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2. Thomas Frederick Tout at Lampeter: the making of a historian*

William Gibson

Thomas Frederick Tout's entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* is instructive about his years at Lampeter. Peter Slee wrote:

He worked in Oxford as a private tutor for two years before being appointed professor of modern history at St David's College, Lampeter, where he remained until his election, nine years later, to the chair of medieval and modern history at Owens College, Manchester. The years at Lampeter were the making of Tout, and most of the ideas with which he was later associated at Manchester received trial there.¹

His nine years at Lampeter are only briefly mentioned but are credited with 'the making of Tout'. Slee is right that Tout's time at Lampeter was his apprenticeship which bore fruit later on; and many of his later ideas and interests were clearly developed while he was at St. David's College. The purpose of this chapter, drawing on William Price's work on the history of St. David's College, is to explore some of the ways in which Tout's later work was inspired by his time at Lampeter.

Tout almost did not manage to make it to Lampeter. In 1880 he had been unsuccessful in an application for a teaching post there when William Augustus Brevoort Coolidge had been appointed.² But Tout had clearly

* This chapter owes a particular debt to the Revd. Canon D. T. W. Price, whose 'T. F. Tout, the Lampeter years' was published in *Trivium*, xv (1980), 73–81 (this volume was a *Festschrift* for Professor D. Chandaman). His two-volume history of St. David's University College, Lampeter is also a definitive source on the history of the college (D. T. W. Price, *A History of Saint David's University College, Lampeter. Volume One: to 1898* (Cardiff, 1977); and *A History of Saint David's University College, Lampeter. Volume Two, 1898–1971* (Cardiff, 1990). I am also extremely grateful to Sarah Roberts of the Roderic Bowen Research Centre at University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Lampeter, for supplying me with additional material from the Lampeter archives.

¹ V. H. Galbraith, 'T. F. Tout', rev. by P. R. H. Slee, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 845–8.

² Coolidge was an American, a former fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford and after he left Lampeter he became an Alpine mountaineer (R. W. Clark, *An Eccentric in the Alps: the*

W. Gibson, 'Thomas Frederick Tout at Lampeter: the making of a historian', in *Thomas Frederick Tout (1855–1929): refashioning history for the twentieth century*, ed. C. M. Barron and J. T. Rosenthal (London, 2019), pp. 25–39. License: CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0.

impressed the interviewing panel, so that when the same post was vacant two terms later he was appointed without the need for a further application.³ It has been assumed that Tout was the only choice for the 1881 vacancy, but Coolidge wrote that he was the second choice, the preferred candidate having accepted a post elsewhere from which he could not withdraw.⁴ Tout's post is often assumed to have been professor of English and history, but in the first entry in the college's calendar he was listed as 'Professor of English and Modern Languages and Lecturer in Logic and Political Economy'. It was in 1885 that he was appointed to a separate chair in history but remained a lecturer in political economy.

In 1881, therefore, Tout arrived to take up his post as professor at St. David's College, Lampeter. Lampeter was a small college in Cardiganshire, established by Bishop Thomas Burgess of St. David's and founded by royal charter in 1822 and with a grant of £1000 from George IV. The college was built by C. R. Cockerell in the style of an Oxford college with a chapel, hall and library in a quadrangle.⁵ The college had earned supplemental charters which gave it the right to award the degrees of BA and BD and was the first degree-awarding institution in Wales.⁶ Before that time most Welshman wanting to take a degree usually went to Jesus College, Oxford, which had strong links with Wales and numerous scholarships for Welshmen. Though St. David's College had never been a theological college and, in fact, offered a general education to anyone without a religious test for entry, it had been founded to educate the clergy and was often thought of as an Anglican institution. During the middle of the nineteenth century the college had been adversely affected by two significant factors. The first was the strident Toryism of the founding principal, Llewelyn Llewelin, who exercised almost complete authority over the college. From 1839 he combined the principalship with the deanery of St. David's, which meant he was much overloaded with work. The second factor was the trial in 1864 of the vice-principal, Rowland Williams, for heresy. Rowland Williams was the last man to be tried for heresy in England for his contribution to *Essays and Reviews*, which was published in 1860. Williams was convicted of the offence in the court of arches, but cleared on appeal to the privy council; however the college was associated with his unorthodox churchmanship for some

Story of W. A. B. Coolidge, the Great Victorian Mountaineer (London, 1959)).

³ RBRC, St. David's College, Minute Book of the College Board, 1875–1886, fo. 143. The decision was unanimous and taken on the authority of the Visitor of the college.

⁴ Magdalen College, Oxford, Wilson Papers, correspondence with W. A. B. Coolidge, MC:F 23/C3/9–12.

⁵ D. Watkin, *The Life and Work of C. R. Cockerell* (London, 1974), pp. 148–50.

⁶ Price, *History of Saint David's University College*, i. *passim*.



Figure 2.1. Photograph of the staff and students of St. David's College, Lampeter, 1890. Reproduced by kind permission of the Roderic Bowen Library and Archives, University of Wales Trinity Saint David. Tout is seated in the second row.

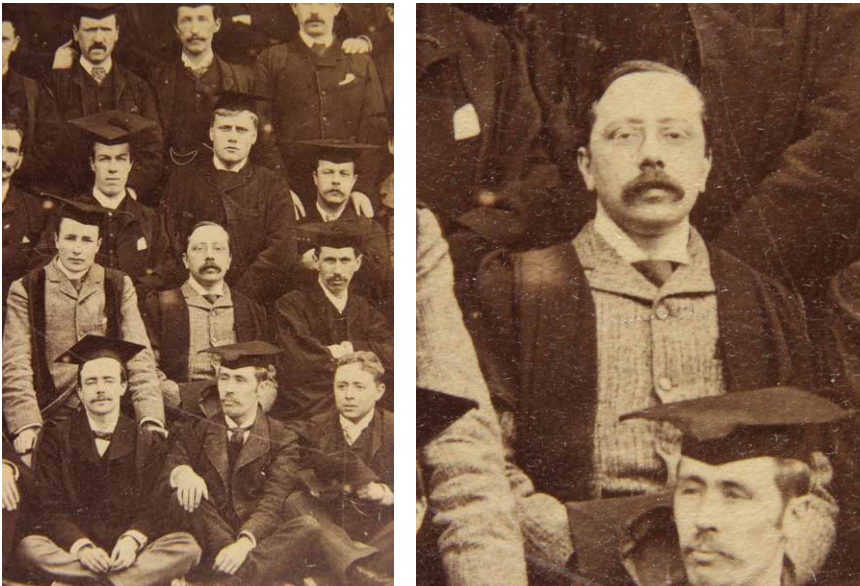


Figure 2.2. Close-ups of Thomas Frederick Tout from the college photograph of 1890; at this date Tout was thirty-four years of age. Reproduced by kind permission of the Roderic Bowen Library and Archives, University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

time.⁷ In the aftermath, some bishops refused to ordain students educated at the college for fear that they had been educated by heterodox teachers. By the 1870s the college had about sixty students reading for the BA or BD.

Tout's arrival coincided with a new phase in the college's development under an energetic and dynamic second principal, Francis Jayne. Jayne had fought off an attempt in the Aberdare Report of 1881 to combine Lampeter with the recently formed college at Aberystwyth and set about reinvigorating St. David's College. In the decade in which Tout was at the college student numbers doubled to 120 and staff numbers grew from six to eight. Among the other staff at Lampeter during Tout's time was an impressive array of distinguished scholars. These included: John Owen, a leading Welsh scholar and later bishop of St. David's; Hastings Rashdall, the great medieval historian who progressed to New College, Oxford; Hugh Walker, the literary specialist whom Betjeman later called 'the great Hugh Walker'; as well as Principal Jayne, who was a theologian of some standing and later bishop of Chester.⁸

On his appointment Tout was offered accommodation in college, which would have been created by merging two sets of student rooms. But Tout chose to forego the rooms in the college in preference for lodgings in the town, for which the college paid £20 a year and from 1885 this was increased to £25 a year.⁹ The decision to live in the town rather than the college could have set him apart from his fellow staff and from students, most of whom lived in the college, but as will be seen he was popular and respected in the college.

At Lampeter, Tout laid the foundations for his later teaching methods at Manchester. In the small, residential college of 120 students he was able to develop a teaching style in an atmosphere of close professional contact. The college's timetable suggests that his formal teaching in English, history and political economy sometimes reached twenty-eight hours a week and in addition he gave informal classes on subjects like essay composition.¹⁰

His students covered the broadest range of abilities. Some were men who were described as 'peculiarly rough material'¹¹ and whose knowledge of English was as a second language. Many of them were aiming to enter the ministry of the Anglican Church in Wales; others were outstanding scholars like Robert Williams, who took a second-class degree at Lampeter and a

⁷ O. W. Jones, *Rowland Williams* (Llandysul, 1991).

⁸ Price, 'Tout, the Lampeter years', p. 74; W. Gibson, *In a Class by Itself* (Exeter, 2007), p. 1.

⁹ St. David's College, College Board Papers, RBRC, SDC, UA/C/1/5, 159.

¹⁰ RBRC, SDC, UA/CP/18, *St. David's College Calendar* (1885), pp. 54–5.

¹¹ Price, 'Tout, the Lampeter years', p. 74.

first at Merton College, Oxford and eventually succeeded Tout in a chair in Lampeter.¹² An analysis of students entering St. David's College in 1877 and 1887 indicates that the majority were the sons of farmers with only a few coming from the 'middle classes'. Their average age was 20.4 in 1877 and this rose to 21.5 in 1887. Most came from Wales, although the increase in student numbers in the 1880s meant that there was a growth in the numbers of English students by 1887.¹³

Since some aspects of history were compulsory for students studying theology, Tout sometimes lectured to classes of eighty. It became his practice to lecture without notes – a demanding practice but one which enabled him to focus on the students' understanding of his teaching. Fairly swiftly, Tout established the history school at Lampeter as sufficiently strong, and with growing student numbers, for a second history lecturer to be appointed in 1884. Before that date Tout taught the entire history syllabus, ranging across huge swathes of British, European, imperial and even legal and constitutional history. Tout seems to have been a demanding teacher. Frederick Maurice Powicke referred to him as 'a kindly companion and a merciless critic', but one who made students feel at home in the period under study and also consciously inducted them into their study. At Lampeter Tout learned the ability to master enormous stretches of history and to be 'a vivid, confident teacher and talker'.¹⁴

In 1883 Tout revised the curriculum to produce a scheme that is perhaps his greatest achievement in undergraduate history teaching: the complementary combination of extensive outline courses and intensive, themed, special-subject courses which used original sources. The arrangement of these two approaches was, to some degree, modelled on the Oxford history scheme, but it was brought into sharp relief at Lampeter through the limited curriculum and small number of single-honours students. Before the era of the undergraduate final-year dissertation, Tout's special subject course was a way of generating specialization together with deep knowledge gained from an insight into the primary sources of the field.

The development of the special subject was Tout's principal achievement at Lampeter. It became associated with the idea of a culmination of academic enquiry in a specialist field in which a student could achieve a degree of exceptional knowledge and skill. It was also assessed, in part, through the use of gobbets – short extracts of primary source material on which the student was expected to write a penetrating exegesis. Such forms of assessment

¹² Price, *History of Saint David's University College*, i. 168.

¹³ Price, *History of Saint David's University College*, i. 209–10.

¹⁴ F. M. Powicke, 'Memoir', in *The Collected Papers of Thomas Frederick Tout* (3 vols., Manchester, 1932–5), i. 1–24, at p. 6.

tested both the broad, contextual knowledge of the student as well as their understanding of the historian's skill in detecting bias, weighing evidence and justifying an interpretation. For many history students it was the first occasion on which they had used original documents from which their historical interpretations were derived. From Lampeter the special subject came to dominate the final year of undergraduate honours teaching of history throughout Britain until the final quarter of the twentieth century.

A parallel development pioneered by Tout was a more rigorous and demanding assessment system, through a move to questions of interpretation over those that required the recitation of knowledge. The development of this trend can be traced through the examination papers that Tout set for honours finalists at Lampeter. It is clear that Tout set both history and English literature papers and while it was common for the English examination papers to ask students to respond to a poem or other extract, the history papers almost exclusively tested large quantities of knowledge and understanding. For example, one of the earliest history-paper questions Tout set was: 'Trace the steps by which the chief kingdoms of the English were united under one head'. Another question asked students to 'Compare the relations between England and Scotland in the reign of Edward I with those in the reign of Edward III'.¹⁵ Such testing of memory and knowledge was entirely usual for undergraduate history honours assessment in the period. However, starting in 1884 Tout began to set questions that used quotations from historians to stimulate a response. For example, in June 1884 he set questions on the growth of the Holy Roman Empire, Edward I and James I based on quotations from historians. The purpose of these questions was to ask the student to consider and evaluate historical opinions.¹⁶ Subsequent examination papers introduced extracts from original documents as their sources. It seems likely that Tout introduced these more evaluative and interpretive questions in history, which involved the use of sources, as a product of his teaching and assessment of English literature. Tout was also a stalwart and energetic external examiner. While at Lampeter he acted as examiner for the University of London external degree in history, for the modern history faculty at Oxford and for the Oxford and Cambridge local examination schemes for schools.¹⁷

Tout's interest in extra-mural teaching also began at Lampeter. There was no Historical Association or Workers Educational Association in Wales at this time, but Tout accepted invitations to lecture all across Wales. William

¹⁵ RBRC, SDC, History Examination Papers, June 1882, exam paper numbers 23–4.

¹⁶ RBRC, SDC, History Examination Papers, June 1884, exam paper numbers 126–31.

¹⁷ C. H. Firth, a Balliol contemporary of Tout, was external examiner at Lampeter.

Price claimed that Tout probably lectured in every town in Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire. He gave a series of lectures in Carmarthen on early Welsh church history for which prizes were offered to local schoolboys who submitted the best summary of his lectures; and he made the offer of an examination for anyone who attended all of the lectures.¹⁸

Tout's interest in secondary education was also apparent in Lampeter, where he was a strong supporter of the creation of St. David's College School, which was a secondary school which prepared students for entry to the college. Not only did Tout write the school's first prospectus but he also taught at the school, specializing in the matriculation class and the preparation of candidates for the civil service examination.¹⁹

Tout was a strong believer in the importance of the publication of historical research and he began his activities in this field at Lampeter. His first publications were book reviews for the *St. David's College Magazine*, from which he progressed to reviewing for the *English Historical Review*. In his very first publication Tout showed signs of the strength of opinion that marked his later work. The editors of the *St. David's College Magazine* had suggested that reviewers stick to local topics which were related to the college or to Wales. However, in 1881 Tout chose to review Sydney Parry-Jones's book *My Journey Around the World*, published earlier that year. Parry-Jones's book was a stirring tale of adventure in Australia and south-east Asia. Tout liked it and recommended it to his readers. What he did not recommend was the prevailing state of book reviewing. He wrote:

[E]veryone knows that reviews are often of no great value. They may be executed in a hurry by men who know very little of the subject or who have not read the book they profess to criticize. It is the commonest thing in the world to find reviewers' copies of new books on second-hand bookstalls and *uncut*. In other cases we hear of publishers starting magazines to puff their own publications. Sometimes a dear friend, sometimes a secret foe of the author, undertakes to deal with his book. In none of these cases is the result altogether satisfactory, and when we come to reviews in some local and provincial journals, it is often difficult to see why they are written except as an advertisement.²⁰

His first major article, on Welsh counties, was published in *Y Cymmrodor*, the journal of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion; Powicke

¹⁸ Price, 'Tout, the Lampeter years', p. 75.

¹⁹ Price, 'Tout, the Lampeter years', p. 78.

²⁰ RBRC, SDC, UA/SP/1/1, *The St. David's College Magazine*, ii (1881), 289–95. I am grateful to S. Roberts and C. R. J. Smith for supplying me with a transcription of the review. Parry-Jones lived near Lampeter, so Tout was not entirely ignoring the editor's injunctions and he had donated a copy of his book to the library of St. David's College.

described the article as ‘getting straight to the heart of a subject and treating it with force and lucidity’.²¹ Some of the earliest of Tout’s articles were almost certainly developed from papers he read to the student debating societies in Lampeter. Tout attended both the English and Welsh student debating societies at the college and in 1889 presented an 8,000-word paper on ‘Owain Glyndwr and his times’ which he later published in the college magazine.²² It was an article that captured some of Tout’s views about both history and Wales. He wrote of the fifteenth century: ‘There is no part of English history which is harder to realise than the fifteenth century. There are few periods of fifteenth century history for which the authorities are less satisfactory than of the great Welsh revolt’.²³ His interest in Wales was marked. He wrote: ‘No part of the country played a greater part in the history of the 13th and 14th century than the Welsh Marches. Here the struggle of Simon de Montfort for constitutional liberty began and ended. The tragic history of Edward II closed in the Lordship of Glamorgan. Richard II’s career was ended in the Marches of North-eastern Wales’.²⁴ While Tout was dismissive of ‘bardic exaggeration’ as a historical source, he also wrote with feeling of Wales: ‘Owain had indeed failed in his attempt to make Wales a separate state. It was well that he did fail. But he succeeded in the nobler task of restoring self-respect and pride in race and country to the people that he loved so well, and who sacrificed so much for his sake. Welsh history is not, as some would have us think, a mere record of failure’.²⁵

In 1884 Tout contributed an essay on Wales to the *Dictionary of English History* – a paradoxical idea, perhaps. He also wrote the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century volume for York Powell’s school history textbook series, probably drawing on his experience teaching at St. David’s College School and in examining for the Oxford and Cambridge local examinations.²⁶ One of his own students reviewed Tout’s history textbook in the *St. David’s College Magazine* thus: ‘Mr Tout has done his work well. His facts are well-selected and skilfully marshalled; his style is clear and condensed ... [W]e can confidently recommend it for schools and colleges as an admirable text

²¹ Powicke, ‘Memoir’, p. 5.

²² RBRC, SDC, UA/SP/1/2, 158. It was a paper he had already read at the Cardiff Cambrian Society on 7 Dec. 1888. This certainly implied that Tout had mastered the Welsh language (‘Owen Glyndwr and his times’, *St. David’s College Magazine*, n.s., iii (1889)).

²³ RBRC, SDC, SP/1/2, ‘Owen Glyndwr and his times’, pp. 158–9. I am grateful to M. Haylock for her transcription of this article.

²⁴ ‘Owen Glyndwr and his times’, p. 161.

²⁵ ‘Owen Glyndwr and his times’, p. 177. He also wrote of Owain Glyndwr: ‘He was the soul of the one great effort made by the Cymry to win back their ancient freedom’ (p. 158).

²⁶ Galbraith, ‘Tout’.

book of English History'.²⁷ It was not a view that was shared by all readers of the work: Powicke certainly took a dim view of Tout's textbook. He also described some of Tout's articles for the *Dictionary of English History* and *Celebrities of the Century* as 'of the popular or "pot-boiling" kind'.²⁸

Tout's most significant venture in publishing at Lampeter was his contribution to the *Dictionary of National Biography (DNB)*, which appeared in quarterly intervals between 1885 and 1900. During his time at Lampeter Tout wrote 116 articles for the *DNB*, to which by 1900 he had contributed a total of 240 entries. This was the equivalent of a single volume of the whole work. Tout was not uncritical of the *DNB* and recorded his sense that some of the articles published in it lacked serious historical understanding. He was piqued that his request to write the article on Saint David had come too late and the editors had allocated the subject to Henry Bradley. He was also annoyed that the editors decided to leave out his entry for Dervorguilla, the co-foundress of Balliol, his *alma mater*. His deep interest in English medieval history was also becoming apparent in his work for the *DNB*. However, Welsh history remained an abiding interest and Henry Jones of Aberystwyth claimed to have seen a manuscript for a book on the history of Wales in Tout's papers which was never published.²⁹

Tout also emerged as an able administrator at Lampeter. The college was small enough for administrative duties to be shared among the academic staff and this gave Tout an apprenticeship which paid dividends in his work to create three separate universities from the Victoria University in the north of England in 1903–4.³⁰ Tout held a number of posts at Lampeter. From 1883–90 he was the college's librarian, a post to which he was elected and re-elected by the college board. The college allowed him £28 a year for books, but Tout was astute in begging books from other sources. He secured the gift of 300 volumes of the Rolls Series from the government and a significant donation of books from Macmillan's, the publisher. In July 1885 he obtained approval from the college board to sell duplicate books to fund the rebinding of some library items.³¹ In 1887 he persuaded the trustees of the British Museum to give the college more than seventy

²⁷ RBRC, SDC, UA/SP/1/2, *St. David's College Magazine*, i (1890), 32.

²⁸ Powicke, 'Memoir', p. 5.

²⁹ Price, 'Tout, the Lampeter years', p. 76.

³⁰ The Victoria University, founded in 1880, combined Owen's College, Manchester, University College, Liverpool and Yorkshire College, Leeds. In 1903 to 1904 the University was disaggregated into three separate universities: Leeds, Liverpool and the Victoria University of Manchester.

³¹ St. David's College, College Board Papers, RBRC, SDC, UA/C/1/5, 237.

volumes, including the catalogues of all the museum's departments.³² In 1881 Coolidge had written to Tout that the library at St. David's College was outstanding but lacked an adequate catalogue. Consequently, Tout decided to create a new catalogue for the library, a task to which C. H. Firth also contributed in 1885. Firth, having completed his work as external examiner at Lampeter, stayed on at the college to help Tout work on the catalogue.³³

One of Tout's achievements in this period was to rebind some of the volumes of the Bowdler Tract Collection, a unique collection of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century books and pamphlets. Tout, with Firth's help, saw the value of the unique collection – indeed, Firth found it so significant that he tried to buy the whole collection for £200.³⁴ Tout also wrote the *DNB* entry for Thomas Phillips, who had made an extraordinary endowment of the college library at Lampeter between the 1830s and 1850s. Phillips sent sixty batches of books and manuscripts (some of them were wagon-loads of items) to the college.³⁵ Most of these were miscellaneous lots of books, incunabula and manuscripts that Phillips had bought at auctions, but they included some exceptionally rare items. Tout, who as librarian had reason to appreciate some of the treasures Phillips had bought and sent to the college, wrote that he was 'the only Welshman of his day who made large sacrifices in the cause of the education of his countrymen'.³⁶

Between 1888 and 1890 Tout was also senior bursar at Lampeter and as a professor sat on the college board, which governed the institution. It seems likely that an alliance of Tout and John Owen ensured that principal Francis Jayne pursued his reforms of the college as far as he possibly could.³⁷ Tout also contributed to the negotiations between St. David's College, Lampeter and the University of Oxford to renew the 1880 affiliation scheme under which Lampeter graduates could matriculate at Oxford and complete their degrees in two years rather than three. His experiences in working on the new statutes of the college in 1888 were also

³² *St. David's College and School Gazette*, vii (1887), 5.

³³ Magdalen College, Oxford, MC: F23/C3/6.

³⁴ Firth bought some duplicates from the collection which are now in the library of Worcester College, Oxford.

³⁵ *The Founder's Library University of Wales, Lampeter* (Lampeter, 1994); *The Founders' Library University of Wales, Lampeter: Bibliographical and Contextual Studies. Essays in Memory of Robin Rider*, ed. W. Marx (Lampeter, 1997, special issue of *Trivium*, xxix and xxx), pp. 169–77; B. L. James, *A Catalogue of the Tract Collection of St. David's University College, Lampeter* (London, 1975).

³⁶ T. F. Tout, 'Thomas Phillips', in *Dictionary of National Biography*.

³⁷ Price, 'Tout, the Lampeter years', p. 77.

a useful preparation for his later work in drafting the statutes of the new University of Manchester.³⁸

Tout also edited the *College Magazine* at Lampeter, which was one of the ways in which both the staff and students could publish essays and develop a collegiate life. When he resigned in 1890 the March issue referred to Tout's 'energy, wisdom, prudence, business-like capacities, and willingness to sacrifice at any time the precious evening hours to committee meetings'.³⁹ He was also editor of the college's *Memorandum*, a form of early prospectus. From the start, he saw opportunities to reduce spending. One of his first decisions as editor was to issue the *Memorandum* biennially since the information rarely changed from year to year. This resulted in a saving of money for printing and distribution.

William Price rightly suggests that Tout's time at Lampeter was 'the making' of the later historian and academic. Nevertheless, Tout does not seem to have been entirely happy at the college. He applied for other jobs in 1882 (Dundee), 1884 (Liverpool) and in 1888 wondered whether to apply for a post at Lincoln College, Oxford, which, he wrote, 'can't be worse than Lampeter'⁴⁰ – this last comment probably reflecting his disappointment that his friend E. H. Cully was not appointed professor of Latin at Lampeter.⁴¹ Price also wondered whether he found the all-male atmosphere of the College stifling.⁴² A verse by E. H. Cully suggests that Tout was capable of opinionated views:

From behind his tinted glasses
Peer the lurid orbs of Tout,
'Most men I consider asses:
You are one, without a doubt'.⁴³

Nevertheless, Tout slowly became a defender of and advocate for the college. At the degree day celebrations on 1887 he proposed the toast to the sub-visitors who were present. The sub-visitors were usually some of the Welsh bishops and aristocrats. After his toast, Tout spoke about the college's reputation. He said that he was disappointed that Lampeter was sometimes thought of as either a college principally for south Wales or as a 'sectarian college'. He pointed out that two of the four sub-visitors were from north

³⁸ Price, 'Tout, the Lampeter years', p. 77.

³⁹ RBRC, SDC, UA/SP/1/2, *St. David's College Magazine*, i (March 1890), 3.

⁴⁰ JRL, T. F. Tout Collection, Tout to his mother, 21 Dec. 1888.

⁴¹ Cully was refused the post because he would not agree to be ordained, which was a requirement Price, 'T. F. Tout, the Lampeter years').

⁴² Price, 'Tout, the Lampeter years', p. 78.

⁴³ Quoted in Price, *History of Saint David's University College*, i. 147.

Wales and that the college existed ‘for Wales as a whole’. He said the college ‘could not protest too strongly’ at any attempt to diminish its contribution to education in north Wales.⁴⁴ He went on to commend the bishops of Bangor and St. Asaph for defending the college in the House of Lords. He also praised Lord Emlyn for supporting the college in the House of Commons and raised a further toast in his honour.⁴⁵ So Tout undoubtedly came to identify with the college and to regard it as an institution to which he felt some loyalty.

At the St. David’s Day celebrations in the same year, which marked the sixtieth anniversary since the college’s foundation, Tout made a remarkably outspoken speech. He was gratified that so many distinguished former students attended the event. He went on to suggest there had been a boycott of the college by some people in Wales and singled out for attack Stuart Rendel, Liberal MP for Montgomeryshire, later Lord Rendel. Rendel was, claimed Tout, a malevolent voice who opposed the college. Tout denounced Rendel as ‘ignorant’ of Welsh history and said that his claim that Lampeter was ‘a centre of English influence and an alien institution propped by English gold’ was ‘arrant nonsense’.⁴⁶

In the vacations Tout stayed at Pembroke College in Oxford, where he was a non-resident fellow and often undertook research at the British Museum or the Public Record Office in London. This was not, however, because he disliked Wales. Indeed, when he was at Manchester he often spent his vacations in Wales, frequently staying with his former Lampeter colleague John Owen, who was bishop of St. David’s.

Tout took an enduring interest in the career of his most able student, Robert Williams, who returned to teach Welsh at Lampeter in 1889, just before Tout moved to Manchester. He was delighted when Williams was appointed professor of history at Lampeter in 1891.⁴⁷ He also maintained a friendship with Charles Lett Feltoe, who had been professor of Latin at Lampeter and later became headmaster of the King’s School, Chester and with whom he corresponded on shared interests in medieval history. Tout advised Feltoe on some aspects of history for his publication *Three Canterbury Kalendars*.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ RBRC, SDC, UA/SP/2, *St. David’s College and School Gazette*, viii (1887).

⁴⁵ RBRC, SDC, UA/SP/2, *St. David’s College and School Gazette*, viii (1887), 6. Viscount Emlyn was the son of Earl Cawdor and therefore able to sit in the House of Commons. He was MP for Carmarthenshire until 1885 and succeeded as earl in 1898.

⁴⁶ *St. David’s College and School Gazette*, vii (1887), at p. 6.

⁴⁷ JRL, GB 133 TFT/1/1299, undated letter to Williams.

⁴⁸ Undated letter to Feltoe, Huntington Library, California, MS. HM 79862. The Huntington Library also owns a work by Tout described as ‘a typescript (some pages are

If a heavy teaching load, an impressive range of publications and research and educational administration were not enough, Tout was also committed to the Victorian ideal of civic responsibility. Here, too, Tout's time at Lampeter prefigured his life in Manchester. Since he had decided to live in the town, he became active in civic affairs and was one of the contributors to the application to the government to make Lampeter a borough in its own right. He served as an alderman of the town and in that capacity secured the award to Lampeter of the status of the assize town of Cardiganshire. Only political chicanery prevented him from serving as mayor in 1887. It was claimed that one leading local councillor, John Charles Harford, hoped that – since 1887 was a jubilee year – the mayors of towns might be knighted and so presented the council with new and expensive mayoral regalia on condition that he succeed as mayor instead of Tout.⁴⁹

In 1890, aged thirty-five, Tout was appointed to the chair of history at the Victoria University of Manchester. His departure was greeted with widespread regret in Lampeter. The college board recorded on 5 May 1890 that it wished 'to place on record its sense of the value of the service rendered by him to the College during the past nine years both in connexion with his Chair and in the discharge of College duties as Librarian and Senior Bursar'.⁵⁰ The students' comments in the *College Magazine* included observations that 'ever since he came here in 1881 he has devoted himself to the teaching of his subject with singular energy and with a success attested by a list of University Honours, which ... may be fairly described as extraordinary'.⁵¹ Another testimonial was the following: 'It is not too much to say that no pair of hands in Lampeter hold together more threads of the College and general policy'. And a third read: '[H]is pupils feel that in him they have lost as good a friend as they have a tutor. There are many of his past pupils, scattered throughout the country who will feel that Lampeter is scarcely the same place to them without such a good friend as Professor Tout to turn to'.⁵²

When, in November 1890, he returned to Lampeter from Manchester for a testimonial dinner in his honour it was recorded: 'Mr Tout arrived in Lampeter by the afternoon train from Aberystwyth and was met at the

carbon copies), with annotations and additions in various hands. It is divided into the following sections: Introductory Note (p. i–iv), Medieval Books (p. 1–87), Medieval Books Addenda (2 p.), Modern Books (p. 1–32), The Non Historical Publications of the Manchester University Press (p. 1–6), Titles Not Listed in Tout Catalogue & Supplementary List (p. 1–7)' (MS. HM 82622). In addition, the library owns a number of letters to Tout from a range of correspondents.

⁴⁹ Price, *History of Saint David's University College*, i. 147. Harford was not knighted.

⁵⁰ St. David's College, College Board Papers, RBRC, SDC, UA/c/1/6, 122.

⁵¹ RBRC, SDC, UA/SP/1/2, *St. David's College Magazine*, iv (1890), at p. 305.

⁵² RBRC, SDC, UA/SP/1/2, *St. David's College Magazine*, 305–6.

station by a large number of enthusiastic students, who took the horses out of the carriage that had come to meet him and dragged him up to the College'.⁵³ He was entertained to songs and dinner and the presentation of a testimonial. On that occasion Tout himself also spoke about his time at Lampeter. His speech was reported in the *College Magazine*:

Looking back over nine eventful and stirring years he had spent at the College, and he could now speak with greater freedom than his colleagues who were remaining, he might say that when he came to the College in May 1881, it was a College of about sixty students. For the last five or six years, after a sudden and very remarkable development, it had settled down, permanently he believed, as College double that number ... [N]ow the institution had entered on a permanent condition of prosperity, a prosperity which ... depended on no individual, but on the inherent merits of the system and the place.

He spoke warmly of the calibre of his former colleagues and the recruitment of new staff of exceptional ability. He claimed that the college now played a full role in the life of Wales. He concluded by saying that he was leaving 'with the greatest possible reluctance'.⁵⁴

After 1890 Tout continued to take an interest in the college. He was appointed to the college's governing council in the early years of the twentieth century and took part in selection panels until he retired from the council in 1929. In 1922, after a crisis forced the resignation of the principal, Gilbert Cunningham Joyce, Tout served on the 'Reconstruction Committee' to rebuild the college's relationship with the Church in Wales; and he also served on the Sankey Committee to investigate the situation at the college in the same year.⁵⁵ One of its chief recommendations was the restoration of the honours school in history, which had been abandoned during the Great War – almost certainly this recommendation was made through the encouragement of Tout.⁵⁶ Later, Tout's influence can be seen in the strong advocacy for Lampeter of Powicke in the post-Second World War attempts to provide government funds for the college. Powicke published a 'Memorandum for the Privy Council' in June 1951 arguing that Lampeter should not be excluded from government funding. He explained to the principal of Lampeter that Tout had been his 'old master'.⁵⁷

⁵³ RBRC, SDC, UA/SP/1/3, *St. David's College Magazine*, iv (1890), 60.

⁵⁴ RBRC, SDC, UA/SP/1/2, *St. David's College and School Gazette*, iv (1890), 413–5.

⁵⁵ Price, *History of Saint David's University College*, ii, 24, 53–4, 60.

⁵⁶ JRL, GB 133 TFT/1/1063, T. F. Tout's correspondence with Sir John Sankey, 1922–5.

⁵⁷ Powicke even gave evidence in the hearing before Mr. Justice Vaisey in the 1950s to defend the college from the ministry of education's failure to include it on a list of funded institutions (Price, *A History of St David's University College, Lampeter*, ii, 156).

Like Price and Slee, Powicke argued of Tout that 'his years at Lampeter were profoundly important in Tout's development'.⁵⁸ Hugh Walker, Tout's colleague and friend, wrote:

In the College Library during term time and the British Museum in the vacation he laid the broad and deep foundations of his scholarship in History; in the Lampeter lecture-rooms he prepared himself for the wider stage in Manchester; and what better training in administration could be conceived than that which he found in facing the problems which arose in the process of reconstituting and reviving the almost moribund little College?⁵⁹

At Lampeter, Tout also developed the ideas that changed the nature of undergraduate history teaching and assessment in British universities; he laid down the foundations of later flourishing research into medieval history and showed himself to be an able and effective administrator. It was the making of a historian.

⁵⁸ Powicke, 'Memoir', pp. 4–6.

⁵⁹ Quoted in F. M. Powicke, 'Memoir', in *Collected Papers of Thomas Frederick Tout*, i. 4–5.

