates in any year, and double figures were not reached until 1876.²² Suspicious mine owners still distrusted academic theory and failed to show any real interest in the College, just as they had shown no interest in Durham's engineering course in the late 1830s or Wood's proposed college in Newcastle in the 1850s.²³ This slow progress with the development of scientific and technical instruction was amply recorded in the Royal Commission on Scientific Instruction and the Advancement of Science (known as the Devonshire Commission), which undertook its investigations from 1870 to 1875. While the Commission's report noted some progress in places, including King's and University Colleges in London, Owens College in Manchester and the recently established College of Physical Science in Newcastle, it found grave deficiencies more generally and especially in the old universities and at an elementary level.²⁴

STUDENT RECRUITMENT AT DURHAM, KING'S COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

The accepted narrative of higher education development in the nineteenth century could give the impression that recruitment to the new London colleges was buoyant while students eschewed Durham. The reality is more complex and undermines the simple view of how the new universities developed.

The number of students recruited to Durham was at first reasonably promising: after an exceptional response for the first intake, entrants dipped, but then grew throughout most of the 1830s. Students from the north of England were in the majority, accounting for 58% of those students with a known place of birth over the first decade, with 30 coming from the south of England and the remainder from the rest of the UK or overseas. While in most years the Arts course dominated, Theology and,

²²Roderick and Stephens, 'Mining Education in England and Wales', p. 109.

²³Reader, *Professional Men*, p. 141.

²⁴D.R. Jones, *The Origins of Civic Universities: Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool* (London, 1988), pp. 38–39; R. MacLeod, 'Scientific and Technical Education', in Sutherland et al. (eds.), *Education*, pp. 196–225, at pp. 203–10.

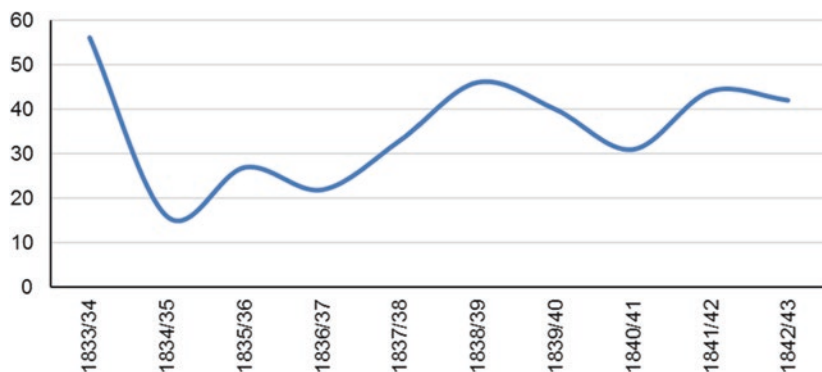


Fig. 8.3 Entrants 1833/34–1842/43 (Durham only, all courses) (*Source* [DUL] DUR: Admission book 1833–1896)

for a while, Civil Engineering admitted significant proportions too (Figs. 8.3 and 8.4).

The student population in Durham grew slowly to a peak of 140 in 1852/53.²⁵ This level did not last, however, and there was a significant drop in numbers during the 1850s (Figs. 8.5 and 8.6).

However, Durham's recruitment had started to compare more favourably with other new institutions. The number of students studying the General course at King's College, London, provided a reasonable benchmark for Durham: both institutions were explicitly Anglican foundations, and the General Arts course was like the Durham BA, containing divinity, classics, mathematics and English (though Hearnshaw described the King's course as 'chaotic and aimless').²⁶

While the number of students at King's varied, the Arts course at Durham grew consistently every year throughout the 1840s until 1852/53, when there were more students studying Arts in Durham than were studying General Arts at King's. The decline at both institutions, though starting slightly early at King's, lasted throughout the 1850s. Although recruitment at Durham was relatively poor, it remained stable throughout the late 1840s and the early years of the 1850s (Fig. 8.7).

²⁵In his evidence to the Commission, Hornby stated that the maximum number of students at any point was 134. Cf. *Copy of all Evidence taken by the Durham University Commissioners under the Durham University Act, 1861* (London, 1863), q. 1006, p. 47.

²⁶Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, p. 111.

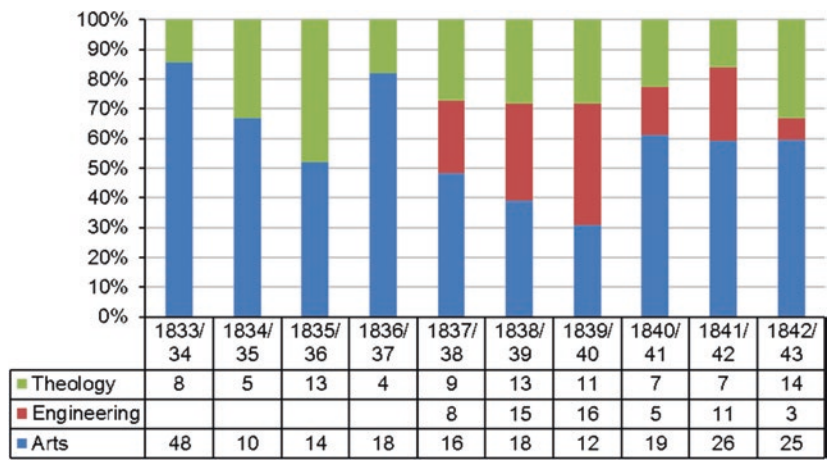


Fig. 8.4 Entrants 1833/34–1842/43 by course (Durham only) (*Source* [DUL] DUR: Admission book 1833–1896. Two students are omitted from this table as it was not possible to identify the course they entered to study. In addition, many students progressed from one course to a second course, but these continuing students have been omitted)

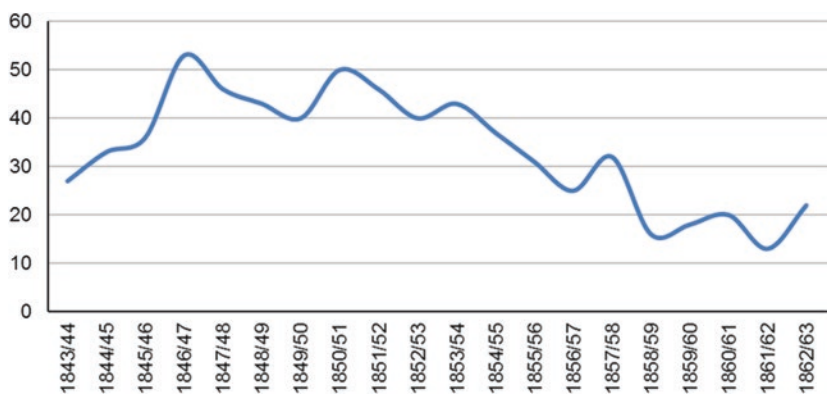


Fig. 8.5 Entrants 1843/44–1862/63 (Durham only, all courses) (*Source* [DUL] DUR: Admission book 1833–1896)

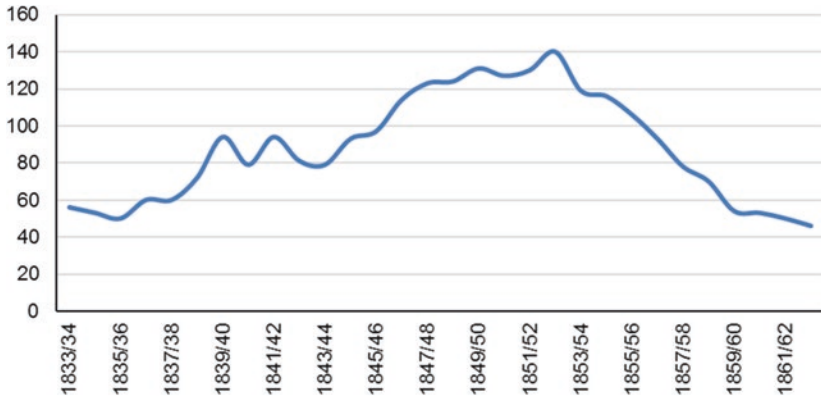


Fig. 8.6 Students 1833/34–1862/63 (Durham only, all courses) (*Source* As listed in the University Calendar)

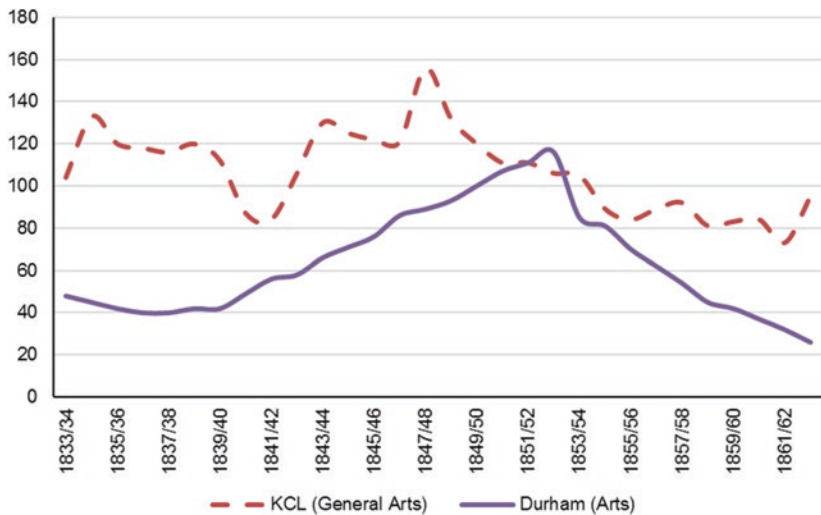


Fig. 8.7 Students 1833/34–1862/63, Durham and King's College, London (Arts course) (*Source* 'Durham (Arts)' as listed in the University Calendar. 'KCL (General Arts)' from Hearnshaw, *King's College London*)

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR FROM 1860

The influences behind this lack of progress started to change during the 1860s and more especially from 1870.²⁷ Until the latter part of the century, there was, first, no agreement over what higher education was. The boundaries between secondary and higher education were not well defined in the early nineteenth century and, indeed, the terms *secondary education* and *higher education* were not used during the period. At the start of the century, secondary education, as we now understand it, was largely undeveloped in England, save for the limited and often exclusive provision of the grammar and public schools. There were no independent examinations in secondary schools until Oxford and Cambridge established the Local Examinations in 1857–1858, with Durham itself swiftly following in 1858.²⁸

For the new post-secondary institutions, this lack of secondary education meant that there were simply insufficient qualified students to fill their new courses. The lack of definition also meant that the boundary with the better secondary schools was blurred. Similar issues persisted in the Scottish university system, with the non-professional education of institutions north of the border being accused of offering little more than the same instruction as could be found in a school. In 1823, for example, the combative Tory journal *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* carried scathing comments on Glasgow University:

The 'University' of Glasgow is composed of two things; first, a school where boys from *twelve years of age*, up to *sixteen* or *seventeen*, are instructed in the first elements of Classical learning ... and also, in the first elements of Mathematics, Law, Ethics, &c; and secondly, of an institution in which lectures are delivered on Medicine, Law, and Theology, for the benefit of those of rather riper years. To dream of comparing [the boys at Glasgow] with the boys of Eton, or Westminster, or Winchester, or Harrow ... would be about as absurd, as it would be to compare a Spouting Club in Cheapside with the British House of Commons.²⁹

²⁷Lowe, 'The Expansion of Higher Education in England'.

²⁸J. Roach, *Public Examinations in England, 1850–1900* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 64–76, 89; Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 256–57.

²⁹'Vindiciae Gaelicae', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 13(72) (January 1823), pp. 93–99 p. 94.

Both King's College and University College had schools which were at first far more successful than their higher departments.³⁰ Both colleges relied significantly on their medical departments and day schools rather than on their general Arts courses for survival. In some respects, the schools of the two London colleges were part of the broader appearance of new secondary schools for the middle classes which accelerated from the 1830s onwards.³¹ However, their existence was also testimony to the lack of qualified candidates for the higher departments and, faced with this shortfall, the colleges took matters into their own hands and founded schools to prepare their own students.³² When, in 1856, Alexander Scott suggested that Owens College should establish a school to prepare students for entry to their higher courses, he was following a familiar pattern. Secondary education remained ineffective until the Clarendon Commission of 1864 and the Schools Inquiry Commission of 1867–1868. Even then, the situation was patchy, divided by class, and the school leaving age was not raised to 14 until the Fisher Act of 1918.³³ An inadequate supply of suitable students accounted for a large measure of the difficulties of the new institutions. There was also a second impact: initially, an invigorated secondary sector took students away from the universities.³⁴

If a lack of qualified students led to difficulties maintaining the intended level of the general courses at the new colleges, it also forced them into the position of being feeders of students into Oxford and Cambridge. This further depressed their status in the slowly developing higher education sector as they were used as springboards to the ancient English universities. The same trend was not uncommon in the Scottish universities, where students might also migrate to Oxford or Cambridge. And when the secondary sector did develop, there was a tendency to encourage students to enter the ancient institutions over the new if

³⁰T. Hinde, *A Great Day School in London: A History of King's College School* (London, 1995), p. 19; Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 47.

³¹Armytage, *English Education*, pp. 103–6.

³²Rothblatt, 'Historical and Comparative Remarks', p. 166.

³³M. Sanderson, *Educational Opportunity and Social Change in England* (London, 1987), p. 25.

³⁴Anderson, *European Universities*, p. 125.

possible. The recently founded schools were as concerned about their own prestige as any new college or university and so directed their students to the old universities in order to bolster their own reputations.³⁵

To make matters even worse, there was insufficient demand for the graduates the new colleges did produce. The purpose of higher education has perhaps always been a topic of contested debate, but this was especially true during the nineteenth century when universities underwent a radical transformation as they slowly evolved strong connections with the old, new and developing professions. Rather than being established to satisfy a clear demand, therefore, Durham and other new institutions were largely established because of ideals, philosophies and conceptions of higher education. The motivation behind the foundation of King's College, London, for example, was not that London University was an astounding success and stood testament to latent demand, but because it posed a threat and the Establishment of Church and State wished to promote its own institution which would compete with it on equal terms for the same type of students while delivering similar academic content.³⁶

However, a pedagogic principle or educational ideal could not give a graduate a job. Even in nineteenth-century England, students wanted to know that the investment in their higher education (which was still expensive, even at the new foundations) would bring some financial benefit upon graduation. The problem, then, was that most of the professions were still far from convinced of the value of the courses that the new institutions offered and until the middle of the nineteenth century, the links between industry and the universities were negligible.³⁷

The earliest profession to recognise the need and importance of higher education were the medics, but they were driven to do so at least in part by successive governments legislating in this area. Nevertheless, it was in the 1870s that a combination of increased requirements for formal qualifications and a full acceptance of the scientific ideal led to

³⁵Rothblatt, 'Historical and Comparative Remarks', p. 166.

³⁶Whyte, *Redbrick*, pp. 42–44.

³⁷Sanderson, *The Universities and British Industry*, p. 3.

the amalgamation of local medical schools and nascent universities.³⁸ It is therefore unsurprising that medical schools often proved vital—even perhaps the most important part—of the new institutions. While the medical school in Newcastle was founded at about the same time as the University in Durham and did not affiliate with the University until the 1850s, it had been conspicuously more successful than the institution it connected with as it benefited from these changes. What made Durham the senior partner was its ability to award degrees, not its relative vibrancy or achievement.

Similarly, the Church needed more clergy, and the demand was met by the creation of new theological colleges to produce them: starting with St Bees in Cumbria, St David's in Wales and then progressing with new foundations throughout the century. The training of teachers was invigorated by the Education Act of 1870, which saw the expansion of the education colleges in Durham and elsewhere to meet the staffing needs of new and expanded schools.³⁹ Other professions, such as architecture and law, moved more slowly in integrating their professional education needs with the provision of the universities and colleges.

Early in the nineteenth century, engineering was one profession that the new institutions expected to be able to contribute to, and they felt they were acting not only to meet a general demand for better trained professionals, but alongside leading industrialists. Unfortunately for the colleges, most engineering firms preferred the traditional model of paid apprenticeships, which meant that the college graduates gained little or no benefit from their studies.⁴⁰ This was one of the most important causes of the collapse of Durham's course in civil engineering. Other engineering courses, including that at King's College, might have survived, but they hardly prospered. The professional education supplied by courses aimed at specific vocations or

³⁸Bonner, *Becoming a Physician*, pp. 259–64.

³⁹Armytage, *Four Hundred Years of English Education*, pp. 156–59; Lawrence, *St Hild's College*, pp. 26–28; G.J. White, *On Chester On: A History of Chester College and the University of Chester* (Chester, 2014), pp. 3–4, 23–24; and Wilkinson, 'The Durham Diocesan Training School for Masters', pp. 217–18.

⁴⁰Reader, *Professional Men*, pp. 117–18.

trades—no matter how lucrative or intellectually demanding the occupation might be—also paled in prestige next to the liberal arts, which remained at the pinnacle of learning, for while it may have been desirable for a medic to be skilled in his profession, for example, he could not be a gentleman without the intellectual training of the liberal arts. Until late into the nineteenth century, it remained the case that the traditional or liberal professions of medicine, law and the Church were united by their common acceptance of the vital importance of a unifying liberal education.⁴¹

In general, and in addition to these concerns, it was also crucial to the new institutions' disadvantage that English society still operated by patronage and that such support remained important until well into the nineteenth century, with change only starting in about the 1850s.⁴² The implication of this was that for as long as the support of a prominent patron remained more important than qualifications (and even ability) in order to gain entry to the more desirable careers and professions, the practical value of the system of certificates, degrees and other awards being developed in the new universities and colleges would be minimal. It was only when competition triumphed that the type of education which the new universities and colleges had been created to provide became a desirable route into well-remunerated and respectable occupations. This change happened towards the latter part of the century, when examinations for key professions gave a new impetus for students to resort to the universities when they had not hitherto felt any need to do so; a key example was the establishment of examinations for entry to the Indian Civil Service from 1858, followed by individual departments of the Home Civil Service until 1870, when almost all branches of the Home Civil Service appointed by competitive entry.⁴³ There was a distinction between a belief in the type of competitive test of a general and liberal education that drove men like Charles Trevelyan and Stafford Northcote (heavily influenced by Benjamin Jowett) and the reform of

⁴¹ Reader, *Professional Men*, pp. 10–11, 16–23.

⁴² Reader, *Professional Men*, pp. 4–6; Runciman, *Very Different, But Much the Same*, pp. 35–40.

⁴³ Armytage, *English Education*, p. 121; Reader, *Professional Men*, pp. 90–96; Roach, *Public Examinations*, pp. 191–228; and Vernon, *Universities and the State in England*, p. 47.

the civil service entrance examinations, on the one hand, and the specialised qualifying examinations that developed in medicine and later in other professions, on the other.⁴⁴ But where there was a connection between these two approaches was the desire for some form of learning to be assessed impartially and for that test to become the gatekeeper to professional preferment, rather than connections and patronage.⁴⁵ The alignment of a liberal education with the tests required of entry to the civil service nevertheless served to increase the relevance of the universities, and especially of Oxford and Cambridge. Ironically, it also served to make a liberal education a vocational training in the specific case of the civil service.⁴⁶ Between 1855 and 1864, for example, of the 458 men who entered the Indian Civil Service through competitive examination 22% came from Oxford and 18% from Cambridge, and only 17% came from no university at all.⁴⁷ Between 1892 and 1894, the majority of entrants (52%) came from Oxford, while a further 20% came from Cambridge.⁴⁸ The demand for relevant educational preparation also went hand in hand with the growth of the emerging professions. There were, for example, estimated to be only 853 civil engineers in 1841, but by 1881, this had risen to 7124. The number of civil engineers rose by 183% between 1841 and 1851 alone, and again by 57% between 1861 and 1871.⁴⁹ Although even by 1900 formal qualifications were still unnecessary to serve as an engineer, it was the new universities and colleges, and the universities of Scotland, which embraced technologically relevant studies, as well as medicine, and the sciences. Progress with such modern and professional studies remained painfully slow at the ancient English universities. Alongside the more general entrance examination for the civil service, this tended to reinforce the distinction between

⁴⁴ *Report on the Organisation of the Permanent Civil Service Together with a Letter from the Rev. B. Jowett* (London, 1854).

⁴⁵ Reader, *Professional Men*, p. 86.

⁴⁶ Sanderson, *Universities and British Industry*, p. 6.

⁴⁷ Reader, *Professional Men*, p. 93.

⁴⁸ Vernon, *Universities and the State in England*, p. 47.

⁴⁹ Reader, *Professional Men*, pp. 208–11.

Oxford and Cambridge as more prestigious, glamorous and powerful than the new universities and colleges.⁵⁰

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a convergence of factors created a significantly more benign environment for expansion in the new universities and colleges: the growth in secondary education created a larger pool of potential applicants and the ability to concentrate on higher (rather than secondary) education; patronage declined in favour of more meritocratic means of gaining professional preferment; and the professions gradually formalised and, although reluctant at first, started to align themselves with higher education. By about the 1870s, therefore, there was a more demonstrable need for the increased provision of higher education in England (especially from the growing middle classes) that had not existed at the start of the century.⁵¹ Writing in 1878, Adolphus Ward, Professor of History and English Literature at Owens College, argued that there was a 'growing demand for academical instruction' which had been brought about as the 'old studies' had 'become wider and fuller'. The demand had also been fed by the development of 'New Learning, like the Renaissance Age ... such as medicine, and various branches of physical and mechanical science'. Although he was far from impartial, Ward could still argue with conviction that 'a carefully considered and prudently carried-out increase in the number of English universities is expedient and indeed necessary'.⁵²

Ward's argument made 20 years earlier would have been unsustainable, given the parlous state of the new universities then struggling for existence. The growing demand for higher education was by this point sufficiently clear that Victoria University was established in 1880 as a federal institution. As with University of London in 1836, the federal structure was again used as a compromise due to concerns from competing rival colleges in the north that they would be unable to compete with the attractions of a degree-awarding university in Manchester. While Owens College was the first and to start with the only constituent college of the new Victoria University in 1880, University College Liverpool was admitted in 1884 and the Yorkshire College in Leeds was admitted in 1887.⁵³

⁵⁰Reader, *Professional Men*, pp. 127–45.

⁵¹Anderson, *Universities and Elites*, pp. 31–41.

⁵²A.W. Ward, 'Is it Expedient to Increase the Number of Universities in England?', *Macmillans' Magazine*, 39(229) (1878), pp. 12–16, at p. 13.

⁵³Jones, *Origins of Civic Universities*, pp. 161–65.

A similar structure was adopted for the University of Wales in 1893, which affiliated the university colleges in Aberystwyth, Bangor and Cardiff.⁵⁴ However, even in the late 1870s, the new institutions were far from secure. King's College especially felt the impact of these new federal institutions in the north of England and Wales. From the mid-1880s, the finances at the College collapsed, along with dwindling student numbers. While a small surplus was returned in 1884, for the next ten years the accounts showed a deficit of never less than £1000 and up to almost £8000 in 1895. Income from student fees sank from £34,775 in 1881 to £27,485 in 1891; in 1893, there were only ten students in the Department of general literature and science, a lower point than Durham ever reached.⁵⁵

THE RESURGENCE OF OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE

Yet while such advantages that came with broader changes in education and society by the 1870s only served to make the task of the new institutions more viable, they did not remove all the barriers that these institutions faced. Perhaps the greatest of those barriers was the resurgence of Oxford and Cambridge.

This revised political order from the 1820s onwards created increasing tension for the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The impact of the reforming Acts was to include Dissenters and Catholics within the broader political nation. Political and government positions had now been opened up. Yet the ancient English universities continued their practice of exclusion, preventing students from graduating at Cambridge or even matriculating at Oxford.⁵⁶

Although both institutions seemed constantly behind when it came to reform and the advancement of new and professional studies, still they managed to secure and retain the greatest amount of prestige in higher education. Nevertheless, the transformation they went through is also easy to under-estimate.⁵⁷ Writing in 1898, for example, the author of the

⁵⁴Anderson, *British Universities Past and Present*, pp. 93–95; Armytage, *Civic Universities*, pp. 36–38.

⁵⁵Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, pp. 353–55.

⁵⁶Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 184–85.

⁵⁷Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge*, pp. 174–75.

history of Trinity College, Oxford noted that the changes were ‘so great that the first half of the century is almost ancient history, though some of it is within living memory’.⁵⁸ The creation of the new colleges and universities actually encouraged reform at Oxford and Cambridge; without competition for several centuries, they had fallen into some measure of complacency, but the new institutions threatened to overtake them if they did not reform.⁵⁹ Even the 1861 Commissioners noted that ‘we are not insensible to the operation of recent changes in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge in drawing away students from the School of Arts at Durham. The emoluments of the Colleges in those Universities have largely increased, the expenses of the students have been diminished, and various restrictions have been removed which formerly fettered the freedom of competition’.⁶⁰

CONCLUSION

Durham, London and King’s College were founded in the brief period between the indulgences of the eighteenth century and the reforms which would secure the prominence of Oxford and Cambridge into the twentieth century and beyond. By 1831, reform of the ancient universities had commenced, but the outcome of those reforms was far from realised. The resurgence of the ancient English universities following the Commissions of the 1850s therefore further diminished the prospects of the new institutions, as the social status they conferred far outstripped any advantages that the new institutions could offer.

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⁵⁸ H.E.D. Blakiston, *University of Oxford College Histories: Trinity College* (London, 1898), p. 213.

⁵⁹ W. Whyte, ‘Redbrick’s Unlovely Quadrangles: Reinterpreting the Architecture of the Civic Universities’, *History of Universities*, XXI(1) (2006), pp. 151–78, at p. 161.

⁶⁰ *Report of the Commissioners Appointed for the Purposes of the Durham University Act 1861* (London, 1863), p. 7.

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CHAPTER 9

Durham's Royal Commission

When a man is sick, his friends usually call in the assistance of a physician; if he expires without such aid being sought, we accuse those around him of culpable neglect ... Ought not Durham to have a commission?¹

Letter to *The Guardian*, December 1858

INTRODUCTION

'Limited, unambitious, and humble' was how Robert Lowe (MP, member of the Durham University Commission 1861–1863, and later Chancellor of the Exchequer and Home Secretary) described the University of Durham in 1867²: a far cry from Thorp's call for a 'boldish flight'.³ Yet by the late 1850s, Durham was on the brink of collapse and very far from achieving anything. And then, for four months from December 1858, the University received a public scolding in the pages of *The Guardian*. One after another, anonymous correspondents contributed their own version of the University's decline. A tipping point had been reached. Something would have to happen to change the situation, as clearly the University could not continue in the state it was in. Perceiving no way to achieve improvement from within the University, in November 1860 a petition calling for a Royal Commission to investigate the state of

¹ *The Guardian*, 15 December 1858.

² *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, HC Deb, 18 June 1867, vol. 188, c. 21.

³ [DUL] TC, 17: Thorp to Gaisford, 11 August 1831.

affairs was raised by 27 of Durham's current or former staff. In February 1861, information concerning the parlous state of the University was laid before Parliament,⁴ and the Durham University Act establishing a Royal Commission received Royal Assent on 6 August 1861.

From one perspective, the establishment of a Royal Commission was nothing unusual, as throughout the nineteenth century this was the government's chosen vehicle for probing into the affairs of universities.⁵ These commissions investigated the state of all the British universities during the course of the century, starting with the Scottish institutions in general in 1826–1831, Glasgow in 1837–1839, St Andrews in 1840–1845, Oxford and Cambridge in 1850–1852, and Dublin in 1851–1853.

Yet Durham's Commission was different in at least two important respects. First, there was the very real possibility that the Commissioners might recommend the University's closure or that it be turned into something quite different. Durham's creation as a university had been contested from the very start and its continued existence had never been secure, so the Commission raised many familiar old anxieties.

Second, while the Royal Commission at Durham was a review of the University, it was also a very personal inquiry into the role, qualities and abilities of its Warden. By the close of 1861, Thorp had presided over the institution he had fought to establish for three decades. He was now 78 years old and was frequently bed-ridden. He had come to personify the University, and the institution's strengths and weaknesses were seen as almost indistinguishable from its powerful Warden. His position at Durham was of such immense significance, one of the Commissioners remarked, that the Warden's authority was 'tenfold that which belongs to any Master of a College by recent legislation at Oxford or Cambridge'.⁶ James Hornby, the Principal of Cosin's Hall, described Thorp as holding 'large and indefinite powers of control and

⁴ *Returns Relating to the University of Durham* (London, 1861).

⁵ Sanderson, *Universities in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 12–13.

⁶ *Copy of all Evidence Taken by the Durham University Commissioners Under the Durham University Act, 1861* (London, 1863), q. 1059, p. 51. The reference to 'recent legislation' is important because the Oxford colleges had been going through their own, externally enforced, reform.

interference'.⁷ Criticism of Thorp's leadership had been growing, and amongst many former staff and students, it had become a dictum that 'you can do nothing till the Warden goes'.⁸

Given the prevailing trends, Durham's Royal Commission can be seen on the one hand as part of the common theme of higher education in the nineteenth century and on the other as something quite unique. It is similar because an institutional reluctance to change except in the face of external pressure, with that outside intervention often encouraged by frustrated internal forces seeking developments for which they were unable to secure approbation, is a prevailing aspect of reform at the ancient English universities. But on the other hand, Durham was different. Different because Oxford and Cambridge were ancient institutions, linked to state and society as intimately as any organisation could be. Different because the University of London was a state-sanctioned, state-controlled, entity, and because the vital force of the metropolis made activities there more significant. Different because other recently established colleges were limited in terms of scope and ambition, so any fall they might suffer was from a lower height. Owens College, for example, had not yet become the senior partner of Victoria University and so had neither university status nor degree-awarding powers. Durham University's future position as an institution at all, let alone as an independent, unitary, degree-awarding university, was therefore a matter of real debate. It was fighting for its life.

Pivotal though this moment is, it has not been explored in any depth. Some historians have taken the Commissioners' verdict without question, using it as absolute evidence of Durham's embarrassing failure. Fowler barely records the Commission at all. Whiting provides more detail, but his passage on the Commission is dry and descriptive, neither probing the eventual recommendations nor examining them in the context of the sector more generally. Yet it was the Commissioners who sealed Durham's reputation over its first three decades, and hence it is right to scrutinise their motives, understanding the context in which they reached their views with the benefit of hindsight that they lacked, and to determine whether the conclusions they reached still stand.

⁷ *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 53.

⁸ *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 68.

‘OUGHT NOT DURHAM TO HAVE A COMMISSION?’

Durham University never rid itself of its detractors, despite its growth until the mid-1850s, and as the years progressed, the periodic public attacks continued. In 1848, for example, *The Satirist* accused the University of having been ‘improvident and unwise; that the salaries given to its officers and professors are much too large, and that the endeavour to clothe it with a collegiate character is unsuited to our times, and involves an expenditure which might have had more useful objects than fellowships’. Thorp was singled out for particular criticism for receiving £500 a year as Warden ‘in addition to his golden stall and his rectory of Ryton’.⁹

In 1855, *Punch* ran a story about the Chapter’s appointment of Thorp’s son to the wealthy parish of Ellingham in Northumberland, which he acquired and held in addition to the perpetual curacy of Blanchland. The magazine contrasted the lot of this ‘fortunate youth’ with that of British soldiers in the Crimea, remarking sarcastically that ‘agonised by the spectacle of so much heart-rending misery, it is a relief ... to contemplate at least one picture of human happiness’. The plurality of Thorp Senior, who it was noted held ‘preferments worth between £4,000 and £5,000 a year’, was condemned too.¹⁰

This type of occasional disparagement in satirical newspapers evolved into a much more serious and sustained campaign in the pages of *The Guardian*. This new type of criticism was no longer external and unfriendly, but was written by Durham staff and students in the pages of the leading Tractarian newspaper. In December 1858, an anonymous letter from ‘Vindex’ was published¹¹:

When a man is sick, his friends usually call in the assistance of a physician; if he expires without such aid being sought, we accuse those around him of culpable neglect. I should ask, if such a rule applies to individuals, why not to bodies corporate? ... Why is the University of Durham an exception to the general rule? Oxford and Cambridge have their Royal Commissions to inquire into the healthy or unhealthy state of their societies. Why has none been appointed for Durham? ... Wars, income-taxes, may have had

⁹ *The Satirist*, 11 November 1848.

¹⁰ *Punch*, 10 February 1855.

¹¹ Vindex can be translated as champion or defender.

something to do with [the University's decline]; but I know, from some years' observation, that they have not the entire blame. Ask any Durham men whom you happen to meet what is the cause of this, and nine out of ten will agree in their independent testimony. Ought not evils, of which the cause is known, to have a cure at least attempted. Ought not Durham to have a commission?¹²

Two replies appeared in the next edition. 'A Durham MA' congratulated Vindex; fault could not be found in the talents of the tutors, who were 'nearly all men whose learning and experience commanded the highest esteem', nor could the 'wealthy university' plead poverty, but he feared that Durham was reaping 'the fruits of what those in power have earlier or later sown'.¹³ The second reply came from 'Alumnus', who declared the University was 'perishing from inanition' and 'that the University (by which I do not mean the governing body)' were 'most anxious for a Royal Commission'.¹⁴

This correspondence stretched until 30 March 1859 and throughout the series of letters, much more was written against the University than in its favour. Most of the comments were submitted anonymously by individuals claiming some connection to the University. Numerous detailed and damning criticisms were made and a number of causes for the decline were put forward: from Durham's relative lack of 'the position, prestige, education and social advantages' of the older English universities¹⁵ to the 'cheap and expeditious travel' offered by the new network of railways¹⁶; one contributor even laid part of the blame on 'the war with Russia, and more recently the Indian Mutiny' for diverting men from the universities to the army.¹⁷

But central to the general critique was a personal attack on Thorp. 'Scientia', for example, accused 'the Warden ... and the Professors' of neither perceiving nor adapting the University 'to the new and altered state of things'.¹⁸ 'Univ. Coll.' asserted that 'if the reform of Durham

¹² *The Guardian*, 15 December 1858.

¹³ *The Guardian*, 22 December 1858.

¹⁴ *The Guardian*, 22 December 1858.

¹⁵ *The Guardian*, 22 December 1858.

¹⁶ *The Guardian*, 29 December 1858.

¹⁷ *The Guardian*, 5 January 1859.

¹⁸ *The Guardian*, 29 December 1858.

University depends on its Warden, it is likely to be delayed so long that no University will remain to be reformed', avowing it to be 'truly on its last legs'.¹⁹ Another unnamed correspondent claimed that the two main causes of the University's decline were, first, 'its inability to provide for its clever men' through well-endowed and long-term Fellowships, and, second, 'its defective constitution and feebleness of the administrative body', and especially of the Warden. 'Everything at Durham centres in the Warden', he claimed, who was 'inefficient' and was backed by 'alien Professors who have large stipends and do no work'.²⁰

A further contributor added unfairly that 'to graduate at Durham costs nearly as much as it does at Oxford or Cambridge', but more correctly that being a Durham graduate brought 'serious disadvantages' through lack of recognition. There was, he opined, 'no chance of competing for appointments in the Indian Civil Service', which all added up to a worthless degree.²¹

Only a limited number of contributors used their real name, and fewer still wrote in support of the University: one of these was Francis Hull. Hull had matriculated in 1847 as a student in Arts at University College. He was not strong academically and was placed outside the honours, in the fifth class, in the final examinations for the BA. It was true that Oxford and Cambridge had been the subjects of Royal Commissions, he admitted, but 'a pretty mess they have made out of them'. The cause of the drop in the number of students could be very easily accounted for, he argued: it was because Durham had become a place full of 'overgrown schoolboys' who were 'full of mischief and fond of playing practical jokes', and hence the University authorities had been forced 'to draw the reins of discipline tighter', which had caused many students to be 'restive and kick'.²²

A number of solutions to the University's precarious position were put forward. The remedy *Scientia* called for was to combine the University with St Bees and to re-create it as a 'great Theological College'—an odd suggestion given that St Bees' own student numbers had been declining for a decade. Perplexingly, every theological student should also be

¹⁹ *The Guardian*, 19 January 1859.

²⁰ *The Guardian*, 19 January 1859.

²¹ *The Guardian*, 9 February 1859.

²² *The Guardian*, 29 December 1858.

required to study 'practical science' to recognise Durham's position at the very centre of the 'hive of industry'.²³ Contrary to what others had suggested, 'Alpha' argued that Durham had not followed Oxford 'closely enough' and that the solution was to adopt a closer imitation of the older institution.²⁴

A substantial number of letters were submitted by James Skinner. Skinner had spent a year at Marischal College in Aberdeen before he became the fourteenth student to matriculate at Durham, entering in the Michaelmas Term in 1833. After graduating with a BA in 1837 and an MA in 1840, he held a Fellowship from 1844 to 1849. By 1859, he had become a well-known supporter of the Tractarians and more especially of ritualism. He was also Senior Curate of the infamous new church of St Barnabas in Pimlico from 1851 to 1857.²⁵

Given his notoriety, Skinner would have been well known to *The Guardian's* High Church readership. Skinner did not like the anonymity adopted by most of the previous correspondents, as he argued that the matter was 'too serious to be disposed of adequately by an anonymous correspondence'.²⁶ He was a sympathetic but clumsy defender of the University, who asserted that it was unjust 'to the authorities of the University to circulate accusations ... without giving them an opportunity of speaking for themselves'.²⁷ This intervention did nothing to bring restraint to the public debate, but it did bring Thorp into it. Probably meaning to be helpful, Skinner now submitted for publication a lengthy correspondence between himself and the Warden. Skinner agreed that the University had 'all the evils of a narrow bureaucracy' and needed a 'thorough reform', but he deeply regretted the personal attack on the Warden and specifically the charge against Thorp of malversation, which he considered to be 'very ungenerously made'. He nevertheless commiserated over the parlous state of the University, yet he noted that all Durham's 'endowments are powerless against the baits of completion, and distinction, and *prestige*, and *genius loci*, and other unspeakable

²³ *The Guardian*, 29 December 1858.

²⁴ *The Guardian*, 2 February 1859.

²⁵ L.E. Ellsworth, *Charles Lowder and the Ritualist Movement* (London, 1982), pp. 13–20.

²⁶ *The Guardian*, 5 January 1859.

²⁷ *The Guardian*, 5 January 1859.

charms which hang around the Isis and Cam'.²⁸ His proposal to reverse the decline was to make Durham a constituent part of the University of Oxford. He himself became the subject of attack and was accused of knowing 'little of the real state of feeling at Durham'.²⁹

On 2 March, a contribution from 'Censor' was published, but the editor added that while 'an immense number of letters, almost all in the same strain' had been received, 'the facts of the case appear to be sufficiently elicited by the correspondence already printed' that no further letters would be printed.³⁰ At the end of the month, *The Guardian* did actually carry one more letter; quite why is unclear, as the suggestions it contained were not new. It was essentially a call for a more proactive approach to publishing the real details of study at the University. This might 'be considered *infra dignitate*', the contributor wrote, 'but it must be remembered that the University unfortunately has not, in public estimation, very much dignity to lose'.³¹ And on that pessimistic note, the correspondence ended.

'CATILINES'

Irrespective of the fairness and balance of these accusations, an influential body of men were now determined to visit reform upon the University. Accordingly, on 22 November 1860, James Hornby, the Principal of Bishop Cosin's Hall, forwarded to Thorp a copy of a petition which had been sent to Parliament. It had been supported by 27 graduates, Fellows and Tutors of the University.³² 'We have observed for some years with pain and regret the declension of the University', the petition declared, which had stirred them 'at last ... to make an effort to rescue it from its present depressed condition; and to this end we have signed a Petition to Parliament praying for a Commission similar to those granted to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge'.³³ No doubt, at least in private, many of the petitioners must also have hoped or expected that the Commission would unseat Thorp. Though Hornby acted as spokesman,

²⁸ *The Guardian*, 23 February 1859.

²⁹ *The Guardian*, 2 March 1859.

³⁰ *The Guardian*, 2 March 1859.

³¹ *The Guardian*, 30 March 1859.

³² [DUL] TC, 559: Hornby to Thorp, 22 November 1860.

³³ [DUL] TC, 679: Petitioners to Thorp, 22 November 1860.

there is no record of who first proposed the petition, but it must be speculated that there were any number of private conversations after the idea was raised publicly in *The Guardian*. All of the petitioners had experience of working at the University and though some had only had a brief sojourn in the north, others, like Hornby, had stayed for many years and held senior positions. They may have felt their petition was necessary, but Thorp was not the only member of senior staff to resent their presumption; Fowler recorded, for example, that Chevallier spoke of the petitioners as 'Catilines', after the Roman Senator Lucius Sergius Catilina who attempted to overthrow the Republic in 63 BCE.³⁴

The petitioners fell into two broad groups. The first contained senior figures, including many of the former Principals of Hatfield Hall or Vice-Masters of University College. They tended to be from a more liberal set than other University staff and almost exclusively Oxford-educated, with many of them connected to Balliol or Brasenose College and the Tutors Association, which had helped drive reform at Oxford in the 1850s.³⁵ They were well-connected, successful and reform advocates. Hornby, for example, was a cousin of Edward Smith-Stanley, the Earl of Derby, who was Prime Minister three times between 1852 and 1868.³⁶ Another representative of this group was the fourth Principal of Hatfield Hall (1853–1854), James Lonsdale. James was the son of John Lonsdale, who had been Principal of King's College, London (1839–1843) before he was raised to the See of Lichfield in 1843. John Lonsdale briefly served as Chair of the second Cambridge University Commission in 1857.³⁷ After Eton, in 1833, James Lonsdale had been elected open scholar at Balliol College. He became a Fellow in 1838 and counted Benjamin Jowett, William Lake (later to become the University's third Warden) and Arthur Stanley among his friends. Jowett, who was Professor of Greek at Oxford and was later to be Master of Balliol College, was already known as a great university reformer.³⁸ In 1850, for example, he had petitioned Lord John Russell for a commission at Oxford in a letter that was also

³⁴Fowler, *College Histories*, p. 112.

³⁵Engel, *From Clergyman to Don*, pp. 43–49.

³⁶*Illustrated London News*, 25 January 1868.

³⁷E.B. Denison, *The Life of John Lonsdale Bishop of Lichfield* (London, 1868), p. 54.

³⁸Anderson, *British Universities Past and Present*, pp. 51–52; P.B. Hinchliff, *Benjamin Jowett and the Christian Religion* (Oxford, 1987), p. 26.

signed by Lake and Stanley.³⁹ Stanley was appointed secretary to the Oxford University Commission in August 1850 and hence was one of the principal authors of the report published in March 1852. In 1851, Lonsdale became a Tutor at Durham and quickly added to this the roles of Junior Proctor and Censor in University College, before assuming the principalship of Hatfield in 1853, in succession to Edward Brady (another of the petitioners). When Lonsdale was appointed, he was the third Principal of Hatfield Hall in as many years and it was said that no one else who was fit for the role would take it. He left Durham, ostensibly due to ill health, but possibly also in protest at the refusal to throw all the scholarships open to competition, after only four years, and although he was generally well liked and appreciated, he described his attachment to the University as being 'very slight'.⁴⁰

The second group were graduates of the University. A few of these graduates also obtained senior positions in the University, while many others occupied livings or held teaching positions in minor public schools. They shared a common interest with the first group of signatories, but generally held positions of much lower status. One example from this group was William Greenwell. He was born in Lanchester near Durham and his father was Deputy Lieutenant of the County. He entered University College in the Michaelmas Term of 1836 as a student in Arts and obtained a combined fifth-class degree, and graduated with a BA in 1840, before adding an LTh in 1842 and an MA in 1843. After this unremarkable academic career, he held various positions in the University and the Cathedral, and served on the Senate. Among these positions were those of Bursar (1844–1847) and Chaplain (1846–1847) of University College, and the first Principal of the short-lived Neville Hall in Newcastle (1852–1854). At the time he added his name to the petition, he was Chaplain and Censor of Cosin's Hall (1855–1863). Of all the petitioners, his experience of the University was the most extensive, having an almost unbroken connection since his matriculation in 1836. The remaining graduates who signed the petition had much more recent connections, all of them having entered the University between

³⁹E. Abbott and L. Campbell, *The Life and Letters of Benjamin Jowett* (2 vols., London, 1897), vol. 1, p. 178.

⁴⁰*Durham County Advertiser*, 23 June 1882; R. Duckworth, *A Memoir of the Rev. James Lonsdale, Late Fellow and Tutor of Balliol College, Oxford* (London, 1893), pp. 36–42, 185–95.

1848 and 1855. Indeed, there is an apparent generational shift as the petitioners all experienced Durham in the late 1840s or the 1850s.

Hornby forwarded a copy of the petition to the new Bishop, the Evangelical Henry Villiers, who had been translated from Carlisle after his predecessor, Charles Longley, had been elevated to Canterbury.⁴¹ Villiers had only been installed in September 1860 and found himself launched into the centre of the intensifying maelstrom. He quite reasonably told Hornby that as he was 'so little acquainted with the constitution of the University or even with my own relationship to' it, he was unable 'to give any pledge'. 'But this much I may fairly state', he continued, '[that] having duly weighed all the circumstances', he would do everything in his power 'to assist those who are jealously desiring to make the University of Durham an efficient & honoured instrument of good to the cause of education in the North of England'.⁴²

In reply, Hornby explained in detail the reasons why they felt a Commission was necessary, and he did not hold back in apportioning blame. There was a 'profound distrust of the willingness and ability' of the Chapter 'to introduce a really comprehensive scheme of reform', he told the Bishop. The Chapter 'on more than one occasion' had 'succeeded in stifling all attempts at enquiry' and, he cautioned, 'they are labouring to do so now'. In matters regarding the University, they were 'practically lead' by Thorp, Jenkyns and Edwards, who were all members of the Chapter. Unless decisive action was taken soon to make the University more useful, he feared 'violent attacks from without and attempts to abolish it'. It was imperative that Parliament intervened, not only because the entire Chapter effectively blocked all attempts at reform, but also because 'many of the most necessary changes' could 'only be effected by the authority of Parliament'.⁴³

'It would be impossible, I fear, to do full justice to our case without entering into the odious task of bringing forward personal charges', Hornby explained to the Bishop. Accordingly, all three Professors and the Chapter were criticised, but the clear focus of the petitioners' anger was Thorp. Hornby acknowledged that 'we must seem to many persons unjustifiably severe upon the Warden', but he was confident 'that the

⁴¹A.F. Munden, 'The First Palmerston Bishop: Henry Montagu Villiers', *Northern History*, 26(1) (1990), pp. 186–206.

⁴²[DUL] TC, 561: Villiers to Hornby, 24 November 1860.

⁴³[DUL] DDR: Hornby to Villiers, 29 November 1860.

opinion of the Tutors on this subject will be amply supported by the testimony of all who are intimately acquainted with the management of the University'.⁴⁴

Although Thorp received the petition on 22 November, the minutes of the next meeting of the Senate, held five days later, made no mention of it. The Senate in fact appeared to remain silent on the external perturbations which might have otherwise been expected to form a large portion of their discussions. The first mention of the Commission did not appear until April 1861, and even then the reference is merely a brief note that a memorial had been sent from the College of Medicine to the Home Secretary, George Cornewall Lewis, 'respecting the intended Commission on the University'.⁴⁵ It is unclear what Thorp may have been thinking. He might have been hoping that the moment would simply pass.

Given Thorp's inertia, the Dean, George Waddington, wrote to Villiers on 10 December 1860 setting out a plan by which at least some of the initiative could be seized back. On the same day, Waddington wrote to Thorp. After speaking with his brother, Horatio Waddington, who was Permanent Under-Secretary in the Home Department, the Dean suggested to both men that they should propose their own Commission of Enquiry rather than wait for a Royal Commission to be established, as this could be done more quietly. Such a Commission of Enquiry, he told the Bishop, could 'be issued by the Home Office at once without any parliamentary prelude & thus we shall have a very much better chance of a good commission. Any alteration that it may recommend must, of course, receive parliamentary sanction – but that would come quietly & almost as a matter of course'.⁴⁶ To Thorp he added 'if you approve of it let *me* set to work at once, so as to get our Commission before Parliament', but to Villiers he remarked 'if you approve of it, let *us* set to work at once'.⁴⁷ Waddington clearly did not trust Thorp to act with the urgency the situation warranted and so three days later, he sent the Warden a proposed petition. Waddington urged Thorp to consider this proposal quickly, consult with the Professors and

⁴⁴[DUL] DDR: Hornby to Villiers, 29 November 1860.

⁴⁵[DUL] Senate Minutes: 23 April 1861.

⁴⁶[DUL] DDR: Waddington to Villiers, 10 December 1860.

⁴⁷[DUL] TC, 562: Waddington to Thorp, 10 December 1860; [DUL] DDR: Waddington to Villiers, 10 December 1860 (emphasis added).

reply with his suggestions as soon as he could.⁴⁸ It was Waddington's hope that the petition could be made by the Warden, the Governors (i.e. the Dean and Chapter) and the Visitor (i.e. the Bishop) as a show of unity and desire to make improvements to the ailing institution. Agreement was eventually reached and a petition was submitted, but Waddington's original draft received short shrift from the senior members of the Senate.⁴⁹ 'I do not think it [would] do at all – nor does Edwards', Jenkyns told Thorp.⁵⁰

In February 1861, information concerning the state of the University was laid before Parliament.⁵¹ Not only did these details demonstrate the rapidly dwindling student population, but the paltry scale of the University was laid bare in other ways too. For example, the Return enumerated that Chevallier had delivered six lectures per week during term in 1859–1860, but that only four students had attended. In return for this work, Chevallier received a stipend of £700 and the student fees of £57 (this was exclusive of his salary and fees as Registrar and Reader in Hebrew). Although an initial Commission of Enquiry had at first been envisaged, such was the state of the University portrayed by the Return that this stage was abandoned.⁵² A Bill dated 7 June 1861 was introduced to Parliament by the Home Secretary for 'Making Provision for the Good Government and Extension of the University of Durham'. It was, he asserted, based on the model of the Commissions at Oxford and Cambridge. The Bill received Royal Assent on 6 August. 'The agitation which led to the bill', noted an editorial in *The Standard*, 'was partly of a private and partly of a partisan character, partly prompted by hostility to the present warden and partly by a wish to destroy the Church character of the University ... No one can dream that this is proposed with a view to the welfare of the University'.⁵³ Only time would tell what its impact would be.

⁴⁸[DUL] TC, 563: Waddington to Thorp, 13 December 1860.

⁴⁹[DUL] TC, 568: Horatio Waddington to Visitor, Warden and Governors of the University of Durham, 22 December 1860.

⁵⁰[DUL] TC, 564: Jenkyns to Thorp, 14 December 1860.

⁵¹*Returns Relating to the University of Durham* (London, 1861).

⁵²Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 97.

⁵³*The Standard*, 16 August 1861.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION

Six Commissioners were appointed by the Durham University Act 1861, with the Bishop of Durham in the Chair. As Villiers died unexpectedly only three days after the Act received Royal Assent, the Bishop by the time the Commission started work was another evangelical, Charles Baring. The appointment of the six Commissioners was controversial, with particular concern expressed about the Bishop's role. The MP for Sunderland, Henry Fenwick, complained that 'the right rev. Prelate was not only Visitor of the University, but he had the appointment of the whole of the governing body, and being deeply interested in the existing state of things, he was not a proper person to be named one of the Commissioners'.⁵⁴ The Home Secretary defended the appointment: the University had been constituted by an Act of the Bishop and Chapter of Durham, Lewis remarked, and so a Church representative was vital given that the Commission was being granted authority to remodel the University. The Bishop of Durham was not in fact the first choice for the role. It emerged that an application had been made originally to the Archbishop of York, Charles Longley, the former Bishop of Durham and future Archbishop of Canterbury. Although he had opposed the Oxford University Bill of 1854, Longley had served as a member of the generally well-regarded executive commission established to consider revised College statutes at Oxford.⁵⁵ This background made him an ideal candidate for Chair, but Lewis regretted that 'the numerous avocations of his Grace unfortunately prevented him from serving on the Commission'.⁵⁶ A vote was taken to remove the Bishop of Durham from the Commission, but it failed to pass, with 30 votes against to 75 in favour of retaining Baring.⁵⁷

Charles John Vaughan, the Vicar of Doncaster since 1860, was also named by the Act. Vaughan had been highly successful as Headmaster of Harrow from 1844 to 1860, putting into practice what he had learned under Thomas Arnold while a student at Rugby School, though his departure is tinged with scandal as he was forced to resign following

⁵⁴ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, HC Deb, 22 July 1861, vol. 164, c. 1337.

⁵⁵ J.R. Garrard, 'Longley, Charles Thomas (1794–1868)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004); Ward, *Victorian Oxford*, pp. 206–9.

⁵⁶ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, HC Deb, 22 July 1861, vol. 164, c. 1337.

⁵⁷ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, HC Deb, 22 July 1861, vol. 164, c. 1337.

threats to reveal his affair with one of the students.⁵⁸ At Rugby, Vaughan formed lifelong friendships with Arthur Stanley and William Lake. In 1850, Vaughan had married Stanley's sister, Catherine. In 1856, after his contribution as Secretary to the Oxford University Commission, Stanley had been appointed Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History. These three men retained close lifelong friendships, though Lake followed Stanley to Oxford, rather than Vaughan to Cambridge.⁵⁹ Although he was a Cambridge man, these friendships placed Vaughan in the same circle of men as James Lonsdale and Benjamin Jowett. Vaughan had at least one further Durham connection. Towards the end of his time at Harrow, he employed one of the Petitioners as mathematical tutor: Robert Baldwin Hayward. Hayward had been the University's mathematical tutor and Reader in Natural Philosophy from 1855 to 1859, as well as Vice-Master of University College in 1857/1858.

The four remaining members of the Commission were MPs: Henry George Liddell, Robert Lowe, Charles Bowyer Adderley and Robert Ingham. The Whig MP Robert Lowe was the most well known of these parliamentarians. He was a man of strong opinions, which he could express with devastating articulation. He was a 'great friend' of David Melville.⁶⁰ Their relationship extended 'from Oxford days to the last months of his life', and Melville even supplied the introduction which first enabled Lowe to enter Parliament.⁶¹ Lowe was a successful student, then tutor and eventually (in 1835) Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford. He was, however, frustrated in his attempt to become Professor of Greek at the University of Glasgow; yet if his attitude to the role is summed up by the way he asked Whitley for a testimonial to support his 'fitness to teach the elements of Greek to Scotch laddies who do not want to learn', his failure to get the role is hardly surprising.⁶² He was also a staunch proponent of the University of London and served as its first MP from 1868.⁶³ For him, Durham was an

⁵⁸C. Tyerman, *A History of Harrow School 1324–1991* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 245–83.

⁵⁹K. Lake (ed.), *Memorials of William Charles Lake, Dean of Durham 1869–94* (London, 1901), pp. v–vii.

⁶⁰*The Guardian*, 16 March 1904, p. 445.

⁶¹A. Patchett Martin, *Life and Letters of the Right Honourable Robert Lowe, Viscount Sherbrooke* (2 vols., London, 1893), vol. 1, p. viii; vol. 2, pp. 43–44.

⁶²[DUL] WC, 13: Lowe to Whitley, 28 May 1838.

⁶³Willson, *The University of London*, pp. 155–68.

‘abortive University’, while in London the very idea of modern higher education reached its apotheosis.⁶⁴

The other MPs played seemingly minor roles in the Commission. Liddell (1821–1903) is not to be confused with his cousin, the Dean of Christ Church, also Henry George Liddell (1811–1898), who had served on the Commission of Enquiry into the University of Oxford in the early 1850s and was popular with leading liberals in that University such as Benjamin Jowett.⁶⁵ The Liddells were a noble northern family, and the younger cousin held the Northumberland Southern constituency for the Conservatives from 1852 to 1878.⁶⁶ Robert Ingham was a QC on the Northern Circuit and a Whig MP who favoured parliamentary reform. He represented South Shields from 1832 to 1841 and again from 1852 to 1868.⁶⁷ Charles Bowyer Adderley, the Conservative MP for Staffordshire North, was a descendant of Oliver Cromwell and held firm evangelical beliefs. He preceded Lowe as Vice-President of the Committee of Council for Education, having been appointed on the formation of Lord Derby’s second ministry in February 1858. He advocated compulsory elementary education, but was little involved with universities and himself passed unexceptionally through Christ Church, Oxford.⁶⁸

In addition to the written evidence received from three individuals, the Commissioners proceeded to interview 11 witnesses between 21 February and 7 March 1862. The interviewees were current or former senior staff of the University, plus a few external individuals with clear related interests, such as Jowett, who had been an external examiner. No current students were interviewed and while three graduates were interviewed,⁶⁹ and a further graduate submitted written evidence,⁷⁰ these individuals had all held office in the University and their comments were

⁶⁴ *The Times*, 15 May 1879.

⁶⁵ J.F.A. Mason, ‘Liddell, Henry George (1811–1898)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

⁶⁶ M. Stenton, *Who’s Who of British Members of Parliament: Volume 1, 1832–1885* (Hassocks, 1976), pp. 129–30.

⁶⁷ Stenton, *Who’s Who of British Members of Parliament*, p. 207.

⁶⁸ J.E.G. de Montmorency, ‘Adderley, Charles Bowyer (1814–1905)’, rev. H.C.G. Matthew, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004; online edn 2006).

⁶⁹ John Cundill, Charles Butcher and Arthur Beanlands.

⁷⁰ Joseph Waite.

sought in that capacity. The absence of a contribution from existing students was not, however, unique as students were not interviewed by the Commissioners at Oxford or Cambridge either.⁷¹ One notable omission was Thorp, who was unable to appear before the Commission.⁷² In a letter he wrote to Baring in his capacity as Chairman, Thorp declined the summons, apologising that he was 'still in bed prostrate; unable to stand or bear any other than a reclining position' and that therefore it was 'impossible to present myself to your Commissioners'.⁷³ Given that Thorp would be dead before the end of the year, it would be inequitable to take his statement at anything other than face value.

It is, however, noteworthy that there were as few as only 14 witnesses. There were a number of Commissions in the nineteenth century to compare: the University of London Commission of 1889 met with 45 witnesses, for example, and the Oxford University Commission of 1850–1852 decided not to interview witnesses orally, but instead issued printed questions and received opinions 'from the great majority of the Professors, and from many persons of note resident in Oxford, or closely connected with it, though not resident'.⁷⁴ London was a far larger and more diverse institution in the late 1880s than Durham was in the early 1860s, as too was Oxford in the 1850s, which explains the number of witnesses to a certain extent. Thorp's absence as a witness is explained by his illness, as (presumably) is that of John Edwards, the Professor of Greek and Classical Literature, who died on 1 April 1862. The Senior Proctor, Joseph Waite, and the Junior Proctor, James Barmby (who was also the incumbent Principal of Hatfield Hall), submitted their views in writing. The absence of any current students is more a reflection of the times than of any direct intent of the Commissioners to exclude their voice. And then, after all, who was left to be interviewed? More Fellows could have been approached, perhaps, but the small number of people seen by the Commissioners reflected the equally diminutive scale of the University.

⁷¹E. Ashby and M. Anderson, *The Rise of the Student Estate in Britain* (London, 1970), p. 10.

⁷²Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 111.

⁷³[DUL] DDR: Thorp to Baring, 31 March 1862.

⁷⁴*Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the State, Discipline, Studies, and Revenues of the University and Colleges of Oxford: Together with the Evidence, and an Appendix* (London, 1852), p. 1.

Benjamin Jowett was one of the most influential men to give evidence. He had served as the external examiner in 1852. On that occasion, half the men were failed,⁷⁵ but on his second visit a year later, he found the quality of the BA pass-men ‘very much improved’, though he still felt that a first-class degree at Durham was equal only to a second-class degree at Oxford and that the standard for an MA was even lower than that for the BA.⁷⁶ In his evidence, he went on to criticise low matriculation standards at the University and the impact of its small scale—‘you cannot have the life or mind of an University when there are only about a hundred students’—but he saved some of his greatest criticism for the administration. He was critical of the role of the Dean and Chapter, and he urged that the connection ‘should be broken off’. In the government of the University, he reported, there had been ‘a good deal of dissatisfaction expressed’; the fault, he stated, was that ‘while there was one set of persons who were working hard, and upon whom almost the whole success of the place rested, there was another set of persons who had all the power and the greater part of the emoluments’.⁷⁷ In later questioning, he supported Jenkyns and Edwards.⁷⁸ Thorp is the obvious target of Jowett’s invective, though when directly questioned about the Warden’s powers, he refused to be drawn too deeply into criticism. ‘Do you consider that the Warden’s power is too autocratic?’, he was asked by Adderley, but he did not answer directly; instead, he simply reiterated his main theme that ‘the affairs of the University should be administered by a body of which the Tutors are members, and in which they have a free power to move anything to be decided by the majority of the body’.⁷⁹

Hornby had led the petition calling for a commission and his evidence was as damning as might therefore have been expected. He explained how he had felt compromised in his position as Vice-Master: ‘we can do nothing in the College’, he explained, ‘without the Warden’.⁸⁰ This undermined the authority of the Vice-Master, Hornby complained, which affected how he was viewed by ‘the servants and others’, as they

⁷⁵ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1861, p. 91.

⁷⁶ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1855, p. 91.

⁷⁷ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1871, pp. 91–92.

⁷⁸ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1877, p. 92.

⁷⁹ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1924, p. 95.

⁸⁰ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1006, p. 47.

were aware that he had 'not the complete control over them which we otherwise should have'.⁸¹ Although he retained control, Thorp was aloof from the College; the result of 'his different social position, and from his living at some little distance' meant that there was 'a good deal of waste occurring'.⁸²

Hornby also felt that part of the cause of the drop in student numbers was that it was 'doubtful whether there is any sufficient demand for what we now supply'.⁸³ The education offered by Durham was very similar to that of Oxford and Cambridge, but as the expenses were not sufficiently lower to make a substantial difference, there was no compelling reason for students to choose Durham. 'With a little improvement in the management' to make attending the University 'as economical as possible', there might be a chance of success.⁸⁴ He made more radical suggestions 'to change the character of it altogether' by making it either a 'mining or engineering college' and perhaps even 'removing it to Newcastle' (a suggestion that Jowett made as well),⁸⁵ though he doubted whether an engineering course could ever work and preferred the option to transform the University into a theological college.⁸⁶

For most of those who gave evidence, the cause of the University's drop in recruitment was clear: all the ills that beset the institution were linked inseparably to Thorp. 'He and the University have become convertible terms',⁸⁷ argued Melville, who displayed the greatest level of animosity for the ageing Warden. 'All the time I was there', he told the Commissioners, 'one always felt that it was a thing that would fall to pieces some day'.⁸⁸

Other than the foundation of the University itself, Melville's establishment of Hatfield Hall was arguably the single most successful and influential undertaking at Durham throughout the nineteenth century. Melville was frequently cited in the Oxford Commissioners' report and was labelled the 'chief advocate' of the hall scheme, which had 'found

⁸¹ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1008, p. 48.

⁸² *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1006, p. 47.

⁸³ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 906, p. 44.

⁸⁴ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 912–13, p. 44.

⁸⁵ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1901–15, pp. 94–95.

⁸⁶ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1016, p. 49.

⁸⁷ *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 68.

⁸⁸ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1354, p. 65.

much favour in the University' due to 'the success which has attended ... Hatfield Hall at Durham'.⁸⁹ Economy had been important to all the University's efforts since 1831 onwards, but with little success, and it was only Melville's Hatfield that achieved substantially lower costs, while still generating a surplus.⁹⁰ But it had also changed the tone of the institution by bringing in men who might well never have considered University College. Melville clashed with Thorp and eventually left. The ostensible reason for his departure was that Thorp insisted on enforcing the terms of his Licence as Principal, which prevented Melville from holding ecclesiastical preferment or from marrying, and he had done both. Thorp had, however, originally waived these terms. At the end of the 1851/1852 academic year, he left. It is possible that the final severance of relations was the decision of Senate, originally taken in June 1851, to open a new Hall to accommodate the increasing number of applicants to Hatfield rather than to expand Hatfield itself.⁹¹

Melville had long harboured a strong resentment at this treatment and railed against the power of the Warden when given an opportunity to do so by the Commissioners:

The constitution [of the University] is a most absolute despotism, and you depend upon the character and enlightenment of the individual who is the despot; it might have been the best thing for the University in its earlier stage, but I do not think it was ever meant to work very true. The constitution is, your Lordship, the Dean and Chapter, Convocation, and the Senate, all of them supposed to be co-operative bodies, all of them, in fact, practically being dead-locked by the supreme will of one who is President in two of them, and a member of the other.⁹²

It was first intended that the Dean should be the Warden, argued Melville, and though Jenkinson was 'ready and willing to assume the place', he was 'only allowed to be in inferior position' as leader of the Chapter and not the University as well.⁹³ 'The consequence is that

⁸⁹ *Report of the Oxford Commissioners*, p. 41.

⁹⁰ By June 1851, there was a 'balance of £543.17.4½ of income over expenditure'. [DUL] Senate Minutes: 24 June 1851.

⁹¹ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 27 June 1851.

⁹² *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1299, p. 63.

⁹³ *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 68.

you have two authorities', Melville explained, that is the Dean and the Warden, and the Warden was unlikely to want to submit his decisions to the Dean for approbation as the Dean was the senior party. It was therefore to get around this imbalance of authority 'that during the whole of my experience there ... the Dean and Chapter were simply managed, the Convocation was simply dictated to, and the Senate simply checkmated' by the Warden: 'that is the constitution of the University of Durham'.⁹⁴

Lowe put the question about the University's constitution bluntly: 'Does not the constitution of the University resolve itself into something like a monarchy in the hands of the Warden?', to which even Chevallier, supportive of Thorp as he was, replied that 'it is very monarchical'.⁹⁵ The same question was put by Vaughan to John Cundill, the first entrant to the University who had held numerous positions in Durham since graduating. Did he find 'any defects to point out' such as the constitution of the University 'being too monarchical'?⁹⁶ As he had never been a member of the Senate, Cundill evaded the question. Hornby had been a member of Senate and he argued that the Warden's power should be reduced and the membership of the Senate made more representative. Even members of the Senate could feel powerless: 'it would be difficult for a University officer, unless in the independent position of a Professor, to speak in Senate of the Warden's power, and of its being excessive'.⁹⁷ Edward Parry described 'a sort of moral pressure exercised upon those who would like to have made alterations' that prevented them from doing so.⁹⁸ In his written submission, Hornby wrote of the need to curtail 'the large and indefinite powers of control and interference possessed by the Warden',⁹⁹ and Parry put it by saying that 'the real evil' was that 'power centres too much in one person, namely, the Warden of the University'.¹⁰⁰ Jowett suggested that the University should look to Scotland to reform its constitution and should copy 'a Scotch University, where the principal persons are the Professors'.¹⁰¹ Unlike other

⁹⁴ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1299, p. 63.

⁹⁵ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 202, p. 10.

⁹⁶ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 523, p. 24.

⁹⁷ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1064, p. 51.

⁹⁸ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1425–27, p. 70.

⁹⁹ *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 53.

¹⁰⁰ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1461, p. 72.

¹⁰¹ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1887, p. 92.

witnesses, Jowett did not take the opportunity to pull apart Thorp's tenure as Warden when asked to consider whether the exercise of his power had been 'too autocratic',¹⁰² but even more measured responses to the Commissioners' questions than those given by Melville, Hornby or Parry still recognised the same fault. Waddington, for example, admitted in his answer that 'the office of the Warden is, perhaps, too despotic'.¹⁰³

THE 16 ORDINANCES

On 13 June 1862, having received and deliberated upon the evidence provided by the witnesses, the Commissioners sealed 16 Ordinances for the future of the University. What was offered was a programme of radical reform: the governance of the University was to be significantly revised, all financial matters reconfigured, and the academic structures remodelled around three schools offering Bachelor's courses taught over two years in Arts, Theology and Physical Sciences. Sweeping reform of the University had been anticipated, but, as the Commissioners soon discovered, the Ordinances roused a powerful resistance from the University authorities.

The overwhelming majority of those who had called for the Commission had directed their ire against Thorp. In step with these criticisms, the Commissioners directed their attention to the Warden and damned him; his power, they found, using almost the same words as given by Melville in his evidence, had been 'almost absolute'. 'In discussing ... the practical workings of the University', the Commissioners concluded, 'the Warden ... has been supreme; the discipline has been confided to him alone ... the management of the property has been conducted by him', and he 'has had and exercised the power of removing at his pleasure the Principals of the Halls'.¹⁰⁴ 'So far as we know', the Commissioner's concluded, the Warden 'possessed an extent of power, for which ... there is no precedent in any other University'.¹⁰⁵ The Senate had offered no counter-balance to the Warden. Not only did Thorp exercise effective control over the Senate, but compared

¹⁰² *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1924, p. 95.

¹⁰³ *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 109.

¹⁰⁴ *Report of the Commissioners Appointed for the Purposes of the Durham University Act 1861* (London, 1863), p. 2.

¹⁰⁵ *Report of the Commissioners*, p. 7.

to other institutions it was a small group. The original Senate of the University of London, for example, contained 36 Fellows in addition to the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor.¹⁰⁶ At first, membership of Durham's Senate, which had been fixed in 1835, included only the Warden, the three Professors, the two Proctors and one member of the Convocation¹⁰⁷; the representation from the Convocation had been increased to three in 1857.¹⁰⁸

The Convocation was much larger than the Senate, but it was arguably even more in the grip of the Warden. It was composed of the officers of the University, those admitted members of the University and of all graduates at least of the standing of MA. This was potentially a large group, but in practice attendance ranged from 60 to 70 to as few as ten members.¹⁰⁹ The Warden controlled the Convocation as surely as he controlled the Senate: it could only confirm or reject what was put to it by the Senate; it could neither originate nor amend a motion; and the Warden had a casting vote in both bodies and could veto a decision of the Convocation. In March 1862, just after the Commissioners had interviewed their witnesses, Thorp wrote to Baring in defence of his powers. 'In Oxford' the power of veto 'rests with the Proctors', he argued, but at Durham it was 'placed in the most responsible Officer, subject to immediate appeal, which brings its exercise under the higher authority of the Dean & Chapter and Visitor'.¹¹⁰

The solution the Commissioners put forward started with removing the Dean and Chapter entirely from the governance of the University and vesting in the Senate the greater part of authority. The Dean would still be the Warden and the two canon professors would be retained, but the connection would go no further. While none of the witnesses had been able to provide examples of interference or difficulties caused by the Dean and Chapter acting as Governors, it seemed that the

¹⁰⁶Willson, *Our Minerva*, pp. 6–7.

¹⁰⁷*A Statute of Chapter enacted by the Dean and Chapter, with the Consent of the Bishop, for the University Established in Connexion with the Cathedral Church of Durham*, 20 July 1835.

¹⁰⁸*A Statute Enacted by the Dean and Chapter, with Consent of the Bishop, for Increasing the Senate of the University by Electing Annually Two Additional Members*, 28 September 1857.

¹⁰⁹*Minutes of Evidence*, q. 123, p. 8.

¹¹⁰[DUL] DDR: Thorp to Baring, 31 March 1862.

Commissioners were swayed by Jowett's argument that 'the Dean and Chapter of a Cathedral' were not 'the fittest persons to have the superior control of a University'.¹¹¹

Further, to ensure a remedy for the University's 'defective constitution', the Commissioners proposed increasing the membership of Senate to include all of the Tutors.¹¹² These very Tutors, men like Melville, were the hardworking friends of the leading Commissioners who had complained of their inability to effect change and reverse the University's decay. The number of meetings would increase too: from every other week up to at least once per week during term. The Warden retained a casting vote in the event of tied decisions, but his power of veto in the Convocation was to be removed.

The University's finances were scrutinised too, though the Commissioners complained that they had 'experienced much difficulty' in understanding Durham's 'intricate accounts', despite the support of 'an experienced accountant' from the Audit Office, who had been recommended by the Treasury.¹¹³ Indeed, the question of finance was a complex one, but seemed in essence to reduce to this: was there too little money or was there enough money that was badly used? The University authorities clearly felt their income was insufficient, and this is the line largely adopted in the University's histories. Whiting, for example, explains:

The poverty of the University was obviously one of its greatest drawbacks. It was very insufficiently endowed in the first place, and the wealthy people of the north who had been expected to contribute liberally had done practically nothing.¹¹⁴

One anonymous graduate of the University contributing to *The Standard* felt that it was wrong to characterise Durham as 'a miserable failure through mismanagement and wasted funds' and pleaded instead: 'give us more funds and there is no doubt we should have more men'.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1956, p. 97.

¹¹² *Report of the Commissioners*, p. 7.

¹¹³ *Report of the Commissioners*, p. 3.

¹¹⁴ Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 98.

¹¹⁵ *The Standard*, 12 September 1861.

Yet this perception was not widely shared. A more common view was that the University was cash-rich, but that its resources were applied inefficiently (perhaps incompetently) and used to feather a few nests rather than ensure that the benefits of the University were opened to as wide a potential audience as possible. The *Newcastle Courant* expressed the popular opinion that the University's 'income was considerable, its fellowships were many, its students were few'.¹¹⁶ According to Parry, the distribution of scholarships was 'very partial, and, in many cases, without reference to the ability of the students',¹¹⁷ and opening them up had not helped.¹¹⁸ Butcher agreed with Parry in his testimony; he concurred that the scholarships were affected by favouritism and when they were opened, it was too late as this was only done 'after the students ceased to come up'.¹¹⁹

The Commissioners agreed: they noted, for example, that in 1862 'the Officers and Fellows ... received ten times the amount awarded ... to the students engaged in the actual course or study' and yet that over the three years from 1860 to 1862, the average deficit had been £1647. The cost of living in University College had been too high as well, ranging from £100 to £140 per year (still cheaper than Oxford or Cambridge), compared with £60 to £75 in the Halls.¹²⁰ As neither the College nor the Halls were independent, the University bore the losses they incurred while they retained surpluses should any be generated. All told, the finances were a mess: the cost of living was too high; the Scholarships were inadequate and poorly distributed; and the endowments that existed were 'mainly devoted to the payment of Professors and Fellows' so that 'the Tutors have had the greater portion of the labour, and the Professors the greater part of the emoluments'.¹²¹

The 'financial embarrassment' of the University required decisive action to restore 'equilibrium in the accounts'.¹²² In order to resolve these various issues, the Commissioners proposed axing a range of the existing University Offices, including the Registrar and Proctors, as

¹¹⁶ *Newcastle Courant*, 22 August 1862.

¹¹⁷ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1433, p. 71.

¹¹⁸ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1434, p. 71.

¹¹⁹ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1116, p. 55.

¹²⁰ *Report of the Commissioners*, p. 3.

¹²¹ *Report of the Commissioners*, p. 7.

¹²² *Report of the Commissioners*, p. 14.

well as all of the Readerships, Scholarships and Fellowships. The funds released would be placed in the general account and used to support 80 open scholarships awarded by examination to matriculated students. Half of the awards would be worth £30 a year and half £50, even though the proposed costs amounted to almost £70 per year. They would be distributed pro rata to the number of students in each School. All the scholarships that had been privately founded would likewise be merged into one account and distributed as 14 awards according to a scheme of the Commissioner's devising. The existing College and Halls would be merged and the Hatfield system of living would be applied to the new body. Staff salaries would be rationalised too: all Professors, other than those to which Canonries were annexed, would receive a fixed salary of £300 per year and Tutors £250.

While considering the financial and administrative management of the University, the Commissioners had not neglected academic matters. Out would have gone the existing structure of degrees and licences, to be replaced by a system of two-year degrees leading to the Bachelor of Arts (BA), of Theology (BT) and of Physical Science (BS). In one further year, a student could proceed to a Master's degree in the same three Schools (MA, MT and MS). Each academic year would consist of two terms, when combined lasting not less than nine months, thus ensuring that the total time in residence was not reduced. All religious tests were to be abandoned, except for students proceeding to a degree in the School of Theology, who would be required to declare that they were bona fide members of the Church of England. This would make the religious tests at Durham looser than those which at that time still existed at Oxford and Cambridge, but not as liberal as those at Trinity College, Dublin.¹²³

It is hard to over-state the sweeping nature of these proposals; it was a staggering revisionist programme. The Dean and Chapter were to be stripped of their role, several Offices scrapped, the Tutors given more of a say in governance, the Halls and College merged, and the degrees condensed into two years. The Commissioners had not recommended closing the University, but these reforms would have created a radically different institution.

¹²³Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 43.

THORP'S DEPARTURE

Amidst the proposals for far-reaching reform, the most personal aspect of the Ordinances concerned Thorp. The Commissioners allowed for Thorp's resignation and offered him a pension of £400 per annum in return. He was given until the start of the Michaelmas Term 1862 to decide whether to accept the deal, or one month from the date on which the Ordinances were given royal approbation, whichever was later. There was no doubt in most public or private circles that this was an insult to the old Warden and a clear condemnation of his leadership. One anonymous former Fellow labelled the treatment of Thorp 'rude and undignified'.¹²⁴ There were others, however, who felt that the pension was an atrocious waste of funds—or, as another anonymous letter-writer described it, a 'monstrous iniquity and mischievous precedent'.¹²⁵

Despite the rancour which ensued, the original suggestion that a pension should be afforded to the Warden came from Thorp. Writing from his bed to Baring in March 1862, Thorp noted that provision had been made to accommodate a suspension of the Warden's duties, 'but nothing has been done for the retirement'. 'Provision should obviously be afforded for such a purpose', he continued, and suggested a pension based on 'long service & a fixed age'.¹²⁶ Though Thorp was talking generally, Baring took this as a direct signal that he would be prepared to retire if he were offered a suitable pension. As a consequence, the Bishop offered Thorp an annual pension of £400 for life. However, it rankled with him that Thorp even considered a pension, given that he 'would still be receiving an income of some 4,000*l.* from Church funds', but Baring went ahead despite his misgivings as he was convinced that 'it was essential to the success of any plans for the improvement of the University, that the Warden should retire'.¹²⁷

Thorp accepted the pension and agreed to resign, but unexpectedly suggested that it might be possible for him to 'retain the title of Warden, as an honorary distinction only'.¹²⁸ Such a request was clearly

¹²⁴A Quondam Fellow, *The University of Durham: What Shall We Do with It?* (London, 1863), p. 7.

¹²⁵*The Examiner*, 30 August 1862.

¹²⁶[DUL] DDR: Thorp to Baring, 31 March 1862.

¹²⁷*The Guardian*, 22 October 1862.

¹²⁸[DUL] DDR: Thorp to Baring, 30 May 1862.

outrageous: ‘the name is connected inseparably with the Office & duties & as soon as the Office is resigned, the title must also cease’, the Bishop made clear.¹²⁹ On 19 June 1862, Thorp wrote to Joseph Waite, the current Senior Proctor, to confirm his resignation to the Senate: ‘I do not know that this separation from you, to which I am necessarily a party consenting under external pressure, will be immediate.’¹³⁰ On 10 October 1862, three days before his seventy-ninth birthday, Thorp finally succumbed to his long battle against illness. He was buried five days later in the family vault at his beloved Ryton.

THE ORDINANCES DISALLOWED

In August 1862, a month following their publication, the Privy Council received formal petitions against the Ordinances. These included petitions from Thorp and collectively from the Warden, Master and Scholars of the University, the Dean and Chapter, Thomas Evans (the new Professor of Greek, who had only been installed by Baring on 11 June 1862), James Barmby (the Principal of Hatfield Hall), Mary Pemberton, the lecturers of the Newcastle College of Medicine and James Skinner. Others still, though they may not have petitioned against the Ordinances, considered them to be insufficiently radical.

The Ordinances exploded in the heart of the University, creating a ‘considerable sensation’ in the words of the *Morning Post*.¹³¹ The *Times* later noted that they had given ‘mortal offence to the Dean and Chapter’:

They cancelled their statutes, they took away their powers, they threw open the emoluments of the University to Dissenters, they founded a school of physical science with corresponding degrees, and, what was perhaps still more offensive, a school of divinity, in which students might obtain degrees without any very profound knowledge of Greek, Latin, or mathematics.¹³²

¹²⁹[DUL] DDR: Baring to Thorp, 31 May 1862.

¹³⁰[DUL] Senate Minutes: 24 June 1862.

¹³¹*Morning Post*, 22 August 1862.

¹³²*The Times*, 25 May 1863.

Indignant at the Commissioners' proposed 'crime of spoliation', the *Christian Remembrancer* complained that it was 'an utter mistake' to assume that Durham could be made successful by 'the cheapness and rapidity with which' its degrees might be obtained.¹³³

Adderley, however, one of the MPs on the Commission, dismissed the complaints. 'It is the outcry of Durham Officials who would prefer continuing the nominal Offices of a non-existent University to having its death proclaimed, or the humbling process of restoration attempted', he reassured Baring.¹³⁴ Nor was the response to the Ordinances universally negative. Importantly, Waddington, who had been destined to be Warden since an Order in Council of 1841 attached the Wardenship to the Deanery, was not disinclined to favour them.¹³⁵ 'For my own part', he told Baring, 'I find much good in the Ordinances, with some points which might perhaps be improved', he added diplomatically.¹³⁶ There was public support too. The *Birmingham Daily Post* felt that the Ordinances were 'specially to be admired' and judged them capable of making the University 'extremely well adapted to the numerous and increasing body of middle-class students'.¹³⁷ The *London Review* considered it 'impossible not to do justice to the liberal spirit by which [the Ordinances] are pervaded' and added that 'whatever could be done has, in most instances, been done boldly and well'.¹³⁸ But the paper's editors would have given the appointment of all the Professors to the Crown, removed the Bishop as the sole Visitor and transported the University to Newcastle.

The Convocation met on 16 August 1862, presided over by Chevallier as Sub-Warden following Thorp's resignation, and agreed a petition against the Ordinances which had been prepared by the Senate. Some members wanted to go further and raised more objections 'against the insult which had been offered to the University' by the 'obnoxious Ordinances', which left them 'personally aggrieved'.¹³⁹ But the Durham

¹³³ *Christian Remembrancer*, XLV(CXX) (1863), p. 510.

¹³⁴ [DUL] DDR: Adderley to Baring, 6 October 1862.

¹³⁵ *An Order in Council Respecting the Further Endowment of the University of Durham*, gazetted 8 June 1841; Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 112.

¹³⁶ [DUL] DDR: Waddington to Baring, 31 July 1862.

¹³⁷ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 27 August 1862.

¹³⁸ Carried in *Newcastle Courant*, 22 August 1862.

¹³⁹ *Newcastle Courant*, 22 August 1862.

University Act had given only a month for petitions to be raised, so there was no time for further work.

These petitions prevented Royal Assent being given to the Ordinances because the government could not advise the Queen to give her sanction until the petitions before the Privy Council had been resolved. The issue came down to a restrictive clause in section 7(2) of the Act of 1861. This clause ruled out any Ordinances which would be inconsistent with the Durham University Act of 1832 or the Charter of 1837 (except that ‘the admission of persons other than those belonging to the Established Church to the emoluments of the University shall not be deemed inconsistent’). The core complaint in the petitions was that the Ordinances would in many respects be inconsistent with the Act and the Charter, particularly by removing the Dean and Chapter as governors, and hence that clause 7(2) ruled them illegitimate.

The Commissioners argued that the entire context of their mandate should take precedence over the specific restrictive clause 7(2), otherwise they were entirely under the power of the Dean and Chapter.¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, a special committee of the Privy Council decided that the Ordinances were indeed illegitimate. The Commissioners were invited to bring forward revised Ordinances, but, they declared, the Privy Council’s decision ‘was fatal to any plan’ they could form which had ‘the least hope of restoring efficiency to the University’.¹⁴¹ The Commissioners therefore reissued their original Ordinances as part of a final report in June 1863.¹⁴² The insufficiency of their powers, they argued, had ‘compelled us to retire from the task confided to us’.¹⁴³ ‘We can imagine well enough’, noted a leading article in *The Guardian*, ‘that Bishop Baring and Mr. Lowe are not in the most amiable mood at the miscarriage of their pet scheme, and will have nothing to do with the University if they cannot have their own way about it in everything’.¹⁴⁴

Robert Lowe, forever biting in his public remarks about the University, harboured a strong resentment that he had failed to force

¹⁴⁰[TNA] Commissioners’ notes on the petitions against the Ordinances, PC 1/2729, *Argument as to the Construction of the Restrictive Clause (Section 7. (2)) in the Durham University Act, 1861*, pp. 4–5.

¹⁴¹*Report of the Commissioners*, p. 13.

¹⁴²[DUL] Senate Minutes: 9 May 1863.

¹⁴³*Report of the Commissioners*, p. 14.

¹⁴⁴*The Guardian*, 20 May 1863.

through on Durham the reform he so strongly desired. In the aftermath of the Ordinances being disallowed, Adderley suspected that 'Lowe had in his mind to revise them with a vengeance next session if his friends would back him'.¹⁴⁵ This never happened, but many years later, in May 1879, Lowe addressed the Convocation of the University of London about a proposal for a new northern university (Victoria University) and 'what he might call the abortive University of Durham', a remark which drew out laughter and agreement from his audience. He noted that Durham 'had succeeded in setting up a legal impediment which entirely prevented anything being done' to implement the Ordinances and added condescendingly that this 'was the only thing the University ever had succeeded in'.¹⁴⁶

CONCLUSION

George Bland, Archdeacon of Northumberland and a member of Chapter since 1853, wrote to Baring in March 1862. 'The evil report made of the University by former Tutors or new, who have been displeased with the Warden' had been 'among the causes of the falling off' of the University, he felt. Whether these complaints were 'well or ill founded', they had been 'a serious drawback'.¹⁴⁷ The Commission was in some respects a very personal attack on Thorp that built on these 'evil reports'. Although the Ordinances were disallowed, which clearly indicated a failure for the Commissioners, if their prime purpose had been to remove Thorp, that at least was achieved with great success.

Nevertheless, it is hard to identify anyone who came out of the Commission unscathed. Thorp was forced into retirement, Bishop Baring was accused of trying to destroy the institution over which he was Visitor, and the remaining Commissioners were faced the embarrassment of their Ordinances being disallowed. But perhaps the greatest long-term consequence was the destruction of the University's reputation by the intimate deconstruction it suffered in the glare of publicity. For more than five years, the University had been the subject of open accusations of poor standards, excessive expense, financial waste, maladministration

¹⁴⁵[DUL] DDR: Adderley to Baring, 1 January 1864.

¹⁴⁶*The Times*, 15 May 1879.

¹⁴⁷[DUL] DDR: Bland to Baring, 4 March 1862.

and decline; any institution, even one much less fragile than Durham, would take time to rebuild itself following such an episode. The nature of the negative publicity which Durham received could easily have proved fatal. Comments in *The Times*, where it is worth noting that Lowe was a leader writer, summed up the new view of the University¹⁴⁸:

For any one with a taste for reforming abuses we can imagine no more tempting subject than the University of Durham. It was all salaries and no work, all teachers and no taught, a place where everything was provided except pupils, an educational establishment with hardly anybody to educate.¹⁴⁹

This type of criticism, plus the copious evidence presented to the Commissioners, left a rich and easily accessible source of material for historians that sealed the University's early reputation. This ensured that the reforming nature of the University's early years, and Thorp's repeated attempts to address professional education, at first in Durham and then with partners in Newcastle, has been largely lost under the well-documented criticisms of those who harboured personal grudges against the Warden.

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¹⁴⁸ Adamson, *English Education*, p. 227.

¹⁴⁹ *The Times*, 25 May 1863.

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CHAPTER 10

Reform and Survival: Sealing Durham's Reputation

Altogether the shaking the Commission gave the University has done them much good. And I fully expect you will know the satisfaction of having got them to make good use of the temper they have been shaken into, if not too late.¹

Adderley to Baring, January 1864

INTRODUCTION

Durham's Chapter might have petitioned successfully for the Ordinances to be disallowed, but it was a pyrrhic victory: the future prospects for the University remained resolutely bleak. *The Times* argued that the Dean and Chapter had 'an undivided responsibility for the ruinous state of the University' not only because they were the University's governors, but now also because they had prevented the Commissioners' reforms.² If the University were to survive, it needed to reform, and quickly too.

But what reform was appropriate? As in the early 1830s, there were in the 1860s competing notions of reform. Upon Thorp's death, the Wardenship passed to the Dean, George Waddington. Waddington forced through a number of changes, but none that seemed to improve the University's prospects. More substantial and lasting change was

¹[DUL] DDR: Adderley to Baring, 1 January 1864.

²*The Times*, 25 May 1863.

to come with the next Warden: William Lake, Prebendary of Wells (1860–69) and formerly Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford (1838–59). Lake brought with him a concept of reform forged in debates at Oxford during the 1850s. His greatest personal satisfaction was in the establishment of the College of Physical Science in Newcastle, and there were clear parallels between the way in which he nurtured this venture and the contemporaneous work of Jowett (also of Balliol) in supporting the foundation of University College, Bristol.³ Lake's work gave the University a more secure future, but the great irony is that it also moulded that future more as a pale imitation of Oxford than ever before. The changes that Lake introduced helped seal the University's early reputation, while University College and King's College were seen to progress.

THE CHAPTER'S REFORMS OF 1863–65

It was to Waddington that the challenge passed of trying to breathe new life into the University after the Ordinances were disallowed. Born in 1793, and so ten years Thorp's junior, Waddington had been installed in the Deanery on 26 September 1840. He maintained the tradition of dining during hospitality residence and was known as a convivial gourmet who refused to observe fast days. This became something of an anathema to Tractarian students, whom he would invite to dinner on Ash Wednesday.⁴

Waddington recognised the scale of the work before him and was not convinced he was equal to the task. 'At the age of 68 one may perform well enough old & accustomed duties – but not those which are new', he urged the Bishop. 'In less than a year you will discover that the interests of the University require a younger Warden', and he suggested that a separate Warden should be appointed and paid for out of the Deanery funds.⁵

³Anderson, *British Universities Past and Present*, pp. 73–74; D. Carleton, *A University for Bristol* (Bristol, 1984), pp. 2–5; J. Jones, *Balliol College: A History 1263–1939* (Oxford, 1988), p. 218; and J.W. Sherborne, *University College, Bristol: 1876–1909* (Bristol, 1977), pp. 5–6.

⁴A. Klottrup, *George Waddington Dean of Durham 1840–1869* (Durham, 1990), p. 4; Stranks, *This Sumptuous Church*, p. 33.

⁵[DUL] DDR: Waddington to Baring, 18 June 1862.

Although new to his role as Warden, in many respects Waddington's appointment represented continuity because he had presided as the head of the governing body for 22 of the 30 years of the University's existence. Waddington needed to strike a balance between recognising the difficulties the University faced while not entirely shirking any responsibility for past mistakes. In his evidence to the Commissioners, he had argued that the causes of the University's decline were mostly external. 'It opened with acclamation', he noted, but the University's fortunes waned as the older universities paid 'greater attention to economy', new theological colleges opened and the predicted 'increased general demand for Academical Education' failed to materialise (Waddington felt the current was actually 'rather running in the opposite direction'). As has just been seen, Waddington's analysis was highly perceptive. With such difficult conditions and strong rivals, when 'it was discovered, that an "honour from Durham", however well deserved, carried no weight in the world, compared with those at the large Universities', the falling-off was inevitable. The disparity between expectations and reality was exaggerated by 'the caprice of the public, which, having raised a promising young institution too high for its power and means, has made the usual amends by reducing it below its deserts'. 'I am strongly of the opinion that, on so short a trial', Waddington concluded, that 'it would be quite premature now to introduce any fundamental change into the Constitution of the University'.⁶

Now in charge of both the Chapter and the Senate, Waddington's position was even more powerful than Thorp's before him—it is clearly ironic that far from being reduced, the Warden's position was now even more dominant and that this was one of the changes supported by the Commissioners. Nevertheless, the minutes of the Senate, normally the quintessence of reserved under-statement, suggest that the burden of attempting even measured reform created considerable tensions between Waddington and its other members.⁷ By as early as 1864, Waddington had agreed to pay Chevallier the diminutive salary of £50 to undertake

⁶ *Copy of All Evidence Taken by the Durham University Commissioners Under the Durham University Act, 1861* (London, 1863), p. 109.

⁷ Examples include the disagreement over how to handle E.H. Stott's request to receive back his Fellowship (2 February 1864) or concerning amendments to the Bill of 1864 (24 May 1864).

the responsibilities of Warden.⁸ No doubt age played some part in this decision, but it should not be forgotten that Chevallier was only a year younger than Waddington.

In December 1862, Waddington counselled the Senate and the Chapter on how they should respond to the Ordinances and he did not fail to be bold. Although he agreed that the Commission was 'not empowered by the Act which constitutes it to deprive the Dean and Chapter of' their role as governors, still, he said, he would 'advise the Dean and Chapter to cede office' in favour of the Senate. This he felt would be more appropriate for 'a young and liberal institution'. The Senate concurred on a few of the points Waddington raised. On several, they objected strongly. One interesting variance concerned fees: Waddington suggested raising the matriculation fee put forward in the Ordinances from £2 to £3, the rent from £5 per term to £7.10, and bat-tels from £1.5 to £1.10 per term. 'It is not by making the institution cheap that we shall make it great', he argued, 'but spread the money thus raised in securing very distinguished Professors, and we shall probably succeed.' The Senate was not convinced: 'we doubt the expediency of increasing the cost of Education here', it replied, adding that 'we think that the success of the University will very much depend upon its cheapness'.⁹

So it was, later in 1863, after continued wrangling and hammering out of compromises, that the Chapter agreed a scheme for the future development of the University. While not as radical as the Ordinances, there was a clear connection to them. The Chapter remained the governing body. The Senate continued too, though with a slightly enhanced role and an enlarged membership that included all the Tutors. It still remained the only body that could originate legislation for confirmation or rejection by Convocation. Despite all the concerns about the over-concentration of power in Thorp's hands, the Decanal Warden retained his role as the Chair of all three governing and managing bodies: the Chapter, the Senate and the Convocation. The Chapter's grip was loosened in other areas and importantly their consent would no longer be required before a degree could be conferred. In addition, only those students proceeding to a degree in Theology (including the

⁸[DUL] Senate Minutes: 21 June 1864.

⁹[DUL] Senate Minutes: 23 December 1862.

Licence in Theology), or any person entitled to become a member of Senate or Convocation, would be required to declare in writing that he was a 'bona fide member of the United Church of England and Ireland, as by Law established'.¹⁰ No other oath or subscription would be required of any person attached to the University, whether student or staff. Of the remaining changes proposed, two were of particular significance: a move to allow students to proceed to the BA after two years of study and the introduction of a School of Physical Science within the Faculty of Arts.

The proposals of 1863 were enshrined in the Durham University Act 1864, which received Royal Assent on 14 July, and then in a series of Statutes of Chapter passed in February 1865.¹¹ However, far from heralding a new era of confidence and growth, the changes did little if anything to improve Durham's faltering progress. Indeed, the move to two-year degrees reduced the University's prospects and did much to harm its reputation, a fact Chevallier much deprecated.¹² Although the general idea was to accommodate an equal amount of teaching in two years rather than three, and thereby reduce the expense of gaining a degree, the outcome was to devalue a Durham degree further. Even so, the scheme lasted for more than half a century and was only amended in 1919, when the BA course reverted to three years.¹³ During this period, there were constant apologies for the policy and students were urged to reside for three years for the BA despite the option of graduating after only two. In 1879, the *Durham University Journal* argued that 'the year cut off' was designed 'to be spent elsewhere in labour, if not at the university'.¹⁴ The *Student's Guide to the University of Durham* from 1880 could see advantages that the *Journal* could not. The *Guide* included the two-year degree as one of the distinctive features of the University, although, for sure, this option was only encouraged for those who could not afford a third year:

¹⁰ *Scheme for the Extension of the University of Durham* (Durham, 1863), p. 9.

¹¹ 27 and 28 Victoria, cap. 168, known as the Durham University Act 1864.

¹² *Durham County Advertiser*, 23 June 1882.

¹³ *Durham University Calendar 1918/19*, p. 252; Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 225–26; *Report of the Royal Commission on the University of Durham* (London, 1935), p. 90.

¹⁴ *Durham University Journal*, 3(10) (1879), p. 2.

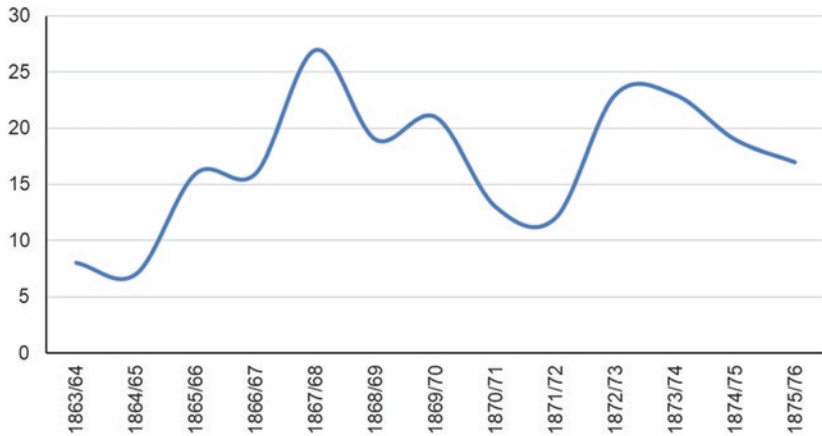


Fig. 10.1 Entrants 1863/64–1875/76 (Durham only, Arts course) (*Source* [DUL] DUR: Admission Book 1833–96)

Every one who knows the older Universities, knows that a student derives more benefit from his third year of residence than from the two first years put together. A student at Durham who without necessity takes only the minimum of residence is voluntarily rejecting the most valuable part of a University career: he is withdrawing his capital just when heavy interest is about to be paid.¹⁵

Nor did the price paid for the University's reputation purchase any sustained improvement in the number of students in Arts (Fig. 10.1).

The number of entrants to the Arts course, which had not exceeded ten since 1857/58, did rise in 1865/56 to 16 and to 28 in 1867/68, but that level of recruitment was inconsistent and the number of students resorting to Durham dipped significantly again around the end of the decade. This is, perhaps, a success: the average number of entrants in the decade starting in 1865/66 was 18.5, almost double the average of ten entrants per year in the preceding decade. Durham too made progress in once again narrowing the gap with the General Arts course at King's College, London—where the number of students declined

¹⁵ *The Student's Guide to the University of Durham* (Durham, 1880), pp. 1, 12–13.

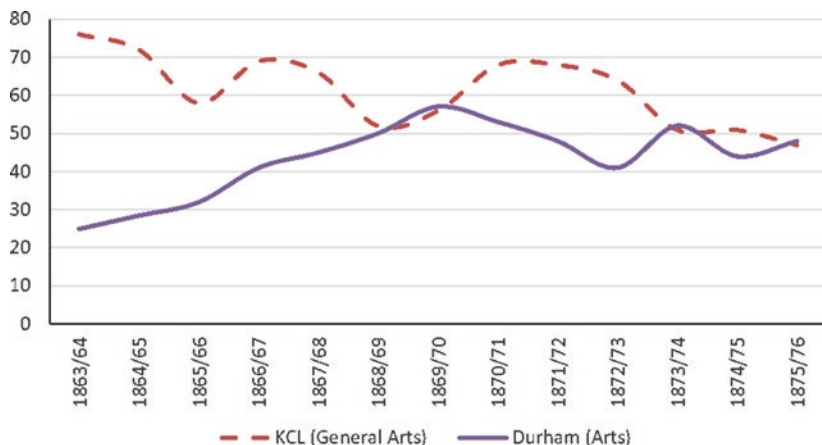


Fig. 10.2 Students 1863/64–1875/76, Durham and King’s College, London (Arts course) (*Source* ‘Durham (Arts)’ as listed in the University Calendar. ‘KCL (General Arts)’ taken from tables in Hearnshaw, *The Centenary History of King’s College London*)

in peaks and troughs until a low of only 22 was reached in 1888/89 (Fig. 10.2).

Yet the heights Durham reached were so meagre as to make celebration redundant. Could peaking at 28 new entrants to the Arts course really be considered a success, even if this was the highest intake achieved since 1852/53 and even if it compared favourably with King’s College? Durham was a University after all, not a college. So, given that in 1865, Oxford admitted 524 students and Cambridge 530, it is not hard to see why some of Durham’s ardent critics continued to view it as little more than a parody of a university.¹⁶ If Durham were a college, it might have been spared some of the harsh criticism it received, but it was not a college, it was a university, and the two benchmarks for being a university in England were simply incomparable.

The School of Physical Science at Durham proved even less successful: it opened in the Michaelmas Term of 1865 and was an instant and absolute failure. Arthur Beanlands, one of the first students in engineering, who had served the University in a range of different

¹⁶Greenwood, ‘University Education’, p. 6.

capacities since graduating, was appointed to offer classes in civil engineering in March 1865. After only three years, his appointment was not renewed.¹⁷ During this period, it seems that only one student registered to study engineering, and none for the two-year course leading to the award of Associate in Physical Science. The one engineering student, Thomas Marley, despite spending six years at Durham from 1868/69 to 1873/74, never managed to graduate. For the School of Physical Science and poor Thomas Marley, failure hardly comes in a more absolute form.

BREATHING LIFE INTO DRY BONES

Waddington died in July 1869 and William Lake became Dean and Warden on 2 October. Reflecting in his memoirs, he mused that the University's existence until that point 'had been a fluctuating and rather disappointing one'.¹⁸ This was a considerable under-statement. While he acknowledged a number of causes for this, he reserved his strongest criticism for Thorp. 'Undoubtedly there had been great mismanagement', he judged:

The first Warden, Dr. Thorp ... had the power of inspiring great attachment among his friends, but his judgment in directing a University was in many respects deficient, whilst his unwillingness to give his Tutors a sufficiently free hand resulted in his retaining hardly any of them for very long.

It was Jenkyns who, according to Lake, had kept the flickering hopes of the University burning and it was his retirement in 1864, at the age of 69, which caused the real disaster.¹⁹

Lake was a representative of a very different generation compared to his two predecessors, and politically was very different too. Born on 9 January 1817 to a retired hero of Waterloo, he attended Rugby School under Thomas Arnold and was heavily influenced by him and the

¹⁷Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 117.

¹⁸Lake (ed.), *Memorials of William Charles Lake*, p. 114.

¹⁹Lake (ed.), *Memorials of William Charles Lake*, pp. 114–15. It should be noted that Jenkyns' brother was Richard Jenkyns, the Master of Balliol College from 1819 to 1854, and hence was well acquainted with Lake.

friendships he developed there. The relationships Lake formed and maintained throughout his life with Arthur Stanley and Charles Vaughan (a member of the Durham University Commission) were especially important to him. But his reforming credentials were not only formed at school. After a glittering career at Rugby, Lake and Stanley proceeded to Balliol College, Oxford.²⁰ Matriculating in November 1834, the future Warden gained his BA in 1838 with first-class honours *In Literis Humanioribus*, followed the same year by a Fellowship, and his MA in 1841. At Oxford as a student and then a Fellow, he widened his circle of friends with James Lonsdale (Principal of Hatfield Hall in 1853/54 and one of the petitioners for a Commission) and Benjamin Jowett (who gave evidence to the Commission); all three men were elected Fellows of Balliol in the same contest in 1838.²¹ All three had also been deeply involved in the reforms at Oxford around the middle of the century. Lake was an influential member of the 'Tutors Association',²² which was active from around 1848 to 1855, though he considered his own views to be part of the moderate majority compared to those of the more 'advanced party' which included Stanley and Jowett.²³ Jowett and Lake played an influential role, advising the Oxford Commissioners on the newly developed tutorial practices at Balliol.²⁴ Lake felt that Gladstone's support for moderate reform had been an 'enormous advantage' in securing the reforming Oxford University Act of 1854. The two men retained close links for the rest of their lives, including when, in 1881, Lake married Katherine, the daughter of the Prime Minister's brother.²⁵

Lake's clerical career commenced with his ordination in 1842. In October 1858, he left academic life at Oxford for the Balliol living of Huntspill in Somerset. In 1860, he became a canon at Wells Cathedral. Through Gladstone, he was appointed to the Deanery of Durham to succeed Waddington. When Gladstone offered the role to Lake, he

²⁰Lake (ed.), *Memorials of William Charles Lake*, pp. v–vii.

²¹R. Duckworth, *A Memoir of the Rev. James Lonsdale, Late Fellow and Tutor of Balliol College, Oxford* (London, 1893), p. 21.

²²Engel, 'Emerging Concepts', pp. 335–41; Ward, *Victorian Oxford* (London, 1965), p. 181.

²³Lake (ed.), *Memorials of William Charles Lake*, pp. 76–77.

²⁴Jones, *Balliol College*, p. 199.

²⁵Lake (ed.), *Memorials of William Charles Lake*, p. 77.

had the attached position of Warden very much in mind; ‘much will be expected from you’ as both Dean and Warden, the Prime Minister warned him:

The university, if I am rightly informed, wants nothing less than life infused into its dry bones. In grappling with its difficulties, you, as a theological student yourself, will not be likely to abet any disparagement of theology, while you labour to supply what ought to be a great institution with a comprehensive and powerful equipment.²⁶

The position of Warden, and with it the explicit commission to reform the University, was highly influential on Lake’s decision to accept the Deanery. ‘My old Oxford work’, he told Gladstone, ‘may enable me to be of some service to the University.’²⁷

For Thorp, the University was like his own child: he had caused it to be brought into the world and he was fiercely protective of it. For Waddington, the University was something he had lived alongside throughout his time as Dean and when he eventually became Warden, he was an old man and lacked a reformer’s energy, even if he retained something of the edge that was necessary and was certainly insightful. Lake, however, was an outsider and powerfully connected with men of national eminence. He was 52 when he entered into his new duties, 17 years younger than Waddington had been when he became Warden. Lake’s approach to the problems that Durham faced would be radically different, but it was precisely for that purpose that he had been appointed: as a new style of reformer, with a track record of tackling deep-rooted issues at Oxford.

Only a month after Lake had been appointed, the University suffered stinging criticism in *The Times*. ‘Very few of our readers, we suspect, have ever heard of Durham University’, the paper proclaimed pompously: ‘tried by any test of ability, [the University] can give no sufficient reason for its existence’ and was nothing but an expensive yet pale imitation of Oxford and Cambridge. The University was even accused, quite incorrectly, of having failed from ‘inability and reluctance’ to support

²⁶W.E. Gladstone to W.C. Lake, 28 July 1869, quoted in Lake (ed.), *Memorials of William Charles Lake*, p. 214.

²⁷W.C. Lake to W.E. Gladstone, 2 August 1869, quoted in Lake (ed.), *Memorials of William Charles Lake*, p. 214.

the scheme for a School of Physical Science put forward by the Mining Institute in the mid-1850s. Could Lake do something? 'The new Dean is an educational reformer, and has work here ready to his hand', the paper noted.²⁸

Lake responded the following week. He defended Thorp over the School of Physical Science, clarifying that he had in fact embraced the scheme, enthusiastically making every allowance requested, but that its failure lay with the squabbling of the professional and industrial community in Newcastle. Lake asked for an end to this kind of unfounded criticism: 'if the public will give us fair play for a time', he pleaded, then 'we shall be able to get some fresh reasons for our existence by a real extension of our practical studies'.²⁹

In addition to his connection through marriage to the Prime Minister, Lake was a close friend of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Archibald Tait. Tait had also been a Fellow of Balliol College and had befriended Lake while he was an undergraduate.³⁰ He shared the Warden's interest in University reform, including as a member of the Oxford University Commission in the 1850s.³¹ Shortly after his appointment, Lake set out his intentions for the University in a letter to the Archbishop. First, he would make 'an extension of this University to Newcastle, in the form of the college of physical science for miners and engineers'. But that was not all, for he hoped 'that in a short time this may become the nucleus of a University on something of the Scotch model, which suits our North of England better than the Oxford and Cambridge types'. The favourable comments on the 'Scotch model' no doubt flattered Tait as a Scotsman and a former student of the University of Glasgow, but also reflected wider use of the term by reformers at Oxford.³² As for 'Durham itself', Lake concluded, there was 'little to be made, except as a college for educating clergymen', which is an oddly dismissive comment for the Dean of Durham to make in writing to the Archbishop of Canterbury.³³

²⁸ *The Times*, 9 November 1869.

²⁹ *The Times*, 15 November 1869.

³⁰ Jones, *Balliol College*, p. 190.

³¹ Jones, *Balliol College*, p. 187.

³² Anderson, *British Universities*, p. 58.

³³ W.C. Lake to A.C. Tait, 1870–71?, quoted in Lake (ed.), *Memorials of William Charles Lake*, pp. 218–19.

THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICAL SCIENCE

The key developments for the remainder of the nineteenth century therefore took place in Newcastle, not Durham. On 6 November 1869, at a general meeting of the Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers, it was resolved to work with the University on creating 'a system of Scientific Education in the North of England for the instruction of young men destined for the mining or manufacturing professions' and creating a college with similar privileges from the University to those 'already extended to the medical profession in this town'.³⁴ Such an attempt was not new, as we have seen. But Newcastle had changed: its industry had grown more complex and the population had continued to expand at a dramatic rate. In 1801, Newcastle had 28,000 residents. This had increased to 88,000 in 1851 and 128,000 in 1871. The greater area of Tyneside had increased from 201,000 people in 1851 to 314,000 in 1871.³⁵ The University had changed too. Although Thorp had always engaged with leading figures in Newcastle, as evidenced by the connection with the College of Medicine, for example, Lake brought a renewed approach. His reputation as a reformer, and his personal network of significant national figures, must have helped give his new approach credence amongst those in Newcastle who were cynical about the University's ability to support professional education.

In February 1871, the Institute issued an invitation to a 'preliminary meeting' to discuss 'the establishment of Classes ... for the teaching of Physical Science' in Newcastle.³⁶ The public meeting was held on 11 March 1871 in the lecture room of the Literary and Philosophical Society, with Sir William (later Lord) Armstrong, the eminent industrialist and artillery specialist, in the chair. One of the first speakers was Isaac Lowthian Bell, the owner of a number of large chemical and iron works, who had provided oral evidence to the Durham Commission in 1862. He had been appointed as one of the members of the Institute's committee to discuss the proposed College with the University. Bell had complained to the Commissioners that young men in the north were of 'two

³⁴ *Transactions of the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers 1869–70, Volume 19* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1870), pp. 40, 56; Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 189.

³⁵ E. Allen, J.F. Clarke, N. McCord, and D.J. Rowe, *The North-East Engineers' Strikes of 1871* (Newcastle, 1971), pp. 13–24.

³⁶ [NUL] CPSMB: 28 February 1871.

extremes, the highly educated and those not educated at all' and that what was missing was 'the means of education of those in the intermediate degree'. This required him to recruit 'self-educated men' as managers in his plants. He even—of all things—once had no option but to employ a Frenchman!³⁷ Bell repeated this point to the public meeting: what was needed from the proposed College, he told them, was 'that kind of education' which was needed 'for undertaking the responsible duties of managers of collieries, iron works, or chemical works'.³⁸

Lake was not present at the public meeting. It is not clear why he was absent, but, given suspicions about how fit the University was to support practical science, it may perhaps have been to allow a free and open discussion. Aware of this concern, in his written statement to the meeting, Lake emphasised that the proposed College would be led by 'Newcastle men'. It would not be beneficial 'to establish a mere branch of this University at Newcastle', he assured them. What the University would do was offer its support for the necessary subscriptions, give half of the time of the relevant professors for lectures at the College and 'throw open to competition' some of its scholarships. However, in order to offer this support, the new College would need to 'be to some extent connected with the University', though 'the bond of connection ... may be a very slight one'. Under such a plan, there was no doubt, Lake predicted, that their new institution 'would be probably as successful as Owens College is at Manchester'.³⁹

This offer was indeed met with scepticism. For example, one of those present, Walter Tait, who was the Rector of Benton and formerly a Lecturer in Modern History at Oxford University, 'asked if it was desirable to prop up the University of Durham' in this way and, although the work of the Royal Commission was only concluded some six years before, suggested instead that 'the best plan would be to have a Parliamentary inquiry as to what Durham does for its money'.⁴⁰ John Rutherford, a progressive Congregationalist preacher and educational reformer, suggested moving the entire University to Newcastle, 'with

³⁷ *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 84.

³⁸ [NUL] CPSMB: 11 March 1871.

³⁹ [NUL] CPSMB: 11 March 1871.

⁴⁰ [NUL] CPSMB: 11 March 1871. Despite his recorded reluctance at the first public meeting, Wait was one of the first subscribers to the new College, giving £25; cf. [NUL] CPSMB: 25 March 1871.

the exception of theology, which might be left under the shadow of the cathedral'.⁴¹ Despite a largely negative response, others present felt somewhat embarrassed by the apparent snubbing of Lake's approach, with one individual noting that 'the innuendoes respecting Durham University' were 'unfortunate when [the University] was disposed to meet them in a liberal way'.⁴²

The initial prospects for collaboration were not promising. The only agreement reached at the first public meeting was that a communication should be sent to Lake, informing him that the proposal for sharing professors was insufficient, but thanking him for his courtesy.⁴³ A private meeting followed on 24 March 1871, at which Lake, on behalf of the University, offered to provide two professors at £400 per year and ten scholarships each worth £20 per year. This offer was dependent on the College's Newcastle supporters guaranteeing £1000 per year in matched funding. The arrangement would be fixed for six years, by which time the College, it was hoped, would have become self-sustaining. It was agreed that this proposition was 'highly satisfactory'.⁴⁴

Another public meeting was held the following day. William Armstrong again took the Chair. This time, however, the Warden was in attendance and he set about winning over the assembled representatives of Newcastle's industrial and scientific community. It was clear to Lake that if their scheme for some 'better means' of allowing working men to study their 'professions in a thoughtful and scientific manner was to succeed', bridges needed to be built between a largely alienated community of professionals in Newcastle and the academic clerics of the University. Lake humorously reminded them that 'about sixteen miles from Newcastle, and perhaps not so far, there was a place called Durham' and even though some clearly held an 'inextinguishable hatred

⁴¹[NUL] CPSMB: 11 March 1871. Rutherford founded Bath Lane School in 1870. The School provided elementary education to poor children and was a predecessor institution of Rutherford College, which formed an original part of what is now Northumbria University. The School's senior department was an early competitor with the College of Physical Science. Cf. J. Allen, *Rutherford's Ladder: The Making of Northumbria University, 1871–1996* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2005); Bettenson, *The University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, p. 25.

⁴²[NUL] CPSMB: 11 March 1871.

⁴³[NUL] CPSMB: 11 March 1871.

⁴⁴[NUL] CPSMB: 24 March 1871.

to the University', for his part Lake 'had found that the University was animated with the most friendly spirit towards Newcastle and the North of England'.⁴⁵

Lake pitched his proposal that had been hammered out the day before, including the professors, scholarships and matched funding. Although he understood that 'people would not interest themselves in an institution which they believed was brought over and stuck down from a town of which some of them did not entertain an exalted motion', restrictions in their charters and endowments still meant that 'it was a matter of necessity ... that there should be some connection between the Institution and the University of Durham'. For these reasons also, the students and professors would be termed members of the University. Now was the time for definite and conclusive action, Lake urged them, for while such a scheme 'had often been talked of in past times ... the matter had ended all in talk'. The only other member of the University's Senate present, Joseph Waite (who after a brief interval had succeeded Thorp as Master of University College), backed up Lake's offer by assuring those present 'that a very decided majority of the Senate entirely concurred, not only in the details of the proposal ... but also in the spirit'.⁴⁶

This proposal was at last accepted. Isaac Bell even offered something of an apology. He suggested that those who had disparaged the University were 'much more to blame' for its lack of success for having 'failed to avail themselves of the advantages' it offered.⁴⁷ Joseph Cowen Jr., a friend of European revolutionaries who later succeeded his father as the radical liberal MP for Newcastle, summed up the feeling of the meeting.⁴⁸ If they did not carry out the College efficiently, he declared, 'it would be to the lasting disgrace of the town and district', and he further hoped that by being 'brought into contact with the soothing influences of that rather soporific institution ... they would materially improve each other by gradually wearing off the corners of each other's prejudices'.⁴⁹

⁴⁵[NUL] CPSMB: 25 March 1871.

⁴⁶[NUL] CPSMB: 25 March 1871.

⁴⁷[NUL] CPSMB: 25 March 1871.

⁴⁸W.F. Rae, 'Cowen, Joseph (1829–1900)', rev. E.F. Biagini, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

⁴⁹[NUL] CPSMB: 25 March 1871.

The task of bringing the College into existence now started in earnest, and the work was swiftly executed. A committee was formed, and again William Armstrong was Chair. This group first met on 4 April 1871 and progress was so fast that the first students were admitted to the College only six months later.⁵⁰ The call for subscriptions met with an equally rapid and positive reply. By early May, it had been agreed that the College should open for its first academic year that October, with the new Professors taking up their posts in July.⁵¹ Productive discussions were held with the major learned societies in Newcastle: the Medical College, the Natural History Society, the Literary and Philosophical Society, and the Institute of Mechanical and Mining Engineers. Even *The Times*, in a complete reversal of its earlier criticism, applauded the ‘energy of the present Dean’ in overcoming all the obstacles that had previously prevented the establishment of such an institution as was now being created in Newcastle. It waited anxiously for the ‘result of this educational experiment’ to ascertain ‘whether it be not expedient to impart scientific knowledge more in the concrete than is the habit in this country’.⁵² A brief prospectus was issued on 25 May 1871, advertising a two-year course (perhaps a result of the move to two-year courses in Durham) of three terms per year, each term being 10–12 weeks long. Rather than obtaining a degree or a licence, successful students would become Associates in Physical Science.⁵³ The subjects covered focused on ‘the application of Science to Engineering, Mining, Manufactures, and Agriculture’. The fees would be five guineas for each course of lectures, with an admission fee of one guinea and a separate charge for the use of the laboratory. Examinations for the public Exhibitions, each worth £15 a year, would be held from 12 to 14 June.⁵⁴

By the end of May, £21,029 had been received in subscriptions. In June, four Professors were appointed: William Steadman Aldis from Trinity College Cambridge as Professor of Mathematics, David Page from the University of St Andrews as Professor of Geology, Algernon Freire-Marreco from Durham itself as Professor of Chemistry and

⁵⁰[NUL] CPSMB: 4 April 1871, 4 May 1871, and 15 September 1871.

⁵¹[NUL] CPSMB: 4 May 1871.

⁵²*The Times*, 12 April 1871.

⁵³A Bachelor of Science award was introduced five years later; the first such degree went to Edward Haigh on 27 June 1876.

⁵⁴[NUL] CPSMB: 23 May 1871.

Alexander Stuart Herschel, the grandson of William Herschel,⁵⁵ from Anderson's University in Glasgow and before that the Royal School of Mines in London, as Professor of Experimental Physics. Herschel received £400 a year and the others £300, to which was added two-thirds of their students' fees. These were first rate and promising appointments.

The College of Physical Science opened to students in October 1871 amidst the turmoil of a bitter engineer's strike. The Nine Hours Movement, so-called because of demands from workers for their day to be limited to a maximum of nine hours, has been described by Norman McCord as 'one of the most significant industrial disputes of nineteenth-century Britain'.⁵⁶ To extend the inauspicious beginnings, the first students were taught in borrowed accommodation. Rooms were used from the Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers, the College of Medicine, and the Literary and Philosophical Society. Uncomfortable though some of these arrangements were, Lake wrote to *The Times* stating that a 'fair start' had been made, but that more donations and support would be welcome.⁵⁷

Despite the labour issues caused by the strike, local industry was booming and Newcastle could now boast of two colleges offering a higher education, both of which were connected with the University: the newly opened College and the College of Medicine. Outside of their connections with the University, in most other respects the two colleges were very different institutions. The College of Medicine was the private initiative of a single professional group. It grew out of the growing need for additional and formal medical education which, during the course of the nineteenth century, was embedded within a legal framework. The training needs of senior medical practitioners were therefore narrowly defined and increasingly specified. While the College of Physical Science also grew out of the interests of a professionalising area, there were multiple groups involved from different industries. Their work neither developed within a coherent national framework nor were they united by a common purpose at a local or regional level. This national context in part explains the local realities which led to the earlier

⁵⁵H.P. Hollis, 'Herschel, Alexander Stewart (1836–1907)', rev. A.J. Meadows, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004; online edn 2005).

⁵⁶Allen et al., *North-East Engineers' Strikes of 1871*, p. 98.

⁵⁷*The Times*, 2 November 1871.

success of the College of Medicine, even though both colleges can trace some origin back to Greenhow's paper presented to the Literary and Philosophical Society in 1831. However, another important aspect is that the purpose of training in engineering, mining and commerce spanned a greater range of abilities: from the type of training required for junior posts to the needs of advanced engineers including the gap identified by Bell for 'the means of education of those in the intermediate degree'.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the changed national context and increased local population and industrial activity, carefully managed by Lake, at last created a sufficiently benign environment for the College of Physical Science to become a reality.

A SOUND SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

'There is a great want of theological teaching in the English Church', Lake wrote in his memoirs, 'and Durham, though not of course equal in this respect of Oxford or Cambridge, might under effective teachers become a really great school of divinity.'⁵⁹ While Lake's vision for Durham itself was strictly limited to the production of clergy, this did not mean that he intended to leave the University's theological provision unreformed. In fact, several crucial initiatives evolved under Lake that continued into the twentieth century: connecting the University with the new theological colleges, the establishment of international links, and the eventual creation of new and privately funded halls dedicated (though not exclusively) to the teaching of theology and the training of ordinands.⁶⁰ It was these developments that set the tone and reputation of the University for decades to come, at least until the reintroduction of scientific education in the mid-1920s.

The key to Durham's future success, Lake argued, would be the 'importation of some really able men as heads of the two colleges and principal teachers':

There is no reason why the early successes of Dr. Jenkyns should not be repeated. It must be remembered, however, that there is at present only

⁵⁸ *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 84; Sanderson, *The Universities in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 166–67.

⁵⁹ Lake (ed.), *Memorials of William Charles Lake*, p. 115.

⁶⁰ St Chad's Hall in 1904 and St John's Hall in 1909.

one Professor of Divinity, and that the appointment to the post is in the hands of the Bishop. To make a good school of theology would certainly require more professors.⁶¹

Where he could, Lake recruited men of quality and reputation early in their careers. One of his first appointments was Alfred Plummer, Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, to become Master of University College from 1874 to 1902. C.K. Barrett described him as a 'good though hardly outstanding' student at Oxford and possessing a 'sound and careful scholarship but few sparks of brilliance and originality'.⁶² William Sanday, also a Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, was appointed Principal of Hatfield Hall by Lake in 1876. Sanday left Durham in 1882 to become Dean Ireland's Professor of Exegesis of Holy Scripture at Oxford. He later became the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity and Canon of Christ Church. Although a more significant scholar than Plummer, the conclusion reached by Joanna Hawke that he was 'not original in his research and slow to arrive at conclusions' indicates a similar sort of solid but unexceptional mind.⁶³ Sanday's successor at Hatfield was Archibald Robertson, yet another Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford. He was, perhaps, the most eminent of the three. In 1897, he left Durham to become principal of King's College, London, and was Vice-Chancellor of the University of London in 1902/3. He became Bishop of Exeter in 1903. Claude Jenkins' summary is that he was 'a careful, fair-minded, and patient teacher and administrator'—not an exceptional scholar, then, but he did combine 'conciseness ... with clarity of exposition'.⁶⁴

Lake attributed Durham's 'position as a sound school of theology' to the work of these three men and the Tutors who supported them. Still, they were not truly exceptional and in Lake's estimation, more would have to be done before Durham could become a 'really great

⁶¹Lake (ed.), *Memorials of William Charles Lake*, p. 115.

⁶²C.K. Barrett, 'Plummer, Alfred (1841–1926)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

⁶³J. Hawke, 'Sanday, William (1843–1920)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

⁶⁴C. Jenkins, 'Robertson, Archibald (1853–1931)', rev. H.C.G. Matthew, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

school of divinity'.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, Lake was thoroughly convinced that Durham could never achieve parity with Oxford and Cambridge: their 'predominance', he argued, would 'prevent Durham from ever attaining a high position'. Durham could therefore 'never expect many able scholars among its members'.⁶⁶

CONNECTIONS WITH THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES

In 1876, the *Durham University Journal* boasted that the University was 'entering upon a period of prosperity'.⁶⁷ This optimism was caused by the arrangements made in May 1876 to allow students to progress from the theological colleges to study for a year at Durham and obtain the BA.⁶⁸ Extending at first to four colleges, the number of connected colleges grew rapidly and eventually included institutions as far-flung as Jamaica and New Zealand.⁶⁹ Allowing students from the theological colleges favourable admission to the BA was a popular move as far as recruitment went. The average number admitted annually to the Arts course in the decade starting in 1856/57 was a mere 11. The situation improved marginally over the following decade, coinciding with the reduction of time required to complete the Arts course to two years, with average admissions reaching 19 students per year. However, over the next ten years, starting in 1876/77, there was a radical increase as the average number of entrants jumped to 55 per year (Fig. 10.3).

Although the entirety of the increase cannot be attributed to the admission of students from theological colleges, it was a significant factor: in the first year of the new allowance for advanced entry, 18% of entrants to the Arts course progressed from a theological college and between 1876/77 and 1895/96, up to 47% of entrants in any year came via this route, with the average over the two decades being 31%—a total of 370 students.

⁶⁵Lake (ed.), *Memorials of William Charles Lake*, p. 115.

⁶⁶Lake (ed.), *Memorials of William Charles Lake*, p. 115.

⁶⁷*Durham University Journal*, 1(2) (December 1876), p. 1.

⁶⁸Park, *St Bees College*, p. 92.

⁶⁹The first four colleges were St Aidan's, St Bees, Lichfield and the Theological Department of Queen's College, Birmingham. Colleges based overseas included Selwyn College (Dunedin) and St Peter's College (Jamaica).

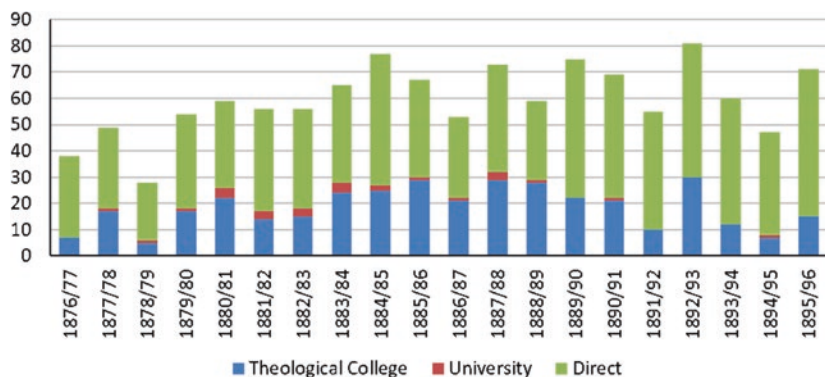


Fig. 10.3 Entrants 1876/77–1895/96 by previous institution (Durham only, Arts course) (*Source* [DUL] DUR: Admission Book 1833–96)

While this scheme undoubtedly increased the number of students at Durham, it was not universally popular. Whiting, probably based on the first-hand reflections of his older colleagues, noted that there were ‘well-grounded objections to this system as at first introduced’. The principal complaints were that the students who transferred in from the theological colleges avoided the first-year examination in Arts, and that the required residence of three terms need not be kept consecutively; even six half-terms over six years could be added together to fulfil the requirement of the regulations. This gave the University the unfortunate reputation that it ‘gave a degree on easier terms than any other university’.⁷⁰

UNATTACHED STUDENTS

The development of progression routes for students from the increasing number of theological colleges was not the only way in which entry to Durham was liberalised under Lake. From the outset, the University had been residential and matriculated students were required to reside in a ‘recognized College, Hall, or House’.⁷¹ The collegiate system in part accounted for the concerns over the cost of studying at Durham—even if the costs were lower than the older universities, they were still not low

⁷⁰Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 309–10.

⁷¹Regulations, Title II, Of Admission, paragraph 2.

enough. This changed when so-called Unattached Members were first admitted in the Epiphany Term of 1871, without the need to join a college or hall.⁷² It is possible that the Archbishop's influence was at work here too, as Tait advocated strongly for the admission of non-collegiate students to Oxford while serving on the Royal Commissioner there. However, it was not until 1868 that non-collegiate students were first admitted to Oxford.⁷³

Although not a member of either a college or hall, unattached students at Durham were still required to reside in a house or lodgings licensed by the Warden and the option was only open to men over the age of 23. Whiting recorded that this extension was not universally popular: as the unattached men were older and often married, 'there was a tendency to avoid that general intercourse with their fellows which is the essence of university life', he noted.⁷⁴ The establishment of the Union Society in 1873 helped mitigate this to some extent, but in the 1880s the unattached students formed their own society to promote social interaction.⁷⁵ This eventually became St Cuthbert's Society in 1888 (Fig. 10.4).⁷⁶

Whatever shortcomings there may have been, the option proved popular: 29% of students (10 out of 35) admitted in 1872/73 were unattached, as were 28% (465) of all entrants between 1871/72 and 1890/91.

Changing the recruitment policy to admit students from the theological colleges on preferential terms, alongside other aspects of reform at Durham such as the increased emphasis on economy and the admission of unattached students, helped create a greater connection between the University and the diocese and region in which it sat. From roughly the mid-1860s onwards, the University played an increasingly important role

⁷²This group of students first warranted a listing in the Calendar for 1876.

⁷³A. Bullock, "'A Scotch University Added to Oxford'? The Non-collegiate Students' in Brock and Curthoys (eds.), *History of the University of Oxford: Volume 7*, pp. 193–208, at pp. 193–94.

⁷⁴Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 141.

⁷⁵Fowler, *College Histories*, p. 57; Tudor, *St Cuthbert's Society*, p. 5.

⁷⁶Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 142; Tudor, *St Cuthbert's Society*, pp. 8–9. The meeting on 25 October 1888 at which the creation of the Society was agreed was chaired by Hastings Rashdall, who later became a celebrated historian of medieval European universities.

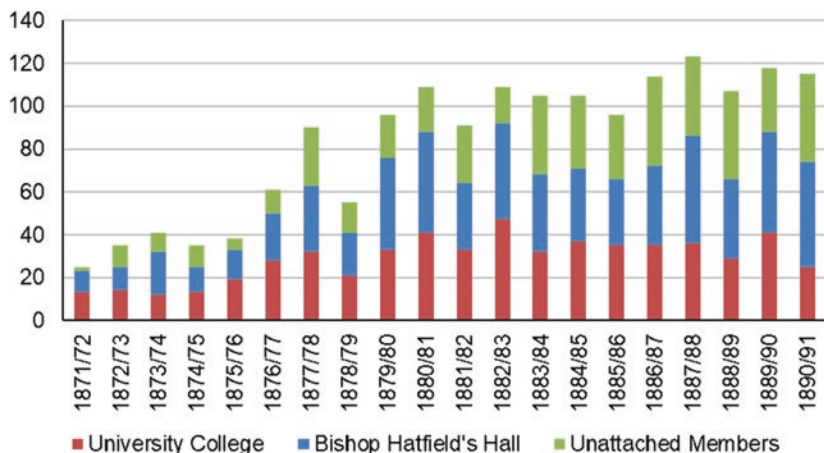


Fig. 10.4 Entrants 1871/72–1890/91 by college or hall (Durham only, all courses) (*Source* [DUL] DUR: Admission Book 1833–96)

in radically widening the social backgrounds of the diocesan clergy. By the early twentieth century, 42% of ordinands in the Durham diocese had been educated at the University, and these men were typically older and from lower social classes than those from Oxford or Cambridge.⁷⁷

The emphasis on theology in Durham persisted into the 1880s and eventually additional staff were appointed to support the growing student population. Although a Professor of Hebrew had been projected for many years, it was only in 1880 that an appointment was made. Henry William Watkins, who had graduated with a BA from King's College, London, and an MA at Balliol College, Oxford, was appointed to the long-awaited fourth professorship. Whiting recorded how he adopted the same understanding as Lake that there was very little scope for development at Durham: a stance which had become *de rigueur* following the Warden's appointment.⁷⁸

⁷⁷Lec, 'Class, Industrialization and the Church of England', p. 171; Lec, *The Church of England and the Durham Coalfield*, p. 70.

⁷⁸Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 143.

INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

By developing a narrower focus on theology and the preparation of ordinands, the University became the natural home for two new and innovative international relationships with colleges in the worldwide Anglican Communion. So, while this move towards theology turned Durham into what its detractors had always criticised it for, it nevertheless opened up great opportunities. Durham's reputation, no doubt, also made it more approachable as a body with which to affiliate than either Oxford or Cambridge. The University of London, the only other English university then existing, had been able to recognise institutions throughout the British Empire for the purposes of submitting candidates for degrees since 1850 and had started to do so through the Royal College in Mauritius in 1865.⁷⁹ However, it still had no Faculty of Theology and would not establish one until 1898, and remained as resolutely religiously non-aligned as it had been since its foundation.⁸⁰

The first of Durham's international affiliations was with Codrington College, Barbados. Named after Christopher Codrington (1668–1710), who in his will left a substantial bequest to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the College at first opened in 1745 as a grammar school.⁸¹ After the See of Barbados and the Leeward Islands was constituted in 1824, William Hart Coleridge DD of Christ Church, Oxford, the inaugural Bishop, soon concluded that the supply of local clergy was inadequate. At Coleridge's instigation, something approaching the original intention of Codrington's will was eventually agreed in 1829 when the Grammar School was reconstituted principally, though never exclusively, to train students for ordination.⁸² Courses were offered in the Arts (including Classics and Mathematics) and Theology, leading to separate Testamurs.⁸³ The Testamur was considered to be the equivalent of a Bachelor's degree and did carry prestige

⁷⁹Harte, *The University of London*, pp. 98, 106–7.

⁸⁰S. Evans, 'Theology', in Thompson (ed.), *The University of London and the World of Learning*, pp. 147–60.

⁸¹G.C. Simmons, 'Codrington College in Barbados, Legacy of Christopher Codrington of All Souls', *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education*, 9(1–2) (1969), pp. 474–96, at p. 476.

⁸²T.H. Bindley, *Annals of Codrington College Barbados* (London, 1911), pp. 31–33.

⁸³Simmons, 'Codrington College in Barbados', p. 478; Bindley, *Annals of Codrington College*, p. 38.

with it: it enabled those who possessed it to vote under the Franchise Act of Barbados, for example, and it was listed by the Royal College of Surgeons of England as satisfying its requirements for general education required of those seeking the Diploma of Member.⁸⁴

The connection with Durham first began when John Mitchinson became the third Bishop of Barbados in 1873. He had been born in Durham on 23 September 1833, just over a month before the University admitted its first students. He had attended Durham Grammar School from 1841 to 1851, the same period when the University's hopes for growth and success remained reasonably buoyant. In 1874, when the College's Principal, William Webb, called for it to 'be affiliated to some English university', Mitchinson's connection made Durham the natural choice.⁸⁵ The College was duly affiliated with the University in the Easter Term of 1875. The arrangement enabled students of the College to become matriculated in the University and to keep terms and meet other academic obligations in Barbados. The examination papers were sent 'in a sealed packet, by the last mail that' left England before the exams started in Durham and were returned—unread—for marking as soon as they had been completed.⁸⁶ The degrees were awarded by the Bishop of Barbados, 'acting under Commission from the Warden'.⁸⁷

The first four students to graduate were awarded their BA degrees on 23 October 1877.⁸⁸ This made them the first students to receive degrees from a UK institution having followed a residential course overseas.⁸⁹ Recruitment through the College remained buoyant in the first decade, with an average of eight new students per year. The prestige of a real university degree rather than a Testamur helped raised the standing of the College too.⁹⁰

The second connection swiftly followed when Fourah Bay College in Freetown, Sierra Leone was affiliated in 1876. It had been founded

⁸⁴ *Calendar of the Royal College of Surgeons of England for 1870*, p. 7.

⁸⁵ W.T. Webb, 'Codrington College, Barbados', *Mission Life*, V (1874), pp. 206–13, at pp. 212–13.

⁸⁶ *Durham University Calendar 1876*, Regulations, Title XI, paragraph 3, pp. xlii–xliii.

⁸⁷ *Durham University Calendar 1876*, Regulations, Title XI, paragraph 5, p. xliii.

⁸⁸ *Durham University Calendar 1883*, p. 136.

⁸⁹ G.C. Simmons, 'West Indian Higher Education: The Story of Codrington College', *Caribbean Quarterly*, 18(3) (1972), pp. 51–72, at p. 55.

⁹⁰ Simmons, 'Codrington College in Barbados', p. 484.

in 1827 by the Church Missionary Society and started with just six students. Nevertheless, it soon grew in prominence and attracted an international teaching staff drawn from Africa, America and Germany as well as England.⁹¹ It gained a strong reputation and earned Freetown the title of the 'Athens of Africa'.

In the middle part of the nineteenth century, several prominent figures in West African society called for the establishment of an African university.⁹² However, it was not until the 1860s that the first clear vision for a West African university was set out by James Africanus Beale Horton. Edward Wilmot Blyden then continued the argument first put forward by Horton.⁹³ The British Bishop of Sierra Leone, Henry Cheetham, returned to his African diocese after a visit to England in 1872 and found 'the place ablaze with a scheme for a godless West African University under Government and Negro control'; the 'great source of evil', he pronounced, was Mr. Blyden.⁹⁴ It had become clear that there was a growing split between African pastors on the one hand, many of whom advocated the establishment of an independent African Church, and the British ecclesiastical authorities and European missionaries on the other. Working with the Church Missionary Society to develop Fourah Bay College was in fact an attempt to see off the threat of a secular university.⁹⁵ However, Durham was not the only institution considered to take on the role; Cambridge and London were as well. Durham was picked because of its theological strengths and Anglican foundation.⁹⁶

Fourah Bay College was affiliated with the University on 16 May 1876 and became a broader institution than it had been up to

⁹¹F.J. Taylor, and E. Downing, 'Fourah Bay College: University College of Sierra Leone', *Nature*, 185 (1960), pp. 884–87, at p. 885.

⁹²A.O. Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism: Britain and University Education for Africans 1860–1960* (London, 1997), p. 2.

⁹³D.J. Paracka, *The Athens of West Africa: A History of International Education at Fourah Bay College, Freetown, Sierra Leone* (London, 2003), p. 52; Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism*, p. 13.

⁹⁴H.R. Lynch, 'The Native Pastorate Controversy and Cultural Ethno-centrism in Sierra Leone 1871–1874', *Journal of African History*, 5(3) (1964), pp. 395–413, at p. 406.

⁹⁵Taylor and Downing, 'Fourah Bay College', pp. 409, 411.

⁹⁶C.P. Foray, *An Outline of Fourah Bay College History (1827–1977)* (Freetown, 1979), p. 6; T.J. Thompson, *The Jubilee and Centenary Volume of Fourah Bay College Freetown, Sierra Leone* (Freetown, 1930), p. 70.

that point.⁹⁷ The first six students to graduate with Durham degrees were conferred their degrees on 10 December 1878; one student, Nathaniel Davis, gained a BA and the remaining five received the LTh.⁹⁸

CONCLUSION

Despite all these reforms, the University's reputation still declined during the 1870s. Not only was it seen as intellectually moribund, but the students were also seen as rowdy. The *Durham County Advertiser*, for example, called the students 'a set of slangy, underbred youths, who mistake impudence for wit and vulgarity for humour'.⁹⁹ During the enfranchisement debates in Parliament, it was clear the University's national reputation fared no better. One MP, George Denman, called Durham 'a little, wretched, miserable University'.¹⁰⁰ By 1880, the regional newspapers called for the University to be affiliated with Oxford University as it had 'proved its incapacity to stand alone'.¹⁰¹

But Lake's 25-year tenure as Warden also coincided with considerable reforms, though of a kind never envisaged by Thorp and Van Mildert. Lake was a radical figure, and his determination and single-mindedness meant that he was not an easy man to get on with.¹⁰² Of all his reforms, he attached the greatest importance to the developments in Newcastle, which were often seen as entirely separate from the University in Durham. His pride in the achievements there are palpable from his memoirs, which were written in the early 1890s. The College of Physical Science, he wrote, now had 'the character of a University; and in point of extent of work and of the number of its professors and teachers, it far exceeds the Durham portion of the University'.¹⁰³ However, this success created tensions between the two parts of the University, which would

⁹⁷Thompson, *Fourah Bay College*, p. 33.

⁹⁸*Durham University Calendar* 1883, p. 140.

⁹⁹*Durham County Advertiser*, quoted in Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 139; cf. Tudor, *St Cuthbert's Society*, pp. 4–5.

¹⁰⁰*Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, HC Deb, 17 June 1867, vol. 187, c. 2004.

¹⁰¹*Eastern Morning News* (Hull) and *Western Morning News* (Plymouth), quoted in Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 138, and *Durham University Journal*, 4(13) (March 1880), p. 21.

¹⁰²Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 162.

¹⁰³Lake (ed.), *Memorials of William Charles Lake*, p. 116.

ultimately lead to the creation of the separate University of Newcastle on 1 August 1963.¹⁰⁴

Lake's legacy is therefore every bit as complex as that of Thorp. It can be argued that he saved Durham from a slow and painful demise into obscurity and closure. The Royal Commission had failed to bring about positive change, and the Dean and Chapter fared little better in doing so during the 1860s. Lake's reforming zeal finally, and after many previous attempts, brought about the long-anticipated College of Physical Science that many in Newcastle craved so desperately. Yet in Durham, Lake restricted the University to being nothing but a sound though unexceptional School of Theology. The University did good work during this period, for sure, but its ambitions were much lower than the soaring expectations of the 1830s. This also cemented the University's reputation until well into the twentieth century as a northern, Anglican, clerical enclave. As Whiting recorded about the early twentieth century: 'the Durham man found himself constantly explaining to people that Durham was a university and not a theological college'.¹⁰⁵ The Newcastle and Durham divisions never fully integrated and the only thing surprising about the separation in 1963 is that it did not come about earlier. It can be argued convincingly that Lake saved the University from an ultimate and final collapse, but by the time he became Warden, the environment for higher education was more conducive and the price he paid was to give up on the ambitions held by Thorp and Van Mildert.

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¹⁰⁴ Bettenson, *University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, p. 70.

¹⁰⁵ Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 259.

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CONCLUSION

The Importance of Revising Durham's Place in the History of Higher Education

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

All three institutions—Durham, London and King's College—nearly failed, but Durham suffered a Royal Commission. This was staffed by people who naturally favoured the reform approach of Oxford and were highly critical of what had been attempted at Durham. Institutions like Owens College avoided such opprobrium as they had not been founded as universities, and though they were no more successful, the expectations placed on them were commensurately lower. Durham was then re-created in the 1870s along the lines that had been resisted by its founders, with progressive developments transferred to Newcastle. This sealed the narrative of the period: radical London, reformed Oxford and Cambridge, and reactionary Durham. The reality is much more complex.

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