

A Study of the History and Use of Lace on Academical Gowns in the United Kingdom and Ireland

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Abstract

This paper traces the history and use of gimp, lace and braid on academical gowns within the United Kingdom.

Academical dress in the United Kingdom is unique in having a long history of using lace for decoration. The laces used are significant and their meanings depend on the gown on which they are used. Some universities, such as Cambridge, use laces to indicate a special status whilst others, such as Leeds, use it on their gowns more generally. The older versions of lace developed from earlier versions of decoration that had evolved over time and continue to be used up to the present day. Other laces appeared more recently—in the past hundred years or so—most of which were used simply because they were available at the time, and some have since disappeared through lack of use.

Two of the main issues that affect the life expectancy of a particular type of lace are its availability and its use in practice. If a lace is used frequently and on many gowns, then the lace tends to survive for a long time; if the lace is confined to a single gown which is rarely used, however, there is a danger that it will disappear.

This paper traces the history of each lace, gimp and braid, showing which are extant and which have disappeared.

The use of lace, gimp and braid on academical gowns is peculiar to the United Kingdom. Nowhere else in the world is there a collection of lace trimmings so diverse or which has survived into modern usage. Outside Britain, various simple braids or trimmings are used which are mostly plain: in Thailand, plain gold braid is used to trim the sleeves of gowns, whilst in America velvet bars, rather than braid, are used on the sleeves. These trimmings are easy to obtain because they are common.

In the United Kingdom, the use of different kinds of lace goes back to the gowns of dignity trimmed with braid and tassels that became used as robes for degrees during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries at Oxford and Cambridge.¹ Once they had been trans-

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1 W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *A History of Academical Dress in Europe until the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 74, n. 4.

formed into the gimp and lace of today, their usage became cemented in practice. Their use subsequently influenced other newer universities to adopt the use of lace which brought about variations of design.

Here, I set out to describe the history and make-up of each extant and extinct design of lace, explaining the possible origins, current status and eventual fate of each. I will not cover other sorts of trimmings such as velvet, ribbons or brocade as these are not strictly classified as 'lace'.

Note on terms

The words 'gimp', 'lace' and 'braid' have sometimes been used synonymously, and sometimes to mean distinct things, causing confusion in the accuracy of descriptions, especially in the regulations of universities. Technically, the trimmings used to trim academics in the UK are not 'lace' in the traditional sense but 'braids' and 'gimps'. For the sake of clarity, in this paper I will restrict the use of these terms to the following descriptions.

Gimp consists of several cords meandering in and out of each other in a pattern that is then sewn securely together along its length. It has no 'backing': you can see to the other side through the holes and gaps between the cords.

Braid is a woven textile tape with constant width along its length, is made of a single weave type and is flat with straight sides.

Lace is a woven textile tape with fixed width along its length and is made of different weaves and textures, sometimes with prominent features such as velvet and knotting which are in relief. Lace is also a generic term for all trimmings in general.

Methodology

The primary sources consulted come mainly from the literature and the various institutions in question. Books on the general history of academical dress give a basic outline of the history of lace in general and some individual laces, such as those of Oxford and Cambridge, are examined through books particular to the institution. For the other laces, communication was established with the various institutions and their robemakers to obtain as much information as possible as well as samples and images.

Correspondence with both institutions and individuals has been important to ascertain information and to verify information from other sources. This, coupled with close examination of pictorial evidence, ensures a more accurate picture. Much of the difficulty in gathering information occurred in the very long time that replies took to arrive, if they did at all. Particular problems were encountered in obtaining samples of the rare and obsolete laces.

Outline and history of individual lace designs

The lace designs here described are the ones that are currently in use (or were in use until recently) for degree gowns.

1. Oxford gimp

According to Hargreaves-Mawdsley, gimp was probably introduced from France.² A print of 1694 depicts the courtiers of Versailles with gimp trimmings. Before that, Oxford used a kind of braid on its gowns that had tufts or tassels at the ends of the braid; an example of

² pp. 85, 86.

such an arrangement appears on several engravings such as those of Edwards.³ The exact date of the introduction of gimp is difficult to establish. None of the engravings by Edwards or Loggan⁴ shows its use on any gown. It is only in Grignon's engraving that recognizable gimp is shown on gowns⁵ so the introduction happened between 1675 and 1770. The portrait of Sir Robert Chambers in the gown of a Bachelor of Civil Law painted in 1765 by Sir Joshua Reynolds⁶ has gimp and so narrows the date range by five years. Hargreaves-Mawdsley deduces from Overton's print of Oxford gowns, *Habitus Academici in Universitate Oxoniensi*, that the tufts were still there in 1730, but Overton's print is actually a reprint of Loggan's. There are two possible conclusions that could be drawn: either the academics were exactly the same in 1730 as those in 1675 and Overton decided not to bother producing a new set of engravings, or Overton's depictions did not really reflect the dress at the time and therefore the 1730 date cannot be trusted.⁷ Evidence for the exact date of introduction is very difficult to find, either through engravings, sculptures or prints, as there does not seem to be any significant example produced between these dates. The change from braid and tassels to gimp may have been a fashionable change but may also have been an economical as well as a practical one as making and installing the braid and tassels takes far more material and time than a simple line of gimp or lace.

The gimp used in the twentieth century can be traced using Venables and Clifford's *Academic Dress of the University of Oxford* series, published between 1957 and 2009.⁸ It can be clearly observed that the gimp was initially very ornate and wide, but that gradually the gimp got narrower and less elaborate until the current version (Fig. 1) became the only one in use. The current gimp started to replace all previous versions completely around the 1990s.⁹ Roughly, going by Venables and Clifford's booklets, the current gimp dates from around the 1980s,¹⁰ before which a wider version existed from before 1957 to around the 1980s (Fig. 2).¹¹ An even older version dates from around the 1900s¹² to 1930s (Fig. 3); the last gown to use such gimp could be the gown of the Bedell of the Convocation of the University of London.¹³

The general basic design of gimp is that there is no 'backing' to it like other braids and laces. Instead, a central line made of two strands of 'Russian braid' (also called 'soutash')¹⁴

3 G. Edwards, *Omnium ordinum habituumque academicorum exemplaria* (1674), engraving of DM or DCL, Gentleman-Commoner, etc.

4 D. Loggan, *Oxonia illustrata* (1675).

5 C. Grignon, after Huddesford and Taylor (1770), engravings of BMus, BCL, etc.

6 *Sir Robert Chambers by Sir Joshua Reynolds* <http://www.thrale.com/image/sir_robert_chambers_sir_joshua_reynolds> (accessed 5 July 2013).

7 Alex Kerr, 'Hargreaves-Mawdsley's *History of Academical Dress* and the Pictorial Evidence for Great Britain and Ireland: Notes and Corrections', *TBS*, 8 (2008), pp. 106–50 (p. 126).

8 D. R. Venables and R. E. Clifford, *Academic Dress of the University of Oxford* (Oxford: Shepherd & Woodward, 1957, 1966, 1972, 1975, 1979, 1985, 1993, 1998). Many of the booklets recycle the images from previous editions and the earlier versions' images are not as clear as later editions.

9 Personal correspondence with John Hicks, Shepherd & Woodward, 21 May 2009.

10 Venables and Clifford (1985), pp. 27, 29.

11 Venables and Clifford (1985), p. 17.

12 Burgon Archive, WBS-093.

13 Burgon Archive, WBS-163.

14 Russian braid: two cords are spun together side by side creating a single braid with a groove between them making them easy to sew on garments using a sewing machine.

that interweave with each other runs down the gimp. The pre-1930s version uses two separate cords rather than Russian braid and this is why it lies flat rather than twisting as can be seen in the other versions. The outer edges of both sides consist of a line of plaited cord that goes in and out of the central line creating semi-circles as it moves along the gimp. The outer line can also be made of frilly lace.

Gimp is used by several institutions. Foremost is Oxford, which uses it on its lay faculty gowns. These are trimmed with gimp on the upper sleeves and around the flap collar, and gimp sewn into pentagon shapes adorns the bottom of the sleeves, the lower sides and the lower back. For the doctors' undress gown, an extra, smaller pentagon of gimp is sewn onto the upper sides, under the arms which the sleeves mostly cover.¹⁵ Originally for the BCL, the gown had pentagons at the upper sides just under the arms¹⁶ (these also appeared on the gold laced gowns of undergraduate noblemen¹⁷), but the upper pentagon disappeared by 1814.¹⁸ In earlier periods the shape of (what are now) the pentagons varied from squares to rectangles, to almost like 'arched windows'.¹⁹ This may be due to local variation between the different robemakers. It is only from 1885 that the pentagons become like the shape that is used today.²⁰

At Sheffield, the same undress gown as at Oxford is used,²¹ save that the sides of the pentagons are curved more inwards.²² Durham uses the basic gimp gown for the music degrees MMus and DMus (undress). However for the MMus, instead of a pentagon of gimp at the bottom of the sleeves there is a long vertical line of gimp running from the armhole to the bottom of the sleeve.²³ Keele uses the gimp as 'frogs'; a line of around 4" is sewn over the armhole with a button on each end for their masters' gowns.²⁴ Hull uses the gimp gown for the MMus.²⁵ Gimp, rather than the Leeds lace described by Shaw, is used by the official Hull robemaker Ede & Ravenscroft for doctors' undress gowns.²⁶ It remains to be seen whether Leeds lace was used in the past but was changed to gimp by the robemaker, or if gimp was used from the very beginning and Shaw was mistaken in his information.

2. Cambridge lace

As with Oxford, Cambridge used braid and tassels to trim some of its gowns before the introduction of lace and the change from the braid and tassels to lace (as it is now) came

15 George W. Shaw, *Academical Dress of British and Irish Universities* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1995), pp. 42, 43.

16 Grignion, after Huddesford and Taylor (1770), engraving of BCL.

17 Grignion, engravings of Nobleman, Baronet.

18 J. Agar after Uwins via Combe (1814), engraving of BCL.

19 See engravings of Grignion, Agar, Shrimpton, etc.

20 A. T. Shrimpton, *Shrimpton's Series of the Costumes of the Members of the University of Oxford*, [2nd edition] (Oxford: A. T. Shrimpton; and London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co. [c. 1885]).

21 Shaw (1995), p. 191.

22 N. Gledhill, 'Academical Dress at the University of Sheffield: A Timeline', *Burgon Society Annual 2004*, p. 50.

23 Hugh Smith and Kevin Sheard, *Academic Dress and Insignia of the World: Gowns, Hats, Chains of Office, Hoods, Rings, Medals and Other Degree Insignia of Universities and Other Institutions of Learning*, 3 vols (Cape Town: A. A. Balkema, 1970), p. 612.

24 Shaw (1995), p. 133.

25 Personal correspondence with Dr Richard Baker, 12 July 2009.

26 Shaw (1995), p. 128.

during the eighteenth century at about the same time as at Oxford. Of the main engravers, Loggan's²⁷ and Agar's²⁸ depictions of Cambridge dress delimit the period during which this happened: 1690-1815. Hargreaves-Mawdsley tries to pinpoint when the change occurred, stating between 1780 and 1800.²⁹ He cites the portrait by J. Page of R. G. Clobury, MD, correctly Clobery, for the 1800 date (which, as Hargreaves-Mawdsley observes, has 'black cross and bead braiding' on the gown)³⁰ and the portrait by John Downman of Thomas Oakes, MD, for the 1780 date. However, the chalk drawing shows Oakes in a plain gown, probably an anomaly, the same as the LLD undress, rather than a braided one. The change may have happened earlier during the mid-eighteenth century and may have been immediate rather than gradual.³¹ In fact, Page's engraving was copied from a drawing by Thomas Kerrich of Robert Glynn (1719-1800) who obtained an MD in 1752.³² Glynn adopted the name Clobery on inheriting family property; so the images are of the same person. Although the portrait was created later on in his life, the gown (showing the lace) may actually date from the time he was made an MD (he resided and taught at Cambridge so he would have worn a gown regularly), and so this may be the best evidence for placing the latest date for the change at around the mid-eighteenth century. This moves the dates for the transition to roughly 1700-1750 (allowing time for change and establishment). The portrait also illustrates the lace in very good detail and it is more or less exactly the same design as that in current use. If the lace is contemporary with Glynn's proceeding MD, then Hargreaves-Mawdsley's dating for the appearance of 'black cross and bead braiding' on the MD gown as post-1780 is probably too late. The decoration on Glynn-Clobery's gown is clearly the new lace, similar to that in Agar's engraving.³³ The engraving by Whittock shows the lace design differently, like some sort of double helix, but this may be due to artistic deviation rather than an indication of a different design.³⁴ Van de Aa's engravings of Cambridge dress published in 1707 and 1727³⁵ are a copy of Loggan's engravings so it is difficult to draw conclusions about whether the dress at that point was exactly the same as it was during Loggan's time.

The design of the lace (Fig. 4) consists of a solid background, the two edges having a sort of saw-tooth. The sides have a running scroll. Running down the centre are alternating squares of plush or velvet, and crosses. There are two versions in current use: the 'Cambridge' version used by Ryder & Amies (Fig. 4) and the 'London' version used by Ede & Ravenscroft (Fig. 5). The latter is narrower and less substantial than the former. However, E&R may have used other versions of lace before the creation of their own present version. They may have used Leeds lace (Fig. 7) and Clerk's lace (see below). The MD gown made

27 D. Loggan, *Cantabrigia illustrata* (1690).

28 Agar after Uwins (1815), various engravings.

29 Hargreaves-Mawdsley, p. 119.

30 Hargreaves-Mawdsley, p. 119.

31 Kerr, p. 137.

32 'Robert Glynn (1719-1800), physician at Cambridge', PMC, National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, <<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1033952/>> (accessed 5 July 2013).

33 Agar after Uwins (1815), engraving of MD.

34 N. Whittock, *The Costumes of the Members of the University of Cambridge* (London: N. Whittock, [c. 1843]), engraving of MD.

35 P. Van der Aa, *Habits ordinaires des personnes qui composent l'Université de Cambridge*, via J. Beeverell, (1707, 1727).

by them for Dr Arthur Templer Davies in 1891 is trimmed with clerk's lace³⁶ as is the MusD undress gown of Dr Edmund Turpin made in the 1890s.³⁷ Further evidence is found in their workbooks from the early 1900s.³⁸ Clerk's lace is very similar to Cambridge lace, save that it is wider and there are extra lines of scrolling and velvet/plush bars, like an extension from the main central motif (Fig. 6). Also known as 'Town clerks' lace', this version is mainly used to trim town clerk gowns as well as some city livery gowns.

Cambridge lace (called 'Doctors' lace' in Cambridge by the University³⁹) is used to trim Cambridge doctors' undress gowns (except for the LLD and DD gowns which are plain and untrimmed).⁴⁰ The PhD has a 4" line of lace 3" above the armholes. The ScD has a long line of lace immediately above the armhole. The LittD has a vertical line of lace going from the shoulders to the armholes. The MD uses the lay gown and is trimmed with lace around the armholes to the shoulders, a line down the facings which is carried over around the flap collar edge and then a line at the bottom of each sleeve (though Whittock illustrates the MD as having a slit at the back that is also edged in lace⁴¹). The MusD is the same as the MD save that there is an extra line of lace at the bottom of the flap collar.⁴² Other universities that use Cambridge lace, according to Shaw, include Bath (whose scheme was designed by him) and Exeter for their doctors' undress gowns. Bath uses the masters' gown with lace around the armholes and for Exeter it is the same save that the higher doctors have additional lace round the yoke.⁴³ Bath calls the lace 'black braid'⁴⁴ whilst Exeter uses the Cambridge term.⁴⁵ Other places that may use Cambridge lace are Nottingham and Reading (see below).

3. Leeds lace

The University of Leeds was founded in 1904. Uniquely, the gowns of bachelors and masters (made in the clerical pattern with a fully pleated yoke) use lace. The lace runs over the forearm seam from wrist to shoulder and around the edge of the yoke for the bachelor's gown and around the armhole slits and on the edges of the yoke for the master's.⁴⁶ Doctors use the master's gown in undress.

36 *Dr. Arthur Templer Davis' MD cap and gown, England, after 1902*, Science Museum (London), <<http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/broughttolife/objects/display.aspx?id=95812>>, accessed 28 July 2011 but no longer available.

37 Burgon Archive, WPG49.

38 Ede & Ravenscroft workbook (early twentieth century): 'MD: Black gown, same shape as QC gown trimmed with a single row of Doctors' lace down each facing and round the edge of the cape, across each sleeve at the bottom and above arm-slits and with two vertical rows from the centre of the arm-slits to the shoulder. Town Clerks' lace used; loose wings 1½" wide.'

39 University of Cambridge, *Ordinances 2010*, Chapter II Section 12.

40 A. G. Almond, *Cambridge Robes for Doctors and Graduates* (Cambridge: Crampton & Sons, 1934), pp. 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 19.

41 Whittock, engraving of MD.

42 G. W. Shaw, *Cambridge University Academical Dress* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 12, 13.

43 Shaw (1995), pp. 54, 108.

44 University of Bath, *Official Academic Dress*, 11 June 2008, <www.bath.ac.uk/graduation/academicdress/academic-dress.pdf> (accessed 1 Aug. 2011).

45 University of Exeter, *Calendar 2010/11*, 'Regulations for Academic and Official Dress'.

46 Shaw (1995), p. 141.

The design of the lace is described by some as 'Cambridge miniature lace'.⁴⁷ However, the actual lace used bears no resemblance to the lace used at Cambridge. Leeds lace is thin, measuring $\frac{13}{16}$ " in width. The background is similar to Petersham⁴⁸ with a saw-tooth edge and the main artifice is composed of fine strands of plush running down the length, sectioned into lozenge shapes by seams (Fig. 7). An earlier version was less wide and the strands of plush less plump (Fig. 8).⁴⁹

Oddly, the official regulations make no mention of the use of lace at all.⁵⁰ There seems to be no record in the Senate minutes that mentions its adoption⁵¹ (only that the scheme was approved, with no detail provided) and it can only be assumed that the lace was implemented (either with the blessing of the University authorities or without) by Ede & Ravenscroft, the University's official robemaker. The earliest mention of the lace in official correspondence was by Ede & Ravenscroft to C. E. Hilliard of the University about modifying the Vice-Chancellor's robes to an Oxford MA gown by replacing the sleeves and removing the 'Leeds lace' in 1943.⁵²

There are several clues to the origin of the lace. The first is that an earlier version appears on an old Cambridge PhD gown made by E&R.⁵³ The second is the very reference to the lace as 'Cambridge miniature lace'. Hypothetically, this lace could be an earlier example created by E&R as its own interpretation of the Cambridge lace before it created a version more similar to the lace that was actually used by Ryder & Amies. After the E&R Cambridge lace was created, the old stand-in became redundant and it may be that the lace was then put to use on the Leeds gown, possibly during the time of the foundation of Leeds (early twentieth century).

According to Shaw, the Hull doctoral undress gown uses Leeds lace⁵⁴ trimmed on the MA gown but with one row sewn above the armhole for junior doctors and two for higher doctors. Ede & Ravenscroft in actual practice use Oxford gimp (see above) contrary to the Hull regulations which state 'braid' as being used.

4. Birmingham/Leicester braid

Birmingham (or Leicester) braid appeared after the foundation of the University of Birmingham in 1900. The braid was used mainly on doctors' undress gowns (other than the PhD which used the plain master's gown) and is trimmed down the facings of the masters' gowns.⁵⁵ There is very little information as to the design and conception of the braid. The earliest mention of it is in the minutes of the first Senate meeting during the formation of the University of Birmingham in 1900.⁵⁶ The regulations for the academics are recorded in the minutes and exactly the same wording as in the modern regulations is used regarding

47 Shaw (1995), p. 4.

48 Grosgrain or ribbed ribbon.

49 Burgon Archive, WBS-254 (c. 1912) and WBS-259 (c. 1937).

50 University of Leeds, *Calendar 1911-12* through to 1980-81.

51 University of Leeds, *Minutes of Senate*, Vol. 1, 19 July 1904, p. 24.

52 Letter from Ede & Ravenscroft to C. E. Hillard, the University of Leeds, 5 August 1943.

53 From a gown modified by Fr Philip Goff.

54 Shaw (1995), p. 4.

55 Shaw (1995), p. 59.

56 University of Birmingham, *Senate Minutes*, 6 July 1900, p. 3.

the undress gown which is described as 'edged with braid'.⁵⁷ Given the lack of information about the braid in the formation of the academics, it could be assumed that Ede & Ravenscroft, the appointed robemakers, had a hand in deciding the braid to be used. However, since at the time of writing they could not provide an example of this braid in black, it could mean that the black version is no longer woven or available. The only mention of its existence (and by which universities) is by Shaw.⁵⁸

For an existing version of Birmingham braid, the University of Leicester (formed in 1921 and received its Royal Charter in 1957) is the only place still to use it, in the red form.⁵⁹ The reason for this survival is that the red version is used extensively on doctoral dress gowns (the undress gown is assigned the black version). The PhD dress gown (which is in the masters' shape) is trimmed with the red braid on the facings and around the yoke. For the undress gown, the PhD uses the master's gown but trimmed with black braid on the facings and around the yoke. The undress gowns of other doctors use the same trimming, save that there is a flap collar on the gown and that is also trimmed with the braid around it.⁶⁰

The design of the braid is similar to that of Cambridge lace but without the velvet squares, so has a continuous line of crosses creating a sort of double-helix pattern. The edges do not have 'loops'. The weave is thick and more pronounced (Fig. 9).

Other places that, according to Shaw, use the black version of Birmingham braid include Nottingham and Reading⁶¹ but this is open to question. For Nottingham, the PhD undress gown is trimmed in a similar way to Cambridge PhD undress gowns, having 4" of braid above the armhole; and for the other undress gowns, the braid runs along the full length of the armhole (like a Cambridge ScD). Smith and Sheard call it 'black velvet lace', which seems to point to actual Cambridge lace.⁶² This is more so given that the scheme at Nottingham is based heavily on Cambridge and some of the officers' robes use town clerk's lace.⁶³

For Reading, the undress gown is trimmed with a row of braid over the armhole. Reading calls the braid 'gimp' and says that it is 'similar to that of the Cambridge ScD [undress] gown'.⁶⁴ This may be a descriptive error as the lace used on the Cambridge undress gown cannot be described as 'gimp'. Smith and Sheard also label it 'gimp', seemingly copying the error.⁶⁵ The other question is whether the lace used is indeed Birmingham braid or actually Cambridge lace, a possibility since the former is similar to the latter.⁶⁶ However, the draft manuscript of the unpublished second edition of *Academic Dress and Insignia of the World* states that the lace is Cambridge lace.⁶⁷

If stock of the black version of Birmingham braid has become depleted then the red version could be dyed black to trim the undress gowns above.

57 University of Birmingham, *Calendar* 1998/99.

58 Shaw (1995), p. 4.

59 University of Leicester, *Calendar* 2005/06, 'Regulations for Official and Academic Dress'.

60 Shaw (1995), p. 147.

61 Shaw (1995), pp. 4, 175, 185.

62 Smith and Sheard, pp. 701, 702.

63 Personal correspondence with Dr John Horton, 2 Aug. 2011.

64 University of Reading, *Calendar* 2010/11, 'G5 / Regulations for Academic and Official Costume'.

65 Smith and Sheard, p. 708.

66 Personal correspondence with Dr Alex Kerr, 12 July 2010.

67 Smith, *Academic Dress and Insignia of the World*, 2nd ed. [draft manuscript] (unpublished, in Burgon Archive), s.v. Reading.

5. Southampton lace

Southampton's academical dress was designed by Charles A. H. Franklyn⁶⁸ around 1952. The regulations state that the undress gown is to be trimmed with a single row of braid around the armhole for the PhD and two rows for the higher doctors.⁶⁹ Shaw describes the 'braid' as having 'three vertical bars alternating with a lozenge shape'.⁷⁰ The sample of the lace obtained from J. Wippell & Sons, official robemaker to Southampton, shows otherwise. The actual lace is best described as a miniature version of Cambridge lace (Fig. 10). It has all the features of Cambridge with the velvety squares and crosses save that it has a narrower scroll either side and it is much smaller. It is also made of rayon rather than the cotton that is used for Cambridge lace.

Wippell's have only ever made one gown using this lace in the past forty years and they do not have enough left to trim another, should one be ordered now.⁷¹ It appears that the lace was chosen as it was something that was available at the time rather than designed specifically, according to Wippell's. There is no mention by Franklyn that he designed the lace himself; if it were otherwise he would no doubt have made sure everyone knew the fact. Also, because undress gowns are rare, commissioning a new design of lace would be unviable.⁷²

Since this lace has fallen into disuse and there is not enough to trim another gown, were another gown to be made then it would be supremely logical to use Cambridge lace given the very close similarities with it. As highlighted above, reproducing the lace would be expensive and uneconomical unless there were a commercial reason to do so which could only be the case if more doctoral undress gowns were ordered regularly.

6. Durham/Newcastle gimp/lace

In Shaw's list of academical lace used in the United Kingdom in 1995, he includes two different laces that Newcastle used for its medical degrees at bachelor and doctoral level.⁷³ The doctoral lace is what he describes as having a 'Greek key pattern' whilst the bachelors lace is 'similar to but not identical with Cambridge miniature lace'.⁷⁴ Shaw gives an illustration of the bachelors' lace but the lace shown on the diagram of the Newcastle MB gown looks more like gimp than lace, when compared to his illustration of Cambridge lace.⁷⁵ He even describes it as gimp in the description of the gown for Newcastle.⁷⁶ For the doctoral lace, Smith and Sheard give an illustration of the MD undress gown which shows the lace as similar to Cambridge lace, but without the scrolls and having dots on the spaces between the crosses like a reference mark ※ between the velvety squares.⁷⁷ However, the illustrations for other braids and laces used for other gowns, namely Leeds and Leicester, use almost exactly

⁶⁸ Wippell spells his name as 'Franklin' as it was spelt before he changed it.

⁶⁹ University of Southampton, *Calendar 2003/4*, iv 15 B. 2.

⁷⁰ Shaw (1995), p. 4.

⁷¹ Correspondence with Mr R. Richardson, Director of J. Wippell & Co., 11 Aug. 2008.

⁷² Correspondence with Mr R. Richardson, 21 May 2009.

⁷³ Shaw (1995), p. 4.

⁷⁴ As Shaw calls Leeds lace 'Cambridge miniature lace' it could be assumed that he is referring to Leeds lace indirectly.

⁷⁵ Shaw (1995), p. 23.

⁷⁶ Shaw (1995), p. 167.

⁷⁷ Smith and Sheard (1970), p. 697.

the same depiction of lace as for the MD undress gown so it should be presumed that Smith and Sheard may not actually have examined the lace in question in the flesh, especially since they have not provided a detailed diagram as they have done for the Oxford gimp and Cambridge lace.⁷⁸ In order to verify the exact nature of these two laces, actual examples have to be obtained. However, the laces in question have recently fallen out of use and existing examples are extremely rare.

The medical laces of Newcastle (for degrees in medicine, hygiene and dental surgery) originated from Durham before the split.⁷⁹ After Newcastle became independent in 1963, much of the original academical dress scheme was transferred intact, including the medical gowns and their laces.⁸⁰ The MD was created in 1861, but the regulation for the gown was only made in 1890 at Durham.⁸¹ Since the requirement of gowns for lectures was abolished at Newcastle in 1969,⁸² it can only be assumed that the doctoral lace fell out of use at around the same time. As for the bachelor's lace, the MB gown in Newcastle was still being worn right up to the early 1980s before the BA gown gradually replaced it.⁸³ In practice, it was completely abandoned and replaced by the BA gown in the 1990s although the Senate minutes of 1995 still prescribe the gown but in cloth instead of silk.⁸⁴ The actual regulations, however, do reflect the change to the BA gown.⁸⁵

Gray & Son are the official robemaker for Durham and Newcastle but they did not keep samples of the laces in question as they 'have not manufactured academic robes on [their] premises for a number of years and any materials etc have long gone.'⁸⁶ Enquiry with Newcastle University yielded no results.⁸⁷

There are actual examples of the medical gowns in existence but they are currently held in private hands. A Durham BDS gown made in the 1950s in the possession of the Durham University Archives has gimp, of the type commonly sold at haberdashers, sewn on it (Fig. 11). This type of gimp is thus not uniquely woven as for Oxford.

As for the doctoral lace, Durham University has recently been given a DHy (Doctor of Hygiene) undress gown made in c. 1905 that has the doctoral braid on it.⁸⁸ The lace is indeed in the Greek key pattern, with velvet being on the meander and border line (Figs 12a–c). Thus, the description in Smith and Sheard of how the gown is trimmed in the lace⁸⁹ is correct, but the illustrative depiction of the actual lace design is wrong. The Durham University Calendars describe the lace as 'black velvet lace'.⁹⁰

78 Smith and Sheard (1970), pp. 45, 652, 660.

79 Newcastle University, *Senate Minutes 1963/4*, 1 August 1963, Minute 15 & Appendix H Academic Dress.

80 Durham University Calendar 1962/3, Vol. I, p. 200.

81 Personal correspondence with Dr Giles Brightwell, 19 July 2010.

82 Newcastle University, *Senate Minutes 1968/9*, 18 March 1969, Minute 539.

83 Public correspondence with Dr Paul Coxon, 2010.

84 Newcastle University, *Senate Minutes 1995/6*.

85 Newcastle University, *Academic Dress [Regulations] 1995/6, 2002/3, 2006/7*.

86 Correspondence with Gray & Son, 5 Sept. 2008.

87 Correspondence with James Johnson, Development Manager of Newcastle University, 25 Sept. 2008.

88 *Burton Notes*, no. 16 (2011), pp. 5, 6.

89 Smith and Sheard (1970), p. 697.

90 Durham University Calendar 1962/3, Vol. I, p. 200.

The nature of how the lace was trimmed on the gowns is as follows:

Doctor Gown with a fully pleated arched yoke under an attached flap collar⁹¹ and with narrow ‘winged’ epaulettes on the shoulders from the fronts to the back of the yoke covering the pleats, the corners of the flap collar being cut off at a 45° angle, the facings at the front go under the flap collar; lace on the outer edge of the facings, around the collar and around the inverted-T armholes with the lace going up to the shoulders and on the ends of the square-ended sleeves. The MD and DCh are made of silk whilst the DHy is made of Russell cord.⁹²

Bachelor Gown of lay pattern with flap collar and with narrow ‘winged’ epaulettes on the shoulders and large flaps over the sleeves; four rows of gimp lace from shoulder to the end of the sleeve flap and on the foot of the sleeve two concentric squares of gimp lace. This is made of Russell cord or cloth and used by MB, BS, BHy, BDS, etc.

7. Portsmouth St Benet braid

The University of Portsmouth was founded in 1992 when it was granted university status. Formerly, it was known as Portsmouth Polytechnic and, before that, Portsmouth and Gosport School of Science and the Arts (founded in 1869). It is the most recent university to use braid for its academic dress and uses the form called ‘St Benet braid’ which is an ecclesiastical braid trimming that is still widely used (Fig. 13). The braid is in the form of a double-helix pattern that runs down the length with a border either side with, for the 1” version, a wavy line running along it and comes in different widths and colours (the background could be of a different colour to the border and double-helix).

According to Wippell’s, the braid was chosen because the Senate found the ‘wavy’ pattern reminded them of the logo of the former Portsmouth Polytechnic.⁹³ The use of the braid in the scheme is rather complicated. Several versions of the braid are used on some gowns and hoods for most levels:⁹⁴

PGDip On the hood: 1” silver braid next to the violet on the cape.

MArch On the gown: ½” silver braid along the outer edge of the facings.

MPhil, MCh As the MArch gown, but with braid trimmed around the armholes as well.

PhD, MD, etc On the dress robe: ½” silver braid along the outer edge of the facings and around the armholes. For the hood: 1” silver braid next to the violet on the cape.

Higher doctors On the dress gown and trimmed like the MPhil with ½” silver braid. For the hood: trimmed like the PhD.

DD, DMus As the PhD robe and hood, but trimmed with violet-gold braid.

DUniv Dress robe trimmed with ½” silver braid along the outer edge of the facings. For the hood: trimmed like the PhD.

However, the 1” braid is no longer produced so now a ¾” version is used instead.⁹⁵

91 Like the gown of the Bedell of the Convocation of London designed by C. Franklyn. Burgon Archive, WBS-163.

92 *Burgon Notes*, no. 16 (2011), p. 6.

93 Personal correspondence with Mr R. Richardson of Wippell’s, 8 Dec. 2011.

94 Nicholas Groves, ed., *Shaw’s Academic Dress of Great Britain and Ireland*, 3rd edn (London: Burgon Society, 2011), pp. 333, 334.

95 Personal correspondence with Mr R. Richardson of Wippell’s, 12 Dec. 2011.



FIG. 1 Oxford: gimp from 1970s to present. WBS-257i



FIG. 2 Oxford: gimp from 1957–80. WBS-257j



FIG. 3 Oxford: gimp from 1900–30. WBS-163



FIG. 4 Cambridge, R&A. WBS-257b



FIG. 5 Cambridge: “London” E&R. WBS-257c



FIG. 6 Clerk’s lace. WBS-257e



FIG. 7 Leeds lace. WBS-257b



FIG. 8 Old Leeds Lace. WBS-257g

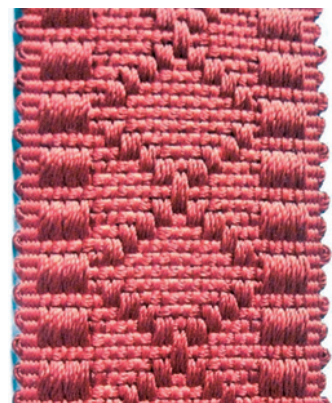


FIG. 9 Birmingham/Leicester braid. WBS-257a

The location in the Burgon Archive is indicated by the WBS number where applicable.



FIG. 10 Southampton lace.
WBS-257j

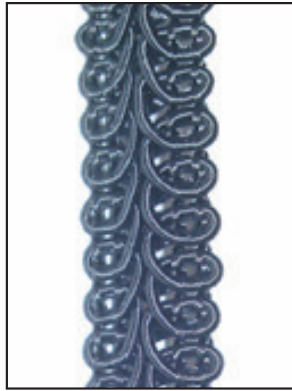


FIG. 11 Durham/New-
castle medical bachelors
gimp. WBS-257f

The lace designs outlined in the sections that follow are those not currently prescribed for use on graduate gowns, but used on other gowns such as undergraduate, ancient and official gowns.

8. *Braid and tufts/tassels*

Before the use of gimp and lace at Oxford and Cambridge, many gowns were trimmed with a form of braid with tufts (with short strands) or tassels (with long strands) and sometimes with buttons in various combinations. This can clearly be seen on the Loggan and Edwards engravings as well as on the monumental busts and brasses around the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁹⁶ This sort of gown was more of a 'robe of dignity' that became used in universities and is the ancestor of the gold lace and damask state robes worn by the Lord Chancellor etc. The initial version used braid, tufts and buttons and variations can be seen used on the Continent as well.

As far as academical dress is concerned, there seems to be some variation as to the exact use of braid, tufts, buttons and tassels, depending on degree in the past. Until the 1670s in Oxford, undergraduates and holders of degrees distinguished themselves with use of tufts or tassels on their gowns.⁹⁷ Within the same ranks, there is also some difference in the amount of trimming: the gentleman-commoner had extra trimmings on the sleeve ends whilst the commoner did not. Noblemen used silver/gold lace and tassels which in turn become the gold lace of the state robes of later periods in the form of 'frogging'. These braid, tuft and button trimmings were all called 'Buttons' at the time.⁹⁸ During the eighteenth century these braid, button, tuft and tassel trimmings were abandoned in favour of gimp or box-pleating (in Oxford) and lace (in Cambridge) and for some gowns, such as the law

⁹⁶ Monuments of Sir Thomas Bodley (Merton College, Oxford), Sir Eubule Thelwall (Jesus College, Oxford) and Hugh Barker (DCL 1605; made in 1632, New College, Oxford); see also Kerr, p. 119.

⁹⁷ Loggan (1675), No. 4 Commoner, 5 Gentleman-Commoner, 16 MB, 20 DM/DCL, 29 Bt., 30 Nobleman.

⁹⁸ L. H. Dudley Buxton and Strickland Gibson, *Oxford University Ceremonies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935), pp. 30, 31.

degree gowns in Cambridge, decoration was removed entirely. The only gown to have kept the braid and tassel trimmings was the gentleman-commoner of Oxford⁹⁹ and the fellow-commoner of Downing College, Cambridge.

At Trinity College, Dublin, the undergraduate gown (for those who are not scholars) uses only tassels on a truncated version of the gown, similar to the Oxford undergraduate pattern but larger and with large 12" shoulder panels. The tassels are installed on the shoulder flaps, under the arms and around the back vent.¹⁰⁰ An image of a version made by Shepherd & Woodward of Oxford (incorrectly made with square box-pleating on the shoulder flaps when it should not be there) can be found on a 2008 issue of *Trinity News*,¹⁰¹ including some of its historical background. The gown was colloquially called a 'gib' or 'jib's gown'. Hargreaves-Mawdsley suggests that this gown didn't exist in the 18th century. He suggests that pensioners (i.e. non-scholars, etc.) wore the same gown as foundation scholars save that there is no velvet on the gown.¹⁰² However, he may be mistaken about the pattern: the current undergraduate gown is nothing like that of the foundation scholar's¹⁰³ and was most likely derived from the fellow-commoner's gown¹⁰⁴ in much the same way as the commoners style gowns evolved at Oxford.

The way the original braid and tassels were laid out can be discovered by close examination of engravings (Loggan, etc.) and monuments.¹⁰⁵ Typically, a strip of braid around 8" long has a button installed at the middle with tufts installed at both ends and sometimes above and below the buttons. Where there is an opening in the form of a vertical slit on the sleeve, the braid is divided in two: the button is installed at the opening side of one braid strip, and the other braid strip on the side facing the button is formed into a buttonhole or loop so it could be functionally buttoned to close the opening slit (Fig. 14). Hargreaves-Mawdsley writes a more detailed description based on the noblemen gowns of Trinity College, Dublin.¹⁰⁶ This setup was also used on the Continent around the same period but in a much simplified form¹⁰⁷ as well as on Scottish doctoral gowns. Instead of round buttons, oblong toggles, like those used on modern velvet smoking jackets, are often substituted.¹⁰⁸ The other version with tassels instead of tufts replaces the central button with a tassel or two (Fig. 15).

The braid and tassel trimming survives in one form or another on town clerks' gowns and vergers' gowns as well as the robes of certain City Livery Companies, such as the gown for the Clerk of the Merchant Taylors' Company.¹⁰⁹ The braid used is mainly Clerk's Lace. The exact placement of the trimming of braid and tassel varies but it is usually on the sleeves and at the back around the central vent of the gown (Figs. 16a-b).

99 Agar after Uwins (1814), Gentleman-Commoner.

100 Shaw (1995), pp. 18, 231.

101 P. Henry, 'Our Forgotten Student Gown', *Trinity News*, Vol. 55, No. 8 (10 Feb. 2008), p. 17.

102 Hargreaves-Mawdsley, pp. 148, 149.

103 W. B. S. Taylor, *A History of the University of Dublin*, 2nd completed edn. (London, 1845), pl. illustrating foundation scholar.

104 Taylor, pl. illustrating fellow-commoner.

105 Monuments of Sir Thomas Bodley, Sir Eubule Thelwall and Hugh Barker.

106 Hargreaves-Mawdsley, p. 148.

107 Thorsten E. Hauler, 'Academical Dress in Germany Part 1: A Historical Outline and the Development of a New System', *TBS*, 5 (2005), pp. 28, 29.

108 An example of which can be seen on Dr Peter Turner's bust of 1614 located in St Olave's Church in London.

109 From a gown made by the Revd Kenneth Crawford in 2009.

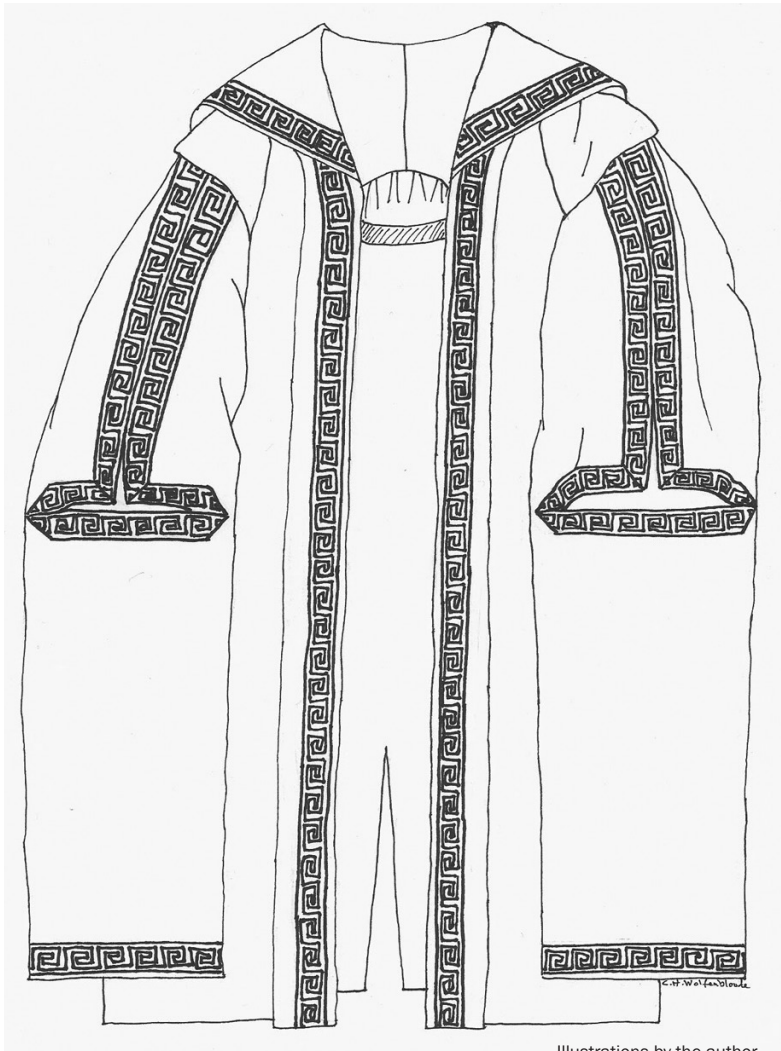


FIG. 12a

Illustrations by the author

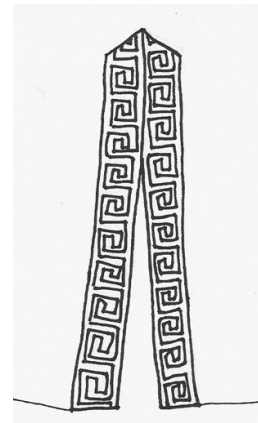


FIG. 12c

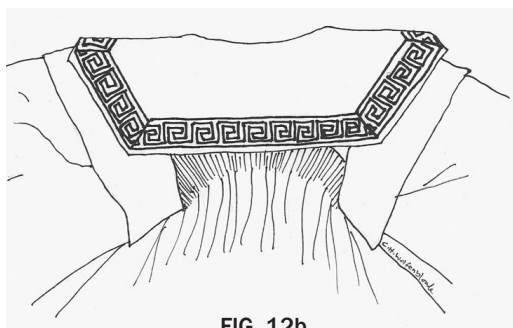


FIG. 12b

FIG. 12a Durham DHy undress gown/medical doctor's lace in Greek key pattern.

FIG. 12b The yoke.

FIG. 12c The vent.

9. Downing College Cambridge fellow-commoner's 'frogging patches'

Of the several Cambridge colleges that still have fellow-commoners who are entitled to a special gown,¹¹⁰ the associated gown used by Downing College alone uses special lace trimming or so-called 'frogging patches'; the others use gold lace or cord and button.¹¹¹ Each college has control over the design of its gowns and so the rules are not set out officially or regulated by the University. The earliest source found for fellow-commoner's gown of Downing is an illustration from 1824.¹¹² It shows the gown in insufficient detail but one can see that the sleeves are trimmed with tassels and the facings are trimmed with some form of lace. The earliest mention of the gown in literature is in 1835 although it makes no mention of the frogging patches, only the 'black silk tufts'.¹¹³ Other evidence for the nature of the lace comes from Shaw's booklet on Cambridge academics where one can clearly see facings trimmed with a line of 'frogging patches' (which Shaw describes as 'rings of black gimp') having the appearance of ovals with some sort of line set-in along the edge.¹¹⁴ Clearer images of the gown were on the Downing College website, but those in question are no longer available.¹¹⁵ Other images¹¹⁶ are less clear and show only one gown with the frogging patches; the rest do not have them, only the tufts on the sleeves are present (these might have been half-finished gowns before new frogging patches were to be installed on them; see below). The College currently owns three gowns. One of them is 'very old' and is kept in the Fellows' Gown Room for any fellow-commoner who requires it for high table. This is probably the gown that is depicted in Shaw's booklet given that the College possessed one gown only at that time.¹¹⁷ When the Junior Bursar was made a Fellow-Commoner in 2002, there were then three other Fellow-Commoners, so there were not enough gowns to go around. It was therefore decided to have three new gowns made. This was done by Ede & Ravenscroft who had trouble obtaining the 'frogging patches' for the facings of the gown (even the Bursar tried to help out on the sourcing during his trips abroad). Eventually, a local woman was engaged to make the lace based on the original lace of the old gown. The modern frogging patch is not as delicate as the original form.¹¹⁸ The modern version consists of an oval cartouche of wool felt upon which a line of gimp (of a type similar to Durham's) is sewn in an oval around $\frac{3}{8}$ " from the edge (Fig. 17). Two of the gowns were purchased by the College and the third was bought by the Bursar.¹¹⁹

According to the Bursar, the gown was, to a certain extent, 'an expression of the individuals who owned them' and their 'gowns tended to evolve over time, compensating for the

110 St Catharine's, Christ's, Corpus Christi, Downing and Jesus.

111 Shaw (1992), pp. 27-29.

112 *Gradus ad Cantabrigiam* (London: John Hearne, 1824), p. 50

113 R. B. Harraden, *Ambulator; or, The Stranger's Guide through Cambridge* (Cambridge: W. Metcalfe, 1835), p. 7.

114 Shaw (1992), p. 29.

115 Downing College, Cambridge, 'Admission of Rumi Verjee to Wilkins Fellowship June 2003', <http://www.dow.cam.ac.uk/dow_server/events/Verjee03/2003-06-26_18-11-04.jpg> and <http://www.dow.cam.ac.uk/dow_server/events/Verjee03/2003-06-26_18-41-32.jpg> both accessed 28 July 2011 but no longer available.

116 Downing College, 'Cambridge, Admission of Fellow Commoners September 2002', <http://www2.dow.cam.ac.uk/dow_server/events/Fellow_Commoners02.html>, (accessed 2 August 2013).

117 Shaw (1992), p. 29.

118 Personal correspondence with Wg Cdr Richard K. Taplin, MBE, Fellow-Commoner and Junior Bursar of Downing College, Cambridge, 29 April 2011.

119 Each gown was made for £500.



FIG. 13 St Benet ½" braid (silver and violet-gold).



FIG. 17 Downing Coll Cantab, fellow-commoner's gown: modern frogging patch. WBS-257d.

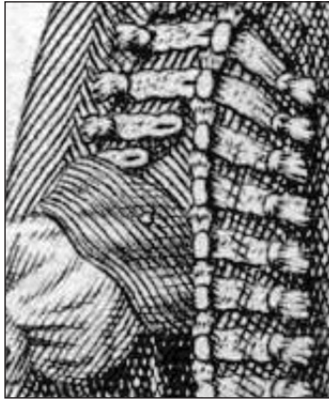


FIG. 14 Braid, tuft/tassels: original, formed into button-hole or loop (Loggan noble).



FIG. 15 Braid, tuft/tassels: tuft replaces central button with tassel (Loggan DM).



FIGS 16a (left) and 16b (right) Braid, tuft/tassels: placement varies on town clerk's robe.

lack of status with greater pomp.' Some gowns have cloak chains installed to stop the gown from sliding down the back and off the shoulders due to the weight of the tassels and braid on the gown. Each gown had silk georgettes sewn inside the facings to identify them; red and gold for the College and blue for the gown belonging to the Bursar. The lace frogging is trimmed on a silk MA gown along the facings with tassels placed along the upper part of the sleeves, which have small wings over the shoulder.¹²⁰

10. Gold lace

Gold laces of several forms are used to trim the gowns of officials of most universities in the UK, such as the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor (though silver lace is generally used for the latter). However, in the past they were also used to trim the gowns of undergraduates, particularly in Oxford and Cambridge. Chancellors originally wore gowns pertaining to their degree and it was not until the seventeenth century that they adopted the special damask and gold laced robes that they continue to wear to this day. This change may have happened at about the same time at Oxford and Cambridge.¹²¹

The robe in question is (if not almost) the same robe worn by the Lord Chancellor of the United Kingdom.¹²² In Oxford, however, Buxton states that the robe has the addition of a gold rosette on each sleeve and the train.¹²³ This rosette is not present on the current robe used nor is it mentioned in the first edition booklet by Venables and Clifford.¹²⁴ Nor does the portrait of Lord Curzon in his Chancellor's robes¹²⁵ have the rosette, so it is rather odd that Buxton makes such a claim. A gold rosette however can be found on the Chancellor's robe of London University worn by the Princess Royal and made in 1981.¹²⁶

Currently, there are two designs of lace most commonly used for such robes. The first is the design used for robes based on the Lord Chancellor's state robes, sometimes referred to as 'gold plate lace'. The gold plate lace is around 3" wide and has an oval cartouche with a lozenge at the centre that runs along the length of the lace linked together.¹²⁷ The other design is the 'oak leaf' design which consists of a line of oak leaves emanating from a central wavy stem.¹²⁸ This design (which comes in gold, silver and black form) seems popular for many official robes, such as the Chancellor's gown at Hertfordshire,¹²⁹ Stirling¹³⁰ and East Anglia,¹³¹

120 Shaw (1992), p. 27.

121 Hargreaves-Mawdsley, pp. 61, 108.

122 *Ibid.*, p. 61.

123 Buxton and Gibson, p. 43.

124 Venables and Clifford, pp. 4, 5. The robe modelled must have been made in 1933 for E. F. L. Wood when he became Chancellor that year.

125 L. J. L. Dundas, *The Life of Lord Curzon: Being the Authorized Biography of George Nathaniel Marquess Curzon of Kedleston* (London: E. Benn, 1928), Vol. III, p. 35.

126 Philip Goff, *University of London Academic Dress* (London: London University Press, 1999), pp. 4, 26.

127 Venables, p. 5.

128 Hand & Lock, embroidery producer (London), <http://www.handembroideryshop.co.uk/acatalog/Oak_Leaf.html> (accessed 5 July 2013).

129 Bruce Christianson, *Academic Dress in the University of Hertfordshire*, 2nd edn. (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire, 2006), pp. 18-21.

130 Colin Fleming, *Malachite and Silver: Academic Dress of the University of Stirling* (London: Burgon Society, 2009), pp. 10, 11.

131 Nicholas Groves, *The Academical Dress of the University of East Anglia* (London: Burgon Society, 2005), pp. i, 16.



Photos by the Revd Kenneth Crawford

FIG. 18a Chancellor's robe's armhole/upper sleeve gold lace frogs and olivettes.



FIG. 18b Detail of sleeve.



FIG. 18c Frogs and olivettes on lower sleeve.



FIG. 18d Individual gold frogs with tasselled ends.

as it is far cheaper than the other variety,¹³² and is also used to trim the uniforms of the army and the Parliamentary robes of peers. This kind of lace is made by Hand & Lock of London.

Before the use of the 'gold plate lace' the facings and train were edged in the same sort of 'frogging lace' used to trim the sleeves. The change to 'gold plate lace' in Oxford can be dated to 1792/3 from the 1804 portrait of William Cavendish-Bentinck, 3rd Duke of Portland,¹³³ when he became Chancellor, by comparing it with the robe in the portrait of the previous incumbent, Fredrick North, Earl of Guilford,¹³⁴ installed in 1772 and his predecessors. It would seem that this change happened at exactly the same time as the change in lace on the Lord Chancellors' robe from examination of their portraits.¹³⁵

Most of the chancellors' robes today do not have a train, mainly for convenience but also to save money on the extra amount of lace and the silk damask used: a robe with a train requires the yoke to be fully pleated for there to be enough material for the train to hang properly when carried by train bearer(s),¹³⁶ otherwise when the train is lifted the fronts and bottom of the facings would be dragged backwards creating a clumsy look. The frogging used on the robes are ornaments made out of gold braid, sequins and wire with a georgette/olivette/toggle between two sets and 'tassels' at both ends (which nowadays are stitched down),¹³⁷ very similar in design to the braid and tassel trimmings of the gowns of noblemen at Oxford and Cambridge in the seventeenth century but more ornate (Figs. 18a-d). A general description of how chancellor and official robes are trimmed is found in the first edition of Shaw's book¹³⁸ as well as in Smith and Sheard.¹³⁹ Robes that use oak leaf lace sometimes do not to use the ornate frogging and instead use strips of lace sewn on in various patterns.¹⁴⁰

The use of gold and silver lace on undergraduates' and fellows' gowns is recorded extensively for the period between 1660 and 1832.¹⁴¹ Interestingly, the fellow-commoner's gown of Trinity College, Cambridge¹⁴² has special zigzag lace trimmings on the facings and narrow lace on the top of the sleeves. The Chancellor's and Vice-Chancellor's robes of Durham af-

132 Nicholas Jackson, 'The Development of Academic Dress in the University of Warwick'. *TBS*, 8 (2008), pp. 27, 28, 45.

133 Benjamin West (1804), <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d2/3rd_Duke_of_Portland_1804.jpg> (accessed 5 July 2013).

134 Nathaniel Dance (1773/74), <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f0/Nathaniel_Dance_Lord_North.jpg> (accessed 5 July 2013).

135 Compare the portrait of Edward Thurlow, 1st Baron of Thurlow (Lord Chancellor 1783-1792), <<http://www.parliament.uk/worksofart/artwork/george-romney/edward-thurlow-baron-thurlow-1731-1816--lord-chancellor-/5404>>, and Alexander Wedderburn, 1st Earl of Rosslyn, (LC 1793-1801) <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/0e/Alexander_Wedderburn%2C_1st_Earl_of_Rosslyn_%28Lord_Loughborough%29_by_William_Owen.jpg> (both accessed 5 July 2013).

136 Dundas, Vol. III, p. 35.

137 Viscount Buckmaster (1915), <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/55/1st_ViscountBuckmaster.jpg> (accessed 5 July 2013).

138 George W. Shaw, *Academical Dress of British Universities* (Cambridge: Heffer, 1966), pp. 94, 95.

139 Smith and Sheard (1970), pp. 8, 9, 26.

140 Christianson, pp. 18-21.

141 William Gibson, 'The Regulation of Undergraduate Academic Dress at Oxford and Cambridge, 1660-1832', *The Burgon Society Annual 2004*, pp. 26-41.

142 Harraden (1803/05), print of a fellow-commoner of Trinity College.

ter the 1960s are almost an exact copy of this design¹⁴³. The state robes of noblemen in the 19th century were elaborate with very wide bands of gold braid trimmed onto a coloured silk damask gown, like that of chancellors. The braid was trimmed onto the gown in the form of semi-circles, sometimes with embroidery (Fig. 19).¹⁴⁴

For Manchester Victoria University, they had various chancellors' robes through their long history using different lace and trimmings. One of these robes is of a purple silk damask trimmed with bars of a special gold lace with toggles at the ends of each bar (Figs 20a and b).¹⁴⁵ Recently in 2013, Leeds Trinity University designed a new robe for its Chancellor in an unconventional pattern and trimmed with gold Bias & Stand army lace.¹⁴⁶

At Cambridge, fellow-commoners of three of the colleges use gold lace to trim their gowns. Christ's College uses a full size version of the undergraduate gown with gold lace round the edge of the sleeve and on each forearm seam. Corpus Christi College has an MA gown with a 1" wide strip of gold lace down each facing.¹⁴⁷ Jesus College uses a BA gown with the forearm seam closed; two long black velvet bars go across the forearm seam with a strip of gold lace running down the forearm seam from the shoulder to the top most velvet bar.¹⁴⁸ For other colleges, fellow-commoners wear the academical dress of their own universities.¹⁴⁹



FIG. 19 Lord Byron in Nobleman's undergraduate gown

Conclusions

Two main conclusions can be drawn from the current use of lace in the United Kingdom. Firstly, lace that is restricted to only a few degrees or to certain ranks will most likely fall into disuse and die out eventually. Secondly, the exact design of lace is not particularly important to the university authorities so long as it is similar to the lace currently used.

Oxford gimp has survived into the modern age because it is used on many degree gowns at that institution: higher lay faculty bachelors, masters and doctoral undress. This ensures that the gimp is used frequently rather than being restricted to certain degrees for

143 Diocese of Ely, *Durham Honorary Degree* <http://www.ely.anglican.org/news_events/honorary%20degree.html> (accessed 2 August 2013).

144 Harraden (1803/05), print of a nobleman in state robes.

145 Smith and Sheard (1970), p. 686.

146 Lisa Farrell, 'A Proud Day for Leeds Trinity University', *The Culture Vulture*, 7 June 2013, <<http://theculturevulture.co.uk/blog/news/a-proud-day-for-leeds-trinity-university/>> (accessed 16 June 2013).

147 Shaw (1992), pp. 27-29.

148 'Women about the Place: appreciations and treatment', an online article on About Jesus College, Cambridge No. 13, <<http://www.jesus.cam.ac.uk/about-jesus-college/old-library-archives/exhibitions/women-at-jesus-college/women-about-the-place-appreciations-and-treatment/>> (accessed 5 July 2013).

149 Shaw (1992), p. 27.



FIGS 20a (ABOVE), 20b Manchester Victoria University chancellor's robe.

which gowns are not often worn. In the case of Cambridge, the fact that its lace is used on the PhD undress gown, which more often than not is converted and merged into its dress version, ensures that it is often used and this is helped by the fact that gowns are worn regularly in Cambridge. Leeds lace survives because it is used on gowns of lower degrees such as bachelor and master, and at Portsmouth, lace is used on hoods as well. In the case of Leicester, the use of its red version of Birmingham braid on the festal PhD gown has saved it from being consigned to history. As for Southampton, the restriction of its lace to the doctoral undress gowns gave it a very short lifespan as there is no tradition of wearing undress gowns in Southampton as there is at Oxford or Cambridge. In the case of Durham/Newcastle, the doctoral braid has followed the same path as at Southampton, because the braid is restricted not just to undress gowns but to one specific faculty's undress gown, thereby narrowing the chances of such a gown being used even more, so that it was bound to fall into disuse. Although the bachelor's version was restricted to medical bachelors and thus survived far longer than the doctoral version, it was nevertheless effectively abolished, probably to simplify the gowns in line with others and possibly for reasons of economy. Therefore, in order to ensure a lace survives, it must be used on as many gowns as possible and not be restricted to a little-used gown or one that is never used at all.

It can also be noted that even a single lace design has many variations. This is due to the lace makers who may come and go. A lace maker may go out of business and so a new lace maker must be sought who, more often than not, cannot reproduce the given lace ex-

actly. Therefore, the gimp and lace used in early times are sometimes rather different from those used today. However, they are of the same general likeness and follow the design closely. The modern design may not be perfectly faithful to the 'original' but it is accepted by the authorities, who probably do not worry about the intricacies. Thus, it does not matter if the lace used is not exactly the same as that used by the official robemakers but as long as it is similar and of the same type then it tends to be acceptable in practice. For some of the laces that have fallen into disuse or have died out altogether, a substitute could be sought. For example, Southampton gowns could use Cambridge lace as a substitute as it is similar in design. Similarly, Birmingham braid could be replaced by Cambridge lace.

It is also a good practice to use lace that is used widely elsewhere, such as the gold oak leaf lace and the St Benet braid at Portsmouth, as there is little danger of such laces dying out.

Some outstanding issues

A more accurate date range for the change from braid and tassel trimming to Oxford gimp and Cambridge lace, and the relating regulations implementing the change (if any exist), are yet to be discovered.

The use of Birmingham braid on Nottingham and Reading gowns is yet to be verified by Ede & Ravenscroft.

The reason how and why Leeds lace came to be used on Leeds gowns when the regulations do not mention it, as well as its origins, are yet to be revealed by Ede & Ravenscroft.

The original 'frogging patch' of the older Downing College, Cambridge fellow-commoners' robe is yet to be examined and compared with the modern example.

The obsolete Oxford gimp designs could be rewoven and be archived for future research and use.

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