

HISTORY OF UNIVERSITIES SEMINAR | 18 April 2023

*Roundtable: New Research on English Universities in the 19th & 20th Centuries*

## **STUDENT DEBT AT OXFORD IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: THE JENNINGS'S CASE**

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This paper examines the relationship between Oxford tradesmen and undergraduates, especially the way in which shopkeepers attracted inexperienced consumers and drove student consumption. Based on a set of primary sources and in particular newspapers, it analyses the Jennings's case that symbolises the conflict opposing students, tradesmen and the university in the mid-nineteenth century. I argue that if undergraduates' overspending and consumerist habits reflected a taste for extravagance and profligacy, they were however partly the result of aggressive new capitalist methods, such as 'touting' and 'dunning', and a consequence of standardized payment facilities such as consumer credit. The ambiguous position of the university did very little to solve the problem. Student insolvency lasted until the first part of the twentieth century.

### **History of Universities Seminar**

Convened by Miles Taylor (Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany), Ku-ming (Kevin) Chang (Academia Sinica, Taiwan), Heike Jöns (Loughborough University, United Kingdom) and Tamson Pietsch (University of Technology Sydney, Australia). Hosted by the Humboldt University of Berlin on Zoom: <https://www.histgeog-uni.net/history-of-universities-seminar-2/>.