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A

A.B. See B.A.

Absit. A formal permit, given by a *Tutor to an *undergraduate, to be absent from Cambridge for the inside of a day; virtually obsolete now that *gate hours are more flexible. (The Latin *absit* means 'let him be absent'.)

Academical year.

> *Years die in July and are dead till September:*
> *By the first of October the New Year's born . . .*
> (J.K. Stephen)

The first of these two lines is less true than the second. Lectures and examinations, and *general admission to degrees, are over by the end of June; the annual accounts of both University and *colleges close at the end of July; but neither those who have to make up the books and audit them, nor others with any administrative duties, can thereupon sit back. The academical year does not end until 30 September, and the new one begins on 1 October. As on other New Year's days, few get up to see the dawn; but 1 October is when in the *Senate House the *Vice-Chancellor reads his report on the previous year, when he vacates his throne, to be occupied by the *Proctors sitting each upon one arm of it until his successor is installed. October is when new *University Teaching Officers normally take up office, when the year's

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and the term's courses of study begin; October sees the influx of *freshers.

The academical year is by immemorial tradition and regulation divided into *terms and *vacations. The Elizabethan *Statutes of 1571 even in their preamble spell out that, however agreeable study may be, it needs, like other work, its periods of relaxation to recoup the vigour for further effort. The three terms into which formal teaching is concentrated alternate nowadays with vacations of several weeks around Christmas and Easter, and the long summer vacation (colloquially just *the Long*) which includes all of July, August and September. So long a summer interval may on first thought seem excessive; but we should think again. Before the industrial revolution, when almost everyone had his roots in the countryside, it was natural in summer to concede precedence to the needs of harvest – hay, grain or fruit. The annual time-table of the law-courts and Parliament too still reflects this fundamental fact. It is the farmer's year, as well as the academical, that begins at Michaelmas. In modern times this pattern of the seasons is still relevant in Academe. Not only is the summer the best time for travel (which still '*in the younger sort is a Part of Education*') and for relaxation from the not unreal rigours of study, but perhaps the intellect too is best geared to the seasons, incubating and maturing through the darker months the learning which is to display its fruits in June examinations.

See also **Term** and **Vacation**.

Act. See **Disputation**; **Keep (2)**.

A.D.C., The. The Cambridge University Amateur Dramatic Club, founded in 1855 by Francis Cowley Burnand, then an *undergraduate of Trinity College, later famous as a playwright and from 1880 to 1906 editor of the magazine *Punch*. Though it had several short-lived predecessors the A.D.C. is easily the oldest still-active university dramatic society in this country. Its earliest performances were in rooms rented at the

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Hoop Hotel (on which see **Union**) in Jesus Lane. At first it had to struggle against tutorial and University disapproval of stage activities, but it gained in prestige from 1861, when the undergraduate Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) accepted its honorary presidency.

By 1882 the club acquired the freehold of its premises. The present A.D.C. Theatre, on the same site, dates from a rebuilding after a fire in 1933, and can seat at least 200. Besides regular performances by the A.D.C. itself, the theatre is used by a number of other clubs. The tradition of its founder has been continued by numerous distinguished professionals who first earned public notice at the A.D.C.

Aegrotat. Until 1971 it was permissible for *tripos examiners, in drawing up their class-list, to include under the heading *Aegrotat* (literally 'he is ill', plural *aegrotant*) the names of candidates who were prevented by illness from completing the examination but were deemed to have deserved honours. Hence an '*aegrotat*' could refer colloquially to a candidate so classed, or to the grading, as 'he got an *aegrotat*'. There is still provision for dealing with such exceptional cases, but in the current procedure the Latin word is not used.

In the nineteenth century the word was used of a medical certificate of illness (cf. *exeat* and *absit*).

Alma mater. See **Emblem**.

Alumnus (plural **alumni**). This Latin word (from the verb *alere*, to nourish) is used metaphorically (even in ancient Latin) to denote the relationship of someone as the 'nursling' or 'foster-child' of an institution in which he has been brought up. (Similarly a school or university may be referred to as one's *alma mater* or 'nurturing mother'. See **Emblem**.)

In America the word is widely current to denote more particularly the former pupils of a university, and this limitation of meaning has lately extended to Cambridge. 'Today's students', we read in an early issue of the *Cambridge*

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Alumni Magazine, 'are tomorrow's alumni' – though it is in fact just as legitimate to call current students so. The feminine is, of course, *alumna* (plural *alumnae*); but in Latin the masculine form may correctly be used with reference to all together, male and female.

Amalgamated clubs. It is usual in a college for all the games clubs, and sometimes other clubs and societies too, to be amalgamated. Every *undergraduate is then entitled by annual payment of one joint subscription to enjoy membership of any of the clubs at choice. Provision is made in the amalgamation's rules for fair sharing of resources in relation to needs; and no member of the college need be inhibited from joining a club on grounds of expense.

Another place. Oxford; not covered in this book.

Ark, The. The Museum of Classical Archaeology, now housed in the buildings of the Faculty of Classics in Sidgwick Avenue; formerly in Little St Mary's Lane in a block originally erected (when the river was a commercial thoroughfare up to Mill Lane) as a vinegar warehouse. This, skilfully classicised and adapted by the architect Basil Champneys for museum use, was from 1883 to 1981 rented to the University by Peterhouse. It has now been re-adapted by the College for use as library and lecture theatre. The Museum contains a remarkably comprehensive collection of casts of ancient Greek and Roman sculpture.

Arms. The heraldic arms of the University (see back cover) are: gules a cross ermine between four lions passant gardant or and on the cross a closed book fessways gules clasped and garnished gold, the clasps downward. These arms were granted in 1573 by Robert Cooke, Clarenceux King of Arms. There is record that at the Council of Constance in 1414 the English Universities were represented by the Royal Arms with the addition of a book gules, shown with its spine to

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the sinister for Cambridge and to the dexter for Oxford. The inclusion in the present arms of the lions of England and the red book was probably a conscious echo of this earlier shield.

There is no motto associated with the shield (but see **Emblem**).

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B

B.A. (Bachelor of Arts); M.A. (Master of Arts). The medieval University course began with the study of the so-called *trivium* of grammar, logic and rhetoric. These three subjects were known as *arts* – meaning in effect *techniques* – being regarded as basic to all learning: grammar as the technique of language (especially Latin) essential to any learned communication; logic as necessary to sound discussion of fact or theory; rhetoric – not with the modern sense of the word – denoting the technique of lucid and convincing exposition. By the *Lent Term of his third year an undergraduate was reckoned to be ready to start being examined on the *trivium* by participating in four University *disputations. But it was not until the Lent Term of his fourth year that the examining process was completed, qualifying him to be admitted to the degree of *Artium Baccalaureus* or *Baccalaureus in Artibus* (abbreviated A.B. or B.A.) – Bachelor of, or in, Arts. (See **Commencement**.) The true derivation of the word *Bachelor* is obscure, but it connoted the first or junior grade in the academic profession.

The Bachelor of Arts could then proceed to work on the *quadrivium* of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. He might in fact devote himself also to theology and other studies, since he was not inevitably examined on the subjects of the *quadrivium*, and it needed only a formal declaration that he had studied them before he proceeded, in his seventh year, to the degree of Master of Arts. The requirement of taking

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part in formal academical *acts, or at least of continued residence in Cambridge before proceeding to the M.A. was gradually relaxed until it became non-existent.

There is here an obvious analogy with the ancient system of a seven-year apprenticeship before one could be formally recognised as a *master* craftsman. University curricula have of course changed enormously over the centuries, but it is this medieval plan of studies that lies behind the still current Cambridge use of the titles of B.A. and M.A. Bachelor of Arts is normally the first degree, awarded on examination after three years' undergraduate study, whether in what are nowadays called arts subjects or in sciences. The M.A. is not awarded on examination, but as a matter of seniority and standing; any B.A. may proceed to it in his seventh year from matriculation. It carries certain limited rights and privileges as a member of the University *Senate.

Backs. 'The Backs', more fully 'the Backs of the Colleges', denotes collectively the grounds, laid out with lawns and trees and gardens, flanking the river behind the colleges of Queens', King's, Clare, Trinity Hall, Trinity and St John's, and bounded on the west by Queen's Road (which is itself sometimes referred to as 'the Backs'). The designation 'Backsides of the colleges', to be found on earlier maps, is now of course obsolete. The overall amenity and elegance of this area is not due to any unified planning, but only to the individual colleges' gradual acquisition and improvement over the centuries of fields beside and beyond the river.

Before the foundation of King's College in 1441, what now survives only in parts as Queens' Lane and Trinity Lane was a continuous main thoroughfare, named Milne Street (because it led to the mills at Newnham). On its east side a number of small lanes joined it to the High Street (now King's Parade and Trinity Street) and on the west other lanes led down to the river, where there were hythes or landing places for goods brought up by river from King's Lynn and the sea. River frontage was perhaps as valuable as street frontage, and Clare

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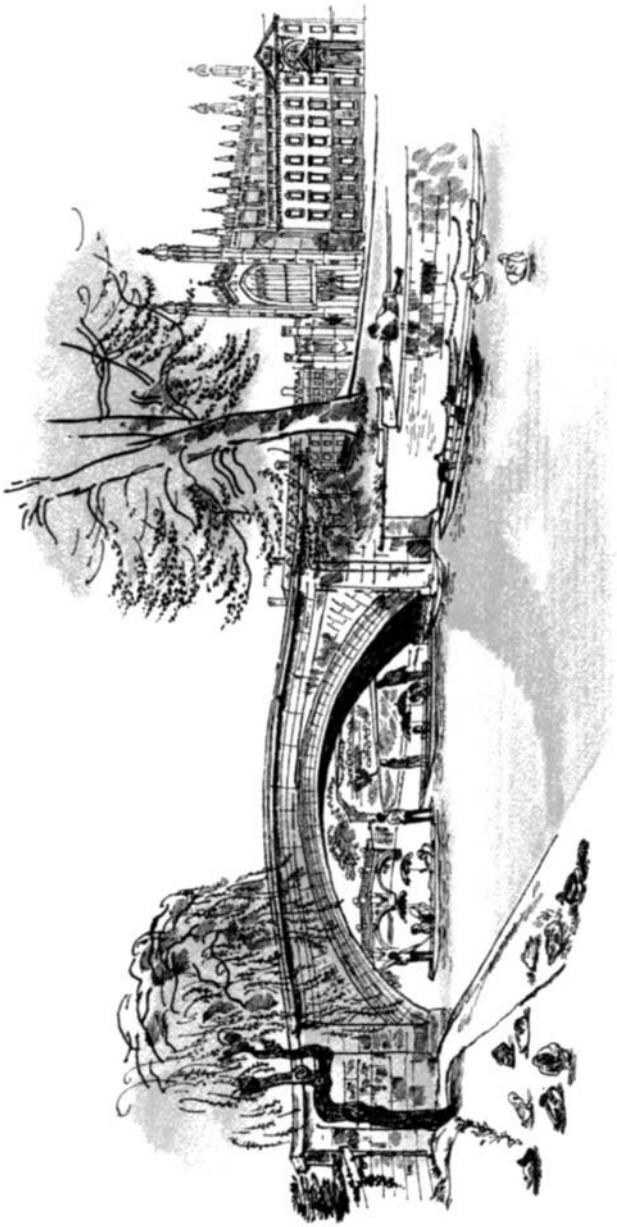

1. The *Backs at King's College. Drawn by David Gentleman for *Bridges on the Backs*, 1961.

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College and Trinity Hall, founded in 1338 and 1358, had but narrow sites. Queens' too, founded in 1448, was originally fairly narrow, though widened before long towards King's, and enhanced by the acquisition in 1475 of land beyond the river which was not built on until the present century.

Royal patronage and prerogative secured for King's a more than ample site between the High Street and the river (sweeping away a large stretch of Milne Street and all else that lay in the way) besides fields to the west of the river. Trinity, founded by King Henry VIII in 1546, owed its large site to the amalgamation and eclipse of two earlier and smaller colleges, Michaelhouse and King's Hall. But not until 1613 did Trinity acquire from the town additional fields west of the river, by exchange for what is now Parker's Piece. Clare was not able to extend across the water and build its beautiful stone bridge until the 1630s, after far from amicable negotiations with King's.

College grounds beyond the river were originally as much utilitarian as ornamental. Loggan's views in *Cantabrigia illustrata* (1690) show sheep and cows grazing on Trinity Backs, and much of the St John's property on that side devoted to orchards and fishponds. It was the eighteenth century that developed the view that gardens are no less important to a college than professors. Only in the 1770s did Capability Brown devise for St John's the purely horticultural conceit of a grove of trees planted on a cathedral plan to enhance their private 'Wilderness' over against Queen's Road. All through the nineteenth century the river had still its commercial uses. In Ackermann's coloured aquatint of 1815 the view of Clare from the Backs is much as now, yet with one important difference: up the river in midstream (for college lawns could not brook the juxtaposition of a towpath) there plods a barge-horse, the bargee standing on his broad back, towing a string of lighters up to the Mill or the Old Granary at Silver Street.

The beauty of the Backs may have a timeless quality, yet the landscape has never been long static. The present century has seen the fine avenue of limes leading westward from Trinity's

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cycloidal bridge superannuated and replaced, and flanked by superbly flowering cherries; and though disease has ravaged the old elms behind Clare, new trees have lately been planted for the delight of generations to come. Even there the old stone mounting-block still attests the former importance of the college's back gate as an access to the highway.

Surprisingly, perhaps, it was an Oxonian (one Hartley Carrick of Hertford College) who wrote

> *Oxonians, doff your naughty pride,*
> *And go and put your heads in sacks;*
> *Though you may boast the Oxford* side
> *You've nothing like the Cambridge* Backs.

(See Fig. 1.)

Bands. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and perhaps later, a ruff, collar, or neckcloth could be called a *band*. The simplest form of neckcloth is a short scarf knotted round the neck with the two ends hanging in front. The two ends have survived in formal clerical, legal and academical dress without the neckcloth itself. A *pair of bands* as worn in Cambridge consists simply of two flat strips of white linen, about six inches long and an inch or so wide, attached to a loop of elastic which goes round the neck under the shirt-collar. They are worn by University officers performing duties in the *Senate House (see front cover, and Fig. 7), and by gentlemen being admitted to degrees (Fig. 15). That a white tie is also worn has a kind of logic to it, since the bands represent, vestigially, the ends of a white neckcloth. Lady graduands do not wear them. The bands worn by the *Vice-Chancellor and other University officers are somewhat larger than those worn for graduation.

Bedder, short for **bedmaker** (Fig. 2). A woman employed, part-time, to do the domestic chores in the residential rooms of a college. Bedders' duties have naturally varied from place to place and period to period. In modern times a common

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