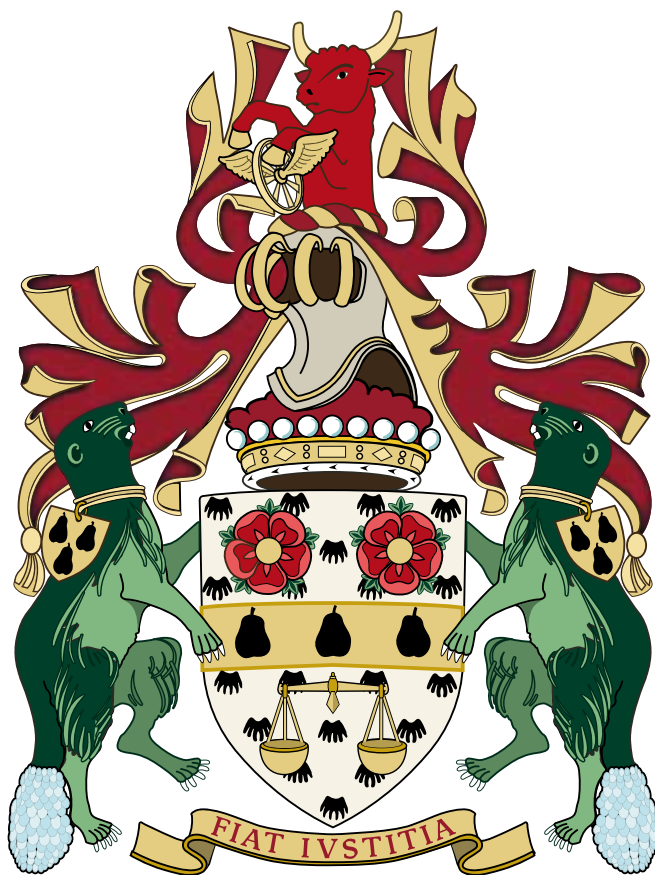




LORD NUFFIELD

A philanthropic legacy

Lord Nuffield
A philanthropic legacy



ARMS OF LORD NUFFIELD

The background of the shield is ermine—the fur of a white weasel decorated with small black tails.

The roses are said to represent England. The pears are taken from the arms of the City of Worcester, where Lord Nuffield was born. The scales or balance link up with the motto 'Fiat Justitia': let justice be done (part of the legal maxim 'Fiat Justitia ruat coelum': Let justice be done though the heavens fall.) The coronet is a Viscount's coronet. The bull in the crest is taken from the arms of the City of Oxford, and the winged wheel that it holds represents the motor industry.

The beavers are also taken from the arms of the City of Oxford (one of the City supporters is a beaver, the other an elephant).

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NUFFIELD COLLEGE 2013



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Frontispiece: reproduction of Lord Nuffield's Arms with an explanation of the heraldic symbols. Illustration by Kim Vousden.

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Foreword

This volume has been produced to commemorate the extraordinary philanthropy of William Morris, Lord Nuffield. Perhaps the most renowned British industrialist of the twentieth century, Lord Nuffield's generosity has touched the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in the years since 1917, when he made his first substantial donation to a rehabilitation workshop for wounded servicemen. However while many people know his name, far fewer are aware of the scale of Lord Nuffield's philanthropy, and the breadth and variety of causes that he supported.

The 50th Anniversary of Lord Nuffield's death presents an opportunity to celebrate his generosity and to reflect upon the impact of his donations, which can still be seen today. A philanthropic legacy indeed.

This volume is published by Nuffield College, in partnership with the Nuffield Foundation. We extend our whole-hearted thanks to all who have contributed.

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*Family portrait taken in approximately 1896.
Back row: Alice, WRM. Front row: Emily, Frederick, Emily.*

WRM to Lord Nuffield

Nuffield was William Richard Morris (WRM), and he was still known as Billy Morris—the local man made good—by elderly Oxford citizens in the late 1980s. He was made a Baronet in 1929, went to the House of Lords as Baron Nuffield in 1934, and became a Viscount in 1938 and a Companion of Honour in 1958. He took his title from the hamlet of Nuffield, near Henley, where he had moved in 1933 to the house he renamed Nuffield Place.

He was born in Worcester in 1877 but the family soon returned to Oxford. His parents were working class but not poor. After leaving school at fifteen he was apprenticed to a local bicycle firm, then left to set up a business of bicycle repair in the family house. Over the next twenty years this expanded in the centre of Oxford to building and repairing motor cycles and then cars. One study of him describes him as more a mechanic than an engineer,¹ but from the beginning he was also a successful entrepreneur. By 1914 he was doing nicely, outsourcing components in the Midlands and assembling the Morris Oxford cars which first appeared in 1912. In the war he mass-produced munitions and received an OBE in 1917 (when the order had just been created), but when he reorganised for peacetime he was still no more than one of many successful middle-level manufacturers and businessmen.

His great success then came quickly after he was able to make cars again in 1920. Britain's automobile industry had been backward in Europe before 1914, when France led; and in 1920 Henry Ford was taking two-third of the British market; but in the national car boom of the 1920s Nuffield led the revolution from a craft industry to factory production. The import tariff that lasted from 1915 to 1956 helped him, and the UK's taxation by horsepower favoured his expertise in small engines. Ford established his factory in Dagenham but was nevertheless left behind, and of Nuffield's British competitors only Austin and Singer stayed anywhere near him. His Morris Motors organisation (as it was then) was producing and selling 20,000 cars annually by 1923 and 55,000 in 1928. Austin's production was a third of that,

1 R.J. Overy, *William Morris, Viscount Nuffield* (London: Europa, 1976), p. 1.



The site of William Morris' workshop in Longwall Street. The building looks much the same as it did in the early 1900s. Photograph courtesy of Paul Edson.

and Singer's half of Austin's. Nuffield's net profit by that second year was just over a million pounds. As the decade went on he took over more of his suppliers and competitors, and by the mid-twenties he controlled a conglomerate of ten separate businesses and two subsidiaries. In 1930 he employed 10,000 people, and had earlier turned down an American offer of eleven million pounds (at mid-1920s prices) from General Motors to buy him out. His Cowley works was transforming Oxford from a quiet university town to a substantial modern city.²

He was an old-fashioned, imperious master: the sole maker of the big decisions, not a committee man, with the business an all-pervading interest. His Oxford garages had given him instincts in practical design and public tastes, and he combined bringing innovations to the market with spectacular cuts in prices, in a style of calculated audacity, doing things in a big way and surprising everyone. (This also came to be part of his style in philanthropy.) He seems to have been good at picking subordinates, though bad at taking advice from them; yet at that stage his decisions tended to be right. Authors write of his salesmanship; his knack of spotting market opportunities; keeping a simple product range; a concern for reliability; pay and bonus systems that kept good industrial relations; tight financial control; and keeping

2 Other economic details also mainly from Overy, *William Morris*.

profits in the firm. He moved towards Ford's assembly-line methods, though on less than the American scale. His personal leadership was stretched to the limit, but he still led the others.

Things changed after 1930 when increasing scale moved his organisation to more managers and boards, and less impact from Nuffield himself. He had made much of his empire into public companies in 1926, though he kept most of the shares himself. The organisation continued to expand in the 1930s but it became unwieldy, and there were expensive mistakes. Others were catching up, including the American challenges of Ford and Vauxhall. Nuffield eventually moved to a big public flotation in 1936 when everything became the Nuffield Organisation, with Nuffield himself as still the biggest single shareholder and chairman. By then he had found a dynamic and modernising deputy in Leonard Lord, but the relationship did not last and Lord went to Austin. In 1939 the Nuffield Organisation was still ahead of the others, but Nuffield himself had developed his other interests and his great days in the industry were over.

He had by then a busy public life. He had his honours and was part of the 1930s Establishment, playing golf with the Prince of Wales, and receiving the freedom of cities and boroughs. He had flirted with politics from the mid-twenties onwards, when the motor industry's tariff protection became an important issue, and but for illness would have stood for Parliament in Oxford in the 1924 election. In the economic crisis of 1929–31 he chaired a group of leading industrialists as the League of Industry. After Oswald Mosley left the Labour government in 1930 to form his New Party, Nuffield gave it £50,000 initially and more later, but withdrew as it became fascist and anti-Semitic. Subsequently he continued to donate to the main parties, mainly though not entirely the Conservatives, but limited his political interventions to speaking for the motor industry and industry as a whole, and making charitable gifts to relieve unemployment. He mixed the satisfaction of a successful capitalist with sympathies for the classes from which he had raised himself.

In the 1930s he also sought to make a patriotic contribution to national security in the industrial world he knew so well. After taking over the Wolseley firm he sought to develop aero-engine production there, but it was not a great success. He got involved in the government's prewar planning for war-time aircraft production, and built a factory in Castle Bromwich to produce for the Supermarine company, principally the Spitfire. When war came its performance was much criticised, and in the crisis of the summer of 1940 the factory was virtually taken over by Lord Beaverbrook's Ministry of Aircraft Production. Nuffield himself was then much engaged in aircraft repair and



26 March 1941: Lord Nuffield presents a cheque for £5,000 from the Nuffield Organisation for the naming of a plane to be called 'The WRM'. He also gave a personal cheque for £5,000 at the presentation.

formed a Civilian Repair Organisation for repair and maintenance. He was briefly the RAF's Director of Maintenance and was knighted for these services in 1941. The Nuffield Organisation was fully mobilised, and Nuffield himself got involved in various individual projects of peripheral importance. But he never became a British equivalent of Speer on the German side, running national industry on a strategic scale in the production war, as he may have thought he could do. Churchill was not particularly keen on industrialists, and the war needed more than Nuffield's flair of the 1920s.

When it was over he remained the company's chairman, but was a negative influence, unhappy in the post-war world of government control and labour and material shortages. There was at one stage a widespread resignation of his managers.³ Lord at Austin coped better, and the two giants, Morris and Austin, merged in 1952 as the British Motor Corporation. Nuffield soon resigned at the age of 75. Yet over the previous twenty years he had developed a second *persona*, as remarkable as his first, in the large-scale philanthropy which this publication is celebrating.

3 Martin Adeney, *Nuffield: a Biography* (London: Hale, 1993), pp. 197–8.

THE NUFFIELD LEGACY



Nuffield Foundation

The man who would give money is compelled to do a great deal of hard thinking. Is his gift going to do good or harm? The responsibility of a would-be giver is great. Lord Nuffield, 1927

The Nuffield Foundation, the largest bequest made by Lord Nuffield, was established for two purposes: to do good, and to protect the future of Morris Motors by preventing the sale of his shares after his death. The tale is complex but the Foundation has thrived, despite the change in our size, and we are proud to note the continuity in our interests over the years.

Established in April 1943 with £10 million of Morris Motors shares, the Nuffield Foundation was for some time the largest philanthropic trust in



Pictured in April 1943 are Lord Nuffield, Janet Vaughan and Sir William Goodenough. Janet Vaughan was later Dame and Principal of Somerville College, Oxford. She was also a founding trustee of the Nuffield Foundation.

the country, worth approximately £30 million in the 1950s (equivalent to about £1.8 billion today). This was reflected in the scope of some of the early projects funded, including those in medical genetics, physics and health. For example, the Foundation funded the work of two scientists who later became Nobel Prize-winners: Patrick Blackett's investigation of cosmic rays, and Dorothy Hodgkin's research on the structure of penicillin and vitamin B₁₂.

Throughout the 1950s, the Foundation was also a major funder of the Lovell Telescope at Jodrell Bank Observatory. In a rare personal intervention, following the success of the telescope in transmitting signals to the American Pioneer V deep space probe, Lord Nuffield matched the Foundation's final grant to the project with a personal donation.

But from its earliest days the Foundation also made grants for social research, in law and in science education, commitments which remain to this day. Our interest in the 'care and comfort of the aged poor' as set out in the trust deed, has led to a stream of projects over the years, from the Rowntree Committee to Investigate the Aged Poor, to research supporting the Dilnot Commission on the Funding of Care and Support. We also funded the first law centres, and have been concerned about empirical research in law since the 1960s.

Our interest in science education began in the 1950s and, as our endowment declined, our commitment to science increasingly focused on capacity building in science and maths education. From the 1960s this led to a fruitful series of curriculum projects which shaped national standards, and over the years we have continued to fund work in this area, both to increase the number of young scientists and social scientists, and to equip young people with the scientific, mathematical and analytic skills needed for citizenship.

Our programme to promote a step-change in quantitative skills for social science undergraduates in the UK is the latest example of this. Jointly funded by the ESRC and HEFCE, this £19.5 million initiative is the Foundation's largest for many years. And our funding of Barbara Wootton's early work on the importance of robust evidence, including randomised controlled trials to inform social policy, also started a theme that remains an enduring interest.

Lord Nuffield took his philanthropy seriously, and he recognised the responsibility it entailed. His wealth was accumulated over a lifetime, beginning in a bicycle shop in Oxford and ending in the House of Lords. Setting up the Foundation was his way of ensuring that his private wealth had maximum public benefit, not only in the short term, but for generations to come. In the seventy years since it was established, the scale of the Foundation's endeavour has changed, but its ideas and aspirations remain much as the day Lord Nuffield signed the trust deed.



Lord Nuffield at the House of Lords.

Nuffield Health

Lord Nuffield's benefaction to Nuffield Health was not in the format of funding. It was acting as a guarantor to a loan which was used to help us get started, and in providing us with a name which immediately invokes thoughts of health and education, and a legacy of providing wellbeing.

Getting and keeping people healthy, providing health education, and supporting people with their wellbeing remain the very pillars on which Nuffield Health still runs today. And his initial belief in these ideals has led to our success today.

Like Lord Nuffield, we fundamentally believe in the importance of employee wellbeing. He understood that the chief asset of any enterprise was the workforce and, in a time when employee wellbeing was unheard of, he provided his workers with a maternity hospital for their wives, sports facilities and a church to fully cover their health and wellbeing needs. He was



Lord Nuffield visiting a hospital in Africa. In 1937 Lord Nuffield donated £100,000 to South Africa to help develop orthopaedic surgery facilities in the country and to further the discovery and cure of crippling disabilities.



27 August 1934: Lord Nuffield was presented with this bicycle by the British Cycle & Motorcycle Manufacturers' & Traders' Unions at the Morris Works, Cowley. The presentation was subsequent to Lord Nuffield stating that the best days of his life were spent on a bicycle and that for health and pleasure he still preferred to tour the country by that means.

also innovative with his wellbeing offerings; installing vitamin D lamps for his workers to ensure they were not missing out on the health benefits of sunlight.

The charitable nature of Lord Nuffield is also reflected in everything we do at Nuffield Health. He provided over 700 hospitals in the Commonwealth with iron lungs free of charge. We work closely with the NHS to provide care to those who cannot afford to come to us directly. We provide free training to GPs. We open the doors of our gyms to the public to offer Health Education. We also strongly agree with his belief in the importance of follow up care and have taken great strides in this area, building in physiotherapy to many of our services so that after treatment, people can get fully back to active lifestyles.

Finally, Nuffield Health provides Fitness and Wellbeing facilities to the public. This area would also have resonated strongly with Lord Nuffield. Not only did he get his start in manufacturing by creating bicycles but he was a strong cyclist himself, entering professional competitions and winning over a hundred championships. He later created a two speed electric exercise horse and used this to be able to exercise in the comfort of his own home. He

would feel at home in our gyms which boast over 5000 of pieces of electrical fitness equipment. Though no electric horses!

Working within the 'Nuffield Family' has enabled us to achieve the successes we have today. We believe the Nuffield name is synonymous with working towards the health of the nation and we take the responsibility that goes along with that very seriously. We will be forever grateful to Lord Nuffield for putting us on the path we are on now and believe he would be hugely impressed with the work that we do today, and plan to do in the future.



Portrait of the young WRM (photo taken in about 1895). As a young man, WRM travelled to America to learn from their developments in manufacturing processes.



Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust

In the aftermath of the Second World War a Nuffield travelling scholarship scheme for British and Commonwealth farmers was initiated. The idea was to reward those who had made conspicuous efforts in food production during the war and emphasised the connection between the Foundation's concern with health and good food. It was also expected that the early Nuffield Farming Scholars would identify developments which had occurred during the war and advance the best practices in agriculture. This concept of learning by travel reflects Lord Nuffield's own journeys in 1913 to gain from the early advances of the automobile industry in America.

The first three scholars were selected in 1947. Jane Kenyon (née Bennett-Evans), John Rowsell and Edward Stokes paved the way for some 1600 scholars from eight participating countries that have since travelled the world studying the best agricultural practice wherever it may be. From Brussels to Washington, the paddy fields of Asia and the fantastically productive farmlands in the Americas, to the most sophisticated and technologically advanced farming in the other parts of the world, Nuffield Farming Scholars have created an unrivalled worldwide network of Agriculturalists that are at the leading edge of their profession.

Each year, the participating countries award a total of approximately fifty scholarships to young agriculturalists following a rigorous application and interview process. The new UK Nuffield Farming Scholars receive a two day briefing on strategic policy and current issues before attending the annual Contemporary Scholars Conference at which they have the opportunity to meet other newly selected scholars from around the world. This gives them their own world-wide network on which to develop plans to travel and study. In 2013 this Conference was held in Canada, in 2014 it will be hosted by Australia. Nuffield Farming Scholars are then expected to conduct at least eight weeks independent travel as a basis for a major report and presentation at the annual conference in the autumn of the following year. They are also

expected to promote their findings to the agricultural community at large by submitting articles and giving talks at various events around the Country.

A great challenge of the twenty-first century will be to provide sufficient food to feed a rapidly increasing population. Not only will greater volumes of food need to be produced but this will be expected to be of better quality whilst also meeting the demands of an environmentally conscious world. This is occurring at a time when there has been a worrying exodus from all sectors of agriculture as evidenced by a drop in student numbers, declining investment in Research and Development and, fundamentally, a diminishing number of farmers. This 'Human Capital' issue is potentially the greatest barrier to the Western World meeting the demands from agriculture. Nuffield Farming, with its worldwide network, is uniquely placed with an unrivalled programme to assist in meeting the challenges in the years ahead and to act as a catalyst for the necessary change in attitudes and practices.



Photograph of the bust of Lord Nuffield (in bronze by Ginette Bingguely Lejeune, approx. 1939) that is now housed at Nuffield College.

The Nuffield Trust for the Forces of the Crown

In May 1939 Lord Nuffield had seen the remarkable response to a National Appeal for Voluntary Recruiting and on 14 October 1939 he endowed the Trust with 1 million shares in Morris Motors worth £1,500,000 to provide 'facilities for recreation' for the Armed Forces including the Militia, the Territorial Army and the Auxiliary Services. With the call up of Territorials and conscripts, Lord Nuffield gifted a further £50,000 to tide the Trust over until dividends from the shares were received.

The Trust worked on the principle that it met the needs set out by the Armed Services, not available from public funds, and it gave each of the Services an allocation to spend. During the Second World War, many newly-formed



Lord Nuffield donated £50,000 to the (then) Sea Cadets. He is pictured above inspecting a detachment in Oxford.



The Nuffield Organisation produced tank engines during the 1940s. Lord Nuffield is pictured here taking a close look at a tank from that era.

units at home and overseas were set up with sport equipment, furnishings, libraries, games and radios. When the Trust found that Service personnel were having to sleep in railway stations etc. when transiting through London, they started a subsidised hotel accommodation scheme and gave grants to the existing Service Clubs (such as the Union Jack Club) to expand their premises or to cover running costs. They also opened several clubs, including the famous Nuffield Centre which offered meals, variety shows by the top-rate artists of the time, dances and complimentary theatre tickets. The Trust also founded rest and recuperation schemes, the largest of which was the Nuffield Aircrew Leave Scheme where operational aircrew (mainly from Bomber Command) could have subsidised or free accommodation at some 30 hotels throughout Great Britain and take their families at a reduced rate. There were also special rest houses set up for female personnel engaged in particularly trying and concentrated work.

Many of the innovative schemes initiated by the Trust were taken up by the government or other charities and continue to exist in a modern form today.

Since 1939 the Trust (using Lord Nuffield's endowment) has given grants worth some £222 million at today's prices and it routinely allocates around

£1 million to the Regular and Reserve Armed Services annually. This funds some 300 grants per year for a full range of sporting equipment; recreational facilities such as cinemas, clubs and bowling alleys; and audio-visual and computer equipment. The Trust also gives grants for adaptive equipment for disabled personnel, to provide Christmas boxes for troops on operations, and for Forces entertainment shows. In addition, the Trust has given additional Capital Grants for large projects such as Outdoor Activity Centres, sports and social clubs, sports pitches, bowling alleys, yachts, gliders and aircraft. Service personnel and their families can also use the Nuffield Centre Anglesey with purpose-built holiday accommodation and a campsite, sailing centre, climbing wall and swimming pool.

Lord Nuffield presciently recognised that enhancing Service morale and improving Service personnel's quality of life would always require more than public funding. His permanent endowment has enabled the Trust as it enters its 75th year to meet his aims and principles and have the resources to continue to do so as needs evolve.

Nuffield and medical research

Lord Nuffield's donations to medicine and medical research make up a large part of his donations with building projects at the Radcliffe and Wingfield hospitals in Oxford as well as funding for academic research positions, and then similar projects elsewhere in the city and in London, Banbury and Reading.

The first sizeable donation to the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford was in 1924 when the then Sir William presented the Infirmary with £90,000 enabling an era of expansion. This led to the acquisition (1929) and expansion into the Radcliffe Observatory site in the 1930s. The Nuffield Maternity Home, a nurses' home, kitchens, operating theatre and wards were all built within a space of eight years. The huge generosity of Lord Nuffield allowed the leading neurosurgeon of his day, Hugh Cairns, to help medical teaching



Lord Nuffield at a formal visit relating to one of his many medical donations.



29 June 1949: Lord Nuffield inspecting the statue of himself at Guy's Hospital.

and research make rapid advances in the 1930s and establish the Nuffield Institute for Medical Research in the Radcliffe Observatory. The 1930s saw the Radcliffe Infirmary transform itself into a leading medical research establishment.

Legend has it that the wife of surgeon Gathorne Robert Girdlestone (1881–1950) of the Wingfield Hospital, Headington, answered their door one evening in the summer of 1930. There stood an unknown gentleman who introduced himself as ‘Morris of the car factory’ and gave her a cheque for £1,000 to help keep the Wingfield Hospital in good repair. In 1931 Nuffield donated a further £70,000 to the hospital allowing it to be largely re-built in 1933. It was subsequently re-named the Wingfield-Morris Orthopaedic Hospital. The re-build provided new nurses’ quarters, seven new wards and a massage department. In 1937 Girdlestone was appointed Nuffield Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery (the first professor of orthopaedics in Britain). He retired in 1939 but continued to be interested in the hospital, helping to launch the scheme for the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre (NOC) in 1949. The NOC NHS Trust now provides a nationally important orthopaedic service as well as a rehabilitation service and is a main centre for rheumatology and metabolic bone disease.



22 October 1931: Duchess of York at Oxford visiting the Radcliffe Infirmary to open the new maternity home funded by Sir William Morris.

In 1939 Lord Nuffield endowed £1,200,000 to form the Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust, and this led to postwar support in the founding of the BUPA and the establishment of the Nuffield Hospitals. Shortly before the war he became active in providing the ‘iron lungs’ that had just become available for polio victims. After learning of the shortage of iron lungs, Lord Nuffield dedicated factory space to manufacturing them, and donated over 5,000 to hospitals in the UK. In the same period he also financed a new bed block at Guy’s, and then spectacularly doubled the gift. He continued making donations to Guy’s in a close and happy relationship with them, and they put up a statue of him.

One of Lord Nuffield’s most important medical provisions helped establish Oxford’s Postgraduate Medical School in 1936–7, for which his main donation was £2 million, followed by £200,000 for the buildings. The medical school became a clinical school for the training of medical students, which is still in existence. The £2 million included provision for three medical chairs but Nuffield insisted, on a take-it-or-leave-it basis, that these depended on creating a fourth (for anaesthetics, which Oxford thought it did not want), and he stipulated who should have it. Of course Oxford crumbled and he got



Pictured above is a Both respirator gifted to the Devizes & District Hospital by Lord Nuffield in October 1939.

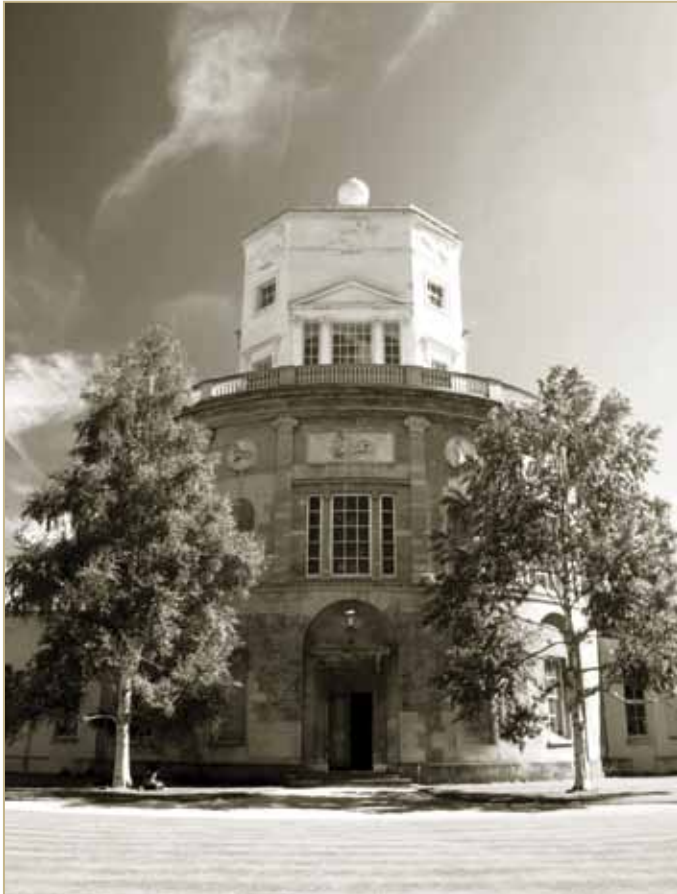
his way, rather like Snow's Sir Horace Timberlake (see page 34), and Oxford soon agreed that he had been right. In 1928 Lord Nuffield had had a bad reaction to anaesthetics when he had an operation to remove his appendix; perhaps this was the reason for his insistence? The Chair of Anaesthesia was the first such appointment in the British Empire.

Rather the same happened in the war when he endowed a chair of plastic surgery. Other medical benefactions to Oxford followed. In many ways this medical philanthropy was the high water mark of Nuffield's relationship with Oxford: bringing to the university the money it needed, in a self-evidently good cause that linked the worlds of research and practice, and involved people whom he found interesting and sympathetic.

In 1956, the *British Medical Journal* (2:4991, p.532) reported that [in Oxford] 'an extensive building programme is being carried out which will extend existing facilities for teaching and research and will provide new laboratories and wards for many of the professorial departments which were established following the generous benefactions of Lord Nuffield in 1936.' These developments included a new fifty-bed department for the Nuffield Professor of Clinical Medicine plus adjacent laboratories, and twin theatres and lab space for the Nuffield Professor of Surgery.

Lord Nuffield's name continues to live on through, among many other things, his endowed Chairs at Oxford. Under these Chairs, wide and varied

research takes place. Topics including the study of pain processing in the human brain (anaesthetics); analysing visual abnormalities due to human neurological disease to further understand brain function (clinical neurology); conducting studies to evaluate treatment effectiveness in prostate cancer and involvement with a new centre for the evaluation of minimally invasive technology including robotic surgery (surgery); genetic epidemiology, health services research, new diagnostic tests, and clinical drug trials for endometriosis (obstetrics & gynaecology); and development of tissue engineering and repair techniques (orthopaedics): all take place today for the benefit of future as well as current generations.



The Radcliffe Observatory: purchased by Sir William Morris in 1929 to provide a home for medical research in Oxford. Image courtesy of Green Templeton College, Oxford.



Green Templeton College, Oxford

‘The advancement of social well-being’: continuing Lord Nuffield’s legacy

The role played by Oxford’s imposing eighteenth century Radcliffe Observatory in advancing the understanding of astronomy since the late 1700s is well-known. Perhaps less celebrated is the fact that, for forty years in the middle of the last century, it was the home to pioneering medical research, thanks to the vision and generosity of Lord Nuffield.

Today, this particular Nuffield legacy continues to influence the advancement of social well-being (one of the Nuffield aims for his Foundation) through the work of Green Templeton College (GTC), which now occupies the Observatory site.

In November 1929 Nuffield—then Sir William Morris—offered to purchase the Observatory for the sum of £100,000. The acquisition would allow the Radcliffe Infirmary to expand onto the nine-acre site next door, following the relocation in the 1930s of the work of the Observatory to the clearer skies of South Africa. As well as donating the land and buildings, in December 1936 Nuffield gave £2 million to found the Nuffield Institute for Medical Research (NIMR) which was initially located in the Observatory.

Here, just as he had hoped, enormous advances were made by world leaders in medicine, including the early development under Ludwig Guttmann—the founder of the Paralympic Games—of what was to become Stoke Mandeville Hospital, and the foundations of plastic and transplant surgery under Harold Gillies, Thomas Kilner and Nobel Prize winner Sir Peter Medawar.

At Nuffield’s instigation, the Observer’s House was renamed Osler House (after Sir William Osler, Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford 1905–1919) and it became the social and administrative centre for the Clinical Medical School in 1946.

However, by 1979, the completion of the John Radcliffe Hospital in east Oxford and the consequent closure of the Radcliffe Infirmary as a medical focus for the University meant that the NIMR was no longer ideally located: the Institute moved out of the Observatory in 1977.



30 September 1942: Lord Nuffield receiving a medal from the Royal College of Surgeons.

The site was made over to the new Green College, founded in 1979 by a general appeal for funds and a substantial donation from Dr Cecil Green (of Texas Instruments) and his wife, Ida, to provide a home and social centre for medical students, fellowships for senior doctors, and a University centre for research and academic activities.

Medical research prospered in the College, in particular cancer epidemiology based on the work of Sir Richard Doll, its first Warden, and continued today by College fellow Professor Sir Richard Peto.

However, research and teaching in human health and social welfare also formed part of Green's objectives and the merger of Green with Templeton College in 2008 broadened the academic focus further to include business and management. Today GTC fellows, students and alumni undertake research and practice in medicine, sciences, business management and a broad range of social sciences. It can be argued that the contemporary College's mission of understanding and enhancing human welfare is well in tune with Nuffield's vision.



Sir Arthur Cope's portrait of Sir William Morris (1929) that hangs in the Dining Hall at Nuffield College.



Nuffield College

Since I retired from the Civil Service I have enjoyed Nuffield College's hospitality and benefitted greatly from it, not least when I first became a member and the college gave me a badge of respectability, at a time when academic intelligence studies were still suspect, and retired professionals were dissuaded from participating. So I feel grateful to Lord Nuffield as the college's benefactor and founder, whose portrait looks down as we eat lunch in the hall. He was the greatest figure in the development of the British motor industry, the British Henry Ford, and the country's leading twentieth century philanthropist: the national equivalent of the American benefactors in the Carnegie and Rockefeller mould in the past, and Bill Gates today. His history as an industrialist and philanthropist is worth remembering on its own account.

Yet it also contains a puzzle: why did Nuffield create this college in 1937 in the form he did? His first proposal was for a specialist engineering college for undergraduates, and what emerged was something very different: the postgraduate college of social studies, open to both sexes, that we have now. The puzzle is not that Oxford rejected the engineering proposal, but that Nuffield so easily accepted Oxford's alternative of postgraduate social studies in its place. He usually knew what he wanted, in benefactions as in industry, and was not easily persuaded. Yet in twenty four hours in July 1937 he switched from engineering to social studies. How did this happen?

His subsequent disappointment is also part of the story. This was not immediate, but was acute when it came. In a set of essays about him published long after his death, his nephew called the college the greatest disappointment of his life, his 'million-pound disappointment', a victim of Oxford's ivory tower attitudes; and said nothing else about it.¹ He may have exaggerated, but it is clear that Nuffield was much disenchanted with his creation throughout the war and for some years afterwards. His relations with the

1 F. John Minns, 'His million-pound disappointment' (chapter 28) in his edited *Wealth Well-Given. The Enterprise and Benevolence of Lord Nuffield* (Stroud: Allan Sutton, 1994).

college were repaired over the last decade of his life by the college's Warden, Norman Chester, but the puzzle remains about his original decision and subsequent regrets. Did smooth-talking academics give him a false prospectus, or was he disillusioned after a genuine conversion?

Subsequent fiction has left a version of the story in C.P. Snow's successful novel *The Masters*, published in 1951, about the election to the headship of a Cambridge college. It has a sub-plot about the college's campaign to get a rich industrialist, Sir Horace Timberlake, to give it money. Timberlake must have been modelled on Nuffield and wanted to endow 'useful' subjects—'you haven't anything like enough fellowships for scientists and engineers'²—while the college fellows did not want their hands tied. Eventually, after numerous college dinners, and extra tuition to get Timberlake's rather dense nephew a third class degree, the fellows got their benefaction, but on the industrialist's terms. He endowed six fellowships, but specified that four of them were to be for scientific and engineering subjects, while one of the others was to go to a non-scientific fellow whose work had caught his eye. Both sides were satisfied with the bargain: the sub-plot had a happy ending. How much of this reflected the Oxford events of 1937?

Nuffield's creation of the college must be seen as part of his career as an industrialist and philanthropist, outlined in the Preface of this publication. Events in 1937 in which the nature of the college was decided are discussed below.

Lord Nuffield's philanthropy

For the modern value of his gifts the figures of the 1930s can be multiplied by about 50: add a couple of noughts and divide by two. £100 then equalled £5,000 today. A working man in 1935 earned between three and four pounds a week, and the average semi-detached suburban house cost between £500 and £700.³ In that world Nuffield was both very rich and very generous. His benefactions are all recorded by hand in his old-fashioned account book in the college archives. The biographies quote a total value of £30 million (perhaps one and a half billion now) for them in their various forms, though it might have been higher.

2 C.P. Snow, *The Masters* (London: Macmillan, 1951), p. 138.

3 Figures from Juliet Gardiner, *The Thirties: An Intimate History* (London: Harper, 2010), p. xv. Other (rather different) figures are given in Richard Overby, *The Morbid Age: Britain Between The Wars* (London: Allan Lane, 2009), p. xv.

1937

St. Paul's, Newcastle 45 3725

Oxford University Grants

Emmanuel, Oxon. Medical School	2700
Lady Margaret do	2700
St. Anne's do	2700
St. Helen's do	2700

Rectors & Fellows of Lincoln

College (Oxford)	50000
Magdalen Professor of Divinity	11000
Oxford University	20000

Oxford University

Spinal Clinic	26	10000
Harvard Assn Club	35	1000
Medical Fund and Costs	2672	1000000
Spinal Clinics (1935-36)	26	10000
Medical Fund	26	1000000
Smoking clubs and things	26	1000
Nuffield College (inc. 26)	27	1000000
Chemical Laboratory	27	100000
Building for Medical Fund	27	200000
Scholarship Fund, Med. Fund	27	100000
Nuffield College, Christ Church	28	275
do. Balliol of Christ Church	28	25000
do. C. S. Hall of Balliol	29	500
Faculty of Divinity	29	3000
Endowment of Balliol	29	10000

Oxford Students Association, Dan 27 10000

Oxford House of Refuge, Dan 27 1000

Oxford City Technical School, Dan 30 1000

Oxford City Defence Corps 20 1000

Oxford City Council 20 1000

Lord Nuffield's donation book in which he kept a hand-written record of everything he donated.

He was generous on a small scale as well as a large one. Some of his gifts were to individuals and inconspicuous good causes which caught his attention among the many that solicited his support: in 1938 he claimed that he had 600 begging letters each day and had six secretaries dealing with them. Small-scale *ad hoc* generosity was certainly part of his style, not publicised but not specially secret. But he was the opposite of any easy touch. He was puritanical in his ideas of individual self-help and preferred on the whole to support institutions rather than individuals.

In this his main pattern was of big benefactions on an eye-catching scale reminiscent of his business methods: they were not designed to do good by stealth. His recorded donations go back to a contribution for war wounded in 1917, though the first large one was in the 1920s and was of £10,000 to help parents to visit their boys in Borstal institutions (now the youth offenders' centres). A total of around £260,000 was given away to varied causes in the nine years 1926–35, but this was small beer compared with the hundred times more that he donated in the years 1935–1943. In 1943 he changed his approach and gave ten million pounds (about half a billion pounds in current value) to form the Nuffield Foundation, with purposes specified as the promotion of health, the relief of sickness, the 'advancement of social well-being' including relevant research, the care and comfort of the aged poor, and kindred activities. Along with four smaller benefactions the Foundation replaced most of the individual donations in the remaining twenty years of

Nuffield's life. The gift to it was in Nuffield shares and the trustees lost a lot through loyalty in staying in them for too long; nevertheless its Fund is still going strong, with its capital value in 2011 of £219 million and annual grant expenditure for that year of £9.1 million.⁴ Nuffield himself continued to make some specific donations after it was established, but they were smaller. They were mainly medical, though the last substantial one was £25,000 in 1960 for the Jodrell Bank radio-telescope, adding to what the Foundation had already contributed.

Some negatives stand out from the list of benefactions. Nuffield did not support the arts or sport, or charities in the Empire or what we now call the Third World, though he gave some support to medical causes in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Rather surprisingly he was not enthusiastic about motor racing, despite the international prestige it might have brought him in the 1930s when the German Mercedes and Auto-Union teams were sweeping the board in the European Grand Prix circuit and there was no effective British competition. Nuffield's MG sports cars had had some years as a successful racing *marque* in the smaller classes, and he presented a Nuffield Trophy for one of the British races. (It is still raced for, rather obscurely.) But he insisted that the MG works team was run as a business, and he closed it down in 1935 when he thought it had become an extravagance.

What were his preferences in his massive philanthropy? Many of the gifts fitted the outlook of a benevolent employer who mixed conservative leanings with sympathy for working class welfare at home (not abroad) amid economic depression: a traditional attitude, unmixed with any feelings of guilt about capitalism and his own success in it. In this spirit he established a trust in 1936 of two million pounds for the areas of high unemployment, then called the 'special areas'. Results included new factories in South Wales and re-opening coal mines in Cumberland. The following year he donated a similar amount for his own employees. The Second War produced comparable support for armed forces' welfare: clubs, cigarettes for troops on active service, the work of the existing service benevolent funds. The same applied to the young—Boy Scouts, Air League, Cadet Corps, YWCA—and to a variety of other good causes: provision for the disabled, church and hall appeals, the Red Cross, an 'Elderly Nurses' National Home' in Bournemouth, and so on. It was a heterogeneous bunch of causes. As in industry, Nuffield liked to make his own choices until he settled in 1943 for his foundations and trusts, though even there he expected to be consulted and involved over what they did.

4 E-mail from Nuffield Foundation 27 March 2013.



A view of the front of Nuffield Place.

Why did he do it all? His tastes were not extravagant: he did not go in for horses, or J-class yachting to win back the America Cup, as his contemporaries Lipton and Sopwith did. His home of Nuffield Place has been preserved as he and his wife had it, an upper middle-class house in prosperous but unostentatious, slightly Spartan 1930s style. He enjoyed his public life, his golf at Huntercombe (the golf club near his house, which he had joined in 1920, supported financially in 1924 and lived in before buying Nuffield Place), and his cruises to Australia in the winters. His wife was more retiring. But Nuffield's dominating hobby was giving money away instead of spending it. Taxation and death duties irked him and were a spur to generosity: he had had two big taxation cases (in 1926 and 1929), both of which he won on appeal.⁵ His own explanation was simply that as he has no children there was no reason not to give the money away. Philanthropy had become his business, with its own satisfactions. He enjoyed the publicity his benefactions received, and the fuss made of him. He liked tangible aims—new buildings and new institutions—where he could see he was achieving something. He

⁵ The tax cases are described in P.W.S. Andrews and Elizabeth Brunner, *The Life of Lord Nuffield: A Study in Enterprise and Benevolence* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1959), chapter ix.

liked to feel he was still in control or at least consulted, a captain of industry applying himself to good works. He probably varied unpredictably between hands-on involvement and giving others a free hand. But there was a consistent thread of social purpose of a fairly direct, uncomplicated kind: doing material good for people.

His choices were influenced by personal relationships. His medical donations owed a lot to the friendships he made with the Guy's doctors he got to know at Huntercombe.⁶ His friend the anaesthetist (Macintosh) at his request even accompanied Lady Nuffield to the United States (by sea) at the beginning of the war when she was nervous about staying in this country. Despite his subfusc style he had a keen sense of his due and could be prickly and easily offended. He was sensitive to criticism and fought ruthlessly to protect his image. In philanthropy as in industry, working successfully with Nuffield was a good test of man-management skills in those dealing with him. This then was the background to Nuffield's offer to found the college and Oxford's successful riposte.

What did Nuffield want?

Nuffield's proposal to create the college was made on 8 July 1937 when he called on Lord Halifax, Oxford's Chancellor, who was then in government as Lord President of the Council and was to become Foreign Secretary the following year. Nuffield told him (in Halifax's words, in his brief letter of the same day to Douglas Veale, the University Registrar) that 'he had it in mind to offer to build on the waste ground he had recently bought below St Peter's Hall a College of Engineering.' He referred to the 'gap in the equipment of Oxford on those lines' compared with Cambridge, with the result that 'she [Oxford] lost many good men'. His offer was of £250,000 for building the college and 'something in the nature of three-quarters of a million' for the endowment. Halifax added that 'Lord Nuffield will expect you to call at Cowley [Nuffield's office at the factory] at 11 am tomorrow' and asked Veale to confirm the appointment with Wilfred Hobbs, Nuffield's personal assistant. Veale also had a phone call from Halifax—the letter was presumably confirmation of it—and spoke to Hobbs on the afternoon of 8 July, and contacted A.D. Lindsay, the university's Vice-Chancellor. He then saw

⁶ For Nuffield's social contacts with medical specialists at Huntercombe golf club, see Jennifer Beinart, *A History of the Nuffield Department of Anaesthetics, Oxford 1937–1987* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 26–9.

Nuffield as arranged and wrote to Halifax to tell him the results. In the letter he summarised the problems that he had put to Nuffield over his engineering proposal, and Lindsay's counter-proposal for social studies that he had put forward in its place; and he reported Nuffield's acceptance. Veale was confident: 'I think I can safely say that he [Nuffield] accepted this scheme as fulfilling exactly what he really had in mind, when talking to you [Halifax], in all essentials, much as it differs from it in detail.' Veale then saw Lindsay and wrote to Hobbs to convey the Vice-Chancellor's endorsement of what had been agreed. 'I had felt very little doubt that the Vice-Chancellor would approve of what I said, because I thought I knew his mind pretty well on this sort of subject.' Lindsay had agreed that it would be 'at the same time most in accordance with Lord Nuffield's desires and with the interests of the University.'

9 July had been a busy day for Veale, and perhaps his shorthand typist: it was also an era of efficient postal services, with late last collections and early deliveries. The key letters were hasty, and Veale excused himself to Halifax in a manuscript addition in his hand 'Excuse a rather incoherent letter. I am rather a flutter of excitement.' But there had been no misunderstandings: the future college had been settled by Nuffield, Lindsay and Veale in little over twenty-four hours.⁷

The rest of the summer saw the details worked out without major problems. At the end of July Lindsay showed Nuffield a concept and proposal he had drafted for the college, and subsequently circulated it in confidence to Halifax and a small Oxford circle. Veale subsequently drafted the texts of a quite lengthy, formal offer from Nuffield to the university, and a Statute and Deed of Covenant for the college's establishment. Lindsay insisted that the college must be open to women and got the statutes inconspicuously drafted to permit women to fellowships and studentships, though not residence. Nuffield's formal offer was eventually dated 8 October, and after being kept confidential through the summer it was released to the University Council for the first time the following day, and referred to a committee two days later. The sceptics had no time to organise. There were tricky issues about the extent of university control that do not need to be described here, and

7 The three letters (Halifax to Veale, Veale to Halifax, Veale to Hobbs) described in these paragraphs are in Oxford University archives UR6/NH/1 file 1. Halifax's letter is printed (less his note about the 11 a.m. appointment) in Drusilla Scott, *A.D. Lindsay: A Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), p. 231. The substance of this letter is printed with Veale's two letters in Norman Chester, *Economics, Politics and Social Studies in Oxford, 1900-85* (London: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 63, 64-66 and 66-67.

were dealt with by the end of the month. One other significant effect of the Council's consideration was to clarify the social studies remit. The draft Statute had referred only to 'post-graduate studies', and the Council added 'especially but not exclusively in the field of social studies'. The university's formal acceptance was on 16 November. In a pleasant gesture Nuffield had just been awarded an MA by decree on 2 November and became a full member of the university. There had been full consultation with Nuffield's staff and professional advisers. It was a remarkably smooth and slick bureaucratic operation, much of it in Oxford's Long Vacation: slicker perhaps than could be counted on now.

So how did Nuffield come to make this engineering proposal and then alter it so quickly? Going in at the top to Oxford's largely honorific Chancellor with an unexpected proposal was consistent with Nuffield's style; but why did he then not fight harder the following day against Oxford's rejection of engineering, as hard as he had fought the doctors (successfully) over getting the chair in anaesthetics?

We do not know how far Nuffield's idea of the engineering college, as put to Halifax, was a long-term ambition on his part. We have little he wrote himself: he was not a great writer and relied heavily on his personal staff, and the archive was sent for salvage during the war. We have an adulatory and unpublished 129-page memoir drafted during the war by Hobbs, and an uncritical biography written with Nuffield's cooperation by P.W.S. Andrews and Elizabeth Brunner of the college, and published in 1955.⁸ Both memoirs have the characteristics of official biographies but as such they show how Nuffield saw things afterwards or wished them to be seen. They make it clear that the catalyst for Nuffield's offer was his purchase for £100,000 in late 1936 of the derelict area of the former canal wharf where the college now stands; but Hobbs wrote that the college had been a longer-term objective:

[T]he erection and endowment of a college at Oxford was a project to which Lord Nuffield had given frequent consideration, and the fulfilment of his desire was prevented only by the lack of an appropriate location ... His patience in waiting for a site was plenteously rewarded by an opportunity which arose in 1937 [actually 1936], and provided a means of beautifying the city as well as indulging in his wish.⁹

8 Hobbs's draft is in box 14/5/1–262 of the Lord Nuffield archive collection in the Nuffield College archives. The published biography is Andrews and Brunner, *Life of Lord Nuffield* (note 5).

9 Hobbs's draft p. 211.



The college site as a coal wharf just prior to the start of building work.

After their interviews with Nuffield and submission of drafts to Hobbs and others Andrews and Brunner gave a rather more opportunistic account of Nuffield's plans:

As a local man with a feeling for his native city, Nuffield had often thought that he would like one day to found a college in the University. Even more, perhaps, had he come to regret the untidy and painful approach to the city from the railway and the contrast which it offered to the architecture of the ancient colleges ... [After buying the wharf area] he considered various commercial uses which would have offered architectural opportunities, and especially a new garage, but kept these ideas in reserve, for the more he thought about the site the more it seemed suited for a college.¹⁰

Whatever the depth of his earlier thinking about the college, Nuffield must have at least have taken advice on building costs and the size of the endowment, but we have no record of the consultations. More relevant to this paper, he must have made some enquiries about Oxford's engineering department before finding it wanting in comparison with Cambridge, and coming up with his proposal. His judgment is not surprising. Oxford

10 Andrews and Brunner, *Life of Lord Nuffield*, p. 310.

was then still overwhelmingly an 'arts' university: in 1938 83% of its finalists were in arts subjects, including law and PPE (philosophy, politics and economics).¹¹ According to the relevant volume of the university history, the engineering department at that time 'produced only about ten finalists per year, sometimes with a hefty proportion of fourths';¹² though at that time the physics school was not much larger.¹³

On the other hand although the engineering effort was small it was not negligible. The university history credits R. V. Southwell, its head in the 1930s, with building up 'a small but high-quality department focused on the essential scientific equipment of an engineer,' though it judged that this aim was 'more successfully realised at the postgraduate than the undergraduate level.'¹⁴ Under Southwell the department 'acquired its own research identity, especially in his own field of mathematics for engineering science'; and he attracted money and equipment from a number of firms.¹⁵ He was a scientist of considerable standing: a distinguished FRS, and a lifelong producer of important papers of applied mathematics and engineering. He was also 'amiable and persuasive', a convivial host, even like Nuffield a keen golfer.¹⁶ These were qualities that might have made Nuffield fight hard for an engineering college with Southwell as its head; but it never happened. Possibly Nuffield was put off by Southwell's speciality of engineering mathematics and the department's abstract label of 'engineering science' (which it still has). Perhaps Southwell had had all the outside support he wanted at the time. Perhaps he and Nuffield did not hit it off, or never met. All that we can say is that Nuffield had no close personal links with Oxford engineering comparable with those he developed with the medical specialists in Oxford and Guy's.

We are also guessing about what Nuffield had in mind for his engineering curriculum, but it was probably not for engineering pure and simple. When Halifax phoned Veale immediately after the meeting he mentioned that Nuffield had also spoken of accountancy,¹⁷ though this was not recorded in his subsequent letter. Nuffield certainly wanted his offer to be remembered

11 Figures from J.B. Morrell, 'The Non-medical Sciences, 1914–1938', in Brian Harrison (ed) *The History of the University of Oxford, Vol. VIII 1914–1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 142.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 144.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 144.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 144.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 144.

16 Obituary by D.G. Christopherson, *Biographical Memories of Fellows of the Royal Society* vol. xviii (1972).

17 This is referred to in Veale's letter of 9 July to Halifax (note 7).

in this way. Andrews and Brunner recorded that ‘he [Nuffield] suggested that alongside engineering, its students might also be trained in modern business studies such as accountancy.’¹⁸ Writing much later, but after substantial contact with Nuffield, Warden Chester wrote that Nuffield had talked to Halifax in terms of a college of engineering and accountancy.¹⁹ It is also relevant that Nuffield rather surprisingly never showed any other interest in engineering degrees. He did not go out of his way to recruit people of this kind into his own organisation, and never did anything for Oxford’s engineering department. He seems to have ignored the training being given on his doorstep in the Oxford City Technical School, subsequently the Oxford Polytechnic and now Oxford Brookes University. It taught automobile engineering, but it was not until 1954 that Nuffield had any substantial contact with it, when he laid the foundation stone for its Headington Building.²⁰

So on 8 July 1937 Nuffield may well have been thinking of a broad engineering degree, and may also have had business education in mind: he would have been aware of the management courses that were beginning to appear in the United States. But, whatever it was, it was not a well developed idea, and not a dominant part of his thinking. In this there was also the motive of improving Oxford’s physical appearance around its shabby western approaches, though I find it hard to believe that this was quite as important to him as the official biographies suggested. Apart from the medical benefactions he did relatively little else for Oxford town rather than gown, and for its part municipal Oxford did not rush to honour him: it did not make him a Freeman until 1951, lagging in this behind Coventry, Worcester, Cardiff and Droitwich.

More powerful, I suggest, was the motive of supporting what he thought of by 1937 as ‘his’ university, with which by then he had widespread connections. Besides those over his medical benefaction, he had endowed a chair of Spanish studies as early as 1926, and later bought the Radcliffe Observatory and provided it for his Institute for Medical Research. By 1937 he had made or was making benefactions to St Peter’s Hall (as it then was) and to Worcester and Pembroke Colleges. Most of these gifts contributed something to the appearance of Oxford’s western end, but Nuffield’s later explanation that the three were the poorest colleges seems an equally plausible rationale. It seems

18 Andrews and Brunner, *Life of Lord Nuffield*, p. 310.

19 Chester, *Economics, Politics and Social Studies in Oxford*, p. 63.

20 It taught automobile engineering then, and is now strong on it. With so many international motor racing firms in the Thames Valley Oxford Brookes now offers courses in motorsport engineering. It received a benefaction some years ago from a Grand Prix driver for twelve master’s courses in the subject.



1951: Lord Nuffield receiving the Freedom of Oxford.

that in the case of St Peter's the Master's importunities also drew on pastoral support given to Lady Nuffield. The university for its part had made Nuffield an honorary DCL in 1931, and by 1937 he was a member of a clutch of senior common rooms.

So Nuffield was close to the university, and could have channelled his generosity where the university had asked for it. It had completed an ambitious review of its future requirements some years previously, and had recently launched an appeal for at least half a million pounds, half for the Bodleian Library and the rest principally for science, particularly a new physical chemistry laboratory. 'Social studies'²¹ was mentioned, but in a low key, as 'but one conspicuous example of the increasing attention now paid to research in all the humane faculties.'²² The appeal made no mention of engineering, and certainly not a new college. Nuffield could just have chosen something that appealed to him off the top of the appeal's list.

21 Oxford had first used the term 'social studies' officially in 1932 as the title of the new faculty then created to run the Philosophy, Politics and Economics degree (PPE), but it had originated earlier in the United States. To the layman it still seems like a cluster of different disciplines, but I give it here the singular case for a single subject. I do not seek to distinguish it from the alternative title of 'social science'.

22 Chester, *Economics, Politics and Social Studies in Oxford*, p. 61



January 1935: Lord Nuffield unveils a bust of his mother in the Emily Morris Building, St Peter's Hall (now St Peter's College), Oxford.

But although Oxford's appearance and his support for the university both counted, Nuffield wanted above all a distinctive college in his own name on the site he had acquired. His business life had been marked by bold gestures, and his proposal for an unusual college and subject accorded with this instinct. Engineering was an attractive idea and met the need for the college to be 'useful', but the evidence seems that it was an opening bid on his part, rather than his key objective. If this was the case it weakened his negotiating position. Unlike C.P. Snow's fictitious Timberlake, he could not stick on his engineering offer and wait for the university to give way. Oxford wanted funds, but not for anything, and in a last resort Nuffield wanted his college more than Oxford needed his money. Engineering could be jettisoned to get it. Yet this was not cynicism: the evidence is that Nuffield was thoroughly persuaded of the changes to social studies he accepted. It was a masterpiece of persuasion by Lindsay and Veale on 9 July. How did they do it?

Lindsay and Veale

They were a fortunate combination of vision and public service skills, brought together by happy chances. Lindsay (later Lord Lindsay) was the

Vice-Chancellor simply because the post was filled in those days by Oxford's heads of houses for three year terms in order of seniority, and as Master of Balliol his turn had come in 1935. He was a national figure. A Scot, a philosopher, he was an authentic progressive of his day. We forget how Britain in the 'thirties was divided ideologically. The legacies of the First War, the depression, and (in many eyes) the apparent triumph of Soviet socialism all made capitalism's future debated on all sides, with a bigger doctrinal gulf than we have today. Lindsay was a socialist, a leader of the workers' education movement, and much involved with unemployed relief and practical Christianity with his friend William Temple, soon to be Archbishop of Canterbury. He supported Indian self-government, disarmament, the League of Nations, the Spanish Republicans, all the progressive causes. Late the following year he was persuaded to fight (unsuccessfully) the Oxford parliamentary by-election as an Independent with cross-party opposition support, in what was almost a national referendum on Munich.

In the university he was an active and reforming Vice-Chancellor, but also a complete Oxford man. He had been an undergraduate at University College, had almost immediately become a fellow of Balliol (in 1905), and became Master there in 1924. Despite his left wing affiliations he was respected by the academics and successful with them. As Vice-Chancellor he supported the funding appeal, including its priority for improving the position of science, and was involved in creating the medical school after Nuffield's benefaction. But he had a special personal concern for social studies and their application in social policy: academia's means of creating a better world. He had been one of social studies' protagonists since helping to create the PPE degree in the early 1920s, and in 1937 he was chairing the oversight of the five-year Rockefeller Foundation grant for social studies, as well as supporting the new Institute of Statistics and overseeing funds for social research at Barnett House. It was probably Lindsay who got the low key reference to social studies into the appeal. As put by Robert Taylor, Nuffield's offer 'appeared to provide the opportunity for bringing some coherence to those disparate activities and advancing the coherence of social studies in Oxford.'²³ Oxford was conservative and traditionally oriented, but not entirely so.

If Lindsay was the visionary, Veale was the implementer. He had been a grammar school boy from Bristol with a scholarship to Oxford to read classics at Corpus Christi. With a good degree he succeeded in the civil service

23 Robert Taylor, *Nuffield College Memories: A Personal History* (Oxford: Nuffield College, 2008), pp. 22–23.

examination just before the 1914 war, joined up and fought in France and was then invalided home and eventually demobilised. In Whitehall he held a succession of important private secretary posts, and was appointed CBE in 1929 after playing a major role as Neville Chamberlain's private secretary over the new Local Government Act. He was marked in Whitehall to go to the top, but applied in 1930 for Oxford's newly important Registrar post, and was chosen from a strong field of applicants.²⁴ There he operated like a model Permanent Secretary. According to the university history '[his] brief was to introduce Whitehall methods into the Clarendon Building.'²⁵ At his memorial service it was said that '[I]n him ... we had the Head of our Civil Service, the Secretary of our Cabinet, the Permanent Secretary of our Prime Minister's Department, and our Deputy Prime Minister rolled into one.'²⁶ The DNB records that 'his tirelessness, accessibility, knowledge and supple draftsmanship soon made him indispensable ... He was patient, impartial (but not so impartial as to lose impetus), energetic and imperturbable ... He always went to a meeting knowing what he expected to be the result and wrote the minutes of Hebdomadal Council in advance ...'. He liked clear decisions and had 'the rapid knack of harnessing the soaring imagination of others to the longer haul without developing tunnel vision.' Lindsay was his favourite Vice-Chancellor. He was knighted in 1954 and was made an honorary DCL by Oxford in 1958. He is commemorated by a sculpture of his head in the archway leading from the Bodleian quadrangle to the Clarendon Building.²⁷

These were the Oxford actors on 8–9 July, with Veale the front man in dealing with Nuffield. This may have been Halifax's doing. In the letter to Veale outlining Nuffield's offer he explained that 'I am not sure whether the Vice-Chancellor is in Oxford,' though it seems that they had already agreed by phone that Veale would make the follow-up visit Nuffield had requested. Lindsay's biographer (his daughter) suggests that Halifax arranged things in this way because Nuffield was known to dislike her father's politics, and this may well have been true. But it seems that Nuffield knew Lindsay and respected him from the part he had played in the medical benefaction, and

24 For the growth of the Registrar post's importance in the university's administration see Brian Harrison, 'Government and Administration 1914–1964' in his (edited) *The History of the University of Oxford vol. VIII*, pp. 689–71. The 'strong field' of candidates for the post is recorded in E. T. Williams's memoir of Veale, revised by H. G. Judge, in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

25 Harrison, 'Government and Administration, 1914–1964', p. 698.

26 Memorial address 3 November 1973 by K. C. Wheare, *ibid.*, p. 699.

27 Quotations and other details from Williams, rev. Judge, *DNB* (note 24).

he was aware of their shared enthusiasm for closer academic contact with the outside world. Though he turned against him later, his respect at that stage shone out a year later in a generous letter he sent to Lindsay after his defeat in the Oxford by-election.

In fact, despite Halifax's professed uncertainty, Lindsay *was* in Oxford at the time, and was immediately contacted by Veale. He seems to have accepted that Veale would make the visit to Nuffield on the 9th: perhaps it was just that he was a Vice-Chancellor with a full diary, but he may have accepted that Veale would be better at handling Nuffield. It seems clear that proposing the social studies college was Lindsay's idea. His daughter writes that '[I]t seems clear that this idea for Nuffield College was entirely Lindsay's. It was something he had been dreaming about for a long time, and when the Nuffield offer came he seized on it as an opportunity.'²⁸ She also says that he and Veale 'had already discussed very thoroughly [what] would be the right things to ask if a benefaction was offered to the university.'²⁹ Lindsay may well have guessed that Nuffield would offer the wharf site for something, and he may have earmarked it in his mind for social studies in some form. In writing to Hobbs on 9 July to confirm Lindsay's support for what had been agreed Veale added that 'This plan was started by the Vice-Chancellor and possible developments have been in his mind for a very long time.' But there is no reason to doubt Chester's account that Nuffield's offer when it came—of a college and its subject—was 'totally unexpected,'³⁰ and called for quick thinking. Oxford in 1937 did not want a new single-subject college, least of all in engineering. The challenge for 9 July was to adapt Nuffield's offer to something Oxford would accept. Hence Lindsay's proposal, though one can guess that Veale was a major influence in the tactics and presentation. There is no indication that either of them consulted Southwell about an engineering college, or indeed anyone else. Nuffield had asked for a meeting the next day and did not like being kept waiting: they did not want him to go cold on the offer. Whatever the precise reason for speed, Lindsay and Veale demonstrated initiative and leadership of a quality not usually credited to academic Oxford in 1937, perhaps not since.

For the meeting with Nuffield we only have Veale's account of it, written to Halifax immediately afterwards.³¹ Over the engineering proposal he had

28 Scott *Lindsay*, p. 232.

29 *Ibid.*

30 Chester, *Economics, Politics and Social Studies in Oxford*, p. 63.

31 Veale to Halifax 9 July (note 7).



Lord Nuffield donated £100,000 for the erection and equipment of a new laboratory of physical chemistry in Oxford in the early 1940s. Above, Lord Nuffield is inspecting a laboratory.

argued that Cambridge and the provincial universities already met the national demand for ‘commercial engineering’, and cited a recent agreement with Cambridge to avoid unnecessary duplication: an engineering college would trespass on a Cambridge speciality. A highly acceptable alternative for part of the benefaction would be to grant £100,000 to provide for the new physical chemistry laboratory specified in the appeal. Veale pointed out that this would fit Nuffield’s concern for industry, and would boost Oxford in a scientific subject in which it was pre-eminent. The laboratory would be ‘of essential importance to engineering and most other branches of Commercial Science’. Presumably a practical consideration (not put to Nuffield at the time) was that providing the laboratory would link this benefaction with the objectives of the appeal, and make it harder for sceptics to object.

Nuffield seems to have accepted this rejection of engineering without question, and welcomed the proposal for the laboratory. For the college Veale set out the counter-proposal of a postgraduate college ‘rather on the lines of Mansfield or Manchester [now Harris Manchester]’. It was to be ‘open to post-graduate students of all kinds,’ but also ‘the centre for our Modern Studies’, and additionally one which ‘could be run as a centre to which the

practical man is brought to give the benefit of his practical experience to the dons.' Then came the key part of the letter, that 'I think I can say that he [Lord Nuffield] accepted this scheme as fulfilling exactly what he had in mind, when talking to you [Halifax], in all essentials, much as it differs from it in details.'³² This was followed soon afterwards by Veale's letter to Hobbs conveying Lindsay's confirmation that the postgraduate college would 'also serve as a centre of Modern Studies developed on the present lines, viz. of bringing in people of practical experience in the world to cooperate with the academic people;' and his agreement that what had been agreed would be 'most in accordance with Lord Nuffield's desires and the interests of the University.'³³

The deal was done, and the rest of the summer saw the details worked out as already described. Nuffield's acceptance of the plan may indeed have been more nuanced than brought out in Veale's letter. But his commitment to Veale's formula for the college—the elements of postgraduate work, 'modern studies', and academic and 'real world' contact—stuck through that summer of further negotiation, and he did not renege on it.

Nuffield's conversion

Nuffield was persuaded by Veale of two essentials: the undesirability of the engineering college, and the role of social studies in its place. Having a postgraduate college would also be an important innovation, but this probably appealed to Nuffield as something distinctive and caused him less difficulty than it did for conservative university opinion. Of Veale's arguments, the need for non-duplication with Cambridge on engineering now seems distinctly specious. In the context of the financial appeal Oxford had indeed made a low-key agreement with Cambridge about seeking to avoid duplication 'in some of the less important branches of knowledge', though engineering was not mentioned;³⁴ but with a million pounds on offer the risk of duplicating Cambridge would never have dissuaded Oxford over something it wanted. The argument must have taken Nuffield by surprise, but as put forward it had an aura of academic convention and professional principle, difficult to contest from outside the magic circle of academe; and it did the trick. Perhaps it also had a *post facto* value for Nuffield as an ac-

32 Veale to Halifax 9 July (note 7).

33 Veale to Hobbs 9 July (note 7).

34 Harrison, *History of the University of Oxford, 1914–1939*, pp. 647–8.

ceptable explanation for his *volte face*, and was given some prominence in Hobbs's draft biography:

[Lord Nuffield] allowed himself to be dissuaded [from the engineering college] ... by informed University opinion, which showed him that Oxford and Cambridge had always refrained from competing with each other in the advancement of certain subjects of study. Engineering teaching, and especially the practical aspect of it, had come to be regarded as one of the Cambridge fields of specialisation, and it was thought that concentration on this particular science at Oxford would to some extent constitute a breach with tradition.³⁵

The connection between providing the physical chemistry laboratory and Nuffield's hopes for engineering sounds equally far-fetched, though it accorded with Nuffield's support for science. On this, as on the need to respect Cambridge, Veale was sailing distinctly close to the wind: the university history refers to the 'dubious arguments' he used.³⁶ But it was probably good judgment that he did not try to explain why Oxford would not have Nuffield's engineering college at any price. The benefaction was at stake, and Nuffield was under no obligation to leave it on the table. Veale supported Lindsay's aims, and like any good civil servant was deploying the most effective arguments he could muster for his leader's position.

More important however was Veale's persuasion of Nuffield that social studies could produce a better Britain. There is no evidence that Nuffield knew anything about this field before it was proposed to him, and we have only the few clues in Veale's letter to Halifax of the way it was sold on 9 July as 'modern studies'. One can guess that Veale talked of extensions of the PPE degree. Political studies were less well known than they are now, and sociology even less so, but Nuffield like everyone else would have been aware of economics' topicality after the 1929–30 crash. Maynard Keynes's *General Theory* had been published in January 1936 for five shillings,³⁷ and was becoming the received wisdom for managing capitalism. Otherwise for what may have been Veale's arguments we can look at Lindsay's concept paper for the college of late July, and at the text of Nuffield's formal offer of 8 October.

What is striking about these papers is the conviction that applying modern academic methods to study 'society' could produce a sea change in governments and communities. Lindsay was a believer. He wrote in his late

35 Hobbs's draft (note 8), pp. 212–3.

36 *History of the University of Oxford 1914–1939*, p. 647.

37 Overy, *The Morbid Age*, p. 88.

July paper that 'we are living in a world of extraordinary complexity, where expert and unbiased knowledge is a vital necessity if civilisation is to survive ...'³⁸ Progress was handicapped everywhere by the divorce between theory and practice. The college of postgraduate studies would be 'especially devoted to the facts and problems of contemporary society', and would provide the necessary opportunities for 'intimate talk, discussion, and common understanding.'³⁹ Nuffield put his name to the same sentiments in his formal offer, drafted of course by Veale.⁴⁰ After dealing with the provision for the physical chemistry laboratory, the offer continued that '[I]n the meeting of the demands of new knowledge in the non-scientific subjects there is an even greater lag than in scientific subjects between research and its practical application.' It went on that 'I have been wondering during the past year whether there is any way to bridge the separation between the theoretical students of contemporary civilisation and the men responsible for carrying it on ...'. It expressed the hope that the college would bring together 'the scholar and man of affairs' as well as those working in different fields, for considering 'social (in which terms I should include economic and political) problems.' As for the immediate benefit for industry, the offer continued that 'I have long deplored the comparative scarcity of University graduates in the highest posts on the administrative and managerial sides of industry,' and he hoped that his college 'would produce a flow of recruits to industry to whom the gulf [between academic studies and practical affairs] had been bridged.'⁴¹ Veale had drafted an astute and harmonious mixture of Lindsay's vision and Nuffield's predilections, and presumably had put the case for social studies on these lines on 9 July.

There is no reason to doubt Nuffield's sincerity in accepting it. He was a conservative with a streak of radicalism in him, as his short-lived support for Mosley had demonstrated, and his other donations had already shown his concern for the slump and its consequence. Social studies offered him the prospect of dealing with causes and not just effects. Direct evidence of Nuffield's mood remains elusive, but there is a rare quotation from him in the *Oxford Mail* of its interview with him about the plan on 13 October 1937,

38 Chester, *Economics, Politics and Social Studies in Oxford*, p. 70.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 71.

40 'I drafted the letter in which he made his offer': Veale to Lindsay 22 August 1939, university archives NH/4(sub) file 1.

41 Nuffield's offer of 8 October 1937 is partly reprinted in *The Economic Journal* XLVII no.188, December 1937, with comment by R.F.Harrod. For the complete text see university archives VC/101/78 and Nuffield archives SEP/5/5.

with the indispensable Veale on hand. According to the report, ‘three times his enthusiasm overcame his [Nuffield’s] diffidence and he broke out with “This is the thing which may go down the ages ...”’.⁴² I quote later a wartime letter by Veale which referred to the ‘burning ardour’ with which Nuffield founded the college; and Veale was well placed to judge. Even during Nuffield’s disillusion during the war, Hobbs’s draft biography recorded what was presumably still his view that what he had agreed in 1937 was ‘an entire departure from the conventional’ and a project that ‘[probably] is entirely unique, as it will seek to provide solutions of social problems by methods which are generally thought to possess considerable possibilities, but have not been developed hitherto.’⁴³

Disillusion and reconciliation

Then came Nuffield’s disillusion, of which I need give only a brief outline. After Lindsay and Veale had arranged his benefaction so quickly in their four months of action in 1937, Oxford reverted to a stately pace, and annoyed Nuffield over the next two years by the slow progress and inept planning. Lindsay was offered the Wardenship but declined it in February 1938,⁴⁴ and another was found and took up office at the beginning of 1939. By then an architect had been appointed and plans being produced. Nuffield was much offended when he first saw them in June 1939, and threatened to disassociate himself unless they were changed, which they were. Posterity tends to applaud the change.

Oxford’s criticism also began to make itself felt, with grumbles that the university had been bulldozed to have a college which it did not want. Traditionalists distrusted social studies. Scientists were angry that the money had not all gone to science. The author of a historical guide to Oxford in my school library—the first book I ever read about Oxford—gave a conventional recent graduate’s view when he wrote in 1939, before he was killed early in the war, that ‘... a clique of brainy fellows is to be hired to think and think on behalf of those who make progress,’ and argued that ‘One such college is enough. If the problems of contemporary civilisation were capable of solution on academic lines, All Souls would have solved them.’⁴⁵

42 Chester, *Economics, Politics and Social Studies in Oxford*, p. 69.

43 Hobbs’s draft, pp. 213–214.

44 Taylor, *Nuffield College Memories*, pp. 27–28

45 Christopher Hobhouse, *Oxford: As it was and as it is today* (London: Batsford, 1939), p. 115.



Model of proposed design for Nuffield College that Lord Nuffield rejected.

Then came the war. The Warden disappeared on war work but was slow to resign. Nuffield had his wartime activities, but he fretted that the college was not making a better contribution. In fact it mounted an ambitious project for a ‘Social Reconstruction Survey’, with lukewarm government support, to provide data and analysis for postwar planning, and it organised conferences on the postwar theme: but there and elsewhere it seemed to be taking a radical turn. Its prime mover had become its acting Sub-Warden, GDH Cole, a social historian and leading Labour Party academic, with more explicit left wing affiliations than Lindsay’s. He had pioneered Guild Socialism before 1914; argued in the 1930s that socialism was the only serious alternative in an age of ‘sheer economic disaster’ and ‘the dissolution of European civilisation’;⁴⁶ and in a wartime speech had set out his hope that the emergency legislation of the time would be deliberately used to eliminate capitalism.⁴⁷ The Reconstruction Survey was distrusted by conservatives as preparation for extensive postwar control, which indeed it was. The chairman of the college’s trustees wrote that Cole was not a man to be left in control of college activities. Nuffield was much upset and more or less withdrew in a huff, not

46 Overy, *The Morbid Age*, p. 70.

47 *Oxford Times*, 1 March 1941.



21 April 1949: Fellows of the College are presented to the Founder at the ceremony of laying the foundation stone for Nuffield College. Lord Nuffield is towards the centre of the picture in a pale gown, walking towards Lord Halifax, Chancellor of the University (to the left of the picture in the heavily embellished gown).

a temporary one. In January 1955 his then assistant wrote to the *Financial Times* in a correspondence about engineering education that ‘probably Lord Nuffield’s greatest disappointment was that the College of Engineering and Technology that he wished to found never came into being.’⁴⁸

Reconciliation gradually came over the last ten years of Nuffield’s life after the election of Norman Chester to be the college’s Warden in 1954. Chester was a Mancunian and he and Nuffield had much in common. He had left school at fourteen and became an academic the hard way, studying public administration. He had served in wartime Whitehall and had been secretary of Beveridge’s famous committee whose report produced the welfare state. He kept his northern style and accent. He endeared himself to me on the only occasion I met him, at a discussion he chaired in the early 1980s on the top civil service, then being assaulted by spokesmen for the Thatcher government. The idea came up—not for the last time—that top civil servants should be much younger, in the late thirties or early forties, promoted at the peak of their powers and not twenty years older. ‘A romantic notion’, Chester

48 C.T. Kingerlee, *Financial Times*, 15 January 1955.

commented weightily and dismissively, and he moved on after an effective pause.

As Warden he worked to repair the breach with Nuffield in his declining years, which included Lady Nuffield's death in 1959; and in the process the two became friends. A comment at the time was that Chester 'treated Nuffield like a rich, elderly uncle.'⁴⁹ The college became short of money to complete its buildings, and in 1957 Nuffield arranged for his Foundation to provide £200,000 for the purpose. He made the college his residuary legatee, and on his death in 1963 it received some half-a-million pounds as well as the gift of Nuffield Place.

Nuffield's change of mind

So why did Nuffield change his mind over engineering? He badly wanted his college. He was moved by Veale's contrived arguments about duplication with Cambridge, and by Veale's outline of Lindsay's totally uncontrived arguments for social studies. The evidence is that despite his proposal he was less committed to engineering than he might have been, and was thoroughly persuaded about the social studies college instead.

Why then did he become so disappointed? It was partly no more than human errors of commission and omission on both sides. Lindsay remained involved in the college project as Vice-Chancellor up to autumn 1938, but as a busy man was probably not one for chatting up Nuffield. The university was thoughtless in not consulting Nuffield about the choice of architect, and then approving the architect's plans six months before he saw them. Nuffield for his part had the enthusiasm of the recent convert, and probably had unrealistic expectations of quick progress and personal involvement. He could not expect to go on his winter cruise to Australia and still be treated as if he were part of a project team. Once the country was engaged in total war it is surprising that he expected the college to make a major wartime contribution.

Politics also counted. Nuffield had presumably been presented with social studies as an exercise in objective data collection and policy analysis, and it is hardly surprising that he came to resent Cole's wartime leadership. But Veale at the time gave more blame to the failure to keep Nuffield in touch. In 1942 he wrote that he was 'prone to expect results to follow close on the

49 Quoted by Taylor, *Nuffield College Memories*, p. 83, from a 1957 diary entry by Sir Raymond Streat (Nuffield College Archives N14/4/1).

heels of decision,' and concluded that '[W]e failed to keep alive, perhaps even to realise, the burning ardour with which he founded it [the college] ... [If trouble had been taken to keep Nuffield informed] I believe Cole could have preached the class war from the steps of the College and Nuffield would have borne it.'⁵⁰ Veale also wrote with insight after Nuffield's death that he was 'supremely self-confident in the management of industry' but 'in private life both shy and humble-minded'. A key point according to Veale was his sensitivity to criticism, and the article is savage about the critics: 'criticism of his choices was made by some in the university who thought the best way to attract his attention to their needs was to deride what he had done for others ...'. In Veale's view Nuffield would have warmed to academic company in other circumstances, but the criticism of him 'became clamorous after the foundation of Nuffield College,' and henceforth 'he never was at his ease' in university and college circles; and difficulty was mutual. Without academic criticism 'he would have been spared the bitterness of disappointment over what he had done for the University which clouded his later years.'⁵¹

Veale lightened this picture by describing the enjoyment Nuffield continued to get from his contacts with the medical school. His medical benefactions continued and included medical scholarships to six colleges, including the women's, and ended with the extension and equipment of the Nuffield Centre of Clinical Medicine in 1951. Veale also indicated that the academic criticism he so deplored ranged wider than the benefaction to the college. Nevertheless this was their focus, and until Chester took office it did not take enough trouble to keep their touchy donor on side. Those involved did not follow the doctors in week-end golf at Huntercombe and convivial suppers at the communal table: C.P. Snow's Cambridge academics managed better with their fictitious Timberlake. In the stresses of war and frustrations of Britain's postwar peace it is not surprising that Oxford's impatient, elderly and unhappy autocrat became so critical.

So there were failings in Oxford's benefactor-management, and tactical exaggeration over the difficulties with Nuffield's engineering proposal: but there was no academic chicanery. Nuffield was not misled by his Oxford interlocutors in that summer and autumn of 1937 about their belief in social studies. Yet it now seems, seventy-six years later, that there was indeed an illusion about the college: but a genuine one on their part, shared with a substantial segment of national opinion. The illusion was about the pace and

50 Quoted by Chester, *Economics, Politics and Social Studies in Oxford*, p. 108.

51 Douglas Veale, *Oxford Magazine*, 7 December 1963.

extent of peaceful and beneficial change that would be fuelled by these academic studies. Lindsay's enthusiasm for his 1937 blueprint mirrored this part of the national mood. Richard Overy has recently written about the inter-war period as a period of British anxiety, a 'morbid age,' preoccupied with the perceived 'crisis of civilisation'.⁵² Yet this was combined with a residual, older belief in a natural state of progress. There was a conviction that developments in knowledge—partly science, but also social studies—could provide succour and solutions for the crisis, through planning. As put by Overy, '[T]he most popular solution which was suggested for the crisis, which was capable of uniting individuals across the political divide, was planning.'⁵³ with social studies as its foundation. Against this background the creation of the college was given a public significance that now seems remarkable. *The Times* on 13 October discussed Nuffield's offer of the college in a full and enthusiastic leader, which hazarded that 'what Bologna did for the public service of the medieval church, Nuffield College may do for that of modern society.'⁵⁴ The BBC had Lindsay speaking about it in the predecessor of what is now its World Service. The college's creation was a national event, even an international one, and Nuffield like many others had high expectations, and some disappointment with the results.

An assessment

Social studies indeed helped to change Britain over the following half-century; but our view of it as an engine of improvement is now more measured than in 1937. The war enabled economists (and statisticians) to bring their professional skills to wartime government, and encouraged hopes of a new society afterwards. Peter Hennessy notes that the war 'had turned Whitehall into an adventure playground for economists and statisticians',⁵⁵ though other social studies had less effect. After 1945 there was what Hennessy has called the 'British New Deal',⁵⁶ but one in which '[T]he Attlee government operated deeply, but on a narrow front.'⁵⁷ Postwar circumstances did not en-

52 Overy, *The Morbid Age*. See for example pp. 34–46 for the publicity given to Arnold Toynbee's pessimism in his influential volumes of *The Study of History*.

53 Overy, *The Morbid Age*, p. 76.

54 *The Times*, 13 October 1937.

55 Peter Hennessy, *Never Again: Britain 1945–51* (London: Vintage paperback, 1993), p. 323.

56 Peter Hennessy, *Having It So Good: Britain in the Fifties* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), p. 22.

57 *Ibid.* p. 7, quoting Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918–1951* (London: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 534.

courage big thinking, and Britain settled into its postwar model of a mixed economy and social welfare with acceptance rather than enthusiasm. Social studies, and the college's contribution, certainly influenced government: but more modestly, empirically, and unpredictably than had been visualised in 1937.⁵⁸ We now recognise that scholarship's influence on politics is usually a long haul.

Should we now regret that the engineering college never materialised? The case for more engineering training was first put forward in 1944 when the Percy Report recommended doubling the output of engineering graduates.⁵⁹ It has subsequently been repeated whenever Britain has had an economic crisis. At the time of writing Sir James Dyson, inventor of the Dyson vacuum cleaner, had written in this vein in *The Times*: 'Britain should focus on generating ideas and patenting them... We need high quality engineers, backed up by supportive government incentives.'⁶⁰ Nuffield's original proposal might also have produced the business education that Oxford subsequently provided on a small scale from 1965 onwards, and then by Templeton College and the School of Management Studies from 1983, and by the Saïd Business School since 1996. But Oxford would not have gone down those routes in 1937. The remarkable thing is that it founded the postgraduate social studies college as an alternative.

There is nothing to regret in this, or Robert Taylor's conclusion to his *Nuffield College Memories* that 'The harnessing of the social sciences, in all their complexities and diversity, to the betterment and enlightenment of humanity, is still a cause worth fighting for.'⁶¹ Least of all could I regret the college's encouragement of my own esoteric work in the Oxford Intelligence Group and the study of government's secret intelligence institutions. How then should we now mark its establishment, fifty years after Nuffield's death? We rightly honour his memory, but might also applaud Lindsay and Veale for the vision and persuasion they showed on 8–9 July 1937 to make it happen. Lindsay had his peerage and his biography, but something might be done for Veale, the effective civil servant who landed the prize. Better still might be to recreate the three dialogues (Nuffield-Halifax, Veale-Lindsay, and Veale-Nuffield) over those two days from which the college emerged.

58 For further discussion see chapters 6 and 7 in A.H. Halsey, *Essays on the Evolution of Oxford and Nuffield College* (Oxford: Nuffield College, 2012), and Robert Taylor's chapter 'A New Nuffield for New Times' in his *Nuffield College Memories*.

59 Hennessy, *Never Again*, p. 160.

60 Article in *The Times*, 26 February 2013.

61 Taylor, *Nuffield College Memories*, p. 185.

They could—indeed should—have ranged over the balance of education and scholarship in the university; the roles of colleges in the larger institution; the scope for studying ‘society’; contact between academe and the ‘real world’; and what Oxford should do. They would make an interesting three-act play by Michael Frayn on the pattern of his dialogue plays *Copenhagen* and *Democracy*. Perhaps he could be invited to write it?

I am indebted for assistance to the Nuffield library and Clare Kavanagh the archivist; and to Alex Danchev for comments.

Biographies of Lord Nuffield

Where not specified in footnotes, details of Lord Nuffield’s career are taken from the following:

Adeney, M. *Nuffield: a biography*

Andrews, P.W.S. and Brunner, E. *The life of Lord Nuffield: a study in enterprise and benevolence*

Jackson, R. *The Nuffield Story*

Minns, F.J. (ed) *Wealth well-given: the enterprise and benevolence of Lord Nuffield*

Overy, R.J. *William Morris, Viscount Nuffield*

Overy, R.J. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

In addition to the references given in the text, copies of many documents are available in the Nuffield College archive.

A version of this section was originally prepared by Michael Herman (Associate Member of Nuffield College) for ‘Friends in Council’, a Cheltenham discussion group which has existed since 1862.

Lord Nuffield was William Richard Morris, and he was still known as Billy Morris—the local man made good—by elderly Oxford citizens in the late 1980s. He was made a Baronet in 1929, went to the House of Lords as Baron Nuffield in 1934, and became a Viscount in 1938 and a Companion of Honour in 1958. He took his title from the hamlet of Nuffield, near Henley, where he had moved in 1933 to the house he renamed Nuffield Place.

One of Britain's most generous benefactors, Lord Nuffield's personal donations amounted to an equivalent of about £1.5 billion in today's terms, and to a breadth of causes that is in itself unusual.

The 50th Anniversary of Lord Nuffield's death presents an opportunity to celebrate his generosity and to reflect upon the impact of his donations, which can still be seen today. A philanthropic legacy indeed.



NUFFIELD COLLEGE

