

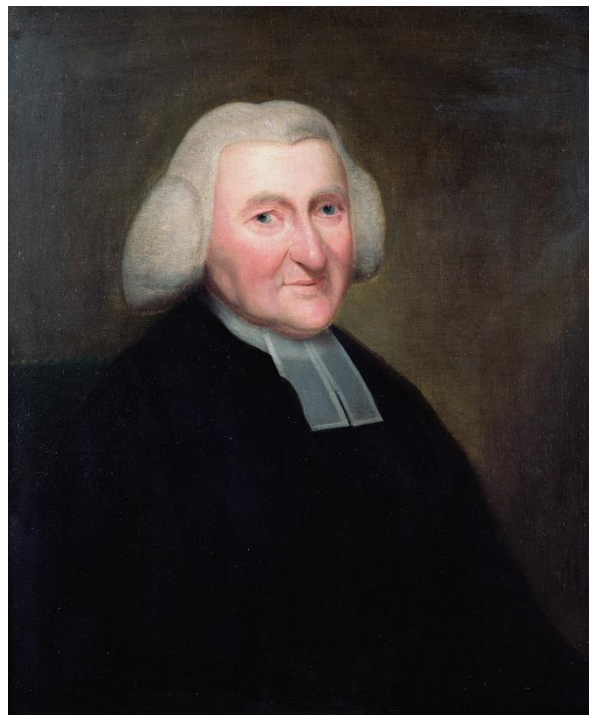
Some Benefactors and their Heraldry

It is a commonplace that many of the coats of arms on display in Oxford colleges commemorate past benefactors. New College is no exception, and in fact is particularly rich in heraldry that celebrates those who have contributed to its material wellbeing. This has been the case throughout its history but my purpose here is to take a look at some of the armorial additions that have been made to its fabric since the mid-19th century.

There have been three significant moments in the last 160 years when coats of arms have been added to the college—in the period 1858–65 when the Hall was restored, in 1896 when Robinson Tower and its adjoining buildings were erected, and in 1939 when the library was built. From each of these projects I have made a fairly random selection of two benefactors to illustrate the process.

The final stage in the heraldic decoration of the Hall was the installation of new stained glass in 1865¹ (a good many shields had also been placed on the panels, the frieze, and the rafters). Warden Sewell, who much preferred antiquarian research to college administration, was intimately involved in the plans for the glass. Preserved in the college archives are a number of rough lists he compiled of benefactors who could suitably be represented, together with letters received from various sources when he was investigating the heraldry of the individuals concerned.

These include one dated 5 September 1865 from the Revd W. H. Parker (William Hooper Parker), Rector of Saham Toney, Norfolk, himself a former fellow of the college,² concerning the Revd Charles Parrott (1713–1787). ‘Parrott’s Coat of Arms is on his monum^t in the Church here . . . his wife’s Arms are quartered with his . . . in the Church, & they are precisely similar to that which you say is on the shield in the Hall. There can be no doubt therefore that that in the Hall is correct’.³



Portrait of the Reverend Charles Parrott, English School, c. 1760 (oil on canvas)
© Courtesy of the Warden and Scholars of New College, Oxford

¹ Full details of the armorial stained glass are recorded in Charles Woodforde, *The Stained Glass of New College, Oxford* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951).

² Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses 1715–1886*, 4 vols (London, 1887–88), p. 1069.

³ New College Archives, Oxford, NCA, 2429.

Charles Parrott was born in London, entered Winchester College as founder's kin in 1728,⁴ and matriculated at New College in 1732.⁵ He was a fellow until 1757 and Rector of Saham Toney from then until his death, marrying in 1760,⁶ three years after vacating his fellowship. In his will dated 1785 and proved 1787, he left £2,000 for the purchase of freehold property, to be conveyed 'to the use and for the benefit of the Warden of New College in Oxford for the time being and his Successors forever in Augmentation of their income'.⁷ Nor did his generosity end there because according to one account he gave a total of £5,600 to the college.⁸

The arms put up in his memory both in Saham Toney and at New College can be described in the arcane language of heraldry as *Gules three pears on a chief Or a demi lion issuant Sable*. They properly belong to a Welsh family of Perrott, the pears undoubtedly serving as a play on the name—not on the face of it appropriate for someone named Parrott but heraldic punning often extends beyond the precise sound of a surname, as indeed is indicated by the fact that the crest accompanying the Perrott shield is a parrot. Closer inspection reveals that a branch of the Welsh Perrotts who settled in Oxford and recorded their right to the arms at the 1574 Herald's Visitation of Oxfordshire used the variant spelling 'Parret' in the late 16th and early 17th centuries.⁹ Both then and for a good while afterwards there was considerable fluidity in the spelling of surnames.



Arms of Charles Parrott, New College Hall, south side
Photograph: Michael Harazin © Courtesy of the Warden and Scholars of New College, Oxford

⁴ Thomas Frederick Kirby, *Winchester Scholars* (London: H. Frowde, 1888), p. 234.

⁵ *Alumni Oxonienses 1715–1886*, p. 1072.

⁶ <www.ancestry.co.uk/imageviewer/collections/61043/images/4098101_00717?pId=910104> (Accessed: 11 June 2023).

⁷ The National Archives, TNA, PROB 11/1151/46.

⁸ Hastings Rashdall and Robert S. Rait, *New College* (London: F. E. Robinson & Co., 1901), pp. 241–2.

⁹ William Henry Turner, ed., *The Visitations of the County of Oxford 1566, 1574 and 1634*, vol. 5 (London: [The Harleian Society], 1871), pp. 128–30.

Charles Parrott himself was the son of Henry Parrott, a clergyman whose immediate forebears lived in Huntingdonshire. The family had evidently been making use of the coat of arms for some time because it appears on monuments in Huntingdonshire churches to Henry Parrott (at Holywell cum Needingworth where he was rector)¹⁰ and his father, another Henry, (at Old Weston).¹¹ But they never established an official entitlement to the arms.

Also commemorated in the stained glass is the Revd John Dell (1755–1838). He came from Aylesbury, where his father was a brewer. Through his mother he could demonstrate a descent from William of Wykeham's sister, Agnes Champneys,¹² and it was as founder's kin that he entered Winchester in 1769.¹³ Matriculating at New College in 1775,¹⁴ he went on to become a fellow. In the same year as his marriage in 1803¹⁵ (at which point he vacated his fellowship), he was presented to a New College living at Weston Longueville, thus becoming (like Charles Parrott) rector of a Norfolk parish. This progression from fellow to country parson was a common occurrence prior to the 19th-century reforms.

The coat of arms John Dell used had originally been recorded for a Delves family and there is no evidence that he was entitled to it. In 1637, however, a very similar coat of arms was granted or confirmed to William Delves alias Dell, secretary to William Laud, the then archbishop of Canterbury.¹⁶ This seems to be the only official recording of arms for anyone named Dell. There is nonetheless clear evidence that John Dell used the Delves arms because his personal armorial bookplate has been preserved amongst the file of documents relating to the 1865 stained glass.¹⁷

However, it was not Dell himself who was the benefactor in question but his widow, Mary Dell. In his will, made in 1837 and proved in 1838, he made no mention of New College.¹⁸ Mary Dell, on the other hand, in her will (dated 1841, along with codicils made in 1850 and 1854, proved in 1858) bequeathed the sum of £1,000 in bank stock to the Warden and Scholars of New College 'for the purpose of being applied in augmenting small Livings in the gift of the College'.¹⁹ It will have been for this reason that the glass displays an impaled shield, that is to say, one that combines the arms of husband and wife, those of the husband being placed on the left-hand side and those of the wife on the right.

The archive of the project includes a letter dated 3 December 1858 from the Revd Frederick Neale,²⁰ vicar of Wootton near Bedford (who was Mary Dell's nephew and co-executor of her will) to the Revd J. M. Holland (John Murray Holland, fellow of New College from 1838 to 1861 and holder of several college offices).²¹

At the request of the Rev^d M^r Rich of Weedon, Aylesbury, I send you the shield of the family of the late M^{rs} Mary Dell—I understand that M^r Rich has sent you the shield of the late Rev^d John Dell her husband. The late M^{rs} Mary Dell was a Miss Shrimpton. The leopards heads (6) are the distinctive bearings of the Shrimpton family . . .

When you have done with the enclosed, I shd be glad to have it back again, as it is the only copy I have.²²

¹⁰ <www.ancestry.co.uk/family-tree/person/tree/13398521/person/1044520220/facts> (Accessed: 11 June 2023).

¹¹ <www.ancestry.co.uk/family-tree/person/tree/13398521/person/1021556063/facts> (Accessed: 11 June 2023).

¹² George Lipscomb, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Buckingham*, vol. 2 (London: J. & W. Robins, 1847), p.71.

¹³ Kirby, *Winchester Scholars*, p. 263; G. D. Squibb, *Founder's Kin: Privilege and Pedigree* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 191.

¹⁴ *Alumni Oxonienses 1715–1886*, p. 361.

¹⁵ *The Gentleman's Magazine* 94 (1803), p. 985.

¹⁶ College of Arms MS, Miscellaneous Grants 4, f. 16 and EDN 56, f. 82.

¹⁷ NCA, 2429.

¹⁸ TNA, PROB 11/1904/372.

¹⁹ TNA, PROB 11/2251/49.

²⁰ *Alumni Oxonienses 1715–1886*, p. 1009.

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 679.

²² NCA, 2429.

Accompanying John Dell's heraldic bookplate is that of Joseph Shrimpton,²³ whom Mary Dell mentioned in her will, though without actually specifying her relationship to him. It would be plausible to suppose they were cousins. The first and fourth quarters of Joseph's paternal arms display the two bars between six leopards' faces referred to in Frederick Neale's letter. Though of no authority, it is clear both from the bookplate and from printed sources²⁴ that the leopards' faces should be positioned '3 2 and 1' as



Armorial bookplates of John Dell and Joseph Shrimpton
New College Archives, Oxford, NCA 2429

© Courtesy of the Warden and Scholars of New College, Oxford

opposed to the arrangement in the stained glass where there are three leopards' faces either side of the bars. The most likely explanation for the error is that Clayton and Bell (the manufacturers of the stained glass) were supplied only with a blazon (i.e. a verbal description of the arms) rather than an illustration.

In any event, the arms as depicted in the stained glass can be blazoned as follows:

Argent a chevron fretty Or between three billets Azure (Dell) impaling Azure two bars between six leopards' faces Argent (Shrimpton)



Arms of John Dell, New College Hall, north side

Photograph: Michael Harazin © Courtesy of the Warden and Scholars of New College, Oxford

²³ NCA, 2429.

²⁴ Sir Bernard Burke, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales* (London: Harrison & Sons, 1884), p. 925.

The 1865 exercise was concerned very much with past benefactors. By contrast, most of the heraldry chosen for the Robinson Tower (and the adjoining buildings to the east) celebrated living individuals associated with the project. The building of the tower followed the early death of Alfred Robinson (1841–1895), fellow and senior bursar, a much-admired figure who had played a key role in the modernisation of the college. The Robinson Memorial Fund was set up almost immediately after he died and received its first contributions within six weeks of his death.

The college archives contain the minutes of the Robinson Memorial Committee, lists of donors and detailed figures. An audit in March 1897 recorded that there had been 415 subscribers and a total of just under £3,150 had been raised. Of this, £529 had been spent on a portrait of Robinson, a tablet in the ante-chapel and miscellaneous expenses, the balance of £2,620 being put towards the cost of building the tower.²⁵

The chairman of the committee was Vernon Watney (1860–1928), who had matriculated at New College in 1879,²⁶ and after graduating had been appointed chairman of the family brewing firm at the age of 26 in 1887.²⁷ His gift of £500 was the largest individual donation to the fund. His wife, Lady Margaret Watney (née Wallop), who was the daughter of the Fifth Earl of Portsmouth, chipped in with £20.²⁸ Perhaps for this reason it was their combined arms (rather than the Watney arms alone) that were displayed on Robinson Tower.

Arms had been granted in 1832 to Watney's great-uncle, Daniel Watney, to be borne and used by him and his descendants and by the other descendants of his father.²⁹ The wheatsheaf in the arms (known as a garb in heraldry) undoubtedly alludes to the brewing of beer. Nearly 40 years later Daniel Watney had a further grant, this time of a quartering to represent his mother's family of Galpin.³⁰ The Watney coat of arms on the tower (on the left-hand side of the internal archway) is therefore rather elaborate:

Quarterly, 1 and 4, Azure a cross engrailed Ermine in the first and fourth quarters a dove Argent and in the second and third a garb Or (Watney), 2 and 3, Quarterly Argent and Or a cross floretty Gules between in the first and fourth quarters a lion rampant also Gules charged with three bars Or (Galpin) impaling Argent a bend wavy Sable (Wallop)



Arms of Vernon Watney, gateway of Robinson Tower
Photograph: Michael Harazin © Courtesy of the Warden and Scholars of New College, Oxford

²⁵ NCA, 829.

²⁶ *Alumni Oxonienses 1715–1886*, p. 1509.

²⁷ *Who Was Who 1916–1928* (London: A. & C. Black, 1929), p. 1098.

²⁸ NCA, 829.

²⁹ College of Arms MS, Grants 39/290.

³⁰ College of Arms MS, Grants 57/216.

Amongst the records of the project is a coloured version of Vernon Watney's marital arms, presumably supplied by himself. They also include the preparatory drawings of the various coats of arms that formed the basis of the carvings.³¹



Arms and Crest of Vernon Watney, New College Archives, Oxford, NCA 829
© Courtesy of the Warden and Scholars of New College, Oxford

³¹ NCA 829.

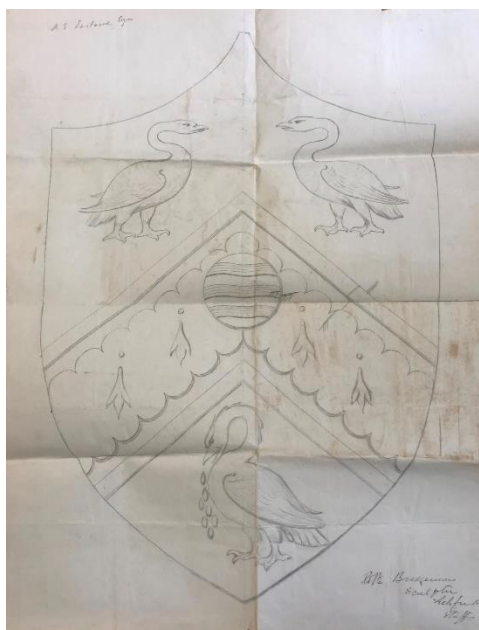
The secretary of the Robinson Memorial Committee was a solicitor called Arthur Edgell Eastwood (1860–1949), who had come up to New College in 1877,³² overlapping by two years with Vernon Watney. He contributed £25 to the Memorial Fund,³³ but it is reasonable to suppose that he put in a good deal of elbow work in his position as secretary and this would very likely have been the reason his arms were amongst those carved on the tower. Three ordinary members of the committee were similarly commemorated.



Arms and Crest granted to John Fisher Eastwood 1891, College of Arms MS Grants 101/77
© Chapter of the College of Arms

³² *Alumni Oxonienses 1715–1886*, p. 404.

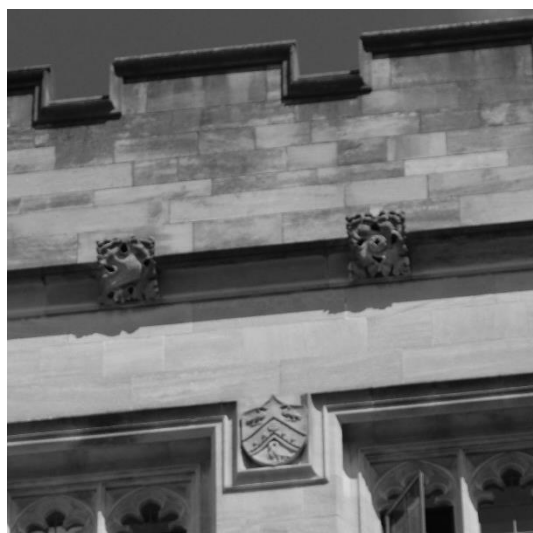
³³ NCA 829.



Preparatory drawing of Arthur Eastwood's Arms for Robinson Tower
New College Archives, Oxford, NCA 829
© Courtesy of the Warden and Scholars of New College, Oxford

Eastwood's father, John Fisher Eastwood, had been granted arms in 1891,³⁴ and it is these that appear on the tower:

Per chevron Gules and Sable on a chevron invected Erminois cotised Or between in chief two swans close respectant and in base a pelican close vulning itself Argent a fountain proper



Arms of Arthur Eastwood, top of Robinson Tower
Photograph: Michael Harazin © Courtesy of the Warden and Scholars of New College, Oxford

In 1901, Eastwood moved to Somerset, taking up residence at Leigh Court, Angersleigh, and spent the rest of his life as a country squire.³⁵

³⁴ College of Arms MS, Grants 66/80.

³⁵ *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society*, 94 (1950), 166–7.

When the project for building a new library came to fruition in 1938–39, a total of eight benefactors were commemorated heraldically on the exterior stonework. All the individuals concerned were properly entitled to arms (unlike many earlier benefactors). The coats of arms of Wardens Spooner and Fisher appear quite high up, either side of the library entrance. In Spooner's case, the arms to large extent commemorate his widow because it was she who donated money to the project. On the south and north faces of the library are a further six shields, of which four represent aristocrats (the Marquis of Lothian, the Earl of Onslow, Viscount Bearsted, and Lord Rockley) and two commoners, Hastings Rashdall and Harry Sacher.

Again, it was Rashdall's widow who actually contributed funds—Constance Makins, whom he had married in 1905. Hastings Rashdall (1858–1924) was an undergraduate at New College and subsequently a fellow of the college from 1895 until 1917 when he was appointed dean of Carlisle, which he remained until his death. He is described as follows in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*: 'A legend for his absent-mindedness, untidy appearance, and lack of physical co-ordination, Rashdall was a much loved tutor'.³⁶

Rashdall's family had been using the arms of a Yorkshire family of Rashdale without authority; these comprise *an inescutcheon within eight martlets in orle*. In 1934, a differenced version of the arms was granted and confirmed to his widow 'to be placed on a Monument or otherwise to the memory of her husband the said Hastings Rashdall deceased, and to be borne by his descendants and by her the said Constance Rashdall as his widow'.³⁷ It was fortunate that she did so because it meant that an entirely legitimate shield was ready and waiting to be used when the new library was built:

Sable an orle within four martlets and as many roses Argent barbed and seeded proper alternating in orle



Arms and Crest granted in memory of Hastings Rashdall 1934, College of Arms MS Grants 66/80
© Chapter of the College of Arms

³⁶ Jane Garnett 'Rashdall, Hastings (1858–1924)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (24 May 2007) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/35676>> (Accessed: 11 June 2023).

³⁷ College of Arms MS, Grants 101/77.

It is perhaps surprising that the Rashdall arms alone appear on the shield rather than being impaled with those of Makins. Mrs Rashdall was herself armigerous, her grandfather, Charles Makins, having been granted arms in 1872.³⁸ It would have therefore been possible to portray the marital arms (as happened in the case of the Dells and the Watneys). Perhaps Mrs. Rashdall was sufficiently modest to wish her husband to be heraldically commemorated without reference to herself. She died in 1958.



Arms of Hastings Rashdall, New College Library, Oxford, south face
© Courtesy of the Warden and Scholars of New College, Oxford

Of the selection of benefactors treated in this article, Harry Sacher (1881–1971) is assuredly the one whose name is best known as it was he who funded the Sacher Building in the early 1960s. What is less appreciated is that he had also contributed generously when the library was built nearly 25 years earlier, his donation being substantial enough to merit his arms being carved on the library's north face (in the same position as the Rashdall shield on the south face).

Sacher was arguably the most remarkable of the handful of benefactors mentioned here. Born in Shoreditch to Jewish immigrants from Poland, and brought up in Mile End, he won an exhibition to New College and got a first in history. Variousy a journalist, a lawyer, and a businessman (he married into the Marks family and became a director of Marks and Spencer), he was a leading Zionist, and played a large role in the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. He was also a very considerable philanthropist.³⁹

³⁸ College of Arms MS, Grants 58/80.

³⁹ Gerry Black, 'Sacher, Harry (1881–1971)', *ODNB* (28 September 2006) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/75340>> (Accessed: 11 June 2023).

Sacher sought a coat of arms in the summer of 1939, and the ensuing grant was made in February 1940. The timing of the grant makes it highly likely that he was spurred to apply for one in the knowledge that his shield could then appear on the library wall. He was granted the following arms:

Per chevron Azure and Argent in chief a triangle surmounted by another reversed Argent between two torches inflamed Or and in base a lion rampant Azure



Arms granted to Harry Sacher 1940 College of Arms MS Grants 106/80
© Chapter of the College of Arms

The two triangles constitute a Star of David—a widely recognised Jewish symbol—though it is more usual for the triangles to be shown interlaced than with one on top of the other. The stone shield itself has deteriorated somewhat—and the coats of arms on the library façade tend in any case to be comparatively little noticed (particularly those on the south side). It would therefore be a pleasant tribute to such a notable benefactor if Sacher’s arms could one day be emblazoned somewhere on the Sacher Building, preferably in full colour.



Arms of Harry Sacher New College Library, Oxford, north face
Photograph: Michael Harazin © Courtesy of the Warden and Scholars of New College, Oxford

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