

Tradition and Humour: the Academic Dress of the University of Glasgow

By Neil Dickson

The University of Glasgow was founded in 1451. It is the second oldest university in Scotland and the fourth oldest in the UK (after Oxford, Cambridge and St Andrews). By the end of the sixteenth century Scotland had five universities,¹ compared with England's two.² This situation continued for more than two hundred years: it was only in the nineteenth century that England finally caught up with Scotland. So perhaps one might expect that Scotland would have a long, continuous and colourful history of academic dress. However, as we shall see, that is not the case. The reason can be expressed in two words: the Reformation. The presbyterian Church of Scotland that emerged from the Reformation was much more austere than the episcopalian Church of England, and exerted its influence over many aspects of Scottish life.

When studying Glasgow's academic dress, we need to be careful not to over-analyse the available information. For the early periods of the University's history we should take heed of R. G. Cant's words,³ written in relation to the University of St Andrews but, as we shall see, applying equally to Glasgow: 'It would be a mistake to think that [academic dress] was regulated in the careful and complete manner with which we are familiar ... The present elaborate system of academic dress is essentially a Victorian creation.'

For modern times we need to be aware how decisions are taken. The current position is that the academic dress code is not included in the Ordinances and Resolutions of the University Court (Glasgow's equivalent of the charter and statutes of other universities) and is therefore not subject to the formal consultations that take place over new ordinances and resolutions. It is however published in the University Calendar (the annual publication that includes such matters as degree regulations). The decisions on academic dress are taken by the Senate, but these normally consist of approving recommendations from the Academic Dress Committee without discussion. I was a member of that committee from 1990 to 2009. Throughout that period, as was the case for many committees, there was no induction process for new members of the committee, or even for new conveners. New members learned about the work of the committee simply by participating in the infrequent meetings and email discussions. This created the atmosphere that, while the committee did have re-

1 The five in order of foundation were: University of St Andrews, University of Glasgow, University and King's College of Aberdeen, University of Edinburgh, and Marischal College and University of Aberdeen. The two Aberdeen universities were separate institutions with their own degree-awarding powers. They amalgamated in 1860 to form the present University of Aberdeen.

2 Oxford and Cambridge. Alternatively, England can be said to have had three universities by including the Archbishop of Canterbury with his power to award Lambeth degrees.

3 Ronald G. Cant, *The University of St Andrews: A Short History*, 3rd edn. (St Andrews University Library, 1992), p. 24.

gard for history and precedents, it did not feel bound by them, and was happy to take whatever decision seemed appropriate at the time, even if it represented a move in a new direction.

There were also some unseen external influences on the committee. When it was necessary to decide on the academic dress for a new degree, the Clerk to the committee usually started by consulting the University's official robemakers. At one time the robemakers were Thomson, Son & Wright, a Glasgow firm. Later they were R W Forsyth, who were also robemakers to other Scottish Universities. Currently they are Ede & Ravenscroft, who have UK-wide experience. So there has been a growing potential for ideas from other universities to be imported into the Glasgow system. The Clerk also consulted the Dean of the relevant Faculty and Head of the relevant Department, who provided a subject-related input to the discussions that was not necessarily consistent with Glasgow traditions. On the other hand, explicit external influence was rejected—on at least one occasion the committee declined to consider an unsolicited letter suggesting colour schemes.⁴ It is also important to note that, while the decisions of the committee are on record, the reasons for the decisions generally are not. Therefore interpretation of the decisions is often necessarily speculative.

The academic dress in the early years of the University of Glasgow has proved to be a difficult area for historians because of the lack of precise information. Durkan and Kirk found evidence of the use of the cappa or cope, and the toga or gown, of styles and designs that varied over time, including copes designed specially for the Dean and the Rector.⁵ Likewise they found some evidence of bonnets of changing shapes.⁶ However, there is stronger evidence regarding the caputium or hood:

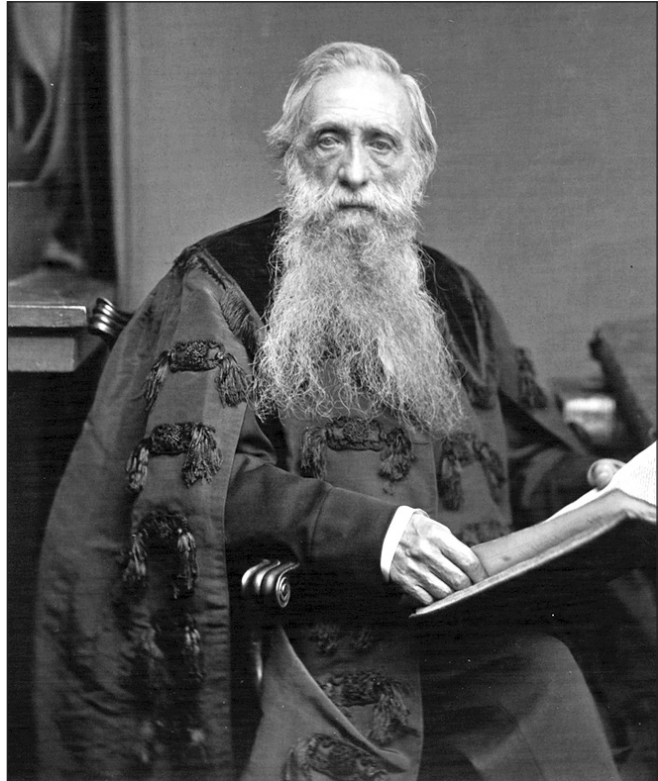


FIG. 1 Thomas Barclay MA DD, Principal, 1870.

⁴ Personal recollection.

⁵ John Durkan and James Kirk, *The University of Glasgow, 1451–1577* (University of Glasgow Press, 1977), p. 196. The relevant records are published in Vol. II. of Cosmo Innes (ed.), *Munimenta Alme Universitatis Glasguensis: Records of the University of Glasgow, from its foundation till 1727*, 4 vols (Maitland Club, Glasgow, 1854).

⁶ Durkan and Kirk, p. 197.

In the fifteenth century it is already clear that the wardrobe keeper at Glasgow was mainly a custodian of hoods, who hired them out to students. The Glasgow records are singularly uninformative about dress, but in 1464 four to six arts hoods were ordered for the faculty of arts. Five years later, new hoods with furring were ordered for the faculty. By 1479 there were five furred hoods, four blue and one red [the red one being a gift to the Dean]. The use of blue may have been an attempt to conform to Bologna usage.⁷ The shade of blue is not given and could have verged on bluish-grey. That these hoods were held in common and for student use is clear from the order of 1490 for the purchase and tailoring of six blue hoods with adequate furring. ... At Glasgow in 1481 [the Rector had] a hood well-furred with ermine and miniver [for special occasions]. ... In 1452 a Glasgow arts statute stipulated that no students were to wear hoods 'swelling out too much in the circle of the face, which are plain evidence of light-headedness'.⁸

The Reformation took place in Scotland in 1560. Academic dress, as described above, was clearly inconsistent with the new political and religious outlook, and the use of copes, bonnets and hoods seems to have disappeared around this time. However, the use of gowns continued for staff and students (as it also did for clergymen). Murray cites evidence of this during the period 1574-1580 (when Andrew Melville was Principal).⁹ There is a general assumption amongst historians that staff wore black gowns at this period but there seems to have been some variation in the colours of student gowns—red and grey gowns are recorded as being in use in 1636.¹⁰ In 1695 Commissioners appointed by the Scottish Parliament directed that staff should wear black gowns, and students red gowns 'that thereby the students may be discouraged from vaging [loitering] or vice', a ruling that reflected existing practice, according to the University.¹¹

From 1727 the staff consisted of the Principal and Professors. By 1740 they were wearing a distinctive style of gown,¹² which is now usually referred to as a Professor's gown because it was a gown of office, not connected to degrees held. Its characteristic features were a velvet collar and long false-panel sleeves. Generally, there were frogs on the sleeves and the front of the gown. A series of photographs taken in 1870 (a selection of which are in Figs. 1 to 4) shows significant differences of detail in the collars of individual gowns, with some gowns having frogs and others not, but these differences appear to be a matter of personal preference, unconnected to office or degrees held.¹³

7 The University of Glasgow was founded using the University of Bologna as a model. Pope Nicholas V's bull of foundation of the University of Glasgow granted it the 'privileges, liberties, honours, exemptions and immunities' that had been granted to the University of Bologna (Durkan and Kirk, p. 41). So it would not be unexpected if Glasgow had been following a Bologna custom.

8 Durkan and Kirk, p. 197. The relevant records are published in Innes.

9 David Murray, *Memories of the Old College of Glasgow* (Glasgow: Jackson, Wylie & Co., 1927), p. 475.

10 Durkan and Kirk, p. 198.

11 Innes, *Munimenta*, Vol. II, pp. 516, 517 and 523. The University's reply to the Commissioners makes it clear that the students wore their gowns in the streets of Glasgow but the staff did not.

12 Portrait of Professor Francis Hutcheson c. 1740. The earliest evidence of a Principal wearing this style of gown appears to be the portrait of Principal Duncan McFarlan in 1839. Both portraits are in the University of Glasgow art collections.

13 Differences can also be observed in the portraits of Prof. Francis Hutcheson c. 1740, Prof. William Cullen 1772, Prof. John Young c. 1800, Principal Duncan McFarlan 1839 and Prof. James

Student gowns also developed a distinctive style. Figures 5, 6 and 14 show a gown dating from the 1850s, one of two such gowns known to have survived.¹⁴

Custom and practice relating to academic dress seem to have changed little in the period from 1695 until the Victorian reforms of the University introduced by the Universities (Scotland) Act 1858. David Murray, who matriculated in 1857, provides valuable insights into the customs immediately prior to the reforms. Writing in 1927 about his student days, he recalls that professors wore black gowns and ordinary tall silk hats (because there was no academic cap).¹⁵ On the other hand gowns were not universally worn: Professor Easton, who was professor of *Materia Medica*, ‘unlike his medical colleagues always wore a gown [when lecturing]’;¹⁶ and Professor William Thomson (later Lord Kelvin) ‘dispensed with his own gown after the first or second lecture and did not insist on the students wearing theirs’.¹⁷ Students wore the scarlet gown and used the ordinary hat or cap in fashion at the time—tall silk hats for older students and cloth caps for younger students.¹⁸ However, Murray also draws attention to an important point: in the 1850s gowns were worn only by matriculated students, and many students did not matriculate.¹⁹ Generally speak-

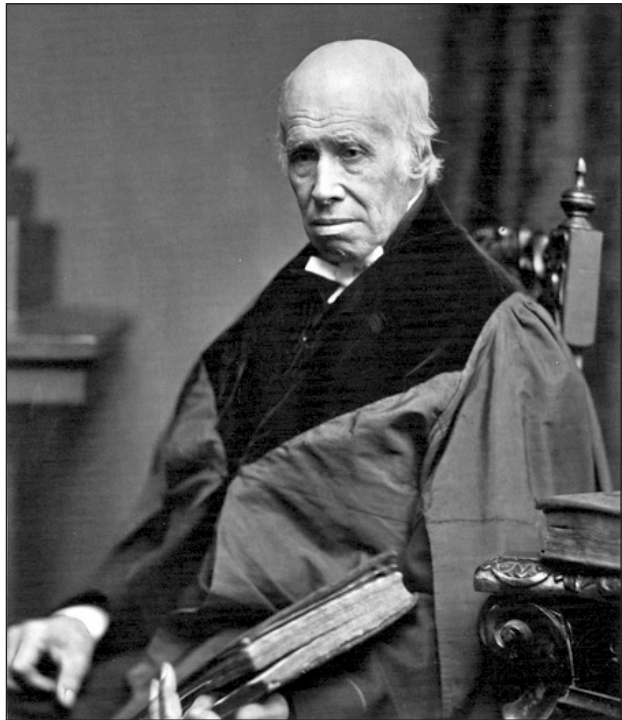


FIG. 2 Thomas T Jackson MA DD, professor of ecclesiastical history, 1870.

Reid 1841, University of Glasgow art collections. There is in particular no distinction between holders of clerical and lay degrees of the kind that existed in Oxford and Cambridge: there are DDs with and without frogs on their gowns, and MDs with and without frogs.

14 The gown illustrated is in the Hunterian, a museum at the University of Glasgow (C.1986.49). For further details of this gown and its history, see Karen Thompson, Sally-Anne Coupar and Julie Benner, ‘The Conservation of the Nineteenth-Century Student Gown in the Hunterian, Glasgow’, *TBS*, 12 (2012), p. 36. The other gown is in the Burrell Collection in Glasgow (E.1955.86) and belonged to David Murray, author of *Memories* and mentioned in the next paragraph. See also the two watercolours of student gowns in MS Murray 593 (reproduced in Cooper, *The Scarlet Gown*, p. 20).

15 Murray, *Memories*, pp. 473 and 154.

16 Murray, *Memories*, p. 237.

17 Murray, *Memories*, p. 478.

18 Murray, *Memories*, p. 473. See also the two watercolours mentioned in Note 14.

19 Murray, *Memories*, pp. 273–278. Note also that, in line with the terminology of the time, *student* means undergraduate student. There seems to have been no requirement on graduate students to wear gowns.

ing, at that time, arts students matriculated because they wanted access to the University Library and intended to graduate. However, medical students generally did not matriculate because they did not intend to graduate: they obtained their licence to practise from the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons (now the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow).²⁰ Murray also describes the form that the graduation ceremony took: graduands wore their red student gowns, the Vice-Chancellor conferred the degree on each person in turn, placed a cap or bonnet momentarily on his head and shook hands with everyone.²¹ The use of a special cap for this purpose continues to the present day but it is interesting to note its existence at a time when academic caps were not specified for staff or students.²²

The quarter-century from 1850 to 1875 was a remarkable period of change, renewal and revival at the Scottish universities, and particularly at Glasgow. The Universities (Scotland) Act 1858 put in place the key parts of the present day constitutions of the Universities of St Andrews, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh. Ordinances made under the Act reformed the curricula. The practice of permitting Glasgow students to attend classes without matriculating and with no intention of graduating was stopped, a move that was greatly facilitated by the Medical Act 1858 which recognized University medical degrees as qualifications for registering as a medical practitioner. The University of Glasgow moved from the Old College in the High Street to new buildings at Gilmorehill in 1870, and teaching in medicine and surgery was moved from the Royal Infirmary to the newly built Western Infirmary adjacent to the new University buildings in 1874.²³ There was also a revival of interest in the University's history and traditions.²⁴ So it is scarcely surprising that academic dress, complete with hoods and caps, was revived and codified during this period (as also happened at the other Scottish universities).

The decision to re-establish full academic dress was taken in 1868 and implemented immediately.²⁵ A surviving illustration of the conferring of an honorary degree on the Prince of Wales in 1868 shows an interesting intermediate stage: the Vice-Chancellor, the Rector and the Bedellus (mace bearer) are wearing gowns, and the Bedellus is holding a hood ready to place it on the shoulders of the Prince of Wales, who is not wearing a gown.²⁶ The official

20 For an account of the expensive legal dispute between the University and the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons on such matters, see J. D. Mackie, *The University of Glasgow 1451-1951* (Jackson, Son & Company, 1954), p. 253.

21 Murray, *Memories*, pp. 306–09.

22 There were two caps used for conferring degrees in the mid-19th century (the master's cap and the doctor's bonnet); see Murray, *Memories*, between pp. 308 and 309. The cap normally used at present is a large round purple cap, but recently the practice of using two caps has been revived: at several graduation ceremonies in 2011 the Chancellor conferred honorary degrees using a black doctors' bonnet and the Vice-Chancellor conferred other degrees using the purple cap; see the graduation webcasts on the University of Glasgow website.

23 For an account of this period, see Michael Moss, J. Forbes Munro, and Richard H. Trainor, *University, City and State: The University of Glasgow since 1870* (Edinburgh University Press, 2000).

24 For example, the four volumes of Innes's *Munimenta* were published in 1854.

25 University Court minutes 21 April 1868 and Senate minutes 1 May 1868. The initiative came from the General Council, which had been established under the Universities (Scotland) Act 1858 to represent the graduates of the University. It is perhaps not surprising that the General Council should have taken the lead, given that the existing academic dress was confined to gowns for staff and students, not graduates.

26 Murray, *Memories*, between pp. 594 and 595.

photograph of the Senate leaving the Old College in 1870 shows the Bedellus with mace, gown and cap, the Principal in a gown and carrying a cap, and the professors wearing a mixture of Professors' gowns, and graduate gowns and hoods.²⁷

The dress code established in 1868 has undergone significant changes, notably in 1893 and 1936. It has also been expanded considerably, due mainly to the creation of new degrees. However, there is a clear continuity in the code from 1868 to the present day. The code is normally published annually and is now available online.²⁸ So, rather than list the code, I will analyse various features of it, looking separately at hoods, officers' gowns, graduates' gowns, caps, and custom and practice—and discovering in the process that those responsible for the code have sometimes displayed a nice sense of humour. A summary of dates appears on page 21.

Hoods

The current specification for the hoods is as follows.

The hoods are of the full shape (Fig. 12). Bachelors' hoods are black, lined with an appropriate colour or colours and bordered on the outer edge with scarlet cord. Masters' hoods are black, and lined and edged with an appropriate colour or colours. Doctorates awarded for supervised study or research, such as the PhD, have the same style of hoods as masters' degrees. Doctorates awarded for independent study or as honorary degrees have scarlet hoods, lined with an appropriate colour or colours.

The colour scheme for the hoods is based on areas of academic study (and not on faculties or other administrative divisions of the University). For example, Science is allocated the colour of whin blossom.²⁹ That colour is used for the degrees of BSc, MSc and DSc. It was first used for the BSc before the Faculty of Science was created and, when the University

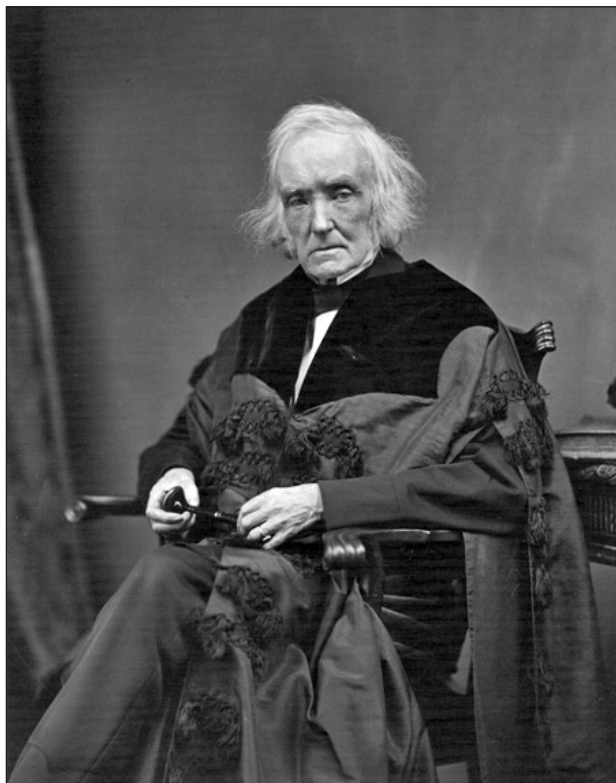


FIG. 3 Harry Rainy MD, professor of forensic medicine, 1870.

²⁷ Murray, *Memories*, between pp. 586 and 587. Prof. Rankine in Fig. 4 is wearing his degree hood with his Professor's gown.

²⁸ University Calendar from 1869 onwards (except from 1977 to 2000); recent editions are online at the University of Glasgow website and there is a link from the Burgon Society website. There is also a summary in Groves, *Shaw*, 3rd edn., pp. 185–189. Webcasts of recent graduation ceremonies can be viewed at the University of Glasgow website.

²⁹ Whin is more commonly known as gorse in some parts of Britain.

was divided into faculties, the MSc degree was not confined to the Faculty of Science but was also awarded in the Faculties of Engineering, Medicine, Social Sciences and Veterinary Medicine.³⁰ The colour is also used for other degrees with a strong scientific theme such as MPH (Master of Public Health),³¹ and as a subsidiary colour for degrees with a scientific component such as MVPH (Master of Veterinary Public Health).

However, the shapes, designs and colour schemes described above took some time to emerge. When academic dress was re-established in 1868, the hoods were of the Oxford simple shape and were specified as follows:

MA	Black silk, lined with red purple silk
LLD	Black velvet, lined with black silk
MB & CM	Black silk, lined with white silk
MD	Black silk, lined with red silk
BD	Black silk, bordered with black velvet and lined with red purple silk
DD	Black velvet, lined with black silk

It was also specified that an LLD or DD who was also an MA could use a red purple lining instead of the black lining. This is consistent with the specification of the BD because, at that date, the BD could only be taken by students who had already graduated MA, whereas the LLD and DD were honorary degrees whose recipients might or might not have an MA.³²

The red purple of the MA (later described as purple, colour of bell heather) has become one of the defining features of Glasgow academic dress. Sadly, the records are silent on why it was chosen. This is unfortunate, particularly since it seems to be a complete change from the blue used in the early years of the University. The red allocated to the MD is not surprising. Blood red has long been recognized as a symbol for surgeons, and the red and white striped poles that were once used as identification symbols by barber-surgeons can still be seen today outside barbers' shops. The decisions to use white for MB & CM, and to make LLD and DD the same, are puzzling. However, as we shall see, they did not last long.

Note that none of the above hoods have fur, and indeed it is still the case today that no Glasgow hoods have fur. This is surprising, given that all known hoods in the early years of the University had fur, and it is the practice of many other universities to use it on bachelors' hoods. I had wondered whether the explanation might be to do with the fact that, following the Universities (Scotland) Act 1858, the BA degree was abolished in Scotland so that Arts students proceeded straight to the MA as their first degree (a situation that continues today). The result is that all graduates are regarded as being of equal status to, or higher than, Masters of Arts. However, when a hood was designed in 1875 for those who had graduated BA prior to its abolition, fur was not used, and instead it was specified as black silk, bordered inside with red purple silk.³³

Between 1871 and 1875 major changes were made to the list of hoods. The first de-

³⁰ University Calendar 1989–90, p. 438.

³¹ The MPH hood is in fact identical to the MSc hood: University Calendar 2012–13. There are several other cases where degrees of similar nature, but different titles, share a hood. Such economy has not always been possible: the Academic Dress Committee proposed that Master of Nursing and Master of Midwifery should have the same hood but the Department of Nursing Studies insisted that Nursing and Midwifery are different professions requiring different hoods (personal recollection).

³² Senate minutes 1 May 1868.

³³ Senate minutes 18 March 1875.

cision was to change the LLD lining from black to red, or more precisely Venetian red.³⁴ Then, following an enquiry from a graduate, the failure to specify a hood for the LLB degree was rectified.³⁵ A hood was also needed for the new degree of BL.³⁶ Venetian red was used for both degrees. The BA hood described above was introduced. The red for Medicine was adjusted to be scarlet, and the MB & CM changed to it.³⁷ The new Science degrees of BSc and DSc were allocated the colour gold (a choice that may have been influenced by the University of London).³⁸

There was also the first appearance of the botanical references that are another defining feature of Glasgow academic dress. The Senate minute explains their purpose: ‘To fix as much as possible the shades of colour defined under the above names it is suggested that the red purple of the MA be defined as the colour of bell heather (*Erica tetralia*), gold as the colour of whin blossom (*Ulex europae*), and Venetian red as the colour of clove carnations.’ In other words, botanical colours were the 1870s equivalent of the present day Pantone system!³⁹

Unfortunately, someone’s knowledge of botanical Latin was a little weak. *Erica tetralia* is cross-leaved heath: bell heather is *Erica cinerea*. The University Calendar entry was

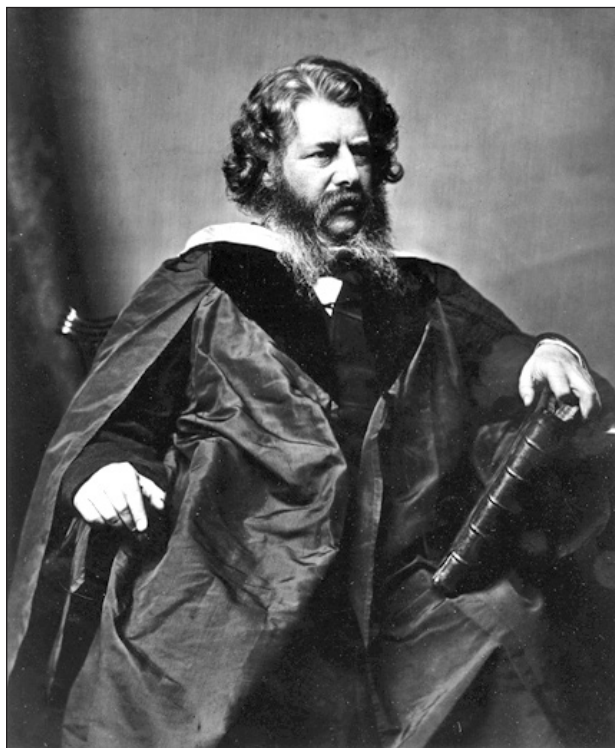


FIG 4. W. J. Macquorn Rankine LLD, professor of civil engineering, 1870.

³⁴ Senate minutes 25 April 1871.

³⁵ Senate minutes 18 November 1872.

³⁶ Senate minutes 18 March 1875. An important difference between the BL (Bachelor of Law) and LLB (Bachelor of Laws) degrees was that a degree in Arts was a pre-requisite for the LLB but not the BL.

³⁷ The outer part of the MB & CM hood was also changed from black silk to black cloth to make it different from the MD hood. At first sight, a more logical choice would have been to use silk for the MB & CM and change the MD from silk to the velvet used for the other doctorates. However, at that date the MD was a professional qualification, which made it rather different in nature from the other doctorates.

³⁸ Bruce Christianson, ‘Lined with Gold: London University and the Colour of Science’, *TBS*, 5 (2005), p. 85. Christianson also points out that the University of Edinburgh adopted lemon yellow for Science at about the same time, but quickly changed to green.

³⁹ Senate minutes 20 March 1873. It was only felt necessary to define some colours in this way. Presumably scarlet was thought not to need definition.

quietly corrected in the 1870s. However it was not until the 1940s that the correct Latin name for whin (*Ulex europaeus*) appeared in the Calendar.⁴⁰

Therefore by 1875 the hoods had become:

BA	Black silk, bordered inside with red purple silk
MA	Black silk, lined with red purple silk
BSc	Black silk, lined with gold coloured silk
DSc	Black velvet, lined with gold coloured silk
BL	Black silk, bordered inside with Venetian red silk
LLB	Black silk, lined with Venetian red silk
LLD	Black velvet, lined with Venetian red silk
MB & CM	Black cloth, lined with scarlet silk
MD	Black silk, lined with scarlet silk
BD	Black silk, bordered with black velvet and lined with red purple silk
DD	Black velvet, lined with black silk or (if the graduate be MA) red purple silk ⁴¹

In 1891 a report from the General Council to the University Court recommended major changes to the dress code.⁴² The recommendations included the introduction of scarlet dress gowns for doctors, a change in the shape of the hood (the shape then in use being ‘neither graceful nor convenient’), and changes to make bachelors’ masters’ and doctors’ hoods clearly distinguishable (velvet and silk cannot be distinguished at a distance). The recommendations were approved by the University Court in 1893. Consequently, from 1893, hoods were of the full shape, a border of scarlet cloth was added to all bachelors’ hoods, and the outer material of doctors’ hoods was changed to scarlet cloth.⁴³ The only change in linings was for BD and DD which became light cherry and white, respectively. This strange decision, which persists today, arose as follows.

The dress code, as approved by the University Court on 27 April 1893, included the decision that the BD and DD should have white linings. The Court reviewed that decision

40 The incorrect *Ulex europae* was replaced in the University Calendar by the equally incorrect *Ulex europaea* from the 1870s until the 1940s! Curiously, the Latin name for clove carnations (*Dianthus caryophyllus*) was not included in the Senate minutes or the University Calendar, and the reference to clove carnations for the colour of Venetian red was later removed from the Calendar.

41 The neckbands of these hoods were black with a very narrow border of the hood lining (Hutcheson, *Notes*, p. 8). The velvet border on the BD hood was on the inside and outside of the cowl, judging by the detailed description in the Revd David Hunter’s 1893 letter (see Note 44).

42 Note that, as in 1868, the initiative came from the General Council (see Note 25, *supra*) and followed shortly after a significant change to the University’s constitution (the Universities (Scotland) Act 1889 redefined the powers of the University Court and the Senate). A copy of the General Council report is bound into the back of the University Court minute book C1/1/3. The committee that produced the report studied the practice of all other British Universities (see their Preliminary Report GUA 24803).

43 The committee appointed by the General Council recommended that doctors’ hoods should also be edged with fur (white for DD, brown for LLD, DSc and MD), and that the MA hood should be white lined with red purple (rather than black lined with red purple), but these particular recommendations were rejected by the General Council on 22 April 1891 (Reports of the General Council DC183/3/2). The committee believed that the introduction of scarlet for doctors’ hoods represented ‘a return to the old colour of the University’. This is puzzling because, as described above, most of the fifteenth century hoods were blue. However, the Latin adjective used for the blue colour is *blodeus* which has sometimes been mistranslated as red (Durkan and Kirk, p. 204, n. 101).

on 19 May 1893 following a letter from the Revd David Hunter DD of Galashiels suggesting that the proposed BD hood looked too like the Aberdeen and Edinburgh MA hoods. He suggested that the light cherry of the Cambridge LLD should be used for the BD and DD. The Court ruled that the BD should change to light cherry but the DD should stay white!⁴⁴

The replacement of the medical degrees MB, CM by MB, ChB and the creation of a new Master of Surgery degree (ChM) in 1892 did not require any new lining colours.⁴⁵ However, the creation of new doctorates in Arts (DLitt and DPhil) in 1895 did. They were assigned 'bluish purple' and 'reddish purple', respectively.⁴⁶ This was an unfortunate choice that caused confusion, especially since the MA colour (colour of the bell heather) was described as 'red purple' and then later as 'purple'. There was an opportunity to sort this out in 1919 when the DPhil (which was a higher doctorate awarded for original work like the DLitt and DSc) was abolished, and replaced by the present day PhD that is available for three years of supervised research in any subject. Unfortunately, instead the DPhil colour was simply transferred to the PhD. This unsatisfactory situation was eventually resolved by changing the PhD to crimson and the DLitt to the same purple as the MA.⁴⁷

The use of native botanical colours, perhaps coupled with an awareness of the historical significance of blue, surfaced again in the 1920s when degrees in Education were established in the Faculty of Arts: the colour chosen was that of the bluebell of Scotland, *Campanula rotundifolia*.⁴⁸

A blue was again chosen in 1931 for newly established music degrees, this time azure blue. Unusually, there is an explanation for this choice: the Senate minutes claim that light blue was used for music degrees at Bologna in the Middle Ages.⁴⁹

44 Hunter's letter is reproduced in full in the University Court minutes 19 May 1893. His letter was based on a misunderstanding. He thought that a decision had been taken to remove the scarlet edge that had been proposed for bachelors' hoods (which would have made the BD hood look similar to the Aberdeen and Edinburgh MA hoods). However, that was not correct: the decision that had actually been taken was to remove the proposed fur edges from doctors' hoods (see Note 43).

45 Throughout the 1890s the University Calendar entry that resulted from the University Court's 1893 decisions on academic dress specified the hood for MB & CM as black silk, bordered with scarlet cloth and lined with scarlet silk (i.e. the new-style bachelors' hood) and did not mention MB, ChB or ChM (see, for example, University Calendar 1899–1900). By 1909 the Calendar included the ChM hood (black silk lined with scarlet silk) but it was not until the next decade that the MB & CM entry was revised to MB, ChB.

46 Senate minutes 9 April 1907.

47 According to Robert T. Hutcheson, "Both Decent and Usefull"—Academic Dress in the University, *College Courant*, 55 (Martinmas 1975), p. 15, the DLitt and DPhil colours could only with the greatest difficulty be distinguished from each other. (Note also that Hutcheson has inadvertently transposed the two colours in his paper.) Confusion between the DLitt and DPhil colours, and with the MA colour, started even before Senate defined the colours in 1907 because it emerged (Senate minutes 9 April 1907) that the robemakers had on their own initiative already supplied some DPhil hoods made with the MA colour. By 1925 the DPhil had been replaced by the PhD and the PhD colour had become the same as the MA colour (University Calendar 1925–26). In 1936 the PhD colour was changed to crimson (Senate minutes 26 May 1936). From then on it was unclear whether the DLitt and MA colours were meant to be the same or not (for example, both are described as 'purple' in the University Calendar 1952–53). The issue was finally settled in the University Calendar for 1955–56 where the DLitt is described as being 'the same purple' as the MA.

48 University Calendar 1929–30.

49 Senate minutes 5 March 1936. It is fitting that the use of blue in the early years of the University of Glasgow, and the connections with Bologna, are remembered in the present academic

The last major change to the hoods was in 1936, when the design of the neckband was altered.⁵⁰ This changed the appearance from the front: the visible surface of the neckband ceased to be made of the lining colour of the hood, and became black (or scarlet for doctors other than PhD), edged with the lining colour (for masters and doctors) or with scarlet cord (for bachelors).⁵¹ At the same time the lining of masters' hoods was extended over the open edges to form a binding, and bachelors' hoods were smartened up by replacing the border of scarlet cloth with scarlet cord.⁵² (See Figs. 9, 12 and 13.) However, since 1936 many new degree courses have been created, resulting in a large increase in the range of colours and colour combinations in use. Also, to try to prevent colours from fluctuating over time, all colours were redefined using the Pantone Color Matching System in 2008.⁵³

No colour scheme will ever be perfect. The main weaknesses in the Glasgow code have proved to be postgraduate degrees in Arts, and the use of white. The establishment of the postgraduate BLitt degree in the 1950s created a problem. The DLitt degree, as we have seen, had already been allocated the purple Arts colour. However, the BLitt could not be given that colour, because it would make the hood look like a BA, i.e. of lower status than the MA, instead of higher status. It was decided to use white instead, totally overlooking the point made by Hunter in 1893!⁵⁴ Also, when the BPhil degree was created in the 1960s, it was treated as being similar to the BLitt, and given the same hood, rather than being given the Philosophy colour used for the PhD.⁵⁵ When the BLitt and BPhil were changed to the MLitt and MPhil in the 1970s in line with changing terminology for UK postgraduate degrees, the white colour was retained.⁵⁶ This unsatisfactory situation continued until 2008 when the Academic Dress Committee decided to appropriate white for International Masters' degrees (see below). This provided an opportunity to sort out the MLitt and MPhil.

dress code. However, in my opinion, the various blues now in use (bluebell of Scotland, azure blue, cornflower blue, sky blue, Vipers Bugloss and smalt blue) are somewhat difficult to distinguish from each other—and there has been at least one graduation ceremony at which some graduates have worn hoods with the wrong blue (personal recollection).

⁵⁰ Senate minutes 26 May 1936.

⁵¹ Old style (1893–1936) hoods are still occasionally worn. For example, the Revd J. A. McIntyre uses an old style BD hood—but it has been relined (conversation on 29 Jan. 2012)—and his wife can be seen wearing an old style MA hood in Fig. 13. The Hunterian has old style MA, LLB and LLD hoods (C.1986.19, C.1996.10, C.1994.11 and C.1986.12). Dr J. Shaw Dunn has old style MB ChB and MD hoods. Sadly it appears that no hoods from the period 1868–1893 have survived.

⁵² This gave rise to the strange case of the hood that never was, namely the old style BMus hood. The BMus hood was originally specified as an old style hood, but all hoods were changed to the new style before the BMus degree was conferred on anyone. So it is likely that no-one has ever worn an old style BMus hood (Hutcheson, *Notes*, p. 19).

⁵³ University Calendar 2008–09. The botanical names and other descriptions previously used to define the colours have all been retained but are now assigned Pantone numbers. The reasons that colours can fluctuate over time include new materials, different manufacturers and manufacturing processes, and fading of samples. In the early 1990s it was particularly noticeable that the crimson colour of the PhD hoods seen at graduation ceremonies actually varied from red to violet. This, and other concerns about the adequacy of the existing descriptions, lead to the decision to adopt the Pantone system (personal recollection).

⁵⁴ Senate minutes 12 Feb. 1953. Not only did the BLitt look similar to the Aberdeen and Edinburgh MA, but the use of white for it was inconsistent with the use of white for the DD.

⁵⁵ University Calendar 1969–70.

⁵⁶ University Calendar 1976–77.

Summary of dates

- 1451** Foundation of the University.
- 1560** The Reformation. Academic dress reduced to gowns only.
- 1690** Rector to have a distinctive gown.
- 1695** Commissioners insist that staff and students wear gowns.
- 1740** Earliest evidence for design of Professor's gown.
- 1868** Full academic dress re-established. Hoods of Oxford simple shape. Purple chosen for MA hood lining.
- 1873** Colours for hood linings allocated more systematically. Botanical definitions for colours.
- 1893** Dress gowns for doctors. Hoods of full shape. Bachelors', masters' and doctors' hoods clearly distinguishable, with the outer colour of doctors' hoods scarlet.
- 1904** Chancellor's gown of new design.
- 1936** Gown designs defined more precisely. Hood designs modified, particularly neckbands. PhD altered: dress gown from scarlet to black, hood from scarlet lined with purple to black lined with crimson.
- 2008** Colours redefined using the Pantone Color Matching System.

The MPhil was changed to the Philosophy colour,⁵⁷ and the MLitt to the Arts colour with an edging of white to differentiate it from the MA.⁵⁸

Immediately after World War Two, degree courses were established in Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine. Dentistry was allocated the colour emerald green, which may simply have been a colour different from those in use.⁵⁹ However, Veterinary Medicine was allocated terracotta, a more subtle choice.⁶⁰ Terracotta is of course clay. If medical doctors' hoods show that they can get covered in blood at work, then vets' hoods should show that they can get covered in ... clay! Is this too fanciful a conclusion? I think not. This is only the first of several colours where a touch of humour is evident.⁶¹ In the 1960s Accountancy was allocated slate grey, clearly providing a surface on which to do calculations and a reminder

⁵⁷ This does however mean that the MPhil and PhD hoods are now identical, so that the holders of these degrees can be distinguished from each other only by their gowns. A similar problem arises with the MSc and Doctor of Clinical Psychology degrees.

⁵⁸ Academic Dress Committee minutes, 30 July 2008.

⁵⁹ The Dental colour first appeared in the University Calendar for 1951–52 but I have been unable to trace the decision in the Senate minutes.

⁶⁰ The decision to choose terracotta is in Senate minutes 12 Feb. 1953 but, as usual, there is no explanation for the choice.

⁶¹ When I submitted an earlier version of this paper for a Fellowship of the Burgon Society, one of the examiners asked whether it was correct to use the word *humour* in relation to these colours. It could be argued that all these colours are for professional degrees, and are appropriate colours that are simply a natural extension of the use of blood red as a colour for the medical profession. However, when I first took an interest in the academic dress of the University of Glasgow, colleagues told me to look out for the humorous colours (personal recollection).

of accountants' reputation for being men in grey suits!⁶² In the 1970s Architecture was allocated the colour of the lime flower *Tilia europaea*, clearly a pun on lime mortar used to bind bricks together.⁶³ When the professional engineering degrees of BEng and MEng replaced the degree of BSc in Engineering in the 1980s,⁶⁴ the colour allocated to the new degrees was plum. If you look at plum-coloured silk you will realize that, just as the medics are covered in blood and the vets in 'clay', the engineers are covered in dirty oil! However, the humour has not got out of hand—it only surfaces occasionally. Some colours are just a simple and obvious choice: for example, nurses' uniforms are usually blue so that it is no surprise that the colour for Nursing degrees is a blue (actually cornflower blue). Other colours may simply have been the result of a search for a colour different from all those already in use. For example, the colour for the MBA and other degrees in Administration is orange (colour of slender St John's Wort, *Hypericum pulchrum*).⁶⁵

Where appropriate, subject area colours are combined (normally by adding the second colour as an edging to the first).⁶⁶ For example, the degree of Bachelor of Animal Health has the Veterinary colour edged with the Science colour, and the degree of Bachelor of Technological Education has the Engineering colour edged with the Education colour. An additional edge colour, or a change in the edging, is also used when it is necessary to differentiate between two degrees. For example, the BL degree, as mentioned above, had only a border of the Law colour compared with the fully coloured lining of the LLB. The Master of Midwifery degree has a white edge to differentiate it from Master of Nursing. The Master in Science degree (MSci) has a scarlet silk edge to the cowl that correctly indicates its status as lying between the Bachelor of Science degree (BSc), which has a standard bachelors' hood with scarlet cord on the outer edge, and the Master of Science degree (MSc), which has a standard masters' hood with the edge the same colour as the lining, ie the Science colour. The Master of Fine Arts (Creative Writing) has a beige edge that represents vellum.⁶⁷

In 1988 the honorary degree of Doctor of the University was created as a means of honouring people who had given great service to the University but for whom the subject-related degrees of DD, LLD, etc seemed inappropriate. So what was to be the University colour or colours? The answer was black with a narrow band of gold. This is the colour scheme used for Glasgow University graduate ties and scarves, and provides a rare British example of the world of college, school and club colours meeting the world of academic dress. However, having once had this idea, it seemed a shame not to use it again.

So, in the 1990s when degrees in Design and Fine Art were established in conjunction with the Glasgow School of Art, the School's colours of malachite green, swiss white and black were used (black for the body of the hood with the lining divided right and left into green and white—a type of division suggested by Ede & Ravenscroft and not previously used in Glasgow). This striking hood met with great approval from the School of Art.⁶⁸ Next

62 University Calendar 1969–70.

63 University Calendar 1976–77.

64 University Calendar 1989–90.

65 University Calendar 1969–70. A possible alternative explanation for the MBA is that the choice of orange, like the choice of gold for Science, may have been influenced by the University of London (see Christianson, nn. 14 and 21).

66 For the examples mentioned in the next few paragraphs, and other examples, see University Calendar 2012–13.

67 Academic Dress Committee minutes, 30 July 2008.

68 Personal recollection.

the Scottish Agricultural College's colours of green (Bottle Sedge, *Carex rostrata*) and blue (Vipers Bugloss, *Echium vulgare*) were used in the same way for Technology degrees in conjunction with the College. Also, the European Union's colours (smalt blue and saffron) appear on the Master of European Design hood (divided right and left, with the cowl edged in the School of Art's malachite green).

In 2008 the Academic Dress Committee was asked to decide on the hood for the new International Master's Degree in Russian, Central and East European Studies. The committee was advised that this might be the first of a series of International Masters degrees. So the committee decided to design a new generic style of hood for these degrees. It thought of using the colours of the United Nations, but unfortunately United Nations blue is precisely the same blue as the University's Music colour. The committee flirted with the idea of using the recently designed University of Glasgow tartan, but settled on a strikingly simple design: white edged with the colour of the appropriate subject area (Arts in the case of Russian, Central and Eastern European Studies).⁶⁹ However, as yet, no further International Masters' degrees have been created. Indeed, since 2008 no new degrees have been created, and there have been no further changes to the academic dress code.⁷⁰

Officers' gowns

All the officers of the University named in the Universities (Scotland) Act 1858 have gowns of office: Chancellor, Rector, Vice-Chancellor, Principal and Dean of Faculties.⁷¹ The only other officer with a gown of office is the Depute Vice-Chancellor (a post created in 1990s, when the arrangements for conferring degrees in the absence of the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor were revised). This means that the list of officers with gowns of office is remarkably short. Indeed it is shorter than the list of student office-bearers with gowns of office!⁷² Why do officers such as Deans, College Heads and Vice-Principals not have gowns of office? The answer may lie with the Clerk of Senate. From 1728 the Senate elected one of its members to be its Clerk. The Clerk of Senate became increasingly powerful, especially during the period of office of long-serving Clerks such as William Stewart (1876–1911) and Christian Fordyce (1940–1971),⁷³ and is now regarded as having equal status to a Vice-Principal. The origins of the post may explain the lack of a gown of office for the Clerk of Senate,

⁶⁹ Academic Dress Committee minutes, 30 July 2008.

⁷⁰ This statement is based on the academic dress code in the University Calendar 2012–13. In the five years from 2008 to 2013 there have been two new Clerks of Senate, and other changes to the membership of Academic Dress Committee. The Clerk to the Committee has also changed. It will be interesting to see whether these changes, taking place at a time when no decisions on academic dress were required, will cause a future discontinuity in policy.

⁷¹ The Dean of Faculties (or Dean of Faculty) was an external person who acted as Auditor and Visitor from the Reformation until 1858, and is now an honorary appointment. This post must not be confused with the 19th and 20th century Deans of the various Faculties, such as the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and the Dean of the Faculty of Science.

⁷² The officer-bearers of the Students Representative Council, the Glasgow University Union and the Queen Margaret Union all have gowns. The SRC gowns are in University Calendar 2012–13, but not those of the Unions. The common design features of these gowns are that they have full sleeves half the length of the gown and the badge of the Council or Union on the left-hand facing; see Moss, Munro and Trainer, pp. 188 and 231.

⁷³ University Calendar 1976–77, pp. xxxii, xxxiii; Robert T. Hutcheson, and Hugh Conway, *The University of Glasgow 1920–1974: The Memoir of Robert T Hutcheson* (Glasgow University Library, 1997), p. 48.

and successive Clerks of Senate appear to have accepted that situation. As the Clerk of Senate is convener of the Academic Dress Committee, any proposal for another officer to have a gown seems unlikely to succeed!

The specification of officers' gowns was not included in the University Calendar until 1939 but most of the gowns themselves predate that by a long way. The records however are somewhat sparse.

The Rector appears to be the officer whose gown has the longest continuous existence. In 1690 it was decided that the Rector's gown should have 'some marks of distinction'.⁷⁴ Portraits and illustrations 1730, c. 1840 and 1868 show the gown developing into the same style as a Professor's gown but with a pointed velvet collar edged in gold, and gold bands on the front of the gown and on the long false-panel sleeves.⁷⁵ The change of collar design to the present square flap collar probably took place c. 1908.⁷⁶

The Dean of Faculties appears to be the officer whose gown has the second longest continuous existence. In 1690 it was decided that he should be provided with a suitable gown.⁷⁷ There is no evidence of a special design being created for him.⁷⁸ In fact the evidence is that he wore a Professor's gown (even though he was not a Professor)⁷⁹ and that when the professors abandoned Professors' gowns for graduate gowns after 1868 the Dean of Faculties continued to wear a Professor's gown, and indeed continues to do so today.⁸⁰

The Chancellor used to wear a gown like a Professor's gown but with white fur facings and collar. The earliest evidence for this is in the 1840s.⁸¹ By 1891 the fur collar appears to have been replaced by a velvet collar on top of a band of fur round the neck.⁸² In 1904 a new Chancellor's gown was made for the new Chancellor (Lord Kelvin).⁸³ It had long closed

⁷⁴ Innes, *Munimenta*, Vol. II, p. 350.

⁷⁵ John Orr of Barrowfield 1730 (University of Glasgow art collections), unnamed Rector c1840 (MS Murray 593) and Sir John Inglis 1868 (Murray, *Memories*, between pp. 594 and 595). See also the statue of William Ewart Gladstone (Rector 1877–1880) in George Square, Glasgow. For further discussion of the gown see Jonathan Cooper, 'The Dress of Rectors at the Scottish Universities,' *TBS*, 12 (2012), pp. 46–62.

⁷⁶ It seems likely that the change in the collar design took place at about the same time as the new designs of gowns for the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor were introduced (1904 and 1907). President Poincaré of France certainly wore a gown with the new collar design at his installation as Rector in 1914 (University of Glasgow, *The Curious Diversity*, p. 71).

⁷⁷ Innes, *Munimenta*, Vol. II, p. 350.

⁷⁸ In case anyone is concerned by the use of the male words he and him, I should point out that the first female Dean of Faculties was Emeritus Professor Jan McDonald (elected 2007).

⁷⁹ In 1690 the Dean of Faculties was an external person who acted as Auditor and Visitor (see Note 71). This may explain the decision that he should have a gown, because he was presumably not otherwise entitled to one. The earliest evidence of him wearing a Professor's gown is c. 1840 (MS Murray, p. 593. Unfortunately the Dean of Faculties has been incorrectly labelled as the Chancellor and vice-versa.).

⁸⁰ The gown currently in use has the frogs on the sleeves and front of the gown spaced in pairs rather than equally spaced. This detail appears to date back to at least 1891 (photograph of Robert Berry in Stewart, *University of Glasgow*).

⁸¹ MS Murray, p. 593. Unfortunately the Chancellor has been incorrectly labelled as the Dean of Faculties and vice-versa.

⁸² Photograph of the Earl of Stair in Stewart, *University of Glasgow*.

⁸³ University Court minutes: on 11 January 1905 Finance Committee authorized payment of £75 to the Robemakers.

sleeves and was trimmed with gold lace and gold frogs,⁸⁴ a design which (with some subtle changes) has been worn by all subsequent Chancellors.⁸⁵

The gowns of the Principal and Vice-Chancellor need to be considered together because the two posts are normally combined. The existence of two separate gowns gives the Principal and Vice-Chancellor a choice of academic dress. Generally the custom has been for him⁸⁶ to wear the Vice-Chancellor's gown only when conferring degrees in the absence of the Chancellor—but this custom has not been universally observed.⁸⁷

The earliest evidence of a Vice-Chancellor's gown is in 1868, when it was very similar to the Chancellor's gown, ie a Professor's gown with white fur facings and collar.⁸⁸ Indeed it has been suggested that the Vice-Chancellor actually wore the Chancellor's gown.⁸⁹ However the gown worn by John Caird (1873-1898) appears to have been different from the Chancellor's gown: the facings were of white fur but the fur did not extend round the neck.⁹⁰ A gown of this style, possibly John Caird's gown, was recently discovered in the Hunterian Museum⁹¹—and crucially it has a leather label bearing the word 'Principal' sewn in to it. This gown is illustrated in Figs. 7 and 8. In 1907 a new Vice-Chancellor's gown was made for the new Vice Chancellor (Dr—later Sir—Donald MacAlister).⁹² It was designed to complement the new Chancellor's gown, with silver trimming instead of gold,⁹³ and this design has been worn by all subsequent Vice-Chancellors. (Figs. 9 and 10.)

The Principal's gown, which resembles an advocate's gown in style, but is purple with black facings, is said to have been designed by Robert Story (Principal and Vice-Chancellor 1898-1907).⁹⁴ He certainly wore it, as have subsequent Principals.⁹⁵

84 Hutcheson, *Notes*, p. 24 refers to a photograph of Lord Kelvin wearing the gown.

85 The Chancellor's gown has undergone some subtle changes over the years. At first glance, photographs of the Chancellor's gown taken in 1932, c. 1934 and 1951 (University of Glasgow, *The Curious Diversity*, pp. 90 and 91, and Moss, Munro and Trainor, pp. 235 and 236) suggest there has been no change between 1904 and the present day. However, the Chancellor's gown worn by the present Chancellor (Sir Kenneth Calman) has slightly different designs of facings and frogs from that of his predecessor (Sir William Kerr Fraser) (personal observation). Also, the positioning of the gold facings, the design at the back of the neck, and the material of the bodies of these two gowns are different from the gown worn by Lord Boyd Orr in 1951 (Moss, Munro and Trainor, *ibid.*)—and these three gowns do not have the square collar stated in the academic dress code.

86 All Principals and Vice-Chancellors to date have been men.

87 Sir Alwyn Williams (1977-88) and Sir William Kerr Fraser (1988-95) strictly observed that custom (personal recollection) but Professor Anton Muscatelli (the current Principal and Vice-Chancellor) does not (personal observation). John Caird (1873-98) also appears to have worn the Vice-Chancellor's gown on occasions when he was not conferring degrees (photograph of the University Court in William Stewart, *University of Glasgow Old and New* (James MacLehose & Sons, 1891)).

88 Murray, between pp. 594 and 595.

89 Hutcheson, *Notes*, p. 26.

90 John Caird in the photograph of the University Court, and the photograph of the Earl of Stair (Chancellor), in Stewart, *University of Glasgow*; also portrait of John Caird 1880 (University of Glasgow art collections).

91 Hunterian, C.1986.44.

92 University Court minutes: Finance Committee 3 April 1907.

93 Portrait of Sir Donald MacAlister 1924 (University of Glasgow art collections) and photograph 1911 (Brown and Moss, *The University of Glasgow*, p. 106).

94 Hutcheson, *Notes*, p. 27.

95 Generally speaking, it is normal practice for officers not to wear hoods with their gowns of

The Depute Vice-Chancellor's gown, which is similar in style to the Chancellor's and Vice-Chancellor's gowns but with sparser silver trimmings, dates from the creation of the post in the 1990s.⁹⁶

In 1902 the University Court agreed that members of the Court could wear 'a black doctor's gown with collar and yoke and faced all with MA silk and with three bands of MA silk on each sleeve'.⁹⁷ This gown appears to have worn in practice only by non-graduate members of the Court and only until c. 1945.⁹⁸ Sadly no gown of this type, nor any photographs of it, appear to have survived, and it never appeared in the University Calendar. The academic dress code currently specifies that the Secretary of the University Court and past and present members of the Court may wear frogs on the sleeves of their gowns but, in practice, few of them do.⁹⁹

The Hunterian has a gown made in the 1920s for the Registrar that was never included in the University Calendar and is no longer used.¹⁰⁰

The academic dress code does not mention the fact that the Bedellus wears a gown, whose design has changed over the years.¹⁰¹ (Fig. 11.) It is also silent on the subject of bands, which are usually worn by the principal officers at graduation ceremonies.¹⁰²

Graduates' gowns

When full academic dress was re-established in 1868 no description of the gowns was published. Instead Senate approved a statement that the University robesmakers had 'standard

office. However, it appears that Principals from Robert Story (1898–1907) to Sir Hector Hetherington (1936–61) did wear their own degree hood with the Principal's gown (see Hutcheson, *Notes*, p. 28, Moss, Munro and Trainor, pp. 93, 235 and 236, and University of Glasgow, *The Curious Diversity*, p. 19). Principals from Sir Charles Wilson (1961–76) onwards have not worn a hood with the Principal's gown (personal recollection); see, for example, Moss, Munro and Trainor, pp. 303 and 338. Principals prior to Robert Story, when not wearing the Vice-Chancellor's gown, appear to have worn a Professor's gown (until c. 1868) or a graduates' gown (after c. 1868), for example Thomas Barclay in Fig. 1, and the photograph of John Caird in Stewart, *University of Glasgow*.

96 The academic dress code implies that the body of the Depute Vice-Chancellor's gown is of the same watered silk as the Chancellor's and Vice-Chancellor's gowns, but in fact it is of a lighter material (personal observation).

97 University Court minutes 13 Feb. 1902. Could the three bands of silk possibly indicate an American influence?

98 Hutcheson, *Notes*, pp. 28 and 29.

99 University Calendar 2012–13. John Cormack recalls that Ede & Ravenscroft have fitted frogs to the gowns of two members of the University Court in recent years (conversation on 6 Jan. 2012).

100 Hunterian C.1986.47. The gown is black with a square collar and closed square sleeves (with inverted-T arm slit); the facings, collar, arm slits and the foot of each sleeve are edged in purple silk (MA colour). Its use may have ceased in 1942 when Robert T. Hutcheson MA, PhD succeeded a non-graduate as Registrar. Unlike the position at some other universities, the Registrar was not the most senior administrative officer of the University: his duties were confined to running the Registry. The post was abolished in the 1990s when a Head of Registry was appointed instead.

101 Moss, Munro and Trainor, pp. 95 and 235. The first of these gowns has open pointed sleeves reaching to the foot of the gown and the second has full sleeves half the length of the gown with the end of each sleeve turned back and held in place by gold cords and buttons. The gown currently worn (Fig. 11) is similar to the second of these but also has a gold edge to the facings, and the University coat of arms on both facings; there are also matching gowns for the Deputy Bedellus and the Janitorial Superintendent with the gold cord, buttons and edge replaced by silver and black respectively (personal observation).

102 Personal observation.

patterns of the gowns', which were of 'the same shape as ordinary (or undress) gowns of the University of Cambridge'.¹⁰³ Scarlet dress robes for doctors were introduced in 1893 at the same time as the outer colour of doctors' hoods was changed from black to scarlet.¹⁰⁴ However, there was still no published description of the design of any of the gowns.

A report accepted by Senate in 1936 expressed concern that incorrect gowns were being worn. It took great exception to the statement published in the University Calendar since 1868 that the gowns were similar to Cambridge gowns, stated that the gowns had never been of the Cambridge pattern, and demanded that the 'traditional Glasgow form should be preserved'.¹⁰⁵ It was decided to publish a description of the gowns, and at the same time to change the PhD dress gown from scarlet to black, and the PhD hood from scarlet lined with purple to black lined with crimson.

The result was a University Calendar entry very similar to the current one.¹⁰⁶ The bachelors' gown has open pointed sleeves reaching to the foot of the gown, the masters' gown has closed sleeves reaching to the foot of the gown and ending with a crescent shaped cut (the points of the crescent facing back), and the doctors' undress gown has a collar and full sleeves half the length of the gown; all these gowns are black. Doctors' dress gowns are scarlet with facings of the same colour as the hood lining and open pointed sleeves reaching to the foot of the gown, except that the dress gown for the PhD is the black undress gown to which are added facings of the same colour as the hood lining.¹⁰⁷ The only official changes to gowns since 1936 are that, when further doctorates awarded on the basis of course work and supervised research were introduced in the 1990s, such as Doctor of Clinical Psychology, their gowns followed the PhD style—and when the regulations for Doctor of Medicine changed in 2001, its dress gown changed from scarlet to the PhD style.¹⁰⁸

However, it should be noted that the official descriptions of the gowns (of which the above is a summary) do not specify various important details. In particular, there is no mention of the vertical cord and button in the centre of the yoke of the bachelors' gown (although it is included in the description of the masters' gown), nor of the ways in which the collar on the doctors' undress gown and the sleeves on the scarlet doctors' dress gowns are finished.¹⁰⁹ So it is possible that some details could have changed over the years.

An unusual feature of the Glasgow dress code is that bachelors who are Masters of Arts may wear the masters' gown with the bachelors' hood. This stems from the fact that until 1961 the principal law degree (LLB) could only be taken by students who were already Arts graduates. So lawyers normally graduated MA, LLB—and the dress code allowed them to point out that they had both degrees. A similar situation applied to the BD degree.¹¹⁰

¹⁰³ Senate minutes 1 May 1868.

¹⁰⁴ University Court minutes 27 April 1893 and 19 May 1893.

¹⁰⁵ Senate minutes 5 March 1936. The report particularly criticized the tendency of bachelors to wear masters' gowns, a practice that has become officially approved at the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and St Andrews (Groves, pp. 55, 169 and 359).

¹⁰⁶ Senate minutes 26 May 1936.

¹⁰⁷ The collar of the PhD dress gown is black; the statement in Groves, p. 187, that the collar is of the same colour as the hood lining is incorrect.

¹⁰⁸ University Calendar 2012–13.

¹⁰⁹ The collar of the undress gown is in fact a flap collar (currently very wide from left to right but Dr John Shaw Dunn has an old gown with a narrower collar); the end of each sleeve of the scarlet dress gown is turned up and held in place by a cord and button (personal observation).

¹¹⁰ University Calendar 1976–77 p. 367. Note that this provision echoes the 1868 specifications

Students' Gowns

There is very little information available about the designs of the red gowns worn by students. There are only two known styles. They are shown in Fig. 14. As noted above, the left hand gown in that figure dates from the 1850s. That style seems to have been discontinued in 1868 when full academic dress was re-established.¹¹¹ It is not known whether the right-hand style in Fig. 14 was introduced then, or whether there was an intermediate style of which no record survives. It has two variations, namely with or without the coloured bands denoting the subject area of the student.¹¹² The option of coloured bands dates from 1907.¹¹³

Caps

There have to be serious doubts as to whether caps have ever really formed part of Glasgow academic dress. At various dates between 1871¹¹⁴ and 2008 cap designs have been specified for students and graduates. However, it is unclear to what extent these caps were actually worn. In particular, it is noticeable that instructions for graduands at graduation ceremonies have for many years made no mention of caps.¹¹⁵ What is certain is that from 1939 to 2008, caps were specified as black cloth trencher ('mortarboard') with tassel for students, bachelors, masters and PhDs, velvet John Knox cap for doctors other than PhDs, and special designs for the Chancellor, Rector and Vice-Chancellor.¹¹⁶ However, in 2008 the Academic Dress Committee decided to remove all references to caps (except for the Chancellor, Rector and Vice-Chancellor) on the grounds that it was inappropriate 'to prescribe caps when caps are neither worn nor carried'.¹¹⁷

for BD, DD and LLD hoods.

111 Senate minutes 28 April 1868 record that a change in design was being considered. William Dickie records that, when in 1870 he wore the 1850s gown in Figs. 5, 6 and 14, he was the only student who wore a gown of that style (William Dickie, *Memoirs* (unpublished manuscript in the possession of Professor Alastair Gillespie).)

112 The academic dress code permits both variations (University Calendar 2012–13). The version without coloured bands appears to have been more common. It was used by student members of the University Chapel Choir until 2003 (see also Note 126). On the version with coloured bands, the colour is determined by the hood lining of the relevant degree. So, for example, arts students have the purple of the MA and medical students the scarlet of the MB, ChB. The Hunterian has an arts student's gown (C.1996.2, shown in Fig. 14), and also a gown with no coloured bands believed to date from the 1920s (C.1986.5). Dunn has a medical student's gown.

113 The circumstances surrounding the decision were unusual. Senate's decision on 7 March 1907 not to re-introduce the compulsory wearing of gowns (referred to in the section on custom and practice) coincided with the preparations for a Royal Visit. In spite of the decision not to make gowns compulsory—or perhaps to express sympathy with those who supported the wearing of gowns—Senate approved a suggestion by the Principal that there should be a procession of students in gowns during the Royal Visit and, presumably in order to advertise the diversity of the University, agreed the bands of colour on 19 April 1907.

114 Senate minutes 25 April 1871.

115 These instructions form part of the academic dress code in the University Calendar.

116 University Calendar 1939–40.

117 Academic Dress Committee minutes, 30 July 2008. Members of staff were, and are, sometimes seen wearing or carrying caps at graduation ceremonies. Mostly these members of staff are graduates of other universities following the customs of their universities. However, Professor Rex Whitehead (Dean of the Faculty of Science 1993–96 and Clerk of Senate 1996–2001) always wore

Custom and practice

The academic dress code specifies the academic dress of the University, and prescribes its use at graduation ceremonies. However, the code has never stated that members of staff who are graduates of other universities wear the academic dress of their own universities, nor does it record the custom that Registry staff who are not graduates wear bachelors' gowns.¹¹⁸ It is also possible that at any date the code does not conform to existing custom and practice. (For example, in 2000 the code was altered to permit women to wear trousers, and overseas students their national costumes, at graduations—but that was a case of the code catching up with long established practice.¹¹⁹)

However, for the researcher, the greatest problem is that the code does not give us any indication as to the extent to which academic dress was worn on occasions other than graduations. Such information is hard to come by.

For the students' red gown, we know that in 1866 the General Council (the body that represents the graduates of the University) expressed concern that there had been a recent decline in the wearing of gowns by students.¹²⁰ One contributory factor in this could have been the reforms of 1858. Medical students, who had previously been non-matriculated, non-graduating students, had become matriculated students studying for degrees, and therefore the non-gown-wearing medical students had gained the same status as the gown-wearing arts students. In 1868 Senate decided not to attempt to enforce compulsory wearing of gowns, but instead to exhort the students to uphold the traditions of the University by wearing their gowns.¹²¹ The plea to the students to wear their gowns occupied more than a page in the University Calendar (the publication that lists all the degree regulations). Did the students listen? It's doubtful. In 1892 the General Council tried to persuade the University to re-introduce the compulsory wearing of gowns by students.¹²² The University, after consulting the students, said no.¹²³ Remarkably, in 1905 and again in 1907, the Students Representative Council petitioned the University to re-introduce the compulsory wearing of gowns. The Senate said no, but in 1907 it was deeply divided: the vote was tied and the decision to say no was taken on the casting vote of the Principal.¹²⁴ That was the last time that the compulsory wearing of gowns appears to have been considered. Thereafter the red gown appears to have been worn generally only on special occasions and formal ceremonies, and suffered a slow decline.¹²⁵ Its last regular use was by student members of the

or carried a cap when wearing his Glasgow DSc dress gown and hood—but it was a doctor's bonnet rather than the velvet John Knox cap specified in the academic dress code (personal recollection).

118 Personal observation.

119 Personal recollection.

120 University Court minutes 21 April 1868.

121 Senate minutes 1 May 1868.

122 University Court minutes 13 June 1892.

123 University Court minutes 23 Feb. 1893 record that the Students Representative Council was against the compulsory wearing of gowns. Acceptance of the SRC's view is not explicit in subsequent minutes but can be inferred from subsequent actions.

124 Senate minutes 19 Oct. 1905 and 7 March 1907.

125 Photographic evidence includes a formal photograph of the Humanity [Latin] Class of 1901–02 where the students are not wearing gowns (Moss, Munro and Trainor, p. 105). Students acting as stewards at events seem to have continued to wear gowns, for example at the Freshers' Camp

University Chapel Choir, who wore it at services until 2003.¹²⁶ However, interest in wearing it is not completely dead: recently Ede & Ravenscroft were approached about the possibility of getting some new student gowns made, but no order has been placed.¹²⁷

There seems to be very little information recorded about the wearing of gowns by staff. Dr T. A. Whitelaw recalls that, when he joined the Mathematics Department staff in 1967, all his colleagues wore gowns when invigilating examinations, most wore them when lecturing, and he was told to wear one when lecturing. However, by the time I joined the Mathematics Department staff in 1974, the situation had completely changed. Most colleagues did not wear gowns when invigilating or lecturing, and I was given no specific guidance. Over the next few years, the wearing of gowns declined further, but Dr Whitelaw continued to wear his when lecturing until he retired in 2007.¹²⁸ It appears that the wearing of gowns when lecturing may have completely died out in 2009.¹²⁹ At Senate meetings, the Principal, the Clerk of Senate, officials from the Senate Office, and any newly appointed professor who was to be inducted into office, wore gowns until recently—but that practice has now ceased.¹³⁰ Therefore formal ceremonies (such as graduation) and chapel services are now normally the only occasions on which academic dress is worn.¹³¹

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1950–51 (Moss, Munro and Trainor, pp. 231 and 256). It is also worth noting that, most unexpectedly, a student with gown and mortarboard is the dexter supporter of Lord Kelvin's coat of arms (Murray, p. 139).

126 Since 2003 student members of the Chapel Choir have instead worn specially designed red choir robes donated by Ede & Ravenscroft. Graduate members of the choir continue to wear gowns and hoods. (Information supplied by the Revd Stuart MacQuarrie.)

127 Information supplied by John Cormack 29 Jan. 2013.

128 Personal recollections of Dr Whitelaw in conversation 25 Aug. 2011.

129 Dr John Shaw Dunn (Anatomy) and Dr R. A. Knox (Greek) continued to wear gowns when lecturing until they retired in 2008 and 2009 respectively (conversations between myself and them on 29 and 30 Jan. 2012).

130 The wearing of gowns ceased when Sir Muir Russell became Principal in 2003. (Information supplied by Professor Graham Caie.)

131 Each year the formal ceremonies comprise graduations, Commemoration Day (when benefactors are commemorated and honorary degrees conferred), the Veterinary Oaths ceremony (when new veterinary graduates are admitted to membership of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons) and a service at Glasgow Cathedral at which the University is officially represented; academic dress is also worn by those representing the University at the formal events of other organisations. Formal ceremonies that occur less frequently include the installation of a newly elected Chancellor or Rector. Members of the Executive of the Students Representative Council continue to wear gowns at its meetings.

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Illustrations

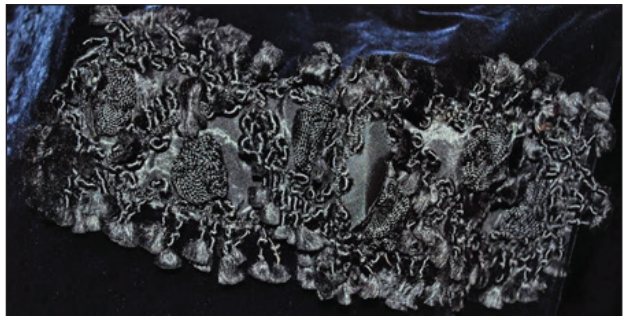
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Figures 5-14 follow.



LEFT: FIG. 5 Student Gown dating from c. 1850.

BELOW: FIG. 6 Student Gown dating from c. 1850 (detail of collar from the rear).



ABOVE: FIG. 8 Details of frog on sleeve of Vice-Chancellor's Gown dating from c. 1890.

LEFT: FIG. 7 Vice-Chancellor's Gown dating from c. 1890.



FIG. 9 Vice-Chancellor with newly graduated bachelors in 1991.



FIG. 10 Vice-Chancellor's gown, 1990 (rear view).



FIG. 11 Bedellus, 2009.



FIG 12. Masters' hood (right foreground) and bachelors' hood (left rear), 2007.



FIG 13. MA: the old style hood on left, current style on right, 1993.



FIG. 14 Student gowns in the Hunterian, in 2012. The author with the 1850s gown on the left and a twentieth-century arts student's gown on the right.