

## OXFORD TAVERNS AND THE CELLARS OF ALL SOULS

months old in the cellars. If left longer than this it was liable to become 'decay'd and unsound'.<sup>48</sup> The bottles were thus in constant use, and as the accounts show, frequently broken.

### SECTION 3 : ORIGIN OF THE SEALED BOTTLES

Many of the entries in the Wine Cash Books, which record the amounts paid for the various items used in the cellars, are of great interest in establishing the origin and date of the sealed bottles. It has long been assumed that the various College bottles were originally the possession of the tavern keepers—an assumption which bears the implication that they sent their own wine in these bottles to the Colleges as had been their practice, it has been shown above, since the mid-17th century. Thus Sheelah Ruggles-Brise states<sup>49</sup> that 'It is believed that these bottles were the property of the taverners or wine-merchants, and not of the colleges, as the buttery accounts of the latter have been searched as far back as 1700 and no charges for bottles have been found'.

This is in itself a quite improbable hypothesis. Quite apart from the fact that the buttery accounts are not the place to look for charges for anything bought by the Colleges,<sup>50</sup> it is difficult to see why either the taverns or the wine-merchants should have had their own bottles stamped with a particular College's seal when they would no doubt have wanted to reuse the bottles to supply other customers<sup>51</sup>—and especially since the taverners' ownership of their bottles had hitherto been indicated with seals bearing their own initials. Moreover, H. E. Salter concludes (from evidence in the City Lease books relating to the non-payment of wine licences) that 'the wine taverns had died by 1751'.<sup>52</sup> None of the bottles sealed with College names, except for one represented by a seal of Exeter College dated 1744,<sup>53</sup> can be dated before the 1750's. The possibility, therefore, that the taverns were supplying bottles to Colleges after the mid-18th century becomes somewhat difficult to entertain.

<sup>48</sup> On 24 December 1754, one cellar, filled in 1752, contained 29 dozen bottles of 'Returned Wine, to be disposed of at any price', which on 10 January was 'brought into ye Common Room so bad that it was given away'.

<sup>49</sup> Sheelah Ruggles-Brise, *op. cit.*, 35.

<sup>50</sup> W. Blackstone, *op. cit.*, 4-5, states that 'The Manciple keeps the Buttery-Book; in which opposite to the names of every Member of the College his Battels are minutely entered'. In it 'are also weekly kept the Accounts of the several College Servants, who furnish provisions and Necessaries, & the sums due to them for those several articles [which] are allowed upon their respective names'. Doubtless the Buttery Books of other Colleges served similar functions.

<sup>51</sup> The assumption of Sheelah Ruggles-Brise was perhaps that wine for the use of a particular College was laid down by the tavern-keeper on his own premises to meet specific orders from the Colleges—in bottles sealed, for identification, with the particular College's initials. However, the cellars of All Souls in particular were vastly more spacious (not to say conveniently situated) than the taverns' cellars could possibly have been.

<sup>52</sup> H. E. Salter, *op. cit.*, 348.

<sup>53</sup> *AM.* 1969, 192.

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The accounts of All Souls provide abundant evidence, however, to show that this College's bottles were in fact College property, bought by the College for its own internal use. A large number of entries from 1750 onwards in the Wine Cash Books relate specifically both to the buying of bottles and to payment for their carriage, and the origin of at least the earlier bottles is given in a memorandum in the front of the first Wine Account Book of 1750, which reads:

Direct to Mrs. Batchelor Glass Maker at Stourbridge, Worcestershire.<sup>54</sup> As well as being conclusive proof that the College acquired its own bottles, this is also I believe the first reference so far discovered not only to the place of manufacture, but also to the name of the maker, of any known British sealed bottle. The earliest of the All Souls bottles (see below) are therefore the only sealed bottles whose provenance can be established by documentary, rather than by archaeological, evidence (apart from those early 19th-century bottles moulded with the various forms of the name of the firm of Ricketts of Bristol).

The entries in the Wine Cash Books, and after 1771 in the New Titling Books, relating to the buying of bottles are as follows:

			£	s.	d.
1750	28 Dec.	To Batchelor for Bottles	35	2	1
1751	May 16	Paid carriage of Bottles	6	4	4
	Oct. 28	Paid Mrs. Batchelor for Bottles	56	17	0
1760	June 4	Paid for ye Carriage of 171 Dozen of Bottles as pr. recpt.	6	0	0
	Dec 8	Pd Mrs Batchelor by Bill on Child to Thomas Brettell as pr recpt.	30	0	0
1761	July 27	Paid Edwd Compson for ye Carriage of 60 Doz. of Quart Bottles & 14 Decanters as pr recpt.	1	12	6
1763	June 14	Paid for Bottles	8	13	0
1768	Dec 17	Strange for Bottles	23	17	6
1770	April 18	Strange for 101 Doz. & 6 quart Bottles delivd 26 July 1769	14	7	7
1772	Oct 6	Strange for Bottles	22	0	6
1776	July	Strange for Bottles	22	9	6
1788	May 16	Paid Heatley for Bottles	22	4	6
1789	May 30	Turner for Bottles	43	4	0
1794	Oct 10	Carriage of Bottles	2	7	5
	Oct 18	Pd for Black Bottles	19	12	9
1800	July 28	Pd Mrs. Turner for Bottles	26	4	10½
	Oct 8	Pd Mrs. Turner for Bottles	25	13	0
		Pd Portorage of new Bottles	0	5	0
1806	March 13	Bottles	25	4	0

<sup>54</sup> See D. R. Guttery, *From Broad-glass to Cut Crystal* (1956), for a history of the Stourbridge Glass Industry. The Batchelor family took over the Dennis Glasshouse at Stourbridge in 1691, when one Thomas Batchelor started making bottles there (pp. 36-7). D. E. Guttery gives no genealogy of the family, and only scattered references to its members. However, the 'Mrs. Batchelor' of these accounts is, it seems, later than any member of the family recorded by him.

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It appears from the above items that within just over two years of the institution of the cellar the College had acquired a sufficient quantity of bottles to last it for the next nine years, until the next recorded delivery in 1760. There is another entry for the purchase of bottles by the College in 1751, recorded in the New Titling Book and the Expense Roll for that year, which records :

June 1750	13 Dozen bottles for the Bursary :	£		s.		d.
		1	:	6	:	0

This would not, however, be a separate purchase from Stourbridge, but rather the acquisition by the Bursary of bottles from the 'Wine Box' for the purpose of supplying wine for 'Extraordinaries' and 'Extraneis', the costs of which were still 'defrayed at the expense of the College'. Assuming that these 13 dozen bottles were supplied to the Bursary at cost price, the College was buying bottles from Stourbridge at 2s. per dozen; the total of £91 19s. 1d. paid to Mrs. Batchelor by 1751 would represent, therefore, about 920 Dozen bottles. A note in the front of the second Wine Cash Book (1760-70) records :

NB. There are 587 Dozen of Bottles belonging to ye College, which are a sufficient stock for ye use of the same.

which shows that the number of bottles in the cellars had decreased by about 36 dozen per year.<sup>55</sup> Although this decrease could be accounted for by the breakage of bottles in the cellars, another note tells its own tale :

June 16, 1761. It was then agreed by ye Society that no Wine shall be carried out of All Souls College in ye College Bottles upon any Account whatsoever, & that none but Members of ye Same shall be allowed to purchase ye wine at any time.

The items above indicate that Mrs. Batchelor was supplying bottles to All Souls certainly until 1761, and possibly until 1763. (There seems to be no record of payment for the bottles for which carriage was paid on 27 July 1761.) Since the first item for payment for bottles, on 28 December 1750, has, it seems, been carried over from a previous Wine Account book which is now lost, it may well refer to bottles bought by the College on or just before the institution of its cellars at Michaelmas 1749—and indeed could include payment for bottles used since the beginning of 1747, when wine was first bought wholesale and divided up in the College.

By 1768, however, Mrs. Batchelor at Stourbridge had been superseded by a Mr. Strange, a china and glassware dealer in Oxford.<sup>56</sup> It is probable,

<sup>55</sup> The Wine Account Books show, however, that 'pint' bottles (or 'half' bottles) were in use from 1749 onwards. The total amount paid for bottles no doubt included the cost of these also; since they would have been cheaper than the 'quart' bottles, the total number bought could have been as much as 11 or 12 hundred dozen. Losses from the cellars may therefore have been as high as 50 or 60 dozen bottles a year: an average of about 2 a day.

<sup>56</sup> William Strange, junior, is mentioned several times in *Jackson's Oxford Journal*. See the index in E. C. Davies, *op. cit.*

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though of course not certain, that Strange himself ordered them from Stourbridge, the nearest glass-manufacturing town, as may have been the case with Messrs. Heatley and Turner—who were possibly glassware dealers as well.<sup>57</sup> After 1806 there are no more records of the purchase of bottles, for in April 1771 the accounts of the wine cellars were transferred to the New Titling Books, which do not appear to have survived after 1810.

There is another aspect of the use of the bottles which is brought out by entries in the Wine Account Books relation to the bottling and binning of wine as it was brought to the College in Pipes. These entries, which record the numbers of bottles put into the various cellars at different times, show a gradual decrease in cubic capacity of the bottles used in the cellars during the period up to 1790, when records cease. The first such entry, in May 1752, records '2 Pipes put into No. 12 cellar (Port) : 97 doz. 00 bott.' Succeeding entries, though far from clear, are sufficiently numerous to show that a single Pipe filled on the average between 48 and 49 dozen of the bottles bought up to 1751 and used until 1760. New sets of bottles were obtained in 1760, 1961 and 1963. An entry in 1764 shows that 2 Pipes filled 50 dozen, and 50 doz. 4 botts., each, indicating a slight average decrease of the capacity of the newer bottles. The old bottles were still being used, for entries suggest that single Pipes filled 48 dozens as well as 50 dozens of bottles each. In 1770, the amounts put into three cellars are recorded as being : 50 doz. 11 botts., 51 Doz. 2 botts.; 50 doz. 10 botts.; 51 doz. 4 botts. By 1780, a single Pipe filled over 52 dozen of the newer bottles, although the oldest bottles were still being used up to about 1785 ; and by 1790 a Pipe filled 53 dozen.

Although it is impossible to apply any statistical analysis to these and other similar figures in the accounts, it is nevertheless possible to see a gradual decrease in the sizes of the bottles used by the College up to the beginning of the 19th century, a conclusion which is borne out by an examination of the bottles themselves (see part 2 of this paper).

From the beginning of the wine accounts, the hand of William Blackstone can be recognized on virtually every page. Most of the College histories mention the apparently long-standing tradition that it was he who 'founded' the College cellar. D. A. Lockmiller in his life of Blackstone<sup>58</sup> says that 'Backstone is credited with having founded the All Souls cellar, the first in any Oxford College. This made it unnecessary for the members of the Society to

<sup>57</sup> Although there is no mention of these in E. C. Davies, *op. cit.*

<sup>58</sup> D. A. Lockmiller, *Sir William Blackstone* (1938), 26 (note).

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resort to the tavern'. And J. Wells states<sup>59</sup> that 'Blackstone seems to have been the first to introduce the system still prevailing in Oxford by which the fellows lay down wine for the use of themselves and their successors; previously they had to go to the tavern across the street and drink bad wine'. These statements are borne out, at least in part, by an examination of the accounts described above. Blackstone was elected a Bursar for the years 1747 and 1751 (effective from the middle or end of December of the previous year),<sup>60</sup> and it is perhaps significant that the beginning of the year of his first Bursarship saw the introduction (in February 1747) of the practice of buying wine wholesale from London. The accounts show, however, that it was his fellow Bursar, George Bingham, who divided up the wine and entered the debits in the Borrowing Book. He also took the lion's share of these divisions, while Blackstone himself apparently received no wine until 1748. The only evidence that Blackstone had anything to do with the wine accounts before 1749 was his writing out the statement of 'Bennett's Wine' (in March 1748), of which he took the smallest share. The Wine Account Book from Michaelmas 1749 until December 1750 has unfortunately been lost, but from this latter date, which is also the exact date of the beginning of his second period of Bursarship, his hand appears in almost every page of the accounts for the next ten years. However, the fact that he did have a hand in the wine accounts before this date makes it quite possible that it was he who not only had the idea of laying down wine in bottles which were sealed with the College name, but also took steps to organize the system on a sound practical and viable basis. It seems clear that the change to a new Wine Account Book (and no doubt the discarding of the old one) on his assumption of office in December 1750 is evidence not only of his complete control of the wine cellars not long after they were formed, but also of his thoroughly orderly and systematic methods.<sup>61</sup> In March 1751 he re-organized the system, the accounts of which had become 'very much confused and mistaken, through ye inaccuracy of Servants', and he audited the Wine Cash Book and checked the Wine Account Book (as well as making frequent entries himself) for every year until 1755 (and occasionally until 1760).

It is thus indeed possible that he 'founded' the cellar in 1747, the year of his first Bursarship, and highly probable that it was he who first had the idea of laying down a stock of wine for internal use in 1749, soon before his second Bursarship in 1751—although it seems, from the evidence of the bottle-seal from Exeter College dated 1744, that he was not the first to do so. Indeed, the

<sup>59</sup> J. Wells, *Oxford and its Colleges*, 6th edn. (1904), 154.

<sup>60</sup> Hence the statement of Geoffrey Faber (*op. cit.*, 24) that Blackstone 'was Bursar of Law in 1746 and again in 1750'.

<sup>61</sup> Prof. E. F. Jacob (*in V.C.H., Oxon.*, III, 181) speaks of 'his orderly mind and inspired common sense'.

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very complexity of the accounts of the wine cellars, and the thoroughness with which they were kept, show that the cellars were organized from their inception by one to whom accounting and administrative matters came easily, and very probably, therefore, by the person who 'in one capacity or another, or to use his own words "as an Accomptant, an Assistant or an Auditor", . . . was much concerned with the Bursorial Business of the College during his residence in Oxford'.<sup>62</sup>

### THE COLLEGE CELLARS AND THE WINE TAVERNS

The foregoing analysis has shown that until the beginning of 1747, the Three Tuns tavern was not only being patronized by the Fellows of All Souls and used by them as a 'Wine Restaurant', but was also regularly supplying wine by retail for College use. However, in February of this year the Fellows obtained their supply through the College, buying shares of Pipes of wine delivered wholesale to the College from London. The College was still, however, obtaining wine from the tavern for its public entertainments until the institution of its own cellars on or immediately before Michaelmas 1749, soon after which payments to the tavern came to an end. But, as has been shown above, the tradition that All Souls was the first to take this step appears to be contradicted by the bottle-seal of Exeter College dated 1744. There are, furthermore, no College bottles extant which are dateable before 1760, and no dated seals other than that of Exeter College earlier than 1764 (All Souls); and the tradition which holds All Souls to have been the first to have had a cellar would not have grown up had not the idea been something of a novelty. It therefore seems reasonable to suppose that the cellars of Exeter College were the first to be instituted, possibly in 1744,<sup>63</sup> those of All Souls being formed soon after.<sup>64</sup>

This tentative conclusion bears upon the likely date of the demise of the wine taverns in Oxford. H. E. Salter states<sup>65</sup> that 'After 1731 the prosperity of the retail wine trade dwindled; in 1738, when it would have been natural to renew the licences by the payment of a fine, this step was not taken; and though the three wine licences were in force in 1748 and paid £10 apiece to the city, yet in 1751 nothing was received from this source, although the licences did not lapse until 1752. It seems, therefore, that the wine taverns had died by

<sup>62</sup> W. R. Anson, in the preface to W. Blackstone, *op. cit.*

<sup>63</sup> This is of course merely a hypothesis, and can only be tested by an examination of the contemporary accounts of all the Colleges.

<sup>64</sup> It is suggested by D. Hinton (*Oxoniensia*, xxxii (1967), 11) that the College wine cellars were founded soon after the beginning of the 18th century. In the light of the evidence given above, I think this opinion can no longer be entertained.

<sup>65</sup> H. E. Salter, *op. cit.*, 348.

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1751, and no subsequent licences were issued. There can be little doubt that this change was caused by the growth of Common Rooms in Colleges'. If the cellar of Exeter College was the first to have been started in 1744, there is little reason to hold the Colleges responsible for the supposed dwindling of the wine trade in 1731—which could have been caused, for instance, by a preference for the Coffee Houses as centres of social activity. The evidence above shows that the Three Tuns was being patronized by the Fellows of All Souls until 1747, which argues against a diminution in trade sufficiently large, before this time, for the taverner to consider it not worthwhile to renew his wine licence. However, the statement by Salter that 'The Three Tuns was pre-eminently a University tavern'<sup>66</sup> shows that its fortunes cannot be taken as indicative of those of others in Oxford, which may well have found their trade dwindling after 1730 for reasons unconnected with the development of the College cellars.<sup>67</sup>

By the 1760's it is quite likely that other Colleges were following the examples of Exeter and All Souls. Probably a large number (and possibly all by the end of the century) had developed stocks of wine which were laid down in their own bottles (the majority of which would have been unsealed). The prohibition in 1760 on the taking of bottles out of All Souls, and the large loss of bottles from their cellars between 1750 and 1760, strongly suggest that there had been a steady exodus of filled bottles from the College in the 1750's. In view of this, it seems quite legitimate to surmise that it was the circulation around Oxford of these bottles—as well, possibly, as those of Exeter College—which stimulated other Colleges to acquire their own sealed bottles, not only as a means of identification, but also perhaps as a rather esoteric status symbol. However, the question whether the taverns 'died' because the Colleges were providing themselves with their own wine, or whether the Colleges were

<sup>66</sup> H. E. Salter, 'Surveys and Tokens', *O.H.S.*, LXXV (1920), 383.

<sup>67</sup> The fate of the Three Tuns after 1750 is uncertain. That it was still functioning as a tavern into the 1760's (possibly until Richard Bradgate's death in 1764) is suggested by a note in the *Register Book for Fines of Leases, &c (1636-1810)* of University College (Muniment Room, uncatalogued) which records: '1757 May 3rd Miss Freeman renewed her lease of Stanton Hall (the medieval name of the tavern building) for a fine of £50 besides sealings 14 years expired'. She was presumably the daughter of the Mrs. Freeman who had held the lease of the building in 1729, and who was the widow of John Freeman, vintner at the King's Head tavern until his death in 1724 (Leeds, No. 40). The actual leases with University College are signed by 'Anne Tomlinson widow' in 1715 (and by 'Margt Freeman' on the former's death in 1719), by 'Margaret Freeman of Oxford widow' in 1729, by 'Anne Freeman of Oxford Spinster' in 1743, and by the same in 1757. (Her mother was still holding a wine licence in 1748—Salter, *op. cit.*, 350). The lease of 1743 also mentions that 'Elizabeth Bradgate widow' had the tenancy of Staunton Hall. The fines for this lease were £61 in 1729, £70 in 1743 and £50 in 1757, showing its relative value at these dates, but a fine was not, it seems, paid to renew the lease in 1771, after 14 years had elapsed. The lease could either have been held for 40 years—its theoretical period of validity (H. E. Salter, 'Oxford City Properties', *O.H.S.*, LXXXIII (1926), p. VII)—or else, as seems more likely, the building taken back into College use until its demolition in 1841 or 1842 (see *V.C.H., Oxon.*, III, 80 and 81).

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forced to look to other sources in the 1760s for their wine supply because the taverns had ceased to exist, must still remain open.

TO BE CONCLUDED

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## APPENDIX

The following table gives the names and dates of occupation of the tavern-keepers of the several taverns in Oxford during the period 1650-1750. The bulk of the material is taken from E. T. Leeds' paper,<sup>68</sup> where necessary corrected and added to by the evidence in the present paper ; other sources are acknowledged in the footnotes.

<p><b>THE CROWN</b> Anne TURTON 1659-60<sup>69</sup></p> <hr/> <p>William and Anne MORRELL 1660-79</p> <hr/> <p>Mrs. Anne MORRELL 1679-96</p> <hr/> <p>Joan TURTON 1696-1706</p> <hr/> <p>Alexander and Kathleen RICHMOND 1706<sup>70</sup>-May 1731<sup>71</sup></p> <hr/> <p>Mr. DAWSON<sup>72</sup> May 1731-after 1748</p> <hr/> <p>?</p>	<p><b>THE THREE TUNS</b> Humphrey BODICOTT 1639-60</p> <hr/> <p>Mrs. Judith BODICOTT 1660-66</p> <hr/> <p>Richard and Elizabeth PONT 1666-71</p> <hr/> <p>Mrs. Elizabeth PONT 1671-December 1687</p> <hr/> <p>George and Joan BROWN January 1688- January 1693</p> <hr/> <p>William and Ann TAYLOR January 1693- May 1695</p> <hr/> <p>Mrs. Ann TAYLOR May 1695-98</p> <hr/> <p>Culpepper and Ann TOMLINSON 1698-January 1712</p> <hr/> <p>Mrs. Ann TOMLINSON January 1712- May 1719</p> <hr/> <p>Richard and Elizabeth BRADGATE May 1719- January 1729</p> <hr/> <p>Mrs. Elizabeth BRADGATE January 1729-48</p> <hr/> <p>Richard BRADGATE Jr. 1748-?64</p>	<p><b>THE SALUTATION</b> Thomas WOOD 1647-63 (1647-51 : 3 Corn- market Street ; 1651- 63 : 104 High Street)</p> <hr/> <p><b>THE KING'S HEAD</b> Richard WALKER 1687-November 1704 (1687-96 : 24 and 25 Cornmarket Street ; 1696-1704 : 12 High Street)</p> <hr/> <p>John and Margaret FREEMAN<sup>73</sup> November 1704- December 1724</p> <hr/> <p>Mrs. Margaret FREEMAN December 1724-?48</p> <hr/> <p>Miss Ann FREEMAN ?1748-?74</p>	<p><b>THE MERMAID</b> Anthony HALL Sen. 1660-May 1675</p> <hr/> <p>Anthony HALL Jr. May 1675-91</p> <hr/> <p>Daniel and Anne PRINCE 1691-96</p> <hr/> <p>Richard and Elizabeth LYNES<sup>75</sup> 1696-1709 (tavern demolished)</p>
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<sup>68</sup> *Oxoniensia*, vi (1941), 44-55.

<sup>69</sup> H. E. Salter, 'Oxford City Properties', *O.H.S.*, LXXXIII, 350.

<sup>70</sup> E. T. Leeds, 'Glass Bottles of the Crown Tavern, Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, xiv (1949), 87-9.

<sup>71</sup> H. E. Salter, *op. cit.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Hypothetical only : suggested by her continuing to hold the lease of the Three Tuns in 1743 and from 1757 onwards, formerly held by Margaret her mother.

<sup>75</sup> D. A. Hinton, 'A Glass Bottle Seal from Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, xxxii (1967), 10-12.