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In Memoriam: Dr Nicholas Groves, FBS

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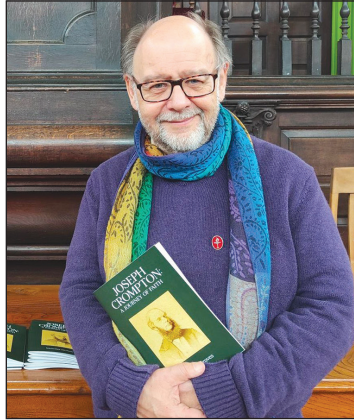
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In Memoriam Dr Nicholas Groves, FBS

29 April 1956–28 June 2023



Members of the Burgon Society and readers of the *Transactions of the Burgon Society* will be sad to learn of the death of Dr Nicholas Groves in June 2023. Nick was a major figure in the world of academic dress, and research and publication on it—for which he was awarded a fellowship of the Royal Historical Society.

Nick was educated at Paston Grammar School, North Walsham, Norfolk, and went on to read for a BMus at Aberystwyth, graduating in 1977. He then became something of a collector of degrees, obtaining a London BA in 1989, a University of East Anglia MA in 1993, a Lampeter (Wales) MA in 2000 in Celtic Christianity and a PhD from Lampeter on ‘The Restoration of Popery: The Impact of Ritualism on the Diocese of Norwich, 1857–1910, with Special Reference to the Parishes of the City of Norwich and its Suburbs’. He was supervised by Professor Nigel Yates at Lampeter. In 2017, he obtained a University of York PGDip in Parish Church Studies. For the last six years of his life he was academic director of Centre for Parish Church Studies (Norwich Historic Churches Trust). He was a talented musician and organist, latterly at the Octagon Chapel in Norwich.

From 1979 to 1993 Nick held a series of teaching posts in secondary schools but his heart was never in being a ‘schoolmaster’, as he called it. His real love was academical dress. He was one of the founders of the Burgon Society, which was formed to promote the study of gowns and hoods. He was the Society’s first dean of studies and helped establish the fellowship of the Burgon Society as a significant award. He devised the Groves system of gown, hood and cap classification, which has become the standard way of describing academic dress. He assumed the editorship of *Shaw’s Academical Dress of Great Britain and Ireland*, 3rd edn, 2 vols (Burgon Society, 2011–14), Vol. I: *Universities and Other Degree-Awarding Bodies* (2011), Vol. II: *Non-Degree-Awarding Bodies* (2014), which is the standard reference work. Shortly before he died, he published a biography of Charles Franklyn (Burgon Society, 2023). Nick’s ‘Hood Key’ [*Key to*

the Identification of Academic Hoods of the British Isles] was popular enough to be reprinted four times; and his article ‘The Use of the Academic Hood in Quire’, *TBS*, 8 (2008), remains one of the most popularly downloaded articles from the *Transactions*.

Nick’s encyclopaedic knowledge of academic dress was remarkable and derived in part from his own meticulous workbooks with hood diagrams in coloured pencil for shell and linings. Nick was also incredibly generous with his time whenever anyone had a question on academic dress. He could always be relied on to identify accurately even the most obscure hoods and gowns. He was also unstuffy about them: if an organization prescribed it, then it was in the canon.

Nick’s love of Lampeter was expressed in his enthusiasm for the academical dress of the College, which was worn until 1971. In *The Academic Robes of St David’s College, Lampeter, 1822–1971*, 2nd edn (Burgon Society, 2021), he described each of the awards and its robes. He had a considerable collection of academic robes, including those of Lampeter, and had even devised a scheme of robes for when Lampeter regained its full degree-awarding powers under the 1971 supplemental charter. He was also an admirer of the University of Wales system of shot silk hoods. He also devised a complete set of academic dress for the University of Malta which was adopted by the University.

Among a plethora of articles on academic dress, familiar to readers of the *Transactions of the Burgon Society*, he was also the author of:

Charles Franklyn, A Man of Strong Opinions (Burgon Society, 2023).

Joseph Crompton: A Journey of Faith—A Memoir of Joseph Crompton (Norwich: Paul Dickson, 2022).

The Academic Robes of St David’s College, Lampeter 1822–1971, 2nd edn (Burgon Society, 2021), a revised and expanded edition of the original 2000 publication.

St Julian’s Church, Norwich Friends of Julian of Norwich (2018).

Of Churches, Toothache, and Sheep: Selected Papers from the NHCT Conferences 2014 and 2015 (Norwich: Lasse Press, 2016).

Redundancy and Renewal: Selected Papers from the NHCT Conferences 2014 and 2015 (Norwich: Lasse Press, 2016).

An Exceptionally Busy Life: William Stephen Gilly, a Memoir (Norwich: Lasse Press, 2014).

Shaw’s Academical Dress, Vol. II (Non-Degree-Awarding Bodies), 3rd edn (Burgon Society, 2014).

Shaw’s Academical Dress, Vol. I (Degree-Awarding Bodies), 3rd edn (Burgon Society, 2011).

The Medieval Churches of the City of Norwich (Norwich: HEART, 2010).

Sarah Anna Glover: A Memoir (Curwen College of Music, 2006).

The Academical Dress of the University of East Anglia (Burgon Society, 2005).

Theological Colleges: Their Hoods and Histories (Burgon Society, 2004).

Key to the Identification of Academic Hoods of the British Isles (Burgon Society, 2002; 2nd edn, 2003; 3rd edn, 2008; 4th edn, 2010).

Academical Dress of Music Colleges and Societies of Musicians in the United Kingdom, with Notes on Degrees and Diplomas in Music of Certain Other Institutions (Burgon Society, 2002), with John Kersey.

Nick was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer early in June 2023 and died a few weeks later.

—Bill Gibson

This brief account of Nick’s life is in anticipation of longer tributes and recognition to be published in Volume 23 of the Transactions.