

## Women in New College—350 Years Ago?

William of Wykeham would have been astonished. Rubric 59 of the Founder's Statutes stated categorically that all residents in college should be men and all administrative and domestic support should be carried out 'per masculos et non per feminas', with the sole exception of a washerwoman who could come only as far as the lodge gate to collect and return the laundry. Although at odd times over the next few centuries we employed several women to weed the college gardens or work in the kitchens, the idea of women living in college and paying battels for their accommodation was out of the question.

Until 1643.

In that year a small group of women's names start to appear in the Bursars' accounts (the so-called 'Long Books') and continue for the next three years. Their names are easily missed, for they appear only in the pages headed *Batillae receptae* ('Battels received'), and nowhere else in the volumes. None of them appears to have had any connection to New College fellows or scholars at the time. They form a hitherto unknown addition to the considerable numbers of royalist 'Strangers'—courtiers, court officials, royalist members of parliament, and military officers—housed in Oxford and Oxford colleges at various times during the Civil War, prior to Oxford's surrender to Parliament in June 1646 and Charles I's imprisonment.

There is no indication that any of the women who came to New College were here at the time of the infamous raid by our Wykehamist former fellow and parliamentarian Colonel, Nathaniel Fiennes, Lord Saye and Sele, in 1642. That September he had led his troops into college and burgled the Lodgings, looking (in vain, as it transpired) for incriminating evidence against Warden Pincke who by now was under arrest. It was not until after the royalist success in the battle of Edgehill (23 October 1642), the King's establishment of part of his court and garrison in Oxford from November 1642, and Pincke's return to Oxford in early 1643, that royalist 'Strangers' started to appear in any number in our college. There was for instance a phenomenal increase in the sum totals of battels settled and recorded in the college account rolls: £48 2s 2d for the year 1641/2 rising sharply to £140 3s 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>d in 1643/4.<sup>1</sup> Regrettably no accounts survive for the year 1642/3 and so we cannot be sure exactly when the influx of 'Strangers' began, although that winter seems very likely. By then, the King had made Christ Church his headquarters, Queen Henrietta Maria was in London but would come to Oxford in July 1643, and the royal household was split between Westminster and Oxford, some of its officials scurrying back and forth between the two cities. The following January (1644) saw what would be the King's last parliament meeting in Oxford, adding to the pressures of space caused by the need for lodgings in the city and in various colleges. Toynbee and Young's gazetteer of many of these temporary residents makes no mention of a New College contingent,<sup>2</sup> but it is clear from the Long Books that we hosted a number of royalists, including women, between at least 1643 and 1646.

It is not known where they lived in college, although for the women the Warden's Lodgings, being set apart from the rest of college, seem a likely place and the women's names in the Long Books frequently appear near to entries concerning the Warden's own battels—although that may just be coincidental. Some of the payments by some of the male 'Strangers' and one female 'Stranger' (Lady Falkland) refer to 'decrements', which the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines as allowances for fuel, candles and 'other common necessities' in Oxford colleges, thereby confirming that they were living in college. All the women 'Strangers' paid for bread and beer, the latter in such quantities that either they were permanently inebriated, had brought servants and/or family members with them, or (if they were not fully resident) were simply using college as a shop for essential provisions. Just once, in term 1 of 1645/6 (i.e. in the autumn of 1645), Lady Waineman and Lady Stukely persuaded the college to dress 'some meate in [the] kitchin' for

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<sup>1</sup> College account rolls NCA 7665, 7668.

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Toynbee and Peter Young, *Strangers in Oxford* (London, 1973).

them, at a cost of three shillings,<sup>3</sup> but otherwise we have no idea of their catering arrangements. The Long Books give the impression that the ‘Strangers’ paid their battels as they went along, rather than settling up at the end of the term or academic year. This might suggest that they were not in permanent residence but simply came and went as they saw fit. More likely, however, it reflects the rather ad hoc way in which the accounts were drawn up, often retrospectively and perhaps incompletely; unless precise dates are recorded, the accounts cannot safely be regarded as an accurate record of who was in college at any given time. Indeed the considerable fluctuations in some of the amounts paid in battels sometimes suggests a lengthier stay or the entertainment of other guests.

There is another article to be written on the male ‘Strangers’ who came to New College and included such royalist notables as the military commander Sir Henry Vaughan, the King’s Serjeants-at-Law Sir Robert Brerewood and Sir John Glanville. The present article is concerned only with the women, nine of whom are recorded as being in college at various times between term 1 of 1643 and term 1 of 1645 (see appendix).<sup>4</sup> Some are clearly members of the aristocracy or gentry, wives of royalist courtiers and military officers, while others may have been companions or high-ranking servants. Most of the royalists who stayed in college were here during terms 1 or 2 of the academic year (autumn and early spring). The following discussion is a tentative approach to identify them and to consider why they came to New College.

First to be mentioned in the Long Books is Lady Salisbury, who stayed in college for more than three weeks ‘until shee departed’ in term 1 of 1643/4 (autumn 1643) and paid battels totalling £2 14s 8d. She was probably Catherine Howard (c. 1583-1673), daughter of the 1st Earl of Suffolk and from 1608 wife of William Cecil, 2nd Earl of Salisbury. He had been in the service of Charles I, but by May 1643 had been secretly negotiating with Queen Henrietta Maria to persuade Charles I to accept parliamentary demands that he had previously rejected. (The Queen responded with half-promises, to gain time while sending military supplies to the King.) His pragmatic support for the parliamentarians, which may have made his wife’s brief stay here rather awkward, was tempered by his later refusal to condone the execution of Charles I in 1649.

Lady Moryson appears next, paying 3s 6d in battels for herself in term 1 and £1 1s 6d jointly with her daughter Lady Falkland in term 2 of 1643/4. She was Mary Moryson, wife of the royalist Sir Richard Moryson of Dublin, and mother of Letitia Moryson who in 1633 had married her uncle Henry Moryson’s close friend Lucius Cary, 2nd Viscount Falkland.<sup>5</sup> Lady Moryson arrived in New College in the autumn of 1643, shortly after Viscount Falkland’s death (on 20 September) at the First Battle of Newbury. The following term she was joined in college by her widowed daughter Lady Falkland, but she herself did not stay beyond that term.

Letitia, Lady Falkland (c. 1612-1647), on the other hand—her name sometimes spelled as ‘Phaulkland’ or ‘Faulkland’ in the Long Books—became one of the best known of New College’s lady residents, staying for several weeks each spring or early summer between 1644 and 1646. Over and above the battels payments she shared with her mother in the spring of 1644, she paid another 5s 7d on her own account; then five more battels bills, in the spring and early summer of 1645, totalling £1 16s 2d, for beer and decrements. The following spring (1646) she was back again, settling up for a total of 5s 3d. One likes to think that, while here, she may have found solace in renewed intellectual pursuits, for she was a fluent Latin scholar and had been part of her husband’s literary and philosophical circle at Great Tew near Oxford and was admired in own her right for

<sup>3</sup> Bursars Long Book NCA 4205. According to the National Archives’ historic currency converter, 3 shillings in 1640 was equivalent to just under £18 in today’s money: <<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter>>.

<sup>4</sup> The college at this date still operated the old four terms of the Founder’s day: Term 1 ran from the feast of St Michael and equates with our Michaelmas term; Term 2 ran from Christmas to March and equates roughly with our Hilary term; Term 3 ran from Lady Day to early June and equates roughly with our Trinity term; and Term 4 ran from June to late September.

<sup>5</sup> See his entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Henry Morison and Lucius Cary were commemorated in Ben Jonson’s ‘Pindaric Ode’: see reprint in J. A. Marriott, *The Life and Times of Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland* (London, 1907), pp. 67-69.

her intelligence and good judgement. She was also respected for her piety and charitable work, which included endowing a school at Great Tew and providing anonymous relief for the prisoners in Oxford gaol. Possibly she was also in Oxford to finalise arrangements for her son Lucius (3rd Viscount Falkland) to be admitted to Christ Church, which happened in March 1647, a month after her own death.

'Mrs Saintgeorge' made four battels payments in term 2 of 1644/5 (spring 1645), totalling £3 5s 0d. She was either Mary St George née Dayrell, the widow of the royalist Sir Henry St George, or their unmarried eldest daughter Mary (since she is styled 'Mistress' rather than 'Lady' St George in the Long Book) who would emerge as sole heiress to the family estates in 1646. Sir Henry was the second of three generations of Heralds, culminating his career with the status of Garter King of Arms. He had close links with the court of Charles I, having travelled with William le Neve to France in 1625 to bring Queen Henrietta Maria to England. Despite a short period of disgrace incurred for forging a grant of arms in 1639, he was in high favour again by 1642 and accompanied the King to Oxford. There, according to Anthony Wood, he received a doctorate in medicine on 9 May the following year. He died in Brasenose College on 5 November 1644, and was buried the next day at Christ Church.<sup>6</sup>

'Lady Thinne' paid battels twice in term 2 of 1644/5 (spring 1645), but her identity is uncertain. It is tempting to wonder whether she was the theorbo-playing and flirtatious Lady Isabella Thynne, daughter of the royalist General of Horse Lord Holland, but she resided at Balliol and attended chapel at Trinity during the Civil war, having obtained a licence from the House of Lords to travel to Oxford in March 1642.<sup>7</sup> The Lady Thynne of New College may have been the Hon. Mary Thynne, wife of Thomas, 1st Baron Thynne of Kempford, or one of the Longleat Thynnes whose husbands had links with other royalist sympathisers at Exeter and Magdalen Colleges.

Mrs Yates paid battels once in term 3 of 1644/5. Nothing further is known of her.

'Lady Wainman' paid battels twice in term 1 of 1645/6, totalling 6s 4d. She is another mystery woman, possibly Margaret wife of Thomas, 2nd Viscount Wenman (sometimes spelled Wainman), MP for Oxfordshire and key negotiator for peace with Charles I during and after the negotiations at Uxbridge in 1644/5. He is described in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* as a 'moderate parliamentarian', which some interpreted as lukewarm royalist and he was imprisoned in 1648 for being too keen to obtain peace with the King at any price. Yet it seems strange that his wife should have stayed in a largely royalist college in 1645, unless it was to gather information for her husband.

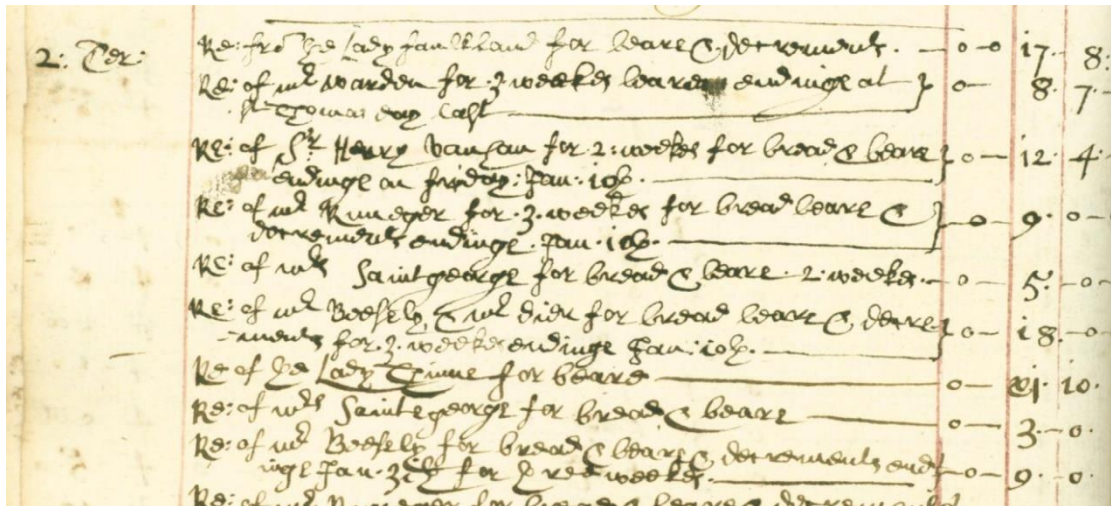
Lady Stewkley ('Stukely' in the accounts) shared one of the payments of Lady Wainman's battels in term 1 of 1645/6, and also made another in her own name. She was Sarah Stewkley née Dauntsey, wife of the royalist Sir Hugh Stewkley baronet of Hinton Ampner in Hampshire. Although in robust health and only 39 years old, he had made a will on 8 September 1642 recognising the possibility of sudden death—perhaps with good cause, since parliamentarian troops were marching at that time through Hampshire on their way to Salisbury and Bristol, and Portsmouth had just fallen to Sir William Waller the previous day. Exactly how he died has not been established, but death came to him on 27 September, and his will—appointing his wife as sole executrix and trustee for their children—was proved a month later.

Lady Gardiner paid battels once in term 1 of 1645/6, and may also have been present in the college earlier that year with either her husband or their son, Sir Thomas Gardiner, who had settled six lots of battels totalling £2 17s 8d for terms 2 and 3 in 1644/5. She was Rebecca Childe, wife of Sir Thomas Gardiner (1591-1652) the royalist Recorder of London and from 1643 the King's Solicitor-General in Oxford. Their eldest son, Thomas junior, served as Captain of Horse with Prince Rupert during the civil war; he had been knighted at Oxford in March 1643 and signed

<sup>6</sup> *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. See also John Gutch, ed., *The History and Antiquities of the Colleges and Halls of the University of Oxford by Antony Wood M.A.* (Oxford, 1786), p. 509.

<sup>7</sup> Toynbee and Young, *Strangers in Oxford*, p. 32; House of Lords Journals, vol. 5 (1641-1642), p. 642.

for powder and shot sent from Oxford to Prince Rupert's men at Wheatley that June. Disaster struck in July 1645, when he was killed in a skirmish near Aylesbury, and shortly afterwards his brother Henry was also killed while on reconnaissance for the royalist forces near Thame.<sup>8</sup> The two brothers were buried in Christ Church Oxford on 28 August and 11 September respectively, and may well be the reason why their mother came to New College a few weeks or months later. Their father by then was in London, recovering from the failed Uxbridge negotiations and about to be appointed the King's Attorney-General.<sup>9</sup>



NCA 4204: part of the Long Book account for battels received in term 2 (Hilary) of 1644/5  
New College Archives, Oxford

It seems plausible that some of the nine ladies came to New College, during the increasingly troubled years of 1642-6 while trying to maintain and protect their family's interests, yet also anxious to preserve some sort of link with the world as they had known it before the war. Here they could find food, shelter and safety within in a college community of largely royalist sympathies, within easy reach of the royal court in Oxford and on hand for any news from husbands or sons serving with the royalist forces. Yet the reality was that the college was also committed to housing and maintaining a sizeable armaments depot in the cloisters and to contributing towards building up the defences of the city.<sup>10</sup> The women residents disappear from the Long Books after the King's final departure from Oxford in 1646, well aware that the college would have to surrender to the parliamentary forces if all went wrong.

Nevertheless, if the above identifications of the nine royalist women are correct, they still do not explain why they were at New College at the times suggested by the Long Books. In the case of the Ladies St George and Gardiner, their visits fell a few weeks or months after the burials at Christ Church cathedral of husbands or sons killed in battle or skirmishes, and it may be that they came to Oxford perhaps to discuss the possibility of placing memorial tablets in the cathedral, and—no doubt at the invitation of Warden Pincke—resided in New College while meeting the relevant cathedral officials. In other instances, such as Lady Falkland's visits, they reflect not just a period of mourning but also her wish to help prisoners in Oxford, pave the way for her son's acceptance at the university, and perhaps reconnect with the sort of intellectual world she had once shared with her husband. For others, being resident in Oxford may have been simply a way of

<sup>8</sup> *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. See also Ian Roy, ed., *The Royalist Ordnance Papers 1642-1646*, part 2 (Oxfordshire Record Society, vol. 46 (1975)), p. 244 and n. 158.

<sup>9</sup> *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>10</sup> For lists of weapons and ammunition in New College, see NCA 7665, Bodleian Special Collections Add. MSS D 114, fols. 131-32, and Roy, *The Royalist Ordnance Papers*, passim. For the regular payments made by New College towards the city defences throughout 1643/4, see NCA 4204 in the section 'Custus ad Extra' ('External account').

keeping abreast of war news in a city marginally safer than Westminster and less remote than some of their country estates. But we shall probably never know exactly why they came when they did.

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**Appendix:** Entries in the New College Long Books 1643/4 to 1646/7 (NCA 4204, 4205)  
1643/4

Term 1 (equivalent to modern Michaelmas term):

Rec' from my Lady Salisbury for beere & bread for 2 weeks	£1
Rec' of my Lady Salisbury for one weeke ending Oct 20	10s 3d
Rec' of my Lady Salisbury for bread & beere untill shee departed	£1 4s 5d
Rec' of my Lady Moryson for 24 days beare	3s 6d

Term 2 (roughly equivalent to modern Hilary term):

Rec' of my Lady phaulkland & my Lady Morison for beare for 4 weekes	£1 1s 6d
From my Lady phaukland for Beere	5s 7d

1644/5

Term 2 (equivalent to modern Michaelmas term):

Rec' from the Lady Faulkland for beare & decrements	17s 8d
Rec' of Mrs Saintgeorge for bread & beare 2 weekes	5s
Rec' of the Lady Thinne for beare	11s 10d
Rec' of Mrs Saintegeorge for bread & beare	3s
Rec' of Mrs Saintegeorge for bread & beare	£2 16s 10d
Rec' of the Lady Thinne for beare	£1 1s
Rec' of Mrs Saintegeorge for beare	5s 2d
Rec' of the Lady Faulkland for beare	5s 4d
Rec' of Sr Thomas Gardiner for beare	2s 6d

Term 3 (roughly equivalent to modern Trinity term):

Rec' from the Lady Faulkland for decrements	1s 6d
Rec' of Sr Thomas Gardiner for beare	9s
Rec' of the Lady Faulkland for beare	4s 4d
Rec' of the Lady Faulkland for beare & decrements	7s 4d
Rec' of Sr Thomas Gardiner for beare	15s 7d
Rec' of Mrs Yates for beare only	7s 10d
Rec' of Sr Thomas Gardiner for beare	£1

1645/6

Term 1 (equivalent to modern Michaelmas term):

Rec' of ye Lady Waineman and of ye Lady Stukely for dressing some meate in kitchin	3s
Rec' of the Lady Gardiner for bread & beare	£4 11s 10d
Rec' of the Lady Waineman for beare	3s 4d

Term 2 (roughly equivalent to modern Hilary term):

Rec' of the Lady Faulkland for beare	2s 9d
Rec' of the Lady Faulkland for beare	2s 6d

(No relevant entries for the remainder of the year or for 1646/7)