

Capuciis Furruratis cum Serico Duplicatis: Furred Hoods with Silk Linings from the Late Nineteenth Century

By Bruce Christianson, Philip Goff, and Nicholas Groves[†]

On 14 March 1879, Kate Milligan Edger became the first woman in the British Empire entitled to wear an academic hood trimmed with fur.¹ The hood in question, a BA from the relatively new University of New Zealand, was a black Cambridge full shape [f1], lined with pink silk (denoting Arts) and bordered with white fur (denoting a bachelor's degree).

Even twenty years previously, such a composite hood would have been a solecism:² for hundreds of years, hoods for graduates of British universities had been lined with either silk or fur, but not with both at once. But, by the end of the nineteenth century, the novel confluence of black hood with a coloured silk lining and a fur border had become entirely respectable,³ to the point where some universities with established systems of academic dress retrofitted fur to their bachelors' hoods.

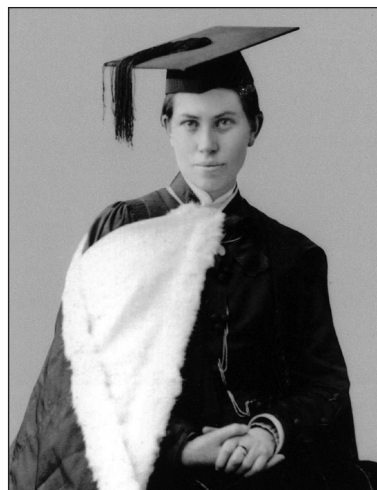


Fig. 1. Kate Milligan Edger, BA New Zealand, 1877.

[†] Deceased.

1 Fig. 1. Kate Edger graduated in July 1877, then had to wait nearly two years for the University to establish its system of academic dress. For a key to the Groves classification of hood patterns, see Groves, *Shaw*, Vol. I, pp. 32–39; also available at <burgon.org.uk/academic-dress/classification>. Grace Annie Lockhart graduated Bachelor of Science from Mount Allison in Canada in 1875, but Mount Allison has never used fur on its hoods. Strikingly, she wears no academic dress in her graduation class photograph, nor are any of her male classmates hooded; Fig. 2: <mta.ca/about/news/grace-annie-lockhart-mount-allison-and-canadian-heroine-mon-05172021-1708> [all web pages in this article were retrieved 14 July 2024].

In contrast, both Elena Piscopia, PhD in Letters, Padua 1678 (Fig. 3), and Laura Bassi, PhD in Science, Bologna 1732 (Fig. 4), are depicted in their official portraits wearing fur-lined doctors' capes: <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elena_Cornaro_Piscopia#> and <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laura_Bassi#>.

2 In this article, we use the term composite to refer to a hood lined with silk of a colour different from the outer, and trimmed with fur. We are particularly, but not exclusively, concerned with hoods that have black outers.

3 Although the new fashion would prove still controversial at Cambridge as late as the 1930s, as we shall see.

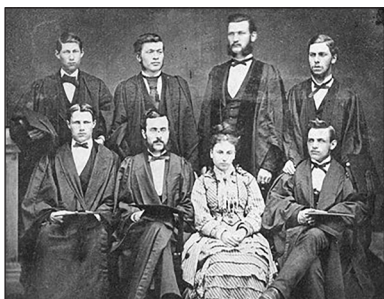


Fig. 2. Grace Annie Lockhart (in mufti), BSc Mount Allison, 1875.

Fig. 3. Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia, PhD (Letters) Padua, 1678.



Once, all graduates were prescribed academic hoods lined with fur

In England during the fourteenth century, the hoods of Bachelors of Arts and bachelors in the lay faculties were lined with cheap fur, such as lambswool; expensive fur, such as miniver, was used to line the hoods of the more senior degrees: doctors, Masters of Arts, and bachelors in the clerical faculties of Divinity and Canon Law.⁴

Silk linings emerge in the fifteenth century

Beginning in the fifteenth century, silk linings were introduced into the academic hoods of the senior degrees for use during the summer (officially between Easter and All Saints) as a cooler alternative to the expensive fur.⁵ Bachelors (other than those in Divinity and Canon Law) were still required to line their hoods with cheap fur throughout the year.

Although the 1443 foundation statutes of All Souls College, Oxford, tantalizingly require graduate fellows to wear ‘furred hoods lined with silk according to their degrees’,⁶ it is not clear whether this refers to an early appearance of the combination lining of silk and fur that would (re)-emerge during the latter part of the nineteenth century, or the Latin formula is simply a convenient way of referring to both types of hood.

⁴ The lay faculties were Civil Law, Medicine, and (later) Music. The clerical bachelors’ degrees in Divinity and Canon Law typically required the same length of study as the lay doctorates; the clerical doctorates took twice this long.

⁵ Silk linings were permitted as a summer alternative at Bologna as early as 1410, and Oxford followed shortly thereafter, although Cambridge waited nearly 150 years before granting her masters and doctors general permission: see Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *Academical Dress*; and Christianson, ‘Oxford Blues’, for more details.

⁶ ‘Omnesque et singuli Socii graduati, cum superpellitiis suis hujusmodi, utantur capuciis furruratis, cum serico duplicatis, suis gradibus congruentibus.’ See Bond, Vol. 1, ‘Statutes of All Souls College, Oxford’, p. 47; Groves, ‘Quire’. Our thanks to Dr Alex Kerr for his comments. The search for an irrefutable instance of a medieval composite hood continues.



Fig. 4 (left).
Laura Maria
Caterina Bassi,
PhD (Science)
Bologna,
1732.



Fig. 5 (right).
John Bull,
BMus Oxford,
1586.

In any event, at some point, although it is not clear exactly when, the divines, lay doctors, and Masters of Arts at the English universities ceased to change back into their fur hoods for winter,⁷ and a silk (rather than fur) lining became the year-round marker of a senior degree.

The Oxford BCL becomes an exception

Most academic hoods were made of the same material as the gown or habit over which they were worn, which in the English universities was, by the fifteenth century, typically black stuff for Bachelors of Arts, black silk for Masters of Arts, and scarlet cloth for doctors.

But somehow, by the end of the sixteenth century, the lay bachelors at Oxford (Bachelors of Civil Law, Medicine, and Music) were wearing a hood made entirely of blue silk, lined with cheap fur.⁸ Scandalously, this simple-shaped blue hood was increasingly merely trimmed with fur, rather than fully lined as the rules required and, by the time of Grignion in 1770, the proctors appear to have given up the battle.⁹

Although these hoods are made entirely of coloured silk, rather than lined with it, they represent a half-way house to the composite hoods that were to emerge later.

⁷ Although there are some interesting survivals. At Oxford the proctors still wear the miniver-lined winter version of the MA hood—but they do so all year round; at Cambridge in 1815 Ackermann depicts lay doctors still wearing fur-lined hoods with their congregation robes regardless of the season; Jackson, Plates XIV (Oxford), IV (Cambridge). In contrast, High Court judges in England continued to change their robes twice a year until 2008: their robes were faced with miniver until Ascension Day, and then with pink shot silk until 28 October.

⁸ The evolution of the Oxford lay bachelors' hoods is discussed in more detail in Christianson, 'Evolution'. In the wonderful 1589 portrait of John Bull, BMus, Fig. 5, his blue silk hood is damask and the fur looks decidedly expensive, but Oxford musicians have a reputation as free spirits when it comes to academic dress: <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Bull_(composer)>.

⁹ Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *Academical Dress*, Plates 11 B and C. (Grignion was the engraver of a set of plates.)

A medical false-hood

Hargreaves-Mawdsley refers to a 1651 portrait of Sir Charles Scarborough, MD, as depicting him wearing ‘a very large white fur hood with only a thin line of pink silk showing’, which would seem to describe an early example of the type of composite hood we are considering.¹⁰

However, Kerr briskly dispels this figment: ‘The thin strip about an inch wide between the fur covering above and the fur binding below is not pink silk but scarlet cloth, exactly the same colour as Scarborough’s Convocation habit: it is part of the shell of the hood and not some silk facing. These hoods, like the habits, could still be lined with either fur or silk (but surely not both together).’¹¹

A legal fiction

Hargreaves-Mawdsley also describes in similar terms a ‘scarlet cloth hood lined with scarlet taffeta and edged with miniver’ as being worn by members of Doctors’ Commons serving as advocates in the Court of Arches,¹² but his sources all lead eventually back to Strype who actually says:

Advocates are such as have taken their Degree of Doctor in the Faculty of the Civil Law; or (when this Kingdom submitted to the Papal See) of the Canon Law ... The Habits they use in Court, both Judges and Advocates, are a Scarlet Robe, and a Hood lined with Taffata, if they be of Oxford; if of Cambridge, White Minever, and round Caps of Black Velvet.¹³

This seems to describe conventional academic hoods worn at the time by Doctors of Law.

Durham introduces two-tone silk hoods trimmed with fur

In March 1858, Gutch refers to the hood for the Bachelor of Medicine at Durham as ‘purple cloth bound with white fur’, but this appears to have been premature:¹⁴ his revised list for September of that year replaces this description with ‘not decided upon by the Senatus’.

In October 1863, the *Lancet* describes the MB as ‘palatinate purple silk, lined with scarlet edged with ermine’.¹⁵ Their source for this assertion is unclear, and the reference to ermine is intriguing, albeit historically inappropriate for a Bachelor of Medicine. Wood’s description in 1875, ‘Scarlet silk, lined with palatinate purple silk, and bound with white fur’, places the colours the opposite (i.e., correct) way around, but confirms the precedent: silk of two different colours, one of them a lining, and the result trimmed with fur.¹⁶

¹⁰ Op. cit., p. 76, n. 3. The picture is reproduced here: <digitalcollections.nyam.org/islandora/object/ladd%253A241>.

¹¹ Kerr, pp. 119–20.

¹² *Legal Dress*, p. 94.

¹³ Strype, Book I, Chapter 24, p. 155.

¹⁴ The first MB was awarded in 1858. The Durham BCL did end up being palatinate purple silk, bound with white fur, which may have been inspired partly by the Oxford model, but the Durham BCL hood, like the MB and the later BSc, has always been full.

¹⁵ Vol. 82, p. 406. The *Lancet* probably had their MB hood on back to front.

¹⁶ Fig. 6, for which our gratitude to Dr Giles Brightwell. Newcastle took this hood with



Lee Dobson

Fig. 6 (left).
Durham MB.

Fig 7 (right).
LLB Edinburgh,
post 1866.



Burgon Society Archive WGC-122

Wood (in 1875 and in 1882) refers to the Durham MusB as ‘White silk, lined with palatinate purple silk, and bound with fur’, which follows the same model as the MB. However, this specification did not survive: Fowler in 1904 states the regulations for the Durham MusB hood as ‘Palatinate purple silk, bound with brocaded white satin’,¹⁷ as do the subsequent sources, and Haycraft in 1923 specifies that the MusB hood is by then simple shape.

them when they departed in 1963. On the modern Newcastle MB the hood is [f7] and only the cape has fur, and this was probably the Durham practice for it from the beginning, with Medicine conforming to Law in this respect, rather than to Science, which has fur on both cape and cowl. Later composite hoods at Durham that followed the model of the MB include the BCom, black lined cerise, cape bound fur, which dates from 1917; and the BDS, rose lined ivory, cape bound fur, first awarded 1932, which also went with Newcastle.

¹⁷ Fowler, Appendix VIII. The MusB had been awarded *ad eundem* to graduates of Oxford, Cambridge, and Dublin since 1863, but the first MusB by examination was not until 1891. The 1890 calendar agrees with Wood, whereas that for 1892 gives the BMus the BCL hood. Our thanks to Dr Paul Coxon for assistance with the Durham sources, and for many helpful comments.



Fig. 8. Helen Connan, BA New Zealand, 1880.

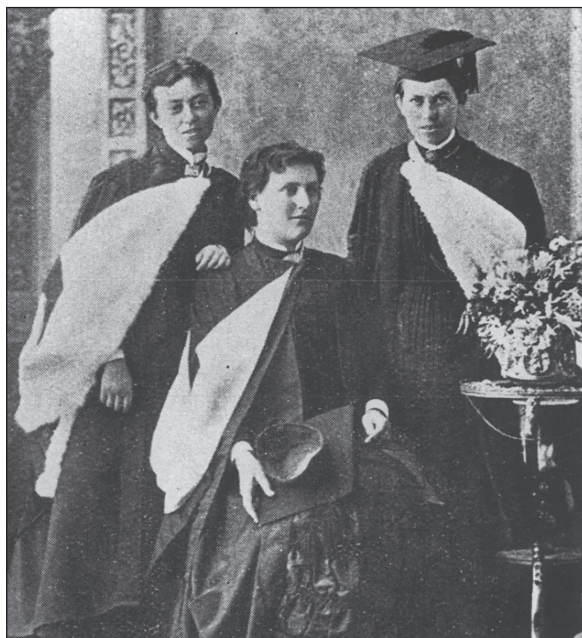


Fig. 9. University of New Zealand: left Margaret Lilian Florence Edger, BA, 1881; centre Helen Connan, MA, 1881; right Kate Milligan Edger, BA, 1877.

Edinburgh takes the next step with a simple black outer

In the University of Edinburgh calendar for 1865–66, hoods for bachelors' degrees appear for the first time.¹⁸ The four hoods (for the LLB, BD, MB, and ScB) follow a regular system: they are made of black silk in a simple shape, lined with the faculty colour silk already used by the corresponding doctor's degree (blue, purple, crimson, and lemon yellow, respectively), and 'bordered with white fur'.

New Zealand goes the full Monty

The University of New Zealand was founded in 1870, but did not prescribe a system of hoods until 1879. All hoods were the 'same size and shape as that of the Cambridge Master of Arts', lined with coloured silk denoting the faculty: the first two faculty colours to be specified were pink for Arts, and pale blue for Law.¹⁹ In addition to the lin-

¹⁸ For details of this development see Cooper, p. 125. These Edinburgh bachelors' hoods were and still are [s4]; Fig. 7. In this paper, we use the term 'faculty colour' in the same sense as Christianson, 'Gold', p. 80, n. 1.

¹⁹ In 1879 pink was for boys, and pale blue was for girls; see Bilal. The black outers were initially made of silk, as at Cambridge, although this was never specified in the regulations. The first academic dress regulations were agreed by the Senate on 14 March 1879; the first mention in the press of a hood being conferred on a graduand during the course of a degree ceremony was the 6 August following. The regulations required all graduates to 'appear at all public ceremonials of the University [which included graduation] in the academical costume

ing, the bachelors' hoods were 'bordered with white fur':²⁰ making these the first black full-shape composite hoods for a university degree.

But was Chichester Theological College there first?

In 1882, the bishops of the Church of England regulated the linings of the English theological college hoods. Prior to this restriction, Chichester used a black Cambridge full shape hood, lined with violet silk and bound on all edges with white fur.²¹ It is not clear when this hood was adopted: Chichester did not accept non-graduates prior to 1846, so the hood is unlikely to pre-date this, but it is at least possible that it was deployed before the composite bachelors' hoods at Durham and Edinburgh, and very likely that it pre-dates the black full hoods at New Zealand.

Ironically, if this is the case, the combination of silk lining and fur trim may have been chosen to ensure the hood did not resemble that for a university degree, following which the hood was suppressed by the bishops because fashion had changed, and now it did.

St Andrews briefly mirrors Durham

St Andrews added a white fur trimming to the cowl of its bachelors' hoods in 1888.²² For twenty years prior to this, bachelors had worn the hood of a doctor in the same faculty. The doctors' hoods were already lined with white satin, intended to represent the pre-Reformation miniver, and so for a short period the bachelors had a hood in faculty colour silk, lined with white satin (representing expensive fur) and trimmed with cheap fur. Eventually the situation was regularized and the white satin lining was removed,²³ leaving the bachelors' hoods as they are today.

proper to their degree', so some in the audience were already hooded, including (as it happens) Kate Edger: <www.canterbury.ac.nz/about-uc/what-we-do/uc-in-the-community/exhibitions-and-collections/canterbury-college/open-doors/graduation-and-celebrations> (seated centre). The first woman to be hooded during a ceremony was Helen Connan, who took her BA on 30 July 1880; Fig. 8.

20 At the time, Cambridge cut the BA and MA in slightly different shapes, but the New Zealand system was designed so that a BA hood could be converted to MA simply by removing the fur border. A year after her BA, Helen Connan became the first woman in the British Empire to be admitted to the degree of MA, at Canterbury University College on 15 August 1881: Fig. 9, seated centre. Standing on Helen's left is Kate Edger, wearing her fur-trimmed BA hood; on her right is Kate's younger sister Lilian, who graduated BA in 1881 at the same ceremony. Kate and Lilian would graduate MA together at Canterbury the following year. It thus appears that New Zealand bachelors' hoods originally had fur trim on the edge of the cape as well as the cowl, as evidenced by Helen Connan and Lilian Edger with their BA hoods in Figs 8 and 9, respectively.

21 See Groves, *Shaw*, Vol. II, p. 103; Groves, *Theological Colleges*; Wood 1882. Wood 1875 makes no mention at all of Chichester.

22 Cooper, p. 135, and Fig. 11, p. 134.

23 It is not clear exactly when, but the satin was gone by the time of Ealand in 1920. A new composite hood was approved much later at St Andrews for the EdB: black, lined primrose, bound fur; this degree went with Dundee when they gained their independence in 1967, although they gave it a new hood.

The new fashion spreads (but only a little) to 19th-century USA

Bryn Mawr is an historically women's college in Pennsylvania, founded in 1885, ten years before the Intercollegiate Code was established in the USA. Bryn Mawr would modify the code, by trimming their black BA hood with white fur in place of white velvet. The silk lining is old gold with a white chevron.

The University of the South, Tennessee (founded 1857), is listed in Wood 1882 as having one composite hood, for its BCL: a black simple hood, lined green and edged with white fur, but it not clear when this hood was first worn, or indeed if it ever was. Chitty asserts that at the July 1872 meeting of the trustees, designs for the hoods of twelve degrees were approved 'in the same designs and colours [still being] used in 1952',²⁴ but by the time of Haycraft 1923 the fur has been replaced in the specification by a purple cord.

Lincoln-Jefferson University in Chicago, founded 1897, has for its BA in Haycraft a black hood, lined purple and edged with white fur. This institution was a notorious degree mill, which included Charles Franklyn among its 'graduates'.²⁵

Manchester retrofits fur

In April 1901, the Council of the Victoria University of Manchester approved the addition of the words 'with a white fur lining inside the edging' to the description of the hoods for the BA and BSc degrees.²⁶ The linings of fur and silk are thus placed the opposite way around to most hoods of the composite type.

The change met with general approval, according to the *Owens College Union Magazine*, which referred to it as 'a change ... which will not appeal to lady students only', and subsequently to 'the general popularity of the becoming change which has so much relieved the dullness of the Bachelors' hoods ...'²⁷

Liverpool adopted a variant of the Edinburgh system when it left the Victoria University in 1903, which incorporated black composite hoods for bachelors' degrees.²⁸

More Colonial universities embrace the trend

In 1894 Melbourne University replaced their BSc hood with a composite: black simple shape, lined moss green silk and edged with white fur. In 1902 the University instigated a system of faculty colour linings, and prescribed composite hoods for all bachelors.²⁹

The University of Western Australia, founded in Perth in 1911, adopted composite hoods for all its bachelors' degrees: black simple shape, lined with watered silk of the faculty colour and edged with white fur. The first faculty colours were royal blue for Arts; emerald green for Science; gold for Engineering; royal purple for Law; peacock blue for Music; and ruby red for Medicine.

²⁴ The first degrees were awarded at the University of the South in August 1874, but this cohort included no BCLs; Chitty, pp. 138, 182, n. 7.

²⁵ Groves, *Charles Franklyn*, pp. 30–32. All LJU hoods are said to be full by Haycraft, but Franklyn's hood in Groves, op. cit., Fig. 2, p. 32, is clearly the Burgon shape.

²⁶ Figure 10. The original design without fur had been approved twenty years earlier.

²⁷ Lowe, pp. 17, 8.

²⁸ Fig. 11.

²⁹ University of Melbourne Calendars, 1858–2009, at <umpc.esrc.unimelb.edu.au/biogs/E000008b.htm>. The fur edgings were replaced with white silk bindings in 1927.



Burgon Society Archive WBS-002 (1)
Fig. 10. BA Manchester,
post 1901.



Burgon Society Archive WBS-274 (b)
Fig. 11. BA Liverpool.



Burgon Society Archive WBS-080 (1)
Fig. 12. BA Dalhousie.



Burgon Society Archive WBS-398 (1)
Fig. 13. BCom McGill.



Burgon Society Archives WAMT-011 (2)
Fig. 14. Fellow of the Na-
tional College of Music.



Burgon Society Archive WGC-050
Fig. 15. Fellow of the Victo-
ria College of Music.

During the period between 1889 and 1923, a number of Canadian universities also adopted composite hoods for at least one of their bachelors' degrees. Here are some examples, all are simple shape except where indicated:

King's College Halifax: BSc—black, lined old gold,³⁰ edged white fur.

New Brunswick: BSc (Arts)—black, lined scarlet, bordered white fur; similarly BSc (Applied), lined green.

Dalhousie: BA—black, lined white, bordered fur.³¹

McGill³² (full shape with fur edging outside both cowl and cape): BA—black, lined pale blue, edged white fur; similarly BCL, French grey; BArch, white; BSc, yellow; BMus, mauve.

Manitoba: Bachelor of Civil Engineering—black, lined yellow, edged white fur; similarly Bachelor of Pharmacy, lined light blue.

Bishop's University Lennoxville (full): BA—black, lined violet, bordered white fur.³³

McMaster University, Toronto: BA—black, lined white silk, edged white fur.

Victoria University Toronto:³⁴ (full) BD—black, lined purple, trimmed ermine [!]

Non-university hoods: English music colleges (all simple shape)

We have already mentioned that Chichester Theological College prescribed a composite hood until it was forbidden by the bishops. Composite hoods were also prescribed for non-degree qualifications by a number of the English music colleges, which were not subject to episcopal oversight.

Trinity College of Music at some point between 1872 and 1875³⁵ prescribed for its Senior Choral Fellows a black hood in a simple shape, lined with violet silk and bound with white fur. By 1882 this had become the hood for a Licentiate in Music, with the Licentiate in Arts having a pink lining in place of the violet one.

The Guild of Organists, founded 1887, gave their fellows a black hood, lined rose pink³⁶ and faced 6" fur. By the time of Haycraft 1923 a number of other music colleges had followed this example:

Incorporated Guild of Church Musicians: Life Fellows—crimson, lined gold shot,³⁷ bound fur.

³⁰ There was also, briefly, a BEng on the same pattern with a green lining.

³¹ Fig. 12.

³² Fig. 13. Wood 1882 sets out a very different system, without composite hoods or faculty colours. The new system was in place by 1903.

³³ The specification is virtually the same as Chichester; since 1906 a very similar hood adorned a New Zealand Bachelor of Engineering. These congruences were observed by Baty.

³⁴ Listed in Ealand, p. 311. The ermine did not last long, but the hood has probably always been full.

³⁵ The exact dates are not known, because the relevant records were destroyed in the Blitz: Groves, *Shaw*, Vol. I, pp. 94–96; Groves and Kersey; however, the violet hood is described in Wood 1875 as the hood for a Senior Choral Fellow; and both composite hoods are listed, as licentiate hoods, in Wood 1882.

³⁶ Wood 1889 has this lining as rose pink; by the time of Haycraft 1923 the lining is given as crimson, possibly to avoid confusion with the LTCM (Arts).

³⁷ The gold lining was added to the original crimson hood at some point prior to 1923.

National Academy of Music, c. 1920: Fellow—navy blue, lined red, bound fur.³⁸

National College of Music, 1894: Fellow—black, lined lavender, bound fur on cowl.³⁹

Victoria College of Music, 1890: Fellow—royal blue, lined scarlet, cowl bordered with white fur.⁴⁰

Another non-university institution to adopt a composite hood for their fellowship, albeit in the full shape, is the Burgon Society, to whose festal hood we turn after the following interlude.

A bridge too far: the Cambridge reforms of 1934

In 1934 Cambridge University established a system of faculty colours for its hoods, by extending the use of the silks distinctive of the various doctors' degrees⁴¹ to lower degrees in the same faculty.

The 1934 reforms were the culmination of a series of consultations that had taken place over the previous two years.⁴² The first (1932) report of the Council to the Senate proposed that masters in the lay faculties should have a black hood lined inside with faculty-colour silk; and bachelors the same, but trimmed on the cape with white fur, i.e., exactly the type of composite hood we have been considering.

In between the first (1932) and second (1933) reports of the Council to the Senate, the faculty-coloured silk proposed for bachelors' degrees moved from being an inside lining to forming the entire body of the hood, as it does now, and a fur facing was added to the cowl edge. This was purportedly to bring the other bachelors' hoods into line with the Cambridge MusB hood;⁴³ the first proposal may have savoured more of nineteenth-century novelty.⁴⁴

Cambridge adopts a composite hood anyway

All was not lost for the 1932 proposal, however. The Cambridge degree of BEd, first awarded in 1969, had a black outer with a blue silk lining, and was faced on the cowl edge and bound on the cape with white fur.⁴⁵

³⁸ Compare this with the Victoria College of Music below.

³⁹ Fig. 14; Groves and Kersey, Plate 4.

⁴⁰ Fig. 15.

⁴¹ The systematic use of distinctive colours for doctorates in different faculties was itself an innovation dating from the reforms of 1889; Groves, 'Cambridge'. For a long time prior to this date, bachelors and masters in all faculties at Cambridge had worn a hood reflecting their status in the Faculty of Arts.

⁴² The various reports are to be found in Franklyn, along with Franklyn's irascible commentary.

⁴³ Which itself dated only from 1889, and was described without apparent irony by Council in their second report as 'perhaps the most beautiful of all academic decorations'; Franklyn, p. 183. To be fair to Cambridge, their new MusB hood did have some precedent in the older Durham BCL, whereas the 1932 proposals followed the 1917 Durham BCom.

⁴⁴ Although so also were the faculty-specific silks for doctors, and indeed faculty hood schemes generally.

⁴⁵ Fig. 16: our thanks to Ryder & Amies for the loan of this hood. The degree is no longer awarded.

Decline and fall

New systems that included composite hoods continued to be defined,⁴⁶ but by the 1960s, enthusiasm for composite hoods and indeed for fur generally was on the wane in the university sector.

Strathclyde in 1964 used fur as the faculty 'colour' for Engineering; Stirling and the Royal College of Art adopted composite hoods in 1967, but not for their bachelors: both adopted fur for masters' degrees, and the RCA for higher doctors as well;⁴⁷ Dundee in 1967 adopted composite hoods for their bachelors;⁴⁸ Brandon in 1967⁴⁹ adopted a composite hood for their BSc; and Saskatchewan flirted with a composite hood for their BA (PhysEd).⁵⁰

Composite non-university hoods of relatively recent vintage include the Fellowship of the North and Midlands School of Music;⁵¹ the Institute of Traditional Anglicans;⁵² the Llandaff Diocese Ordination Course;⁵³ and of course ...

The Burgon Society festal hood

The Burgon Society was founded to combine study of the design, history and practice of academic dress, and so Council (as the Executive Committee was then called) decided in 2009 that it would be fun to adopt a second official Society hood for festive occasions,⁵⁴ along the lines of the nineteenth-century composite hoods that we have been considering in this article.

Following a fruitful period of experimentation, the specification for this hood has settled down, and is now as follows:

A black hood of the Durham BSc shape [f7], lined with the Society's ruby shot silk and bound around the cape and cowl with white or grey fur, with or without spots, so that 2" fur shows all round. The fur may be real or artificial. The neckband is plain black, straight, and narrow.

Although partly inspired by the 'furruratis cum serico duplicatis' clause of the All Souls College Statute, this hood is not, strictly speaking, a 'winter' hood at all: Dr Alex Kerr refers to it drily as 'a hood for all seasons', which is very appropriate for a society with members in both hemispheres.

Our final figures show two examples of a Burgon festal hood,⁵⁵ together with a contemporary BA hood from the University of Auckland for comparison.⁵⁶

46 This article makes no attempt to give a systematic account of developments within the last hundred years, but see Groves, *Key*; and Smith, Vol. III.

47 See Fleming for details of Stirling.

48 Fig. 17. The hoods are [a6]. The fur is removed to make the corresponding master's degree.

49 When they separated from McMaster. The hood is [f1], ochre, lined light blue, edged, fur.

50 Simple, black, lined gold, bordered fur.

51 Originally [f1] black, lined and bound 2" red satin, cowl faced 3" fur.

52 Black [s2], lined crimson, cowl bound 1" fur each side.

53 Black [f1], lined dark blue, cowl faced 3" fur, with 1" old gold set 1" in; Fig. 18.

54 This hood was designed by the authors, and the full story of the process is told in this volume; see Goff.

55 Fig. 19 is Professor William Gibson's festal hood, made by the Revd Kenneth Crawford (Robes of Distinction); the fur is faux ermine. Fig. 20 is Professor Bruce Christianson's festal hood, made by Paul Fielder, FBS (Étude Classique); the fur is unbleached grey possum (see Appendix).

56 Fig. 21. This hood is also from Étude Classique; the fur is bleached possum. Auckland



Bruce Christianson

Fig. 16. BEd Cambridge.



Burgon Society Archives WBS-078 (1)

Fig. 17. BSc Dundee.

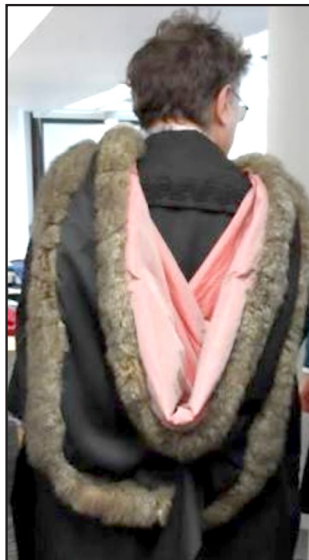


Burgon Society Archives WBS-298 (1)

Fig. 18. Llandaff Diocese Ordination Course.



Fig. 19. Fellow of the Burgon Society, festal hood with faux ermine.



Philip Goff

Fig. 20. Fellow of the Burgon Society, festal hood with natural grey possum fur.



Chris Williams

Fig. 21. BA Auckland, with bleached white possum fur.

Conclusion

Composite hoods, ‘furred and lined with silk’, remain in use at many institutions, but they have not for some time featured regularly in new systems of academic dress. As demand increased for cruelty-free alternatives to traditional materials, synthetic substitutes for silk became popular with academic robe designers⁵⁷ but, for whatever reasons, the synthetic substitutes for fur have not.⁵⁸

Even Liverpool, which adopted a variant of the Edinburgh system when it left the Victoria University in 1903, has not extended the use of fur to recently introduced bachelors’ degrees, and none of the post-1992 developments in the UK has embraced it. This article therefore charts not only the rise—but perhaps also the fall—of an academic dress tradition.

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University College became a university in its own right when the federal University of New Zealand was dissolved in 1961, and inherited its academic dress. Nothing about the BA has changed officially from the time of Kate Edger: indeed, when Kate’s granddaughter Jill Smith took her BA from Auckland University in 1985 she wore Kate’s hood, with the fur trim restored. The pink on the modern hood is perhaps slightly lighter; the fur trim is confined to the cowl; at some point prior to the 1970s the outer has shifted from black silk to black cloth; and more recently the cape has become slightly rounded. In contrast, when Canterbury University College became a university, they abandoned the use of fur altogether. Our thanks to the Revd Dr Noel Cox for his assistance with New Zealand academic dress.

⁵⁷ And with young people.

⁵⁸ The recent MFA at TCD is an exception, although (like the Oxford BCL) it is not actually a composite hood.

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Appendix: A brief note on the use of possum fur in New Zealand

The Australian brushtail possum (*trichosurus vulpecula*), a cat-sized marsupial, was introduced to New Zealand in 1837 for the fur trade in a horrible error of judgement.⁵⁹ In Australia, the possum is protected as a native species. But in New Zealand, it has become the country's most damaging animal pest, wreaking havoc on native flora and fauna, increasing carbon emissions while driving endemic species towards extinction, and acting as a vector of bovine tuberculosis.⁶⁰

It is a pity, as possums are cute and good pets, but New Zealand's conservation policy towards possums continues to be extermination.⁶¹ While this is proceeding, the fur of culled possums is widely used (in bleached form) to trim the bachelors' hoods of the four universities in New Zealand that still prescribe fur borders for them. The natural colour of the possum's coat in New Zealand is either black or grey.

⁵⁹ <teara.govt.nz/en/possums/page-1>

⁶⁰ <nzpocketguide.com/new-zealand-hates-possums/>

⁶¹ <www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/science-and-technical/possumcontrol.pdf>, <www.scientificamerican.com/article/behind-new-zealands-wild-plan-to-purge-all-pests1/>.