

‘A Hood for the Minister’: Some Thoughts on Academic Hoods as Recorded in Eighteenth- and Early-Nineteenth-Century Church Inventories

by Nicholas Groves

As part of my on-going doctoral research, I have had to examine the Inventories of all the Norwich city parishes. In passing, I noted down what they had to say in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries about hoods.¹

It was required by the XXth Canon of 1603 that the parish should provide ‘a comely surplice with sleeves’ for the parson, and most of the Inventories record this—but they also seem in many cases to have provided the hood as well. Some of the listings are less than useful—‘a hood’. Others tell us a great deal. In passing, we should note that these Inventories were compiled by the churchwardens who, then as now, did not always appreciate the finer points of ecclesiastical nomenclature. Also, the coverage is uneven—some parishes have more surviving Inventories than others, some are more fully completed than others.²

In several cases, the garment is listed as ‘a hood or tippet’. Given the notorious difficulty of deciding exactly what a ‘tippet’ is in relation to the literate’s hood (‘a decent tippet of black so it be not silk’), does this tell us that the eighteenth-century churchwardens could not tell the difference either? Certainly it tells us they regarded them as interchangeable: in 1740, St George Colegate lists ‘a scarlet hood or tippet’; St Peter Hungate (1725) has ‘a black hood or minister’s Tippet’; and Sts Simon & Jude (1709) has ‘a black hood or tippet for the Minister, lined with silk’. St Lawrence (1709) has, intriguingly, ‘a hood and tipit’—was this two items—or was it one, with a dual function (hood for graduate, tippet for literate)?³ I think we may take this as further proof that the literate’s tippet is not a scarf—whatever else it may be.

¹ Transcriptions of the relevant entries are at the end of this article. The Inventories themselves are in the Norfolk Record Office, in the series DN/TER. I shall hope to extend the sample at a later date.

² St John Maddermarket, for example, lists only the church plate!

³ It is just possible it refers to the two parts of the full hood—what we would call cowl (‘hood’) and cape (‘tipit’)— i.e. a hood with a tippet—remembering the Cambridge use of the word tippet to mean the cape of the hood.

Many of the hoods are listed as ‘black’, or ‘black lined silk’. These will be the non-regent MA hood of Cambridge—which was black, and strictly unlined, but many of these appear to have a lining—e.g. St James Pockthorpe (1722): ‘a hood of silk and woollen, black’. The ‘woollen’ refers to the outer shell, which must have been of cloth, though it is possible that ‘silk and woollen’ could refer to a mixture: a corded material perhaps, with the silk woven over the wool?

Several scarlet hoods appear, and St George Colegate in 1791 actually lists one as we would wish: ‘a scarlet hood lined with black silk’. This must be an Oxford DD—or just possibly a Dublin one. However, this simply does not seem to fit with the Vicars:

Vicars of St George Colegate.

1715–1745: William Hyrne, MA, DD Cantab.

1745–1752: Samuel Salter, MA, DD Cantab.

1752–1785: Richard Tapps, MA Cantab.

1785–1790: Henry Harrington [?literate]

1790–1795: Ozias Thurston Linley, BA Oxon.

1795–1814: James W. Newton, MA Cantab.

1814–1851: Francis Howes, MA Cantab.

1851–1852: Edward Hibgame, MA Cantab.

1852–1874: Alexander Durdin, MA Dublin.

The relevant Vicar is Linley—and he does not appear to have proceeded MA, let alone DD.⁴ The other possibility is that Harrington was a DD of Oxford, but this is unlikely. Thus it remains possible that Linley was wearing a ‘falsehood’!

St George Tombland in 1723 has ‘a hood of silk and woollen scarlet’.⁵ Whether or not we decide that ‘silk and woollen’ means cloth lined silk or a mixed cloth, (but in 1740 they list a hood of scarlet ‘lined with silk’, implying two different materials) it implies that the whole hood is scarlet. We know that the DD hood at Cambridge gained its current shot silk lining very late (c. 1850), and that previously it was scarlet lined rose: does this imply that, previous to that, it was lined with scarlet? One would like to know where these hoods were made: were they bought from robemakers in Cambridge or London—or were they ‘run up’ by

⁴ Thus *Alumni Oxoniensis*. I am grateful to Dr Alex Kerr for checking this information for me. However, as this does not mention Linley’s being Vicar of St George’s, one wonders if any higher degrees may have been omitted too.

⁵ Quite certainly acquired for John Clarke, MA, DD (Cantab), Vicar of St George’s 1712–56—and also Dean of Salisbury 1728–57. Clare Hall, Cambridge: pensioner 1699; BA 1704; MA 1707; DD 1717. The Churchwardens’ Account Books do not exist for before 1772, so it is not possible to check that this was so, but is very likely, given the case of Charles Sutton (see below).

Norwich tailors from patterns provided?⁶ If the latter, was the scarlet lining a Norwich innovation? And if so, does this imply that the rose-colour was less the pale pink we might expect than something approaching crimson, which could easily be approximated as scarlet?

St George Tombland can add a little more from other sources. In 1806, the Vicar, Charles Sutton, proceeded DD at Cambridge.⁷ On 4 June that year, the Churchwardens' Accounts note: 'Dr Sutton, for a new Doctor's hood: £2/15/-.'⁸ It was preserved in the church as late as 1891, and was, I suspect, a victim of 'clearing out'—probably by one of the ultra-Ritualist clergy who were incumbents from 1895.

So much for Cambridge: what of Oxford? The majority of Norwich incumbents were Cambridge men,⁹ but St Gregory's lists 'an Oxford hood' in 1784. This presumably refers to the MA hood, which with its red lining was of course noticeably different from the all-black Cambridge one. St George Colegate also has 'two *red* hoods' (my emphasis)—and lists these alongside a scarlet one, so it is clear that they could tell the difference between the two shades. It is difficult to see what these can be: they could be Oxford MA hoods, as from at least 1592, and until about 1770, it was the custom to wear the Oxford MA hood inside out, with the red lining showing,¹⁰ but it is possible that they may in fact be Cambridge DD hoods, the 'red' referring to the rose-colour lining, and this certainly seems to fit the list of incumbents better.

St Gregory's provides specific titles for its hoods—there is a Master of Arts hood—presumably Cambridge; a Doctor of Laws hood—again, presumably Cambridge, though at this period the LL.D hood of Cambridge was the same as the DCL hood of Oxford. It also lists in 1827 'a bachelor's hood': i.e. the standard BA hood of black and fur.

Perhaps the most intriguing entry is at St Andrew's, which has (1723) 'two Church hoods'. Does this imply that there was some difference between the hoods used in church and those used at the universities? Or simply that the Churchwardens were ignorant of their academic significance? It also raises the question of whether, despite the careful provisions noted above, in many cases the minister was provided with a hood which he wore regardless of his degree.

⁶ I would suggest this might be the case for St Mary Coslany, where the hood is of serge, lined with silk.

⁷ Charles Sutton, c. 1756–1846. Sizar of St John's, Cambridge, 1775; scholar 1778; Fellow 1784–93. BA 1779; MA 1782; BD 1790; DD 1806. Vicar of St George Tombland 1788–1841.

⁸ NRO PD 106/49.

⁹ In 1857, out of 28 incumbents in the City, 14 were Cambridge, 4 Oxford, 2 Dublin, 1 London (an MB at that), 1 St Bees, and 6 literates.

¹⁰ Bruce Christianson: 'The Evolution of the Oxford Simple Shape', *Burton Society Annual*, 2002, pp. 30–36 (p. 33. n. 10).

The custom of providing a hood seems to die out around 1850—just as degrees from the newer universities (Durham, London) become more common—and also as theological college hoods start to be more common, too; and we must therefore assume that clergy had their own hoods. Certainly, one would like to have been able to look into the vestry cupboards of Norwich around 1750!

Hoods in the Inventories of Norwich city churches

All Saints—no hoods listed.

St Andrew—

1706—‘two tippetts’;

1723—‘two Church hoods’;

1852—‘two silken hoods’.

St Augustine—1845—‘one hood’.

St Benedict—1845—‘a black silk hood’.

St Clement-at-Fyebridge—1845—‘two hoods’.

St Edmund Fishergate—no hoods listed.

St Etheldreda—1845—‘a hood’.

St George Colegate—

1729—‘two red hoods, one all silk, the other silk and woollen’;

1740—‘a scarlet hood or tippet’;

1791—‘a scarlet hood lined with black silk; two red hoods, one all silk, the other silk and woollen; a hood of black silk’.

St George Tombland—

17??—‘two surplices and two tippetts’;

1716—‘a hood suitable to ye minister’s degree’;

1723—‘a hood of silk and woollen, a hood of silk and woollen scarlet’;

1726—‘a hood of silk and woollen black, a hood of silk and woollen scarlet’;

1740—‘a cloth hud [*sic*] of scarlet lined with silk’.

St Giles-on-the-Hill—1834—‘a silk hood’.

St Gregory Pottergate—

1735—‘one MA hood, one LD hood’;

1753—‘1 DD and 1 MA hood’; 1784—‘1 MA, 1 D of Law hood, 1 Oxford hood’;

1827—‘an LL.D, an MA and one bachelor’s hood’.

St James Pockthorpe—1722—‘a hood of silk and woollen, black’.

St John Maddermarket—1827—two scarlet and one black silk hoods.

St John de Sepulchre—1723—‘one large holland surplice and a silk tippet’; in 1740 the tippet is listed as a hood.

St John Timberhill—no hoods listed.

St Julian—no hoods listed.
St Lawrence—1709—‘a hood and tipit’.
St Margaret de Westwick—no hoods listed.
St Martin-at-Oak—no hoods listed.
St Martin-at-Palace—1845—a black silk hood.
St Mary Coslany—1827—‘a hood of serge lined silk for the minister’.
St Miles Coslany—no hoods listed.
St Michael-at-Plea—no hoods listed.
St Michael-at-Thorn—1845—‘two surplices and a hood’.
St Paul—
 1827—one hood;
 1834—‘one black silk hood’.
St Peter Hungate—1725—‘a black hood or minister’s Tippet; a new scarlet hood’.
St Peter Mancroft—1834—‘two scarlet hoods, two black hoods’.
St Peter Parmentergate—1845—‘a hood’.
St Saviour—1834—‘a hood’.
Sts Simon & Jude—1709—‘a black hood or tippet for the Minister, lined with silk’.
St Stephen—no hoods listed.
St Swithin—no hoods listed.



**Dr Edmund Turpin's
Lambeth DMus robes (1890s)**
Photographs: Br. Michael Powell