

Student spending in the 1670s

| Edgley | Husband. |
|---|--|
| From Mich: to Xmas | (16) |
| Retirements _____ 0: 11: 0 | From Xmas to Ladyday |
| Schollars absence _____ 0: 13: 0 | Remains with me _____ 0- 16- 01 |
| Rests due from last yr _____ 0: 14: 11 | Given him _____ 0- 05- 00. |
| Rests due from last yr _____ 10: 18: 11 | Saphist: for football _____ 0- 01- 00 |
| Allow for Sch. _____ 3: 0: 0 | Given him more _____ 0- 05- 00 |
| 7: 18: 11 | Bedmaker _____ 0- 02- 08 |
| Recd _____ 10: 0: 0 | Taylor _____ 0- 05- 10 |
| | Mending his shoes _____ 0- 02- 04 |
| Rests in my hands 2: 1: 6 | Barber _____ 0- 2- 0 |
| N. p: 40 | Laundress _____ 0: 4: 6 |
| | Bookseller _____ 0: 18: 0 |
| | Stewards bill _____ 0: 03: 0 |
| | Cooks Bill _____ 0: 15: 0 |
| | Chandler _____ 0: 5: 11 |
| | Glover _____ 0: 1: 2 |
| | Fire of a bed _____ 0: 2: 0 |
| | Allowd for being porter 1: 0: 0 |
| | 3. 13. 5 |
| | Deduct Remaining in the 0 16 . 1 |
| | for porters place $\frac{1}{2}$ y ^r 1, 0. 0 |
| | 1 16 1 |
| | Due to me _____ 1 17 4 |
| | Received may. 26. 1675. 6. 0. 0. |

Extract from a Pupil Account Book, 1676
Reference: L/51

The extract above is a page from the pupils' accounts kept by the Tutor of the time. As with the early College Bursarial ledgers these are very detailed and provide an interesting glimpse into the lives of late 17th century students at St. Catharine's.

The entry on the left for Edgly, is believed to relate to Samuel Edgeley, who came up to St. Catharine's in 1675. He was awarded his BA in 1678/9 and went on to be Rector of Wandsworth in Surry in 1688. He died there in 1732.

The first item on his list is 'Detrements', more commonly spelt detriments, and according to the Oxford English Dictionary, "'detriments' at Cambridge corresponded to the 'decrements' at Oxford, and appear to have been originally deductions from the stipends of foundation members on account of small extras for the table, etc., not included in their statutory or customary commons; the charge was afterwards extended to all members and students of the colleges."¹ The second item is Scholars Absence; it is not clear what this was, but may have been a fine for being away from College. 'Rests due from last q^r [quarter]' may be the money due, but not received last quarter.

The entry on the right is for Husband, perhaps John Husbands, who also came up to St. Catharine's in 1675. Unfortunately very little is known about this student except that he received his BA in 1678/9. His list of expenses is longer and contains many items to be expected of a student: 2s 8d for a bedmaker, payments to a 'Taylor' [tailor], a barber, a laundress, a bookseller (18s), a chandler (a candle seller), and a glover. There is also a payment of 2s for the hire of a bed. If a student lived a great distance from Cambridge it would have been impossible to bring a bed, and being here for a relatively short amount of time meant renting one was seen as the sensible option. The provisions made for students were very different in the 17th century to what they are today!

The third item on Husbands' list appears to be 'Sophist: for football - - - 0-01-00' [1s]. Consultation with other Archivists in Cambridge has produced a number of thoughts on what this entry might mean. It is certainly a very early mention of football. The Oxford v. Cambridge varsity football match did not come into existence until 1874. Suggestions for what it might mean include Sophist being short for Sophista, i.e. a second or third year student. Perhaps it was a payment for a football or to take part in a game, or a fine for playing football. Another explanation was that it could be 'Sophist', the Greek for teacher, and so perhaps the payment was for a football teacher. A final thought is that it could be a corruption of the Greek word for ball – 'sphaira', perhaps therefore a payment for a ball for football.

The Archivist is always pleased to answer questions about the College and its members. Enquiries should be directed to archivist@caths.cam.ac.uk, or call 01223 338343. The Archivist only works for the College on Thursdays and Fridays so there is sometimes a delay in being able to answer queries.

¹ "detriment, n.". OED Online. December 2013. Oxford University Press. 20 December 2013
<<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/51330?rskey=2MtlkF&result=1&isAdvanced=false>>.