

OXONIENSIA

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Intending contributors to *Oxoniensia* are asked to submit an electronic copy of their work to the editor, Dr Stephen Miles, no later than 1 December each year (editor@oahs.org.uk). The editor will be pleased to advise on preliminary drafts. 'Notes for Contributors' are available on the website.

EDITORIAL NOTICE

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The Society, formed in 1972 by the amalgamation of the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society (founded in 1839) and the Oxfordshire Archaeological Society (founded in 1852), exists to further the study of the archaeology, topography, architecture, and history of Oxford and Oxfordshire. In addition to publishing *Oxoniensia*, it provides a programme of winter lectures in Oxford and organizes excursions to places of architectural, historical, and archaeological interest. Through its Listed Buildings Committee and associated Victorian Group, the Society makes representations to public bodies, both on its own behalf and for the Council for British Archaeology, to safeguard historical buildings and monuments. The Society also convenes the Oxford City and County Archaeological Forum, which fosters liaison to discuss and advise on issues concerning archaeology and museums, monitor cases and on occasion make representations on matters of concern.

The Society's website can be found at www.oahs.org.uk. In 2010 OAHS launched two new initiatives to promote digital access to studying Oxfordshire's past: past volumes of *Oxoniensia* are now available online (the last five years only to members) at <http://oxoniensia.org> and the OAHS online guide to resources and societies for studying Oxfordshire's past is to be found at <http://oxfordshirehistory.modhist.ox.ac.uk>.

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OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

The Association was founded in 1980 to further the study of local history in the County, and in particular to promote links between amateur local historians and academic and professional bodies involved in local history. The Association organizes twice-yearly study days and publishes a regular newsletter and a journal, *Oxfordshire Local History*. Further details at: www.olha.org.uk

Enquiries about the Association should be addressed to the Hon. Treasurer and Membership Secretary, Liz Woolley, 138 Marlborough Road, Oxford, OX1 4LS (membership@olha.org.uk).

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An Alphabetical Digest of Rusher's 'Banbury Trades and Occupations Directory', 1832-1906, ed. J. Gibson;
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In preparation:

Life (and Death) in Georgian Banbury.

The Society's magazine, *Cake and Cockhorse*, is issued to members three times a year. Those from 1959 to 2003 are available to buy on a CD-ROM or free online at www.banburyhistory.org.

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OXONIENSIA



A refereed journal dealing with the
archaeology, history and architecture
of Oxford and Oxfordshire

VOLUME 81

2016

PUBLISHED AND SOLD BY
THE OXFORDSHIRE ARCHITECTURAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, OXFORD

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ISSN 0308-5562

Cover images: photographs and a drawing from 'William Butterfield ... in Oxford' and 'The Camel that Escaped the Nazis'. See figures starting on p. 82.

Produced for the Society by Boydell & Brewer Ltd
Printed in Great Britain by CPI Anthony Rowe, Chippenham and Eastbourne

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Abbreviations

Abbreviated titles are used in each article after the first full citation. In addition, the following are used throughout the volume or in particular articles:

BAR	British Archaeological Reports (Oxford, 1974–)
BAR BS	British Archaeological Reports, British Series
BAR IS	British Archaeological Reports, International Series
BCA	Balliol College Archive
BL	British Library, London
Bodl.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
BRO	Berkshire Record Office
CBM	ceramic building material
ECA	Exeter College Archive
EPNS	English Place-Name Society
EVE	estimated vessel equivalent
Fig./Figs.	figure/figures
f./ff.	folio/folios
FLO	Finds Liaison Officer
HER	Historic Environment Record
IoAO	Institute of Archaeology, Oxford
JMHS	John Moore Heritage Services
KC(A)	Keble College (Archive)
MCA	Merton College Archive
MCR	Merton College Register
<i>MedArch</i>	<i>Medieval Archaeology</i> (London, 1958–)
MOLA	Museum of London Archaeology
MS	manuscript
n.	note
NCA	New College Archive
n.d.	no date
ns	new series
OA	Oxford Archaeology
OBR	Oxfordshire Buildings Record
OD	Ordnance Datum
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> (Oxford, 2004)
OHC	Oxfordshire History Centre
OHS	Oxford Historical Society
ORS	Oxfordshire Record Society
OS	Ordnance Survey
os	old/original series
OU DCE	Oxford University Department for Continuing Education
OUSA	Oxford Union Society Archive
OXCMS	Oxfordshire County Museum Service
PHA	Pusey House Archive
QCA	Queen's College Archive
r.	recto
<i>SMidA</i>	<i>South Midlands Archaeology</i> (Oxford, 1983–) [formerly CBA Group 9 Newsletter]
TNA: PRO	The National Archives, Public Record Office, Kew

TS	typescript
TVAS	Thames Valley Archaeological Services
v.	verso
VCH	<i>Victoria History of the Counties of England</i> (London, 1900–) [<i>Victoria County History</i>]
vol.	volume

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Building Recording and Test Pits at Brasenose College, Oxford

Construction works associated with the refurbishment of the existing kitchen block at Brasenose College, including the Grade I Listed Old Kitchen, necessitated a programme of building recording and an archaeological watching brief during intrusive groundworks. BGS Architects Ltd, working on behalf of Brasenose College, commissioned Oxford Archaeology to carry out these investigations between August 2008 and March 2011 in compliance with conditions attached to both the planning consent and the listed building consent.¹

The college lies within the historic core of the city and occupies the site of former medieval properties that were laid out to front onto School Street (now Radcliffe Square) and included the academic Brasenose Hall. The hall was owned by the university from the mid thirteenth century and was later acquired by the University College. The exact date of the replacement of the hall by the college is unknown, although building work appears to have been underway in 1509 and the charter that established a college, to be called ‘The King’s Hall and College of Brasenose’, is dated 15th January 1512.² The kitchen block is situated outside the main quadrangle of the college, where the Old Kitchen is built out from the south side of the hall (Fig. 1). The irregular angle of the Old Kitchen’s attachment to the hall, and the truncation of one of its windows, have suggested to most college historians that the former may be a survival from the earlier hall.³ Why the kitchen building might have been retained is unclear, although evidence from Corpus Christi and recent excavations at Jesus College has suggested that it may not have been unusual for the kitchens of former academic halls to be retained and incorporated into the buildings of the newly founded colleges (in the early sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries respectively in these two cases).⁴ The current kitchen and adjacent store rooms are situated to the west of the old kitchen and formed part of a major refurbishment of the college facilities that was designed by T.G. (later Sir Thomas) Jackson. His drawing of 1886, detailing buildings to be demolished, provides an important record of the arrangement of the college at this time.

WATCHING BRIEF

The watching brief encompassed the digging of ten test pits, including an extension to an existing coal cellar that was to be converted into a boiler room (Test Pit 7) and a new lift pit (Test Pit 8), the digging of pile caps for a temporary kitchen and dining marquee in the old quad, floor reduction in the old kitchen, and various associated service trenches. Most of these intrusions were relatively shallow and exposed only deposits of made ground of fairly recent date.

The earliest certainly dated features found were two medieval pits in Test Pit 7. This area had been truncated by the construction of a sixteenth- or nineteenth-century cellar, since infilled, but the pits survived beneath the base of the cellar at a depth of 2.5 metres below ground

¹ The details of the investigations are reported in full in ‘Brasenose College, Radcliffe Square, Oxford: Historic Building Recording and Archaeological Investigations Report (2014)’, OA unpublished report.

² *VCH Oxon.* 3, p. 208.

³ *Ibid.* p. 214; E.W. Allfrey, ‘The Architectural History of the College’, *BNC Quatercentenary Monograph*, 3 (1909), pp. 8–9; RCHM, *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the City of Oxford* (1939), p. 26.

⁴ Julian Munby, personal communication; R Bashford and B.M. Ford, ‘Eleventh-Century, Later-Medieval and Early Post-Medieval Evidence from Investigations at Jesus College and Market Street, Oxford’, forthcoming.

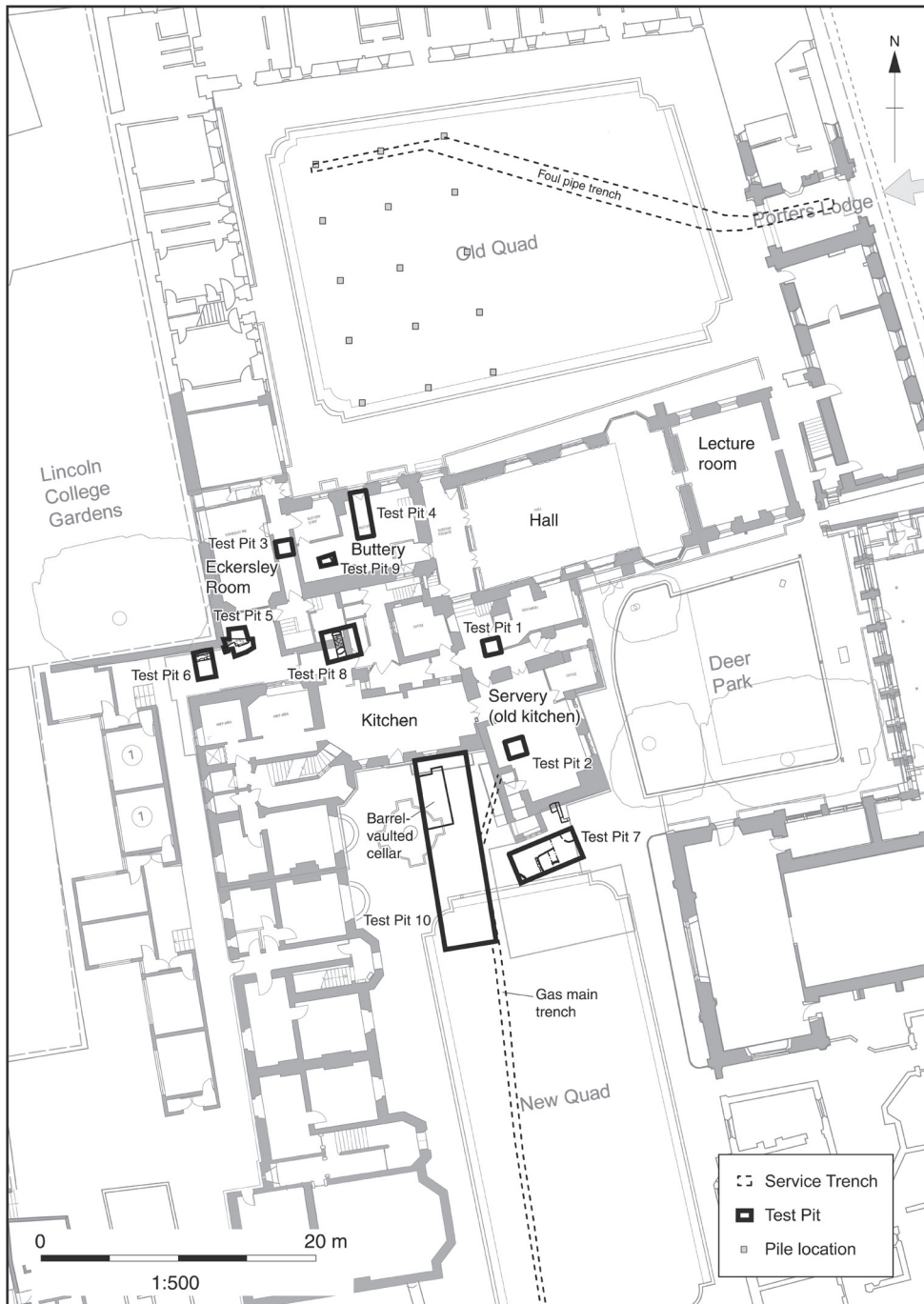


Fig. 1. Site plan showing test pits, services trenches and pile locations.

level, where they were cut into a thin layer of loessic brickearth that overlay the gravel. They produced pottery dating from the eleventh to thirteenth century, including a rare example of a probable north French greyware jar body sherd that may be a late Anglo-Saxon import.

Also of possible medieval date were a soil layer and wall that were uncovered in Test Pit 5. The soil layer, the earliest deposit that was reached in this test pit, contained fifteenth- to sixteenth-century pottery, and was cut by the construction trench for the wall, which was aligned south-west to north-east, being on a slightly different alignment to the college buildings. The wall was trench built and was bonded with an orange brown sandy clay. It was at least 0.60 metres wide and was exposed to a depth of 1.0 metres. A return on the south side of the north-eastern end of the wall extended for 0.4 metres and may be the remains of a buttress or one side of a threshold. If the return is the remains of a buttress, it would suggest that this structure formed the southern wall of a building that once lay on the site of the Eckersley Room. However, if instead the observed terminus of the return represents an interruption for a threshold, it would imply that the identified remains of the wall are part of the north-eastern corner of a structure. Agas's map of 1578 shows open space in this location, and as such it seems likely that this wall pre-dates the foundation of the college at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The similarity of the alignment of the wall to that of the old kitchen may suggest a common origin, perhaps in the fifteenth century, and that this structure was demolished prior to the construction of the buildings which form the old quad in the mid sixteenth century. The footings of the perimeter wall of the neighbouring Lincoln College were exposed in this test pit, and had been partly built direct on the earlier wall.

A stone-built barrel-vaulted cellar was exposed during the excavation of a service trench south of the current kitchen (Test Pit 10). The precise date of the cellar was uncertain, although it had been truncated by the south wall of the south range of the old quad. This suggests that it, too, may have pre-dated the sixteenth-century construction of the range. The vault was in-filled with pea-shingle and the route of the service trench was altered to preserve the structure in situ.

Clay pipe and pottery dating from the sixteenth to seventeenth century that were recovered from a possible cess pit in Test Pit 8 suggest that it was contemporary with the property to the south, identified by Salter as 'Salissury',⁵ and therefore represent the last phase of activity on that plot prior to the construction of the library and chapel in 1655–6. A pit of similar date was also uncovered in Test Pit 7.

Two pits in Test Pit 5 contained pottery dating from the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries, suggesting that they post-date the construction of the old quad buildings. These features may have been associated with the demolition of the earlier wall in this test pit, although their fills were not characteristic of robber trenches. Alternatively they may represent seventeenth-century pits in the area shown on Agas's plan of 1578 as open space to the rear of the newly constructed college buildings, which was subsequently built over by the southward expansion of the college.

Partial foundations were revealed in Test Pits 5 and 6 that correspond with a building indicated on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1878 as 'Brewhouse'. A wall in Test Pit 7 was identified with the 'scullery' shown on the same map and on Jackson's demolition plan of 1886, and was abutted by a second wall that was identified on the latter plan as 'College Rooms'.

BUILDING RECORDING AND WALLPAINTING

Following photographic recording of a series of twentieth-century buildings to the south of the Buttery that were to be demolished as a component of the works, building recording concentrated on the Eckersley Room and the cellars beneath the buttery and hall, where

⁵ H.E. Salter, *Map of Mediaeval Oxford* (1934).

alterations were to take place. The cellars remain an important part of the kitchen facilities with the buttery cellar containing the silver vaults and the cellar under the hall used for wine storage. Both cellars contain elements of the sixteenth-century college building, in the stonework of the lower walling. The wine cellar underneath the hall contains three large stone columns that support the large floor beams of the hall above. These date to the late seventeenth century and it is likely that the cellar was a large open space at this time. Later alterations include the addition of brick-vaulted ceilings and walls in both cellars and the creation of shelving for storage in the wine cellar in the eighteenth century. Later changes include the addition of a silver vault in the buttery cellar in the nineteenth century and the reworking of the west end of the hall cellar in the twentieth century.

In the Eckersley Room, named after Lt. Col. Nathaniel Farington Eckersley, whose benefaction financed the conversion of the former student room into a small dining room in 1936, the removal of the existing twentieth-century wall panelling exposed the fabric of the wall. For the most part this comprised twentieth-century brickwork and a disused fireplace of probable nineteenth-century date, but at the southern end of the east wall, previously thought to have been built during Jackson's late nineteenth-century reworking of the kitchen area, a section of timber frame with early straw plaster was exposed that clearly dates to the primary phase of the range construction. Fixed to the timber frame were a series of wooden panels decorated with a series of seven- and eight-pointed stars painted in yellowish gold on a black background (Figs. 2 and 3).

The decoration extends over the chamfered beam directly above the panelling and also to a beam on the south elevation, suggesting that the decoration was only used in a space *c.*1.9 by 1.7 metres square. The star decoration is carried over to adjacent panelling, confirming that



Fig. 2. The east wall of the Eckersley Room after removal of twentieth-century panelling, showing the painted panel in situ.

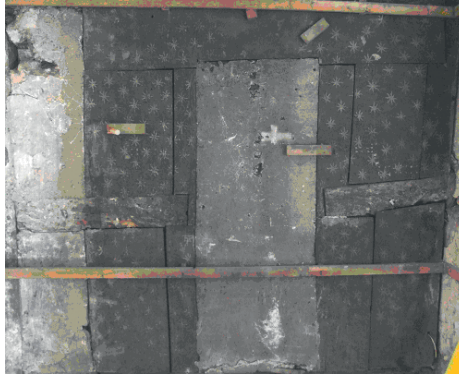


Fig. 3. Detail of the star-painted panel exposed by removal of twentieth-century panelling in the Eckersley Room (© Madeleine Katkov).

the panels have not been moved from elsewhere. The presence of lath and plaster at differing depths seen beneath the wooden panels suggests that the panelling is not contemporary with the initial build but was added later. The ten wooden boards are c.25 mm thick and varying in size and shape, having the appearance of wide elm floorboards. They have been cut to fit around the original timber framing. A blocked doorway is set within the panelling, and was either in situ when the panelling was added to the elevation or was cut in afterwards. However, the star pattern is not divided by the doorway, suggesting that the former is more likely. The panelling is nailed to the timber frame behind using hand-made nails. Only one panel can be seen to have rebated edges, but these are not used. The lower sections of panelling are not decorated and were probably later inserted in relation to the change in floor level.

The date of the painted panel and the character of the room of which it formed a part are uncertain. Paint analysis failed to ascertain a date for the panel, but it did indicate that the stars were part of the original design and were not added later to an originally plain surface.⁶ Stylistically the panel would appear to be part of a seventeenth- or early eighteenth-century decorative scheme. It probably formed part of a small bedroom or study.

The Eckersley Room formed part of the original sixteenth-century construction of the college, although its layout and function are not recorded until the earliest college room list in 1747, when it was one of two rooms that were described as a 'Domus' and 'Butlers do. (domus?)'. Subsequently the two rooms continued to be used as student rooms until the twentieth century, with a brief interlude from 1886 when one was used as a lecture room. The earliest depiction of the rooms is shown on William Williams' plan of c.1732 and show the west (now Eckersley) room with study/bed closets on its north side and the east room with study/bed closets on its west side (now the passage). This may be the period from which the panelling dates, although the infilled doorway is not depicted in the correct location and the layout would mean that the decoration would be the external wall of the closet rather than inside. The subsequent history of the rooms is somewhat confused as the nineteenth-century plans are inconsistent in their depiction of the partition on which the panelling was located. It is probable that the location of the study room was at some stage different to the configuration shown on the plans and the panelling relates to this layout which is not shown on any plan.

Oxford is well provided with domestic wall paintings, which occur in a variety of locations and in greater or lesser quality.⁷ Painted cloths and wallpapers were also used for room

⁶ The painting was examined by Madeleine Katkov and paint samples were analysed by Catherine Hassall.

⁷ E.C. Rouse, 'Some 16th and 17th Century Domestic Paintings in Oxford', *Oxonienisia*, 37 (1972), pp. 198–207.

decoration from the sixteenth century. The painting in the Eckersley Room is a good example of the decoration of a minor space and is well preserved. An interesting parallel is the 1625 pew at Rycote Chapel (Great Haseley), which is decorated with a blue starry sky. The panel is an important piece of evidence for the decorative quality of student rooms in the college during this phase.

Following the discovery of the star-painted panelling, the building plans were altered to preserve the panelling in situ and the doorway that had been proposed for this location was relocated to elsewhere in the room.

ALISON KELLY, CHRIS RICHARDSON, MIKE SIMS and ROBIN BASHFORD