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Red Brick Universities

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The UK has several types of universities. The first type is ancient universities. They were founded before the 17th century. This type includes universities such as Oxford, Cambridge and so on. The process of admission to these universities is so hard.

The second type of Universities is red-brick ones. They are located in Manchester, Birmingham and Leeds. As you could guess, they are built of red bricks.

Red Brick Universities is the name for the union of six prestigious British universities located in large industrial cities. The peculiarity of the new educational institutions was that they accepted students without regard to their origin, social status. In addition, they focused on applied science and technology, that is, they sought to inculcate skills necessary for real life to students, preferring practical knowledge rather than theoretical knowledge.

Now Red Brick Universities are also included in the prestigious Russell Group – the union of the 20 best English universities.

Who are the red brick universities? There has been a list of official orders before the First World War. These institutions are all evolved from specialized industrial cities. The six are:

1) University of Birmingham; 2) University of Bristol; 3) University of Leeds; 4) University of Liverpool; 5) University of Manchester; 6) University of Sheffield [1].

Origins of the term and use

The term 'red brick' or 'redbrick' was first coined by Edgar Allison Peers, a professor of Spanish at the University of Liverpool, to describe the civic universities, while using the pseudonym "Bruce Truscot" in his 1943 book "Redbrick University". Although Peers used red brick in the title of the original book, he used redbrick adjectivally in the text and in the title of the 1945 sequel. He is said to have later regretted his use of red brick in the title.

While the University of Liverpool was an inspiration for the "red brick" university alluded to in Peers' book, receiving university status in 1903, the University of Birmingham was the first of the civic universities to gain independent university status in 1900 and the University has stated that the popularity of the term "red brick" owes to its own Chancellor's Court, constructed from Accrington red brick. The University of Birmingham grew from the Mason Science College (opened two years before University College Liverpool in 1880), an elaborate red brick and terracotta building in central Birmingham which was demolished in 1962.

Civic university movement

These universities were distinguished by being non-collegiate institutions that admitted men without reference to religion or background and concentrated on imparting to their students "real-world" skills, often linked to engineering and medicine. In this sense they owed their structural heritage to the Humboldt University of Berlin, which emphasized practical knowledge over the academic sort. This focus on the practical also distinguished the red brick universities from the ancient English universities of Oxford and Cambridge and from the newer University of Durham, collegiate institutions which concentrated on divinity and the liberal arts, and imposed religious tests on staff and students. Scotland's ancient

universities were founded on a different basis between 1400 and 1600.

The first wave of large civic red brick universities all gained official university status before the First World War, all of these institutions have origins dating back to older medical or engineering colleges. These universities developed out of various 19th-century private research and education institutes in industrial cities. The 1824 Manchester Mechanics' Institute formed the basis of the Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST), and thus led towards the current University of Manchester formed in 2004. The University of Birmingham has origins dating back to the 1825 Birmingham Medical School.

Red brick universities history

In the 19th Century, Britain was undergoing enormous changes as a result of the Industrial Revolution. In the large industrial cities, there was an urgent need for a workforce with technical and scientific skills to meet the demands of the new economy.

This led to the creation of specialised schools and private education institutes, often dedicated to fields such as medicine or engineering. For example, the Manchester Mechanics Institute was established in 1824, and Birmingham Medical School in 1825.

These institutions were incredibly successful, and became centres of knowledge and research during the Victorian era. Eventually, some were granted independent university status.

Many of these new civic universities featured buildings built in the Gothic style with red bricks – a popular trend in the Victorian times. This led to institutions of this type being nicknamed 'red brick' universities.

However, after the end of the First World War, a number of other institutions from the Victorian era began to be made fully fledged universities.

Despite differences in architecture styles, these universities are all considered 'red brick' [2].

Red brick universities today

Red brick institutions were actually mocked at first by Britain's existing universities. The university establishment, particularly 'ancient' universities such as Oxford and Glasgow, saw them as inferior. This led to the term 'red brick' being used in a derogatory way.

However, this quickly changed. Today, England's red brick universities are among the most highly ranked in the world. Out of the 6 original red brick universities, 5 are in the global top 100. Nearly all of the red brick universities are members of the prestigious Russell Group (which includes Cambridge, Oxford, Glasgow and Imperial), and many employers request graduates with a red brick degree [3].

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