newspapers, magazines, and reviews discussed examination success with great frequency and examination success was seen as a sign of 'professional masculinity'.¹⁷

The college responded to this new emphasis on academic excellence by, in 1861, increasing the difficulty of the entrance examination 'with a view to accepting as commoners none but men qualified to read for an H onours School'.¹⁸ The number of undergraduates was increased from the original 20, but lack of funding made the awarding of scholarships, which were now competitively awarded, a slow process. By 1873 there were 75 undergraduates, 225 by 1884, and 300 by 1914. ¹⁹ The quality of matriculants was further improved by instituting the recommendations of the University Commission of 1850 to weaken ties to Winchester, the admission of commoners, and the opening of fellowships and scholarships to open competition which improved the academic quality of the f

1812 and 1826. In 1826–7, Thomas Tyler became the first New College student to be awarded double Honours: a Second in Lit. Hum. and a Third 'In Disciplinis Math. et. Phys.' (mathematics and physics).

As mentioned above, even though New College students could take the University examinations after 1834, and were encouraged by Warden Shuttleworth to do so, very few did. In the 1830s, only six students were awarded Honours, an improvement over the first decade of Shuttleworth's rule when only three students achieved Honours. Results were not spectacular—no Firsts in the 1830s. Most results were Thirds and Fourths, which were seen by examiners as 'a degradation rather than a distinction'.²³ In the decade after Shuttleworth's departure in 1840, 23 students were awarded HonoursTF1 12 T480003>1620044>3004900575004800550003>159036004B00580 gom7().

today, there is a fascination with the number of Firsts. A reading of from 1975 to 2022 is replete with wardens' reports of the number of Firsts achieved and the college's position in the Norrington Table— which is heavily influenced by the number of Firsts. For example, in 1975–6, the warden reported a 'rather disappointing 13 Firsts only in Finals'

Examination Results