

UNIV ONLINE CATALOGUES

Notes on the sending down of the College in 1880

A note with these papers shows that they were collected by J.H.S. Wild and deposited in the Muniment Room in August 1951. UC:P45/MS/1 below was originally sent to him by the son of Sir Michael Sadler.

The sending down of the whole College in 1880 is one of the more comic episodes in its history. In May of that year, after a Bumps supper, some undergraduates, decided, as a prank, to screw up the doors of one of the Fellows, Albert Sidney Chavassee. Chavassee had recently been appointed Senior Proctor, and the College authorities, angry at what they saw as an affront to the authority of the University, as well as the College, therefore agreed to send the entire College down unless the persons who had done this came forward (Chavassee, to his credit, was the only Fellow who voted against this proposal, and was prepared to take the incident in good part). The undergraduates refused to go along with this, and therefore had to leave the College that same day. The actual undergraduate who had screwed up the door, Samuel Sandbach, had already gone down, and was unaware of what had happened. When told of the sending-down, he confessed, and the College was allowed to return.

The items in **UC:P46/N** below show that the incident aroused interest and comment in the newspapers, which generally agreed that although the prank might have gone too far, the College was unjustified in so severe a punishment. Further information on these events can be found in L. G. Mitchell, 'The Screwing up of the Dean', *University College Record* Vol. XI no. 4 (1996), pp. 69-81, and Robin Darwall-Smith, *A History of University College Oxford* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 402-6.

Other papers on the sending down may be found at **UC:P46** below.

Catalogued in January 1996.

UC:P45/MS/1

2 May 1932-2 Dec 1949

Bundle of letters and reminiscences from Sir George Stapylton Barnes (Univ. 1876), his brother, the Rt. Rev. Monsignor Arthur Stapylton Barnes (Univ. 1880), Sir Michael Sadler, his son Michael Sadleir, and J.H. Wild, all concerning the sending-down [17 pages].

The most important items in the bundle are the reminiscences by Sir George, with some additional comments by his brother, which tell the whole story in considerable detail.

UC:P45/MS/2

13 May 1880

Printed letter from G.G. Bradley, then Master of University College, addressed to parents of undergraduates, explaining why they had been sent down.

UC:P45/P/1

1880

Photograph of a cartoon titled "Tale of a Screw", which tells (with some apposite Latin quotations) the story of the sending down.

UC:P45/P/2

1880

Photograph of another cartoon, titled "Roll Call", depicting undergraduates rushing through Main Quad into the Hall, under the watchful eye of the Fellows.

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