

# Transactions of the Burgon Society

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## Officers, Fellows & Members; Congregation 2002 - Chairman's address; Fellowship of the Burgon Society 2002

Michael Powell

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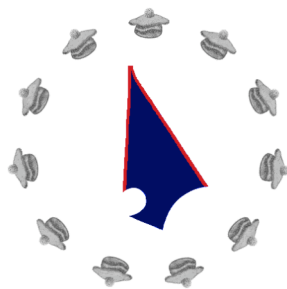
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# THE BURGON SOCIETY



## ANNUAL 2002



# THE BURGON SOCIETY

Founded to promote the study of Academical Dress

## ANNUAL 2002

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Burgon Society Website:  
**[www.burgon.org.uk](http://www.burgon.org.uk)**

Burgon Society members may also be interested in the Academic Dress E-Group, founded by the Archivist of this Society, which is to be found at [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/academic\\_dress](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/academic_dress)

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**Ms Susan North** (de jure), *Communications Officer, Senior Curator of Fashion, Victoria & Albert Museum,*  
**Dr Stephen E. Plank** (by submission), *"Academic Regalia at Oberlin College, Ohio: the establishment and dissolution of a tradition"*  
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**The Revd Canon Douglas A Southward**, (by submission), *1. "Is Academic Dress obsolete in the 21st century?" 2. "St Bees College, Cumberland, 1816-1896: a study of its academical dress." 3. 'The hood of the Carlisle & Blackburn Training Institute.'*  
**Dr James Thomson** (jure dignitatis), *Vice-Patron, Master of Charterhouse*  
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*Members' post-nominal letters are printed as stated on the membership application forms.*

*In Memoriam*  
**Alan Tait M.A., B.Mus., FTCL, ARCO, ARCM**  
**1953 - 2002**

*Member of the Burgon Society*

It was with immense shock that all his friends learned of the sudden and unexpected death of Alan Tait (49), younger son of Margaret and the late Alex Tait. Alan was educated at Edinburgh: Leith Academy Primary and Secondary Schools and at age 16, decided that he wanted a career in the Civil Service serving some 27 years achieving the rank of Higher Executive Officer. Changes in Government staffing in 1996 offered him the opportunity of early retirement from the Service and the opportunity to do the one thing which through the years he had always cherished and that was, to study music. As a mature student he commenced studies at Napier University Edinburgh, graduating Bachelor of Music with Honours in the year 2000 and at the time of his death, he was studying at Edinburgh University for the postgraduate degree of Master of Music. Throughout his life, music had consistently played a huge part particularly his interest in the pipe organ of which he was an accomplished performer. He was appointed Organist at Junction Road Parish Church in 1966 at age 15 years and this was followed with appointments over the next 34 years to various Edinburgh Churches including the Interdenominational Robin Chapel in the Thistle Foundation, Edinburgh. In his search for knowledge and particularly in his earlier years he researched and studied music at a variety of levels holding an impressive array of musical qualifications. His interest in academic dress stemmed from his earliest years at Leith Academy Primary School where all the staff then held the Edinburgh M.A., and throughout his life he studied and researched the background and development of academic dress and its usage. He particularly abhorred the increasing number of Ministers in the Church of Scotland, of which he was an Ordained Elder, in dispensing with wearing academic robes when conducting public worship! Music was his life and in August 2000 he was asked to lecture at selected music classes at Napier University. This invitation absolutely delighted him and he told a close friend only weeks prior to his death, that he had never been so happy as he was when lecturing at the University and he very much hoped that at some future time he would secure a permanent position on the music faculty. Alas however it was not to be, for sometime during the hours of Saturday/Sunday morning 28 April he was called into the nearer presence of Almighty God. We have all lost a good friend and a good person. We give thanks for his life and for everything which he achieved, and the standards for which he stood, the world is but a poorer place for his passing. *Dr Stuart W Sime*

## **Congregation 2002 - Chairman's address**

President, Vice-Patron, Members of Council, Fellows, Members and Guests.

It seems but the blink of an eye since last I stood here to address this Congregation.

During the year our growth has accelerated and our Membership stands at 81 with 27 Fellows.

This is all the more surprising since we do not set out to entice people into joining our Society with free offers, and we don't even give our members a hood or a gown. For that they must work towards Fellowship, an award we do not make, as the old marriage service has it, "lightly or wantonly". We are determined not to be seen as a dressing-up society, however much we might all admire our new Officer's robes, which are receiving their first outing today, thanks to the generosity of Ede and Ravenscroft.

Instead we seek to keep alive an interest in, and formal study of, our rather specialised area of costume; concerned at all times with academic enquiry into the origins, evolution and design of such dress, and all that flows from its study, for example: the history of universities and degrees; dyeing, weaving; the social history of robemaking and the use of academical dress in society today.

Just as the Master or Mistress of the robes to a monarch has always been privy to much else besides, so we find, in our pursuit of the story of academical dress, that we learn about many other things as well.

Little by little we are piecing together the great jigsaw that no one individual can possess. We are, if you like, the hunter-gatherers of the costume world except that we have learned to pool our resources and in this lies the strength of our Society.

Today we have presented three Fellowships by examination, all of which, as we have heard, cover very different territories. Dr Stephen Plank, Dr John Lundy, and The Revd Canon Ambrose Southward increase our number of Fellows by submission to five. Moreover there are, currently, three candidates actively working towards Fellowship and five others at the enquiry stage.

We are also fortunate that the Master of Charterhouse, Dr James Thomson, has taken us under his wing and has made us so welcome here. We are delighted that he has agreed to become our Vice-Patron and know that he will be a good ambassador for us. We also know that our award to him of the FBS *jure dignitatis* is not quite in the same league as his Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons whose gown he is wearing today. Nevertheless we hope that he will sport our Fellowship with pride!

His work as secretary of the Lambeth Degree Holders Association is, for us, a link with one of the most fascinating of all degree awarding authorities, namely the Archbishop of Canterbury, exercising former Legatine powers bestowed by the Pope; and dispensing Lambeth alumni from such trivial and wearisome things as residence and examination!

This year we have awarded the FBS *honoris causa* to one of the great characters of the robemaking business. Ron Brookes is known to every university in the land and beyond. He has been honoured with the Associateship of Liverpool John Moores University but, more importantly he is held in great esteem by the robemaking business as a whole, together with all its



attendant industries. He enjoys, and this is the real acid test, the respect and affection of all of his colleagues which is a testimony to his goodness as well as his unrivalled knowledge of the business. Inside Ron's head is an incredible map of colours and shapes as well as an intricate appreciation of the ins and outs, comings and goings of robemakers. His skilful organisation and running of ceremonies has averted many potential disasters and his uncanny sixth sense for something not seen or overlooked is legendary. We very much look forward to an informal gathering with Ron during the coming year and to as many of his stories as he feels able to tell us. It is also a great pleasure to welcome his wife Christine and daughter Carmel here today.

We welcome to Council and to Fellowship, as our Communications Officer, Susan North, Senior Curator of Fashion in the Textiles and Fashion department of the Victoria and Albert Museum. Susan graduated from the MA course in dress at the Courtauld Institute. Amongst many other things, she has an interest in the academical dress of her native Canada and we can look forward to the fruits of her research. Susan's responsibility within the Society, will be to link us to museums, dress collections, costume societies, departments of dress and to oversee the way we present ourselves to the world. She remarked to me recently that all of the costume societies with which she has a connection are composed almost entirely of women with one or two brave men as exceptions. It is a great delight for us then, that rare commodity in the costume world, namely a society composed almost entirely of men, to welcome Susan to our ranks.

During the year the Newsletter, Burgon Notes, was introduced thanks to the efforts of Bruce Christianson and Philip Lowe. It aims to present more immediate items of news and to be less formal than our Annual. We are pleased to have items of news for inclusion in it from any of our Fellows, Members and friends.

The first Burgon lecture and dinner took place in September. The lecture here at Charterhouse was given by The Reverend Colin Lawlor, Chaplain of Brighton University. It was an amusing and erudite insight into the life and personality of John Burgon and was based on the research which Fr Lawlor did for his MPhil thesis on the vexatious and quarrelsome Dean from whom the Society takes its name. A splendid Society dinner followed the lecture at the Café du Marche a mere step away from these hallowed walls!

During the year we were saddened by the death of Alan Tait, who would have played an increasing part in our proceedings. His executor, Dr Stuart Sime, also a Member of the Society, very kindly donated Alan's academical dress collection to us. Several Council members enjoyed a memorable lunch at our Secretary's home to inspect the collection: something Alan would have approved of enormously, I suspect.

This collection together with other robes held by the Society has recently been given a home, thanks to Br Michael Powell, at St George's College, Weybridge and photographs of our archive, which is being catalogued, will soon be available on our website. I should also like to thank Br Michael for his work on our 2002 Annual which will be available before Christmas.

Another loss to the academical dress world and beyond comes with the death of Dr David Avery. Twice Lord Mayor of Westminster, he was much involved with the Polytechnic of Central London and designed the academical dress for the University of Westminster which emerged from PCL.

Behind the scenes much has been going on: the administration of the Society by our Registrar, Dr Stephen James. and the Secretary and Treasurer Mr Ian Johnson; the preparation and examination of candidates for Fellowship by our Dean of Studies, Nicholas Groves and others and the development of the website by Peter Durant.

As a Council our greatest strength, I think, is not just in our shared hobby, although we would all want to keep that enjoyment alive, but that we engage in open debate in a spirit of cooperation and allow ourselves room for disagreement. The Council conducts the business of the Society on an almost daily basis, by means of Cyburcouncil, our virtual meeting chamber on the Internet. Meanwhile, our sister organisation, the academical dress discussion forum on the Yahoo Groups website has a worldwide membership of 318 people.

So in a short time we have experienced a good deal of growth and change. As Cardinal Newman said, 'to grow is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often.' We have plenty to do in the year ahead and can only do it with the continued support and interest of all our Members.

Philip Goff



## Fellowship of the Burgon Society 2002

### Fellowship by Examination

In the course of the past year Fellowship of the Society by submission has been awarded to Dr John K Lundy (*"Academical dress of the Republic of South Africa, with especial reference to the University of the Witwatersrand."*), Dr Stephen E. Plank (*"Academic Regalia at Oberlin College, Ohio: the establishment and dissolution of a tradition"*), and The Revd Canon Douglas A Southward), (1. *"Is Academic Dress obsolete in the 21st century?"*, 2. *"St Bees College, Cumberland, 1816-1896: a study of its academical dress."* 3. *"The hood of the Carlisle & Blackburn Training Institute."*)

**Dr John Lundy** currently holds the posts of Professor of Anthropology and Forensic Science, Clark College, Vancouver, and Forensic Anthropologist, Medical Examiner Division, Oregon State Police. He holds the following degrees and diplomas: BA, MA, Western Washington University; PhD University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg; Diplomate, American Board of Forensic Anthropology; Chartered Biologist, Institute of Biology, UK; Fellow, American Academy of Forensic Sciences; Member, Forensic Science Society, UK. He was a Fulbright Scholar at Sheffield University in 1991, and is presently a Visiting Fellow, Clare Hall, Cambridge University.

**FBS Research Abstract** - *"Academical dress of the Republic of South Africa, with especial reference to the University of the Witwatersrand."*

This work addresses the academic dress of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, and the dress at the eight other South African universities where requested information was provided. The focus is on Witwatersrand - a brief historical note including changes that have occurred, the use of academic dress by students and staff during the campus protests of apartheid, and a detailed description of current prescribed academic dress. Aspects of academic dress at Witwatersrand are compared with the other South African universities as well as with selected Commonwealth universities. Findings of note are the bachelor's gown being the most common doctoral style gown at the included universities, and the most common bachelor's gown is the Oxford MA gown.

**Dr Stephen Plank** holds the degrees of B.Mus. with honor Louisville (1973), M.Mus. Louisville (1974) and Ph.D. Washington Univ. in St. Louis (1980) He has held the posts of Professor and Chair of the Dept. of Musicology and Director of the Collegium Musicum at Oberlin College (Ohio) where he has taught since 1980. He is also Associate Organist and Choirmaster at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Cleveland (Ohio). He is the author of 'The Way to Heavens Doore: an Introduction to Liturgical Process and Musical Style' (1994), and of articles in *inter alia* Early Music, Musical Times, Music & Letters. He has in preparation a new book: "Mind the Gap: Historical Performance and the Modern Choir"

#### **FBS Research Abstract - "Academical Dress in Oberlin."**

Oberlin College, founded in 1833 in the 'western reserve' area of Ohio (US) may claim a varied history, ranging from the fervent evangelical idealism of its early years to the impassioned liberalism and individualism of the present day. Characteristic of much of its history are high academic distinction and social activism – it was, for instance, the first American college to admit African-American students and the first to educate men and women together. This study, based on pictorial and textual sources in the college archives, surveys the history of academical dress in the life of the college, in part to document its particularities but also to relate changes in academic attire to the evolving ethos of the college. Particular attention is given to the student rejection of academic attire as a response to the deaths of anti-Vietnam war protestors at nearby Kent State University in 1970, and the latter-day echoes of this in present-day commencement ceremonies."

**The Revd. Canon Douglas A. Southward's** entry in Crockford shows that he studied at the London College of Divinity becoming ALCD in 1957. He was ordained deacon in 1957 and priest in 1958. He received an LTh from St John's Nottingham in 1974. After holding various curacies 1957-63 he became Priest-vicar at Lichfield Cathedral from 1963-65, Vicar of Hope, Derbyshire 1965-72, Vicar of Crosby Ravensworth 1972-82 and Vicar of Bolton 74-82. From 1978-82 he was Secretary to his Diocesan Pastoral Committee and Redundant Churches Committee. He was Rural Dean of Appleby 1978-82 and became an Honorary Canon of Carlisle in 1981. After being Rector of Asby 1981-82 and Priest-in-Charge of various parishes 1982-98 he retired.

#### **FBS Research Abstracts:**

1. ***St Bees Theological College, 1816-1895: a study of academical dress.*** This essay begins with a brief outline of the College's history. The question of the AD of students is addressed; but no conclusions can be reached as there is no surviving information. The College hoods are next discussed, including contemporary remarks on the original hood, and possible causes for its abandonment. A comparative table from various sources for the three hoods is also given, and the relation of the violet lining to other contemporary hoods is discussed. The text of the 1882 Report of the Upper House of Convocation on Theological College hoods is given, and the whole essay illustrated with colour diagrams of various hoods.
2. ***Carlisle and Blackburn Diocesan Training Institute: its hood.*** A brief outline of the Institute is given, and the writer's part in the introduction of the hood is explained. The reasons for its colours are summarised, as is the surviving documentation. A number of questions regarding the hood are answered in tabular form, and it is compared with hoods for similar courses. The Appendix contains the text of the 1882 Report, and copies of relevant correspondence about the hood. Illustrated with colour diagrams of hoods.

3. *Is Academic Dress obsolete in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?* This wide-ranging essay starts by examining the reasons for which robes are worn – not only in the academic context – and the question of what clothes say about their wearers. A brief outline of the evolution of AD is given, outlining the way it has moved from being everyday dress through specialist dress to almost ‘fancy dress’. The use of robes at the four ‘ancient’ Scottish universities is discussed, with especial reference to the possible discontinuance of AD after the Reformation, and its revival in the 1870s. The base question is then re-addressed. Illustrated with examples of robes both historical and contemporary.

### **Fellowship Jure Dignitatis**

Fellowship *jure dignitatis* was awarded to our new Vice-Patron, Dr James Thomson, Master of Charterhouse. In his presentation of the new Vice Patron the President made the following biographical remarks:

*“James Thomson was born in 1939, the son of a Doctor, and after education at Haileybury and the Imperial Service College, received his medical training at the Middlesex Hospital. Thereafter followed a distinguished career notable for the wideness of its speciality in so many branches of medicine and a most impressive list of appointments, including honorary consultant in surgery to the Royal Navy and The Royal Air Force, and, in 1976, St. Luke's Hospital for the Clergy. His devoted work to that last institution led to the award by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1987 of the degree of DM (Lambeth). Shortly afterward proposed and then founded the Society of Lambeth Graduates*

*A stalwart member of The Church of England, as a medical student he worshipped at All, Saints', Margaret Street and after retirement from medicine he for a time looked after affairs at the Church of St. Bartholomew the Great, Smithfield, and then became Master of the Charterhouse.*

*The church and medicine owe so much to the devotion of James Thomson, as, indeed does the Burgon Society, very much still in its infancy. The generosity of allowing it to meet in the distinguished and historical surroundings of Charterhouse, and the interest and support of James and Katharine Thomson have given an enormous fillip to us as we secure our foundation.”*

### **Fellowship De Jure**

Fellowship *de jure* was awarded to our new Communications Officer, Susan North: she holds the degrees of B.A. Art History, Carleton University (Ottawa) and M.A. Art History (History of Dress), London. She worked for the National Gallery of Canada and National Archives of Canada, before joining the Victoria & Albert Museum in 1995. She is currently Senior Curator of Fashion in the department of Furniture, Textiles and Fashion, and co-author of “Historical Fashion in Detail: The 17th and 18th Centuries”.

### **Fellowship Honoris Causa**

Fellowship of the Society *honoris causa* was awarded at Congregation 2002 to Mr Ron Brookes. Mr Brookes is also an Hon. Fellow of Liverpool John Moores University. The Chairman introduced Mr Brookes to Congregation with these words:

*“For most people in the academical dress world, and indeed, the university world the name of Ron Brookes conjures up an image of courtesy and reliability which belong to an age which sadly seems to have all but passed by.*

*Born in Northfield, Birmingham, Ron’s connection with the robemaking business began in earnest in 1959 when he joined the firm of Albert Thrussells, a specialist supplier of college apparel. This brought him into contact with both the University of Birmingham and Ede and Ravenscroft, the university robemaker, who had a special agreement with Thrussells.*

*In 1961 Thrussells were taken over by Moss Brothers and Ron, as Assistant Manager, was put in charge of the development of the academical dress hire side of the business. Most of the gowns and hoods were made by Joshua Taylor of Cambridge, and Radcliffe and Taylor of Stockport.*

*As Moss Brothers expanded, Ron became the manager of the Stoke on Trent branch and then, two years later he was promoted again to the Cambridge branch where Moss Brothers had taken over an old-established business named Buttress. Moss Brothers-Buttress had good connections with several Cambridge Colleges and also Joshua Taylor, who were near by. The business, under Ron, expanded rapidly and Cambridge became the centre of Moss Brothers’ academic wear business.*

*In 1978 Moss Brothers made a policy decision away from academical dress which defies all reason given the position of the shop opposite S. John’s College. Meanwhile Bill Keen, the Managing Director of Ede and Ravenscroft, having just purchased Radcliffe and Taylors, came on a fortuitous visit to Ron to discuss the supply of robes.*

*In 1980 this connection bore fruit when Ede and Ravenscroft moved its HQ from Leatherhead to Waterbeach, near Cambridge, and Ron became Manager of the new warehouse.*

*Opening in January 1981 with four warehouse staff and later two office staff he has seen it through its extraordinary growth, especially when the polytechnic colleges received their charters and needed help and advice both with dress and with ceremonies.*

*In 1997 Ron was made an Associate of Liverpool, John Moores University, in recognition of his work for the university and beyond.*

*In 1998 Ron reduced his working commitment to three days a week although it seemed to me and others that he continued to do the same amount of work. In 2001 he was rumoured to have retired again, this time to a single day a week but still managed to find the time to design the new academical dress for the new University of Gloucestershire.*

*Ron has an unrivalled knowledge of the university ceremonies scene and has nurtured and supported countless numbers of novice ceremonies officers in his time. He also possesses a huge amount of knowledge about the social history of robemaking in Great Britain and a detailed understanding of the academical dress of a vast array of universities, colleges, and other institutions worldwide.*

*Married in 1963 to Christine, who ran the new sales department of Ede and Ravenscroft for ten years, they have three daughters, Angela, Bernadette and Carmel and it is a delight to welcome Christine and Carmel here today.*

*President, I present to you Mr Ronald Christopher Brookes for the award of the Fellowship of the Society, honoris causa”*