

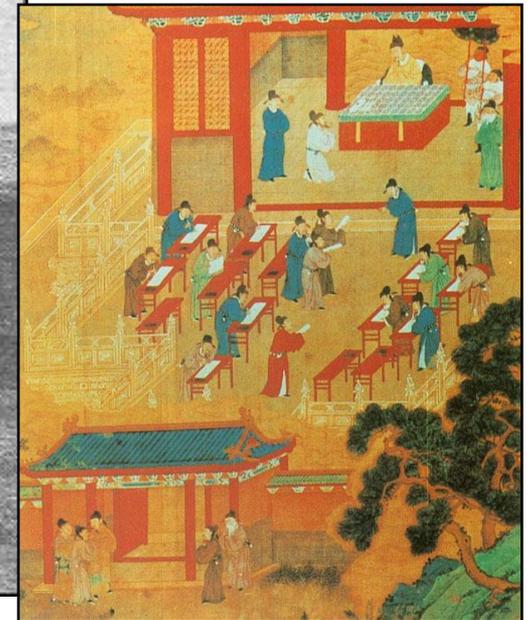
# The Cambridge Assessment Archives

**The Cambridge “Locals” and their legacy**

Seminar by Gillian Cooke and Andrew Watts

October 1<sup>st</sup> 2013

# Chinese imperial examinations



# Examinations and reform

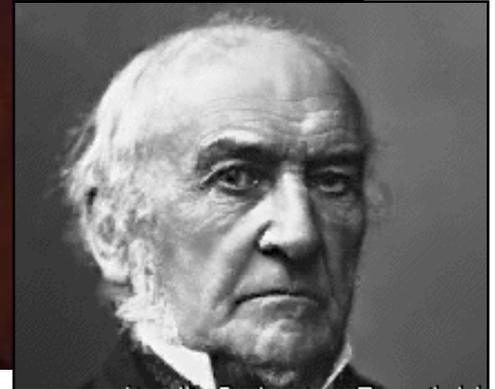
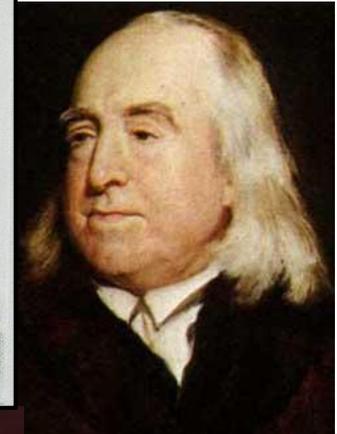
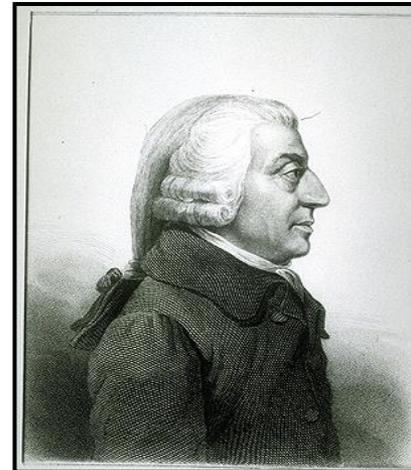
Robert Burton: 'Anatomy of Melancholy' (1621)

Adam Smith: 'Wealth of Nations' (1776)

Jeremy Bentham: 'Constitutional Code' (1827)

J.S.Mill: 'On Liberty' (1859)

W.E.Gladstone when Chancellor of Exchequer: 'competition as against ... private favour' (1854)



# 'Local' examinations 1858

Railways

Wooden boxes

'Centres':

Birmingham, Brighton,  
Bristol, Cambridge  
Grantham, Liverpool,  
London, Norwich.

297 junior candidates;

73 senior candidates



# Forerunners of the Locals



Teacher accreditation scheme (1846)

College of Preceptors (mid-1850s)

Civil Service examinations (1854, 1855)

Society of Arts 'trade exams' (1855)

# Oxford local exams

June 1857 University of Oxford  
Delegacy of Local Examinations  
established

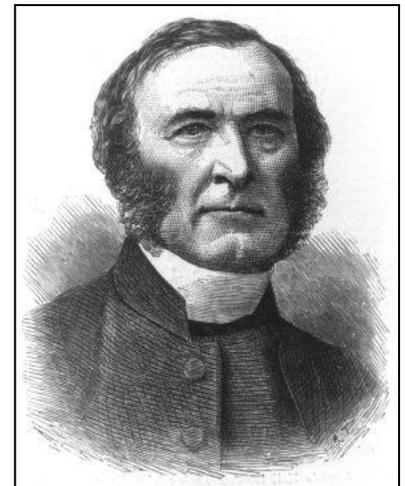
First exam conducted in summer 1858:  
11 centres

Temple stated: 'The universities should  
be made to feel that they have an  
interest in the education of all England.'



Viscount Ebrington

Frederick Temple



# Cambridge local exams

Spring 1857, deputation of schools to Cambridge University.

The Council of Senate set up a syndicate to devise a scheme on 4<sup>th</sup> June.

Examinations Syndicate set up in February 1858.

First examinations held  
in December 1858.



# Subjects in the first Locals

## Preliminary Examination

English (analysis, parsing and short composition), Arithmetic, Geography, outlines of English History, Reading aloud and Dictation (juniors)

## Subjects offered

Religious Knowledge, Latin, Greek, French, German, History, Geography, English Literature, Political Economy and English Law, Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Mechanics, Geology, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Drawing and Music.

## Differences between Oxford and Cambridge

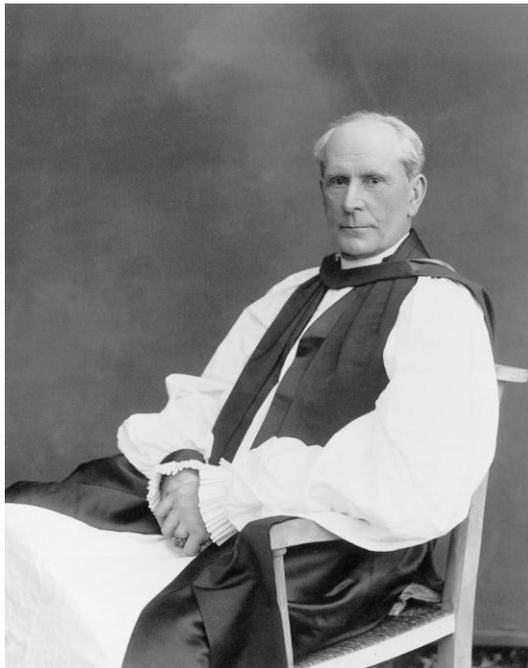
‘Associate of Arts’

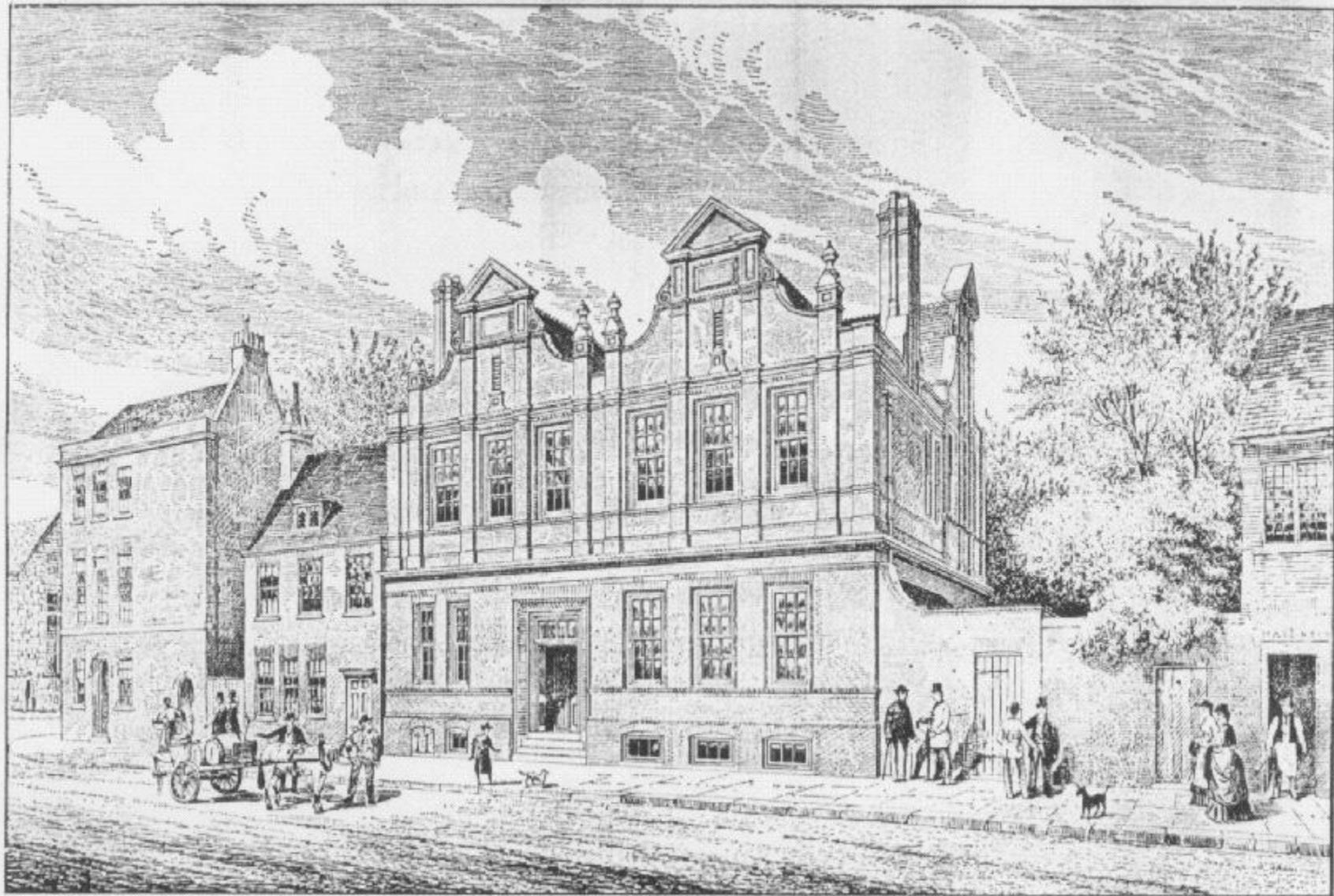
Timing of exams



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NETWORK

George Forrest Browne, St. Catherine's College, first  
long-serving head of the Cambridge Examinations  
Syndicate





Syndicate Buildings, Mill Lane, 1886

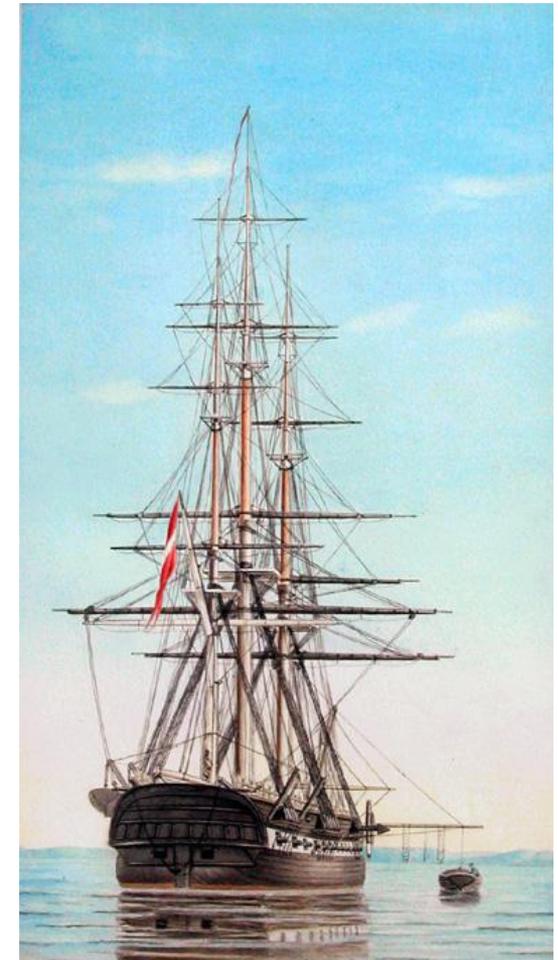




# Expansion at Cambridge both at home and overseas

Year		Centres	Juniors	Seniors
1858	Boys	8	297	73
1878	Boys	93	3329	626
	Girls	81	1483	997

First application from Trinidad in 1862. In 1864 10 candidates.



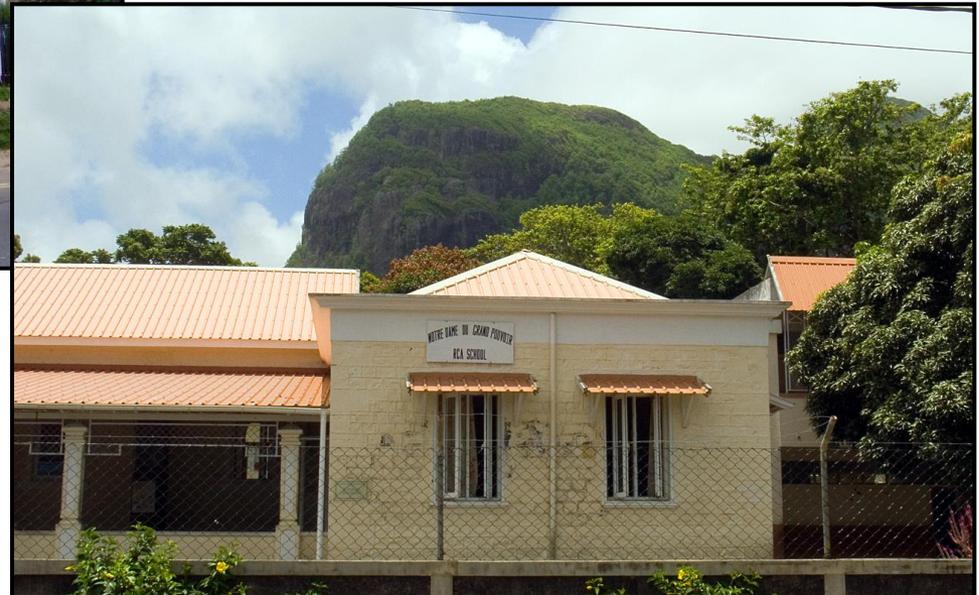


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# “World-wide currency”



1869-70 Natal  
1871 Adelaide  
1873 Mauritius



1874 Wellington

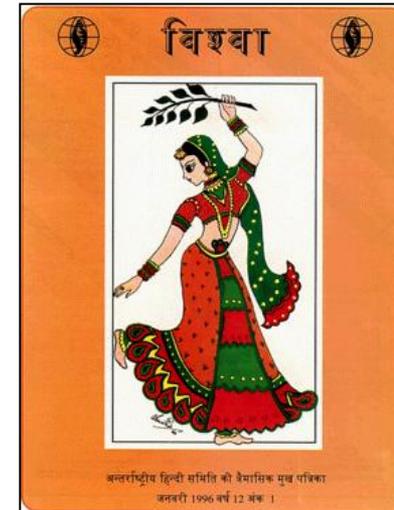
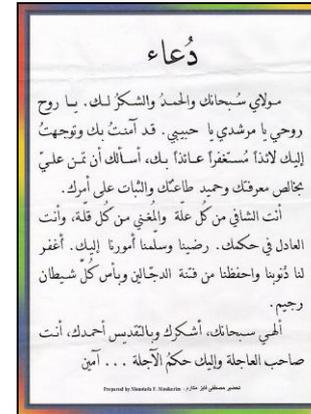
1898 36 overseas centres  
1220 candidates

# An international curriculum?

In 1910, Arabic, Sanskrit and Chinese for Senior Locals.

In 1918, Tamil and Sinhalese for examinations for Ceylon.

In 1919 Hindi and Urdu for Senior Students



# Exams and girls' education

Miss Buss, Head of North London Collegiate School, at her school prize giving in 1871 on the Locals' good effect: 'There can be little doubt as to the good effect of these examinations on girls' education.'

In 1891 she told the governors of her school: 'Our practice has been to use the public examinations of the Cambridge and London Universities for the purpose of school external examination ... Since our scheme was passed, nothing less than a revolution in the education of girls and women has taken place.'

J.R.Roach concluded that they were 'one of the most important levers in raising the whole level of women's education throughout the country.'



# Part two

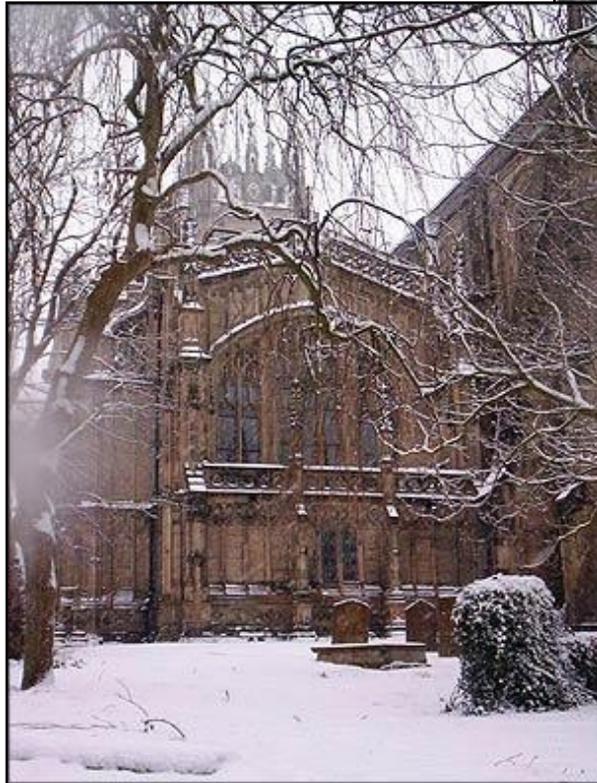
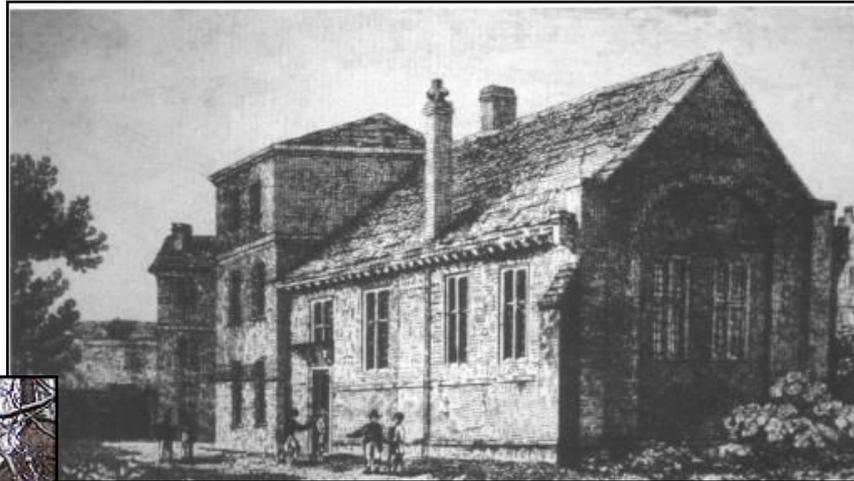
# Lessons from the past?

- A demand for external standards
- Examinations grew from within educating communities
- The independence of examining boards
- Enduring criticism of exams
- The national commitment to examinations
- The individual in a mass accrediting system

# “Middle class schools”



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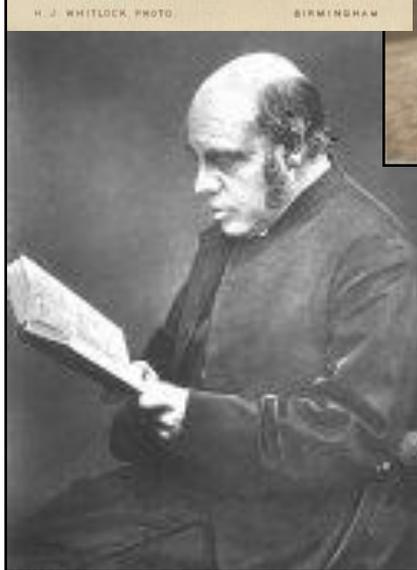
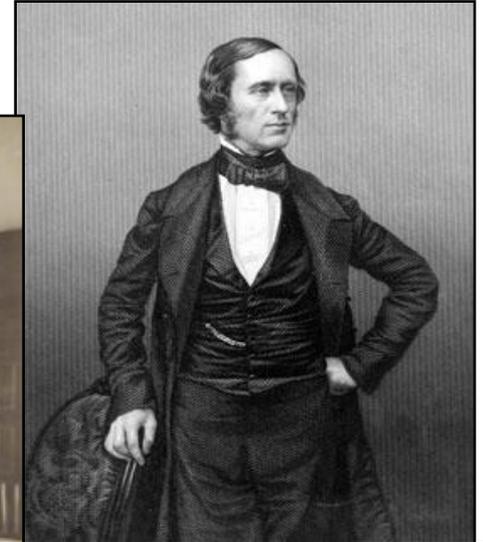
By the 1890s



# Eminent Examiners in 1858



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# Examiners



*Music:* William Sterndale Bennett, composer and Professor;

*Botany:* C.C Babington, Professor at Cambridge for 30+ years and a correspondent of Darwin's;

*Divinity:* J. B. Lightfoot, a leading biblical scholar;

*Preliminary subjects:* H. Montagu Butler, later Master of Trinity College.

At first the examiners were paid by the difficulty of the subject and the weight of the scripts they marked! In the 1860s, for each pound weight, markers of Arithmetic earned 9 shillings and 6 pence, of History 12 shillings, and of Classics 18 shillings.

# Universities and public exams



London

Oxford

Cambridge

Durham (university established 1832)

Victoria (established 1888)

Glasgow

(Scotland introduced a national leaving certificate exam in 1888)

# A radical's view

In a Symposium published in 1889, entitled 'The Sacrifice of Education to Examination', the editor, Auberon Herbert, who was an advanced radical and a Liberal MP, attacked exams '... as a tool of centralisation. They increased the power of those who are in control of them.'

“No remedy for existing evils is to be expected by substituting some of these forms of centralisation for others, but only by allowing the utmost freedom for new wants and new forms of thought to express themselves in new systems to compete with the old.”



# Criticisms of exams

**Lack of teacher control**

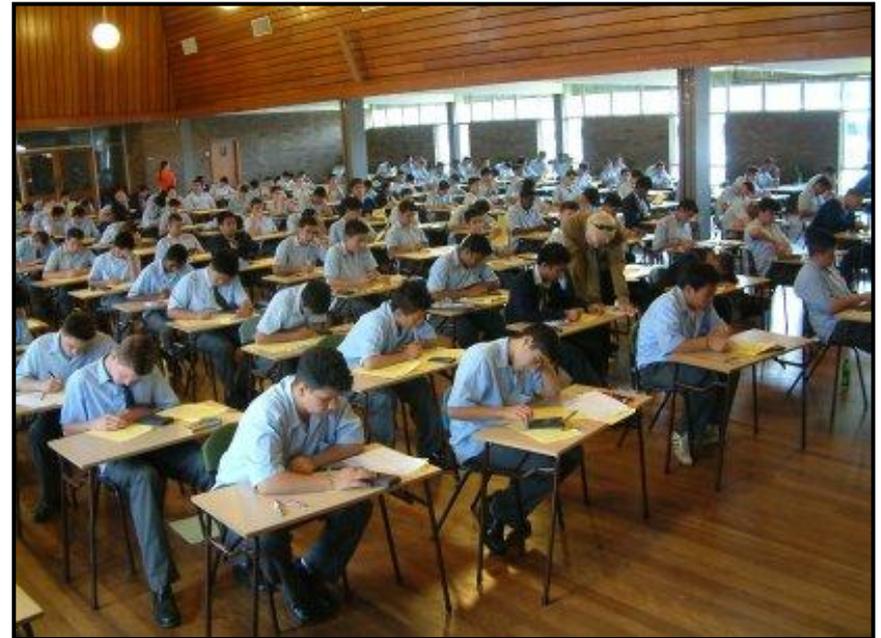
**Effects of exams on pupils**

**Effects of exams on school curriculum and teaching**

**Value of what was assessed**

**Inequalities**

**Statistical**



# Government led changes

1870 **Forster Education Act**

1894 **Bryce Commission** on Secondary Education

>>> Board of Education and an Educational Council

1902 **Balfour Education Act**

1911 The Board of Education proposed that a **School Certificate Examination** system be established

1917 / 18 the first School Certificate exams held

1944 **Education Act**

1951 **GCE 'O' and 'A' levels**



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# Elasticity?

Royal Commission on Secondary Education. 1894.  
(Bryce Commission) Volume 1.p.167

*An authority responsible for examinations?*

‘It was not generally contemplated that the central authority should itself act as an examining board, or form such a board. Its function with reference to examination, as also to inspection, lies in the laying down of such general rules as are applicable to all cases. According to the English conception of variety and elasticity in educational organisation, this is a function which, though important, is not large.’

# World War II





Dear Mr. Examiner,

4733

Dear Mr. Examiner

I am sorry I have do such a bad paper  
but I never did know much Trigonometry. We are all  
rather excited to day since all the other boys have  
gone home this morning while we have had to stop  
till now for the exam. So you will be able to  
understand under what conditions we are doing  
your exam when you have learnt that we have  
been here 14 weeks on Monday at a stretch and  
that we will be in the train in a few hours. I don't  
don't suppose I must wait to write any more but wish  
you a ~~H~~A MERRY XMAS and PROSPEROUS  
A NEW YEAR

I remain yours truly

4733

P.S.

P.S. I am sending you a few blank sheets since I believe you  
are <sup>paid</sup> ~~marked~~ by weight

# Lessons from the past?

- A demand for external standards
- Examinations grew from within educating communities
- The independence of examining boards
- Enduring criticism of exams
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