

"These Troublesome Times":

ALL SOULS COLLEGE AND THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR

The first complete surviving All Souls College Minute Book, *Acta in Capitulis*, MS. 400a dates from 18th August 1601 to the final entry, dated 29th July 1707, when it was agreed that the Wood-House should be repaired. The manuscript comprises 260 folios, of which folios 1 – 258v are the text, and folios 259r – 260v are an index which may have been added when the papers were first bound. The fact that the edge of the text has disappeared into the gutter on a number of occasions does suggest that the papers were originally written on loose pages before being bound. The folios that relate to the Civil War and Commonwealth periods are numbered 104r (25th April 1642) – 147v (29th September 1663) when Percivall (sic) Starmey renewed his lease at South Petherton at a reduced fine of £50 because of "losse in the warre time". The purpose of this study is to examine at the administration and the impact that the Civil War had on it though the eyes of the Warden and Fellows as recorded in the *Acta*.

The majority of these entries were written by Martin Aylworth (1592 – 1658) elected Fellow 1610 and still in Fellowship at his death 11th January 1658. Indeed Aylworth was a prolific writer of the Minute Book his entries commencing on 25th July 1620, and the last was written on 27th November 1657. His spelling is not consistent, for instance he writes both "year" and "yeer"; his use of capital or lower case is difficult to decipher, and this is true as the century goes on and he starts to use long ascenders and descenders to his letters. Nevertheless, his characters are large, easy to read, and firmly written. During the Civil War and Commonwealth periods he was fond of using the phrase "these troublesome times".

In common with All Souls Fellows at this time, Aylworth's bequests indicate a wealthy man – in his will written 28th May 1656, there were three large bequests to his brother's children, which in total amounted to £470, and in today's money can be valued at £49,432¹. To the poor of Stanton Harcourt, where the college owned land, he left forty shillings where "I aided some tymes in the great sickness"; the parsonage house was in reality the college's Pest House to which Fellows escaped in times of the plague. Forty shillings was left to the poor of St Mary the Virgin and £5 to the poor of the other Oxford parishes.² One puzzling entry is that "Bath Library" is to receive his two volume edition of *Corpus Juris Civilis*". There is no mention of a bequest to All Souls College.

The spacing of the college meetings throughout the year follows almost the same pattern as today – with meetings in the early part of the year leading up to June or July and then a break until October when the new academic year started. Between 1642 and 1660 there were in total 160 meetings making an average of 8 per year. This, of course, all relies on all the meetings being recorded or loose leaves not being lost. There are instances in the volume of meetings being written up out of sequence and date order. In 1642 four meetings are

1 TNA Currency Converter

2 TNA. PROB11/278 also found on the Ancestry website.

recorded: three in April and the fourth in July. In 1648 again only four are noted: one in March and three in December. Exceptions to this low number occur in 1650 and 1655 when fourteen are recorded in each year. Here again the sequence follows the other years with a gap in the summer months. These figures are low in comparison with some earlier pre-Civil War years; for instance, in 1619 there were 28 meetings recorded; with 24 a year later. But these are in the extreme and possibly due to the large number of leases that needed to be reviewed during those years.

As to be expected the Minute Book gives a good idea as to what was happening in Oxford at this time, particularly how the events of the eighteen years of the Civil War and the Commonwealth affected a small college, which having no income from students, had to rely on its estates. These were throughout Northamptonshire, Kent, Buckinghamshire and a few, such as Salford, Edgeware and Kingsbury, in London, and were the only source of a regular income. The college treasury at this time would have comprised the two massive iron bound trunks then in the Gate Tower, now in the Undercroft of the Chapel.

Perhaps with some forewarning that financial life was going to be difficult in the coming months on 14th April 1642 the college appointed William Turton, an ironmonger, to collect its candle rents owing in Oxford city. Although the last use of the term "candle-rent" is dated 1655³ it relates to rent from tenements which have deteriorated or have gone to waste. How much this helped the college finances is unknown; but the real axe fell on 11th July 1642 when the college, after receiving a letter from the King, loaned all the ready money in the Treasury, namely £351 7s 3d, and also borrowed on the college bond the sum of £300 - making £651 7s 3d available for the royal finances. On that day the Warden received a receipt for £654 14s 3d from Richard Chaworth, Chancellor of Chichester⁴. Somewhere a difference of £3 7s had appeared.

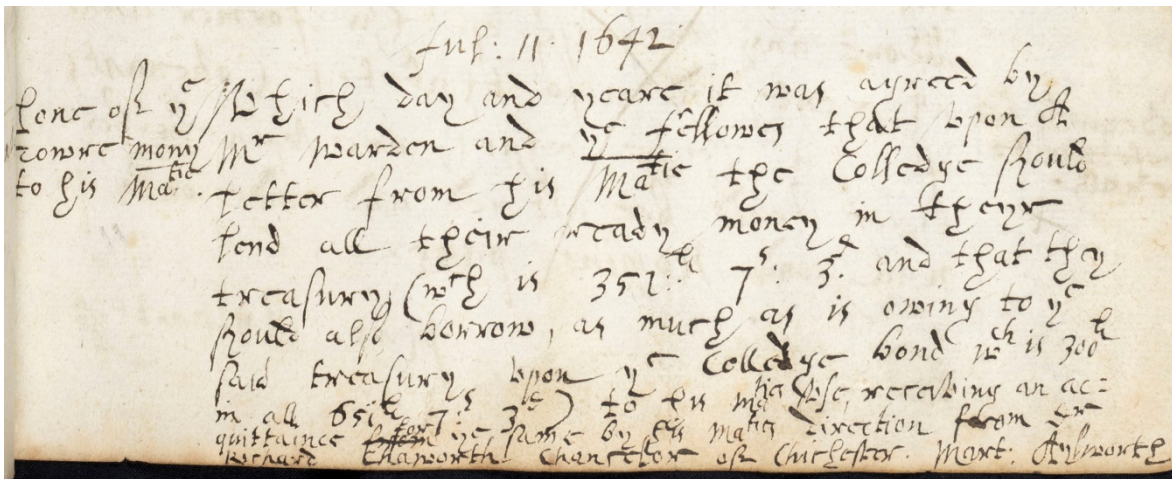


Fig. 1 "Lone of y^e tower money to his Majestie", f.104^r

3 Oxford English Dictionary.

4 Charles Trice Martin (hereafter CTM), *Catalogue of the Archives in the Muniment Rooms of All Souls College*. 1877. Page 384, no. 11.

By January 1643 it was obvious that an input of ready money was needed by the college so it was agreed that their steward Richard House should sell ten acres of wood in Wappenham, and a further twenty acres in Wilsden "at ye best rate hee can, for ye behoose of the Colledge to bee brought into this years accompt". In the same month, 12th January 1643, another demand from the King was this time directed to the college plate "the Colledge should lend theyr plate, to bee employed for his Maties use". This was speedily complied with: a receipt dated 19th January from William Parkhurst and Thomas Bushell in the college archives lists 170lb. 8oz 19 dwt. of white plate, and 82 lb 5oz of gilt plate.⁵ Reading both entries we can get no sense of whether the two commands were dealt with willingly or unwillingly. While the University was deemed to be Royalist and the townsfolk Parliamentarian there was no guarantee this would be the case in each college.

On 10th April 1643, the Bursars⁶ were given a letter of Attorney⁷ to enable them to call in any debts to the college. Another demand from the King compelled the college on 1st June 1643 to "undergoe ye Charge of mainteyning. 120. Souldiours for ye space of A month". The cost the college being four shillings a week for each soldier, or a total of £96 a month.⁸ Six months later, on 4th January 1644, it was noted some of the college tenants were behind with their rents to the sum of £600; and to make up this shortfall in income the college should borrow the same figure. Immediately the Bursars were given authority to call in the rental arrears. Resignation set in and realizing it would be difficult if not impossible to make up the shortfall and get tenants to pay their rents, the entry for 18th April 1644 reads "by reason wee could nyther receive money from our tenants nor borrow money to pvide necessarities and because ye troublesome and danger of these times" the Warden, Fellows, Probationers, Chaplains and servants of the college were given special permission to be absent from the college from 26th April until the Michaelmas following. The situation did not improve, and the permission for absence was repeated on 30th September 1644 to last until 14th January 1645; yet again there was no easing of the monetary situation and on 15th January 1645 the permission was again repeated to last until 24 June 1645. This was again extended with a notice in the Minute Book dated 25 October 1645, the leave of absence dating from 24 June 1645 to 25 March 1646. The final extension was granted on 23rd June 1646 when 30th July became the new end date.

Those that did remain in college were given authority to lay out money on any expenses. However, by 20 January 1645 there seems to have been a suspicion that money was being spent unwisely, and the Sub Warden was authorized to keep details on the financial expenditure of the Bursars; and if it was discovered that "ye Bursars expend any money

5 CTM. p. 384, no. 12

6 John Bagley (Arts); Humphry Newton (Law).

7 A letter of Attorney which occurs often in the *Acta* was a written authorization for someone to represent or act on the college's behalf wither in private matters, business or other legal instances.

8 In today's currency a total of £11,284.42.

upon any private occasion without the consent of Mr Warden and officers they shall bee put out of comons for three months".

Only a thorough examination of the very fragile Steward's Books which list those in Commons on any particular day gives any inclination of which Fellows remained in college during these periods. Nor do we have any idea about which servants were left in college, for them it would have been difficult to leave, as they had no ancestral home to which they could flee, only perhaps parents' homes in the city which would not have secured much protection from the soldiers or sickness.

Further expenditure had already fallen on the college when on 3rd August 1644 it was agreed that All Souls should pay twenty five shillings towards the "Bulwarks" for five weeks. It is not clear where these Bulwarks were but may have been the defences in New College grounds⁹. Plague had now taken over the city and the college agreed to pay a contribution toward the relief of those infected "according to pportion with other Colledges as formerly hath been accustomed" (fig. 2). At this time the remaining Fellows may have gone to the Parsonage House in Stanton Harcourt to escape the plague, the tenant of which was Mrs Frances Hovenden. Earlier, a Robert Hovenden, (Fellow of the college until his death in 1642) had leased the Parsonage House from 1627 until his death; but it is unclear how she was related to Robert. Apart from the Warden, Fellows were not allowed to marry, so it is unlikely that she was his widow. Mrs Hovenden was still a tenant of the college on 28th July 1645 when her lease was renewed at a reduced figure of £13 6s 8d because of the "divers rates and contributions beside quartring of soudiours and sondry other payments ye Widow Hovenden both hath been and now is put unto these troublesom times".¹⁰

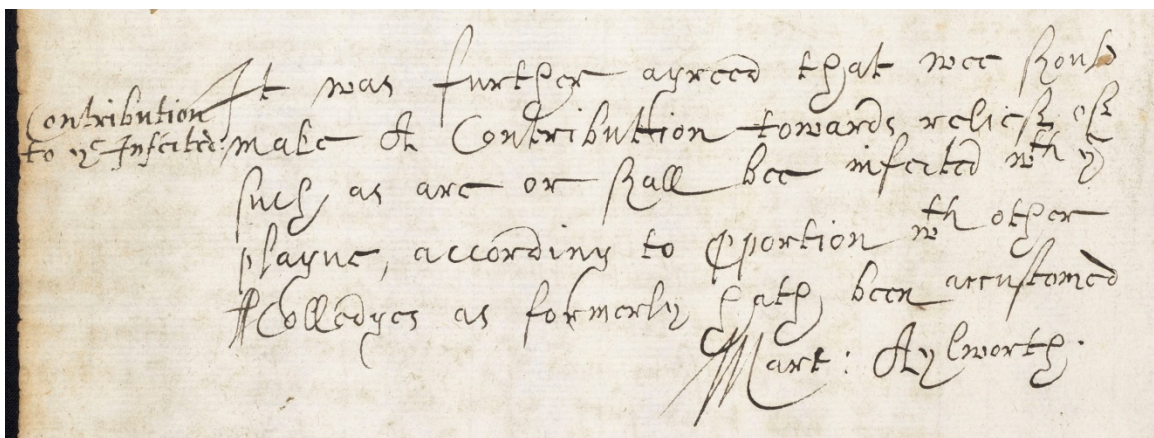
A photograph of a handwritten manuscript snippet on aged, yellowed paper. The text is written in a cursive hand and reads: "It was further agreed that wee should contribute towards relief of such as are or shall be infected with the plague, according to pportion wth other Colledges as formerly hath been accustomed. Mart: Aylmer." The word "Contribution" is written in the left margin, and "to ye infected" is written below it.

Fig. 2 "Contribution to ye Infected". f.107^v

Despite the distraction of the political events outside the college, the Warden and Fellows did on occasion turn their attention to the internal running of the establishment. On 20th

⁹ Anthony Kemp, *The fortification of Oxford during the Civil War*. Oxoniensia, XLII, 1977.

¹⁰ Mrs Frances Dayrell married a Robert Hovenden at Abingdon 14 April 1623; she was the daughter of Walter Dayrell, Recorder of Abingdon who died 29th June 1628. Thomas Dayrell, Fellow of All Souls College from 1628 until ejected by the Parliamentary Visitors in 1648 was the second son of Walter, and therefore the younger brother of Frances.

January 1645 John Watkins¹¹ was reappointed Library Keeper; this yearly appointment he had first received on 20 April 1637. Watkins was appointed because he was the occupant of one of the rooms at either end of the library. At the appointment the college set down the regulations for the use of the library; firstly a new lock was to be made, no Fellow or Chaplain was to lend his key to a stranger, "or bring any stranger into ye library to continue there longer then hee himself shall abide with him" on penalty of losing commons for a week. If a Fellow committed this offence for a second time then commons for a fortnight was lost; and for a third time commons for a month was lost. "No youth of ye Colledge shall make use of ye Library, till hee first have taken an oath for well behaving himselfe there and that if he shall presume to lend his key to any stranger hee himselfe shall bee excluded from ye benefit of ye Library". By "youth" it is assumed that Chorister or servitor is implied; the term Bible Clerk in the college did not come into constant use until the early eighteenth century.

Between 22nd May and 5th June 1645 the city experienced a second siege and the college was ordered to provide fifteen pounds for the defence of the University and city. The fifteen pounds were duly paid, but to Aylworth's puzzlement the money was returned as the siege was incorrectly considered to have been broken: but then the Lords demanded the money returned to them, "wee know not for what use and twas deliverd unto them" he wrote on 26 May 1645. The catering in college during the siege caused worry to those still in the buildings, and an entry on 27th February 1646 says that each Fellow was to be given twenty shillings, each servant ten shillings, and the Manciple John Hollingsworth¹² fifteen shillings to provide provisions by 12th March 1646. This money seems to have been in addition to a weekly allowance of five shillings. On 23rd June 1646 the college agreed to divide an unspecified sum of money between the Fellows and servants that had "endured ye siege".

On 6th October 1644 a fire in Oxford destroyed large segments of the city¹³ and some college property was destroyed. On 28th July 1645 Thristram Clements was given permission to rebuild the seven tenements destroyed in St Ebbe's, without paying any fine for thirty years, on condition that he rebuilds the property in "some fitting manner". The same conditions were imposed on William Harding, rent-free for thirty years so that he could rebuild the "Blene Anchour" destroyed by the fire.

By 5th November 1646 the death of John Watkins (the Library Keeper, and Fellow) had caused a vacancy; in consequence the Warden and Fellows met in the "common-dining-hall," the usual place for elections, with the intention of filling the vacancy. However they were advised by the Warden that all elections or admissions were prohibited by an order from House of Commons; and that happily, as no scholar or candidate had appeared suitable, the fellowship agreed not to make an election. Sixteen days later on 21st November 1646 the

11 Fellow 1617 until his death in 1646.

12 Steward/Manciple 1640 – death 30th September 1670 aged 63. Buried in the cloister his memorial stone reads that he was evicted by the Parliamentarians but returned to the college at the Restoration.

13 Stephen Porter, The Oxford fire of 1644. *Oxoniensia*, XLIX, 1984.

Warden, Gilbert Sheldon, was granted leave of absence for ten months during which he could live within "any of ye Kings dominions, or abroad in any forraign country according to his own will and pleasure" (fig.3).

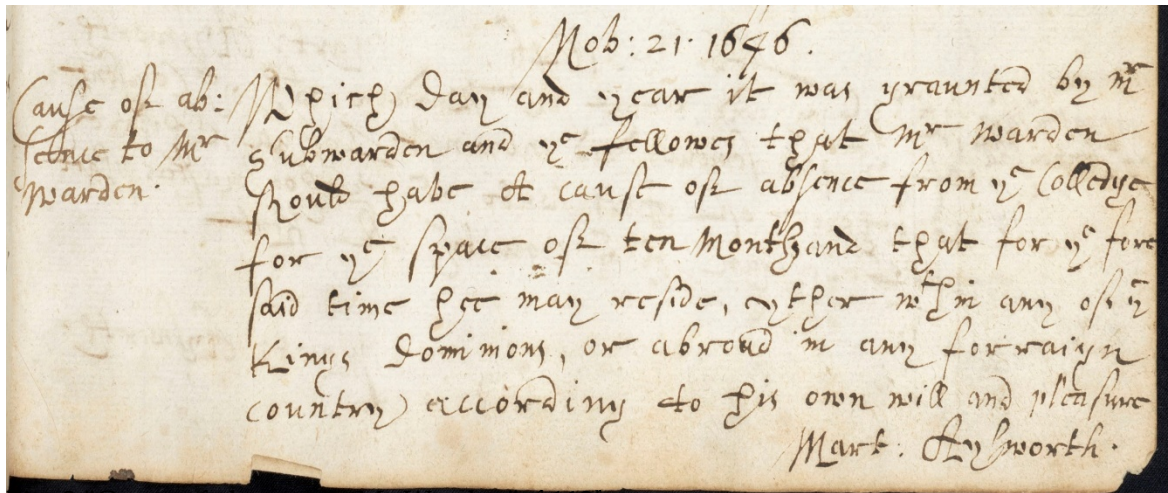


Fig. 3 Cause of absence to Mr Warden , f.112

Sheldon remained Warden until 1648 when ousted by the Parliamentarians, to return in 1660. A year later on 3rd November 1647, the Fellows were again prohibited from electing new Fellows by order of the House of Commons .

From this date onwards the majority of the entries in the Minute Book relate to tenants, arrears of rents, or being allowed a lower rent due to perhaps a poor harvest or in the words of Aylworth because of "these troublesome times". On 27 March 1648 it was recorded that the lease of Llangenith and Penarth originally in the hands of Francis Mansell should be renewed to William Thomas of Swansea for the use of the children of Sir Anthony Mansell, brother of Francis who had been killed at the Battle of Newbury. The fine to be ten pounds less because of the "many good offices to ye Colledge" by Francis Mansell.¹⁴ Edward Finch of Gray's Inn was allowed, on 5th December 1648, to renew his lease of Googy Hall with a reduced fine of one hundred pounds because of his "full payment of his rents these troublesome times". And again a year later, 20 December 1650, the college steward Richard House was allowed to renew his lease at Weedon at a reduced fine because of "ye many good offices" he had done on behalf of the college. The following year, 11th January 1650, Mrs Loss renewed her lease of Chery Lands and Luckings Lands in Weedon at a reduced fine because she had been "at som extraordinary charges in reparations". Dr Steed was allowed to renew his lease of Newlands in Kent on 6th April 1650 at a reduced rate because of "his extraordinary respect shewed to ye Colledg".

It was obvious the college was concerned about the reduction in incoming rent money and on 18th March 1650 the college appointed three Fellows Mr Prestwich, Mr Baldwin and Mr Sprig¹⁵ with Letters of Attorney giving them the authority to demand arrears of rents from the tenants. Among these tenants who did not qualify for a reduced fine, was Mr Eldridg

¹⁴ Francis Mansell had been Fellow of All Souls College from 1613 to 1633. He had been the Royalist Principal of Jesus College 1620-1; 1630 – 48; 1660, and resigned in 1660. He died 1st May 1665.

who was allowed to renew his lease on 8th April 1650 at Crendon but the ten pounds arrears should be paid first. In October Thomas Chapman was allowed to renew his lease of Langley Marsh, but on condition he discharged some of the arrears amounting four pounds owing to the college.

To remedy the college having to reduce fines due to the hardship experienced by the tenants either by being forced to support the quartering of soldiers or other effects of the war; it was agreed on 22nd April 1652 that in future, a clause would be inserted into all leases whereby "our several Tenants shall covenant to save ye Colledg harmless and indemnified from all assessments, billettings and Quartering of souldiours and all other payments whatsomver ...".

One puzzling entry dated 13th November 1652 concerns money owed to the Committee of Middlesex totaling £73 6s 8d. It is possible that this entry relates to the *Committee for the Militia of the County of Middlesex* established in 1644. Whatever it relates to, it would seem the college had not paid the due sum, this they decided should be paid out of arrears money. Another problem was the demand from ejected Fellows (see Appendix 1) who had petitioned for their arrears due from the college. And on the same day, 13th November 1652, the Warden, Officers and some of the Fellows were to consider the matter and prepare an answer to the whole Fellowship; and if agreed upon, to deliver this to the Vice Chancellor and Heads of Houses on 24th November 1652. The Vice Chancellor having appointed a meeting on that day to consider the matter.¹⁶

Internal college matters were dealt with at the meeting on 15th June 1653 when the lower room in the tower was joined to the fourth middle chamber, then the rooms of John Prestwich, but money being short Prestwich was to pay for this himself. The shortage of plate was a problem and on the same day it was agreed that the profits of Penhow in Wales, amounting to "sixscore pounds" should be used to purchase replacement plate for the college.¹⁷

The perils of communication at this time are illustrated by the appointment 6th March 1655 of John Hartcliff to the living of Harding (Harpsden), diocese of Oxford, on the assumption that the previous incumbent Herbert Croft had died. This turned out to false, Herbert Croft was very much alive as reported to the college on 28th April 1655. The remedy was to appoint Hartcliff to Harpsden, should it become vacant in their time, and if Hartcliff is still alive.¹⁸

15 John Prestwich, Fellow by the Parliamentary Visitors 1649. Died 30th July 1679; Sir Timothy Baldwin, Fellow 1639 – 61. Knighted by Charles II on 10th July 1670. Died 1696; Joshua Sprigg, Fellow by the Parliamentary Visitors 1648. Died June 1684.

16 John Owen (1616 – 1683, a Nonconformist church leader was Vice Chancellor in 1652. He had been appointed by Oliver Cromwell.

17 CTM contains no archives relating to this purchase; and the Song Books and New Titling Books which detail expenditure or income either by individuals or college departments have not survived for this period.

Martin Aylworth died on 11th January 1658 and his place was taken by other Fellows, and the weary "these troublesome times" drops out of the entries. On 8th June 1658 the college found ten pounds to give to the "poore distressed protestants" in Poland. And despite the shortage of funds, which may have at last been easing, one of the glories of the college, the sundial carved by William Bryd, was placed on the Chapel roofline, costing the college £32 11s 6d.¹⁹

Oliver Cromwell died on 3rd September 1658 and his son Richard succeeded his father only to resign in 1659 but retained his Chancellorship of Oxford University. On 15th July 1659 the Warden John Palmer was given leave of absence for six months so he could attend parliament, but at the same time he was to be allowed his weekly allowance from the buttery and kitchen. On 8th May 1660 Richard Cromwell resigned as Chancellor. On 8th November the same year Pembroke College was allowed to renew their lease of St Aldates from All Souls College on condition they gave some books to the library.²⁰ In 1661 Charles II was restored to the Crown, and apart from one entry dated 29th September 1663, when Percivall (sic) Starmey was allowed to renew his lease of South Petherton at a reduced rate because of his "losse in the war time", the Minute Book entries start to concentrate on the renewal of leases. They must have hoped it was the start of better times ahead.

Norma Aubertin-Potter

18 The Church of England Database lists only one at this period: Herbert Croft. Rector: Uley 1638-39; Rector Harpsden 1639-41; Prebendary Salisbury 1639 – 44; Bishop of Hereford 1662-91. Chaplain to Charles I. Deprived of his livings during the Commonwealth but restored in 1660. Died 22 April 1691. There is one John Hartcliffe at this time; in 1662 curate and schoolmaster of Chisleton.

19 Tradition states it was designed by Christopher Wren, Fellow 1653, but there is no evidence for this. The sundial remained on the Chapel roof until taken down for repair in 1871; and in 1877 it was placed on the Library roof thus losing its famous accuracy.

20 What book or books Pembroke College gave on this occasion is unknown, but in 1636 they gave a copy of John Gerard, *The Herbal, or Generall historie of plants*, in lieu of a fine for the renewal of the lease of Beef Hall. Sir Edmund Craster, *The History of All Souls College*, Edited by E.F.Jacob. London, 1972. p. 58.

APPENDIX 1

Fellows ejected during the Commonwealth, and restored after the Restoration

EJECTED

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Oliver LLOYD | 13. Edward NORTON |
| 2. Nicholas GREAVES | 14. Nathaniel NAPER |
| 3. Thomas DAYRELL | 15. William DARELL |
| 4. Thomas GORGES | 16. Francis NEWMAN |
| 5. Henry BARKER | 17. John BIRKENHEAD |
| 6. William BASSET | 18. Richard FISHER |
| 7. John BAGLEY | 19. Thomas SMITH |
| 8. Henry COVENTRY | 20. Henry HARRINGTON |
| 9. Thomas CROFT (junior) | 21. Thomas JEAMES |
| 10. Francis HUNGERFORD | 22. Francis TALBOT |
| 11. Henry J'ANSON | 23. Thomas CULPEPER |
| 12. John LLOYD | 24. William HAMILTON |

RESTORED

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. William BASSETT | 7. Thomas JEAMES |
| 2. Sir John BIRKENHEAD | 8. John LLOYD |
| 3. Henry COVENTRY | 9. Oliver LLOYD |
| 4. Thomas CROFT | 10. Thomas SMITH |
| 5. Thomas CULPEPER | 11. Francis TALBOT |
| 6. Henry HARRINGTON | |

APPENDIX 2

Timeline¹ of some events which took place during the Civil War locally and nationally:

1642. Charles I tries to arrest the five members of Parliament. War begins when the Royal Standard is raised at Nottingham.
- August 18th. At Oxford privileged men, their servants and scholars begin military training.
- August 23rd. Arrival of Royalist troops in the City under Sir John Byron.
- September 10th. Byron leaves Oxford to join Charles with a consignment of University plate.
- September 15th. Lord Saye (Parliament) disarms colleges and seizes hidden plate.
- Mid-October. Parliamentarians quit Oxford.
- October 29th. Charles enters Oxford.
1643. January 3rd. Requisition of college plate.
- July 14th. Queen Henrietta Maria arrives in Oxford.
- Royalists beaten at Battle of Newbury. Cavalier news sheet *Mercurius Aulicus* published every Sunday in Oxford.
1644. January 22nd. First meeting of the Oxford Parliament.
- May 27th – June 3rd. Charles slips out of Oxford.
- October 6th. Great fire in Oxford.
- November 1st. Charles back in Oxford.
- Royalists beaten at Cropredy Bridge and Marston Moor. Queen flees to France.
1645. May 22nd – June 5th. Second siege of Oxford.
- Cromwell beats Royalists at Naseby and Longport.
1646. April 27th. Charles leaves Oxford to go to Scots at Newark.
1647. Charles I taken prisoner.
1648. Parliament votes to bring Charles to trial.
1649. January 19. Trial of Charles begins. Charles beheaded January 30th. England declared a Commonwealth.
1650. Charles II lands in Scotland.
1651. Charles II defeated at Worcester and flees to France.

- 1653. Cromwell named Lord Protector.
- 1655. Cromwell dissolves Parliament and divides England into 11 districts. Cromwell prohibits Anglican services.
- 1657. Cromwell rejects title of "king". Creation of new House of Lords.
- 1657. July. Richard Cromwell elected Chancellor of Oxford University.
- 1658. Cromwell dissolves Parliament. Cromwell dies on September 3rd.
- 1659. Richard Cromwell resigns from the position of Lord Protector.
- 1660. May 8th. Richard Cromwell resigns as Chancellor of Oxford University.
Parliament invites Charles II to return.
- 1661. Coronation of Charles II.

i A full timeline of events in Oxford between 1642 – 1646 can be found in: John BARRATT, Cavalier Capital: Oxford in the English Civil War, 1642 - 1646. 2015