

The Foundation of Wadham College, Oxford

By NANCY BRIGGS

LORD PETRE deposited the main body of the archives of the Petre family at the Essex Record Office in 1938-1939. A subsequent deposit in 1953 included a group of papers relating largely to the benefactions of Sir William Petre (c. 1505-1572) to Exeter College. The most interesting of these Oxford papers are, however, the correspondence between Dorothy Wadham, daughter of Sir William Petre and foundress of the college which bears her name, and her half-brother, John, first Lord Petre.¹ I have printed full transcripts of these letters as far as possible, modernizing the punctuation and extending contractions. A few verbose portions and passages not relating to Wadham College have been omitted; this has been indicated by conventional dots or the provision of summaries. Two unpublished documents from the college archives have been printed by permission of the Warden and Fellows.

Nicholas Wadham died on 20 October 1609, leaving his widow and executrix, Dorothy, to found a college at Oxford, a trust for which there are no details in his will. On 27 November 1609 Dorothy Wadham wrote to the Lord Treasurer, Salisbury, asking for his help, and alluding to difficulties created by a colleague in the trust, whom she describes merely as a member of Gloucester Hall.²

John, Lord Petre, and Sir Edward Hext had been appointed overseers of Nicholas Wadham's will. On 22 January 1609/10 Dorothy Wadham appealed to her brother for help in the raising of money for the college and in the frustration of the schemes of one who, having secured an instrument 'even in a manner at my husbondes last gaspe', is accusing her of backwardness in

¹ For the Petre archives, see F. G. Emmison, *Guide to the Essex Record Office, Part II*, 1949, pp. 19-23. The Oxford papers bear the catalogue mark, Essex Record Office, D/DP Q13. The fine series of Petre family, household and estate accounts include detailed expenses for Dorothy Wadham's trousseau and wedding (E.R.O., D/DP A11, ff. 9^v-12^v, 15^v, 53). I am grateful to Lord Petre for his permission to publish, to the County Archivist for facilities to examine the documents, and to all my colleagues, especially Mr. A. C. Edwards, for advice and assistance. My thanks are also due to Mr. H. M. Colvin and Mr. Lawrence Stone for their help and encouragement.

² T. G. Jackson, *Wadham College, Oxford*, pp. 15-16, summarizes the will (P.C.C., 118 Dorset) and prints the letter to Salisbury, which is preserved in the State Papers Domestic, and reprinted by R. B. Gardiner, *The Letters of Dorothy Wadham, 1609-1618*, p. 9. See also Appendix II.

NANCY BRIGGS

forwarding the design.³ Two days later, she wrote to the Bishop of Bath and Wells,⁴ revealing the identity of the troublesome fellow trustee.⁵ (D/DP Q13/3/6) 24 Jan. 1609/10. Copy of a letter from Dorothy Wadham to the Bishop of Bath and Wells.

My good Lo : whereas your Lordshipp knoweth there are growen some differences betwene Sir John Davis and me, partlie by assuminge to himselfe more then an equall power by an instrumente under my late husbandes hande towching the Colledge busynes, but especially by his unjuste relations made to your self and others of my backwardnes herein and that I finde contention is not the waie to begynne the work, for that hitherto I see nothings donne but complaintes offered, I have entreated my good brother the Lo. Petre (my self beinge neither able not (*sic*) fitt to travaile) in my behalfe to conferre with your Lordshipp what is fitt to begynne with all, that by layinge of the first stone, I might hope to see the buildinge followe. And to this ende have acquaynted my said brother what money in certentie is readie, and what likewise is to be raised for the Colledge by Mr. Wadhams gifte, uppon the truthe whereof I must ever insiste against whatsoever informacion Sir John Davis hath broughte to your Lordshipp or can produce owte of those unwarrantable notes which he hath taken withowte commission and sett downe withowte testimony. And althoughe I am verie sensible in the wronge he hath donne me herein, yet truly it moves me not, for a littell patience and tyme will retorne this imputacion uppon him self, and make it apparante that his zeale is greater to compasse his owne endes, then benefit the Colledge. It is the performance of his will who is gone I most desire, which is so stronge in me, as I had rather putt up injurie then loose tyme by contestinge againste him and his medlinge with this busynesse ; howsoever (besides the wronge done unto me) I might alleadge divers reasons why another man should be fitter. But I referre my self to your good Lordshipp and my good Brother, humbly entreatinge the contynuanee of your Lordships helpe towards the execucion of this truste, wherin I shall acknowledge my self most bounde unto you, as alreadie I am for many particuler favours. And so I humbly take my leave.

John Petre's reply is lost, but it must have contained an offer to undertake sole responsibility for the foundation of the college to draw forth this characteristic letter.

(D/DP Q13/3/7) 10 Feb. 1609/10. Dorothy Wadham to John, Lord Petre.

My verie good brother . . . consideringe better with myselfe that I shall lye open to be condempned, yf I shuld by a writinge under my hand and seale, commytt that wholie to the truste of another, which my deere husband soe solelye, and absolutelie trusted me with, doe hartelie praie you to pardon me in not granntinge the same. But (yf hit shall stand with your good plesure) to joyne with me, I shall thinck myself mytche bounden unto you, and will wholie be directed by you, but must

³ D/DP Q13/3/5.

⁴ James Montague (?1568-1618), Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1608, translated to Winchester, 1616, but continued to hold the office of Visitor to Wadham College, as provided by its Statutes (Jackson, *op. cit.*, 61).

⁵ For the endowments, see Appendix I ; for Sir John Davis, see Appendix II.

FOUNDATION OF WADHAM COLLEGE, OXFORD

be bold to entreate you, I maie alltogether ymploye one Arnold⁶ in the work, who is an honest man, a perfectt workman, and my neere neighbour, and soe can yeld me contynewall contentmentt in the same. And besides I purpose to have a man of myne owne, that shall kepe a book of the weaklie disbursementes, soe as I can not be mytche abused by hem. And he beinge commended unto me, by my good frend, and lovinge neighbour, Sir Edward Phelipps, have soe faithfullie promysed hem the work, as withoute tayntinge my reputacion can not gaynesaye hit. And to deale mor playnlie with you, beinge partlie promysed a fitt place to buylde the Colledge in, have taken ordre he shall ryde to Oxford to veywe hit, and from thense to London, to enforme you of the state thereof, with whom, when you shall have conference, I have noe doubt, but you will well approve of hem. And as towchinge your desire to have my servantt Arnolde spedilie to come upp, to aunswere Sir Jo. Davis objections, can not for some spetiall busines formerlie intended, sendd hem unto you soe hastelie. But understandinge my good frend Sir Edward Hext is shortlie to come to the parlymentt, who of late, accordinge to his accustomed grete love towards me, came to Edge to see me, to the hazard of his helthe, beinge verie yll—he is one joynd with you, as an overseer in my husbandes will, beinge gretlie trusted by hem, and was with hem fyve dies before his deathe, at which tyme he earnestlie requested hem to see his said will performed in all thinges, and to assiste me contynewallie with his advise, which he willed me also to folowe—I have made him fullie acquainted with the state of all thinges touchinge Sir Jo : Davis, and have entreated hem, to have conference with you aboute the same, who (by reason of his weaknes) can not be in London untill Thursdaie in the shrove week, before which tyme I praie you, to putt off all conferens, which I doubt not, by the meane of my honorable frend my L. Bishop of Bath and Wells, you may easilie doe.⁷ And then will send Arnold with hem, who I hope will satisfie my honorable good LL. that he hathe most untrulie slanndered me. In which respectt, I doe protest I will have no dealinges with hem in this busynes, nor anye other. And towchinge his instrumentt, upon which he soe mytche insistethe, hit proceeded from his owne forwardnes, who offred the same to my husband in his grete weaknes, not two daies before his deathe. Others might have been joynd in the instrumentt, yf they had bene soe forward as hemself, and whose assistance would better have bene to my likinge. He was the rather inserted, and putt in the writinge, in regard, he promysed to save mytche by his credit, in bargayninge with Gloster Hall. Notwithstandinge the said instrumentt, my husband charged

⁶ William Arnold is known from documentary sources to have worked at Cranborne, c. 1609-1610 (*Country Life*, June 1924, and Arthur Oswald, *Country Houses of Dorset*), Wadham College, 1610-1613 (Jackson, *op. cit.*, especially Chapters II-IV) and Dunster, 1617-c. 1620 (Sir H. C. Maxwell-Lyte, *A History of Dunster*, ii, 366-367). Mr. Arthur Oswald, who has kindly allowed me to use the draft introduction for a new edition of *Country Houses of Dorset*, has come to the conclusion on stylistic grounds that Arnold was associated with Montacute (*Country Life*, 3 Nov. 1955) and Wayford, among other houses in West Dorset and the adjoining part of Somerset. These letters are important in providing evidence that Arnold was recommended by Sir Edward Phelips, who built Montacute, and that he is definitely the man of that name who worked at Cranborne. I do not think William Arnold was a relative of Dorothy Wadham's steward, John Arnold; if he had been, she would have mentioned it as an additional recommendation. Mr. Oswald has followed up the clue in the Dunster agreement, 1617, that Arnold was then connected with Charlton Musgrove, and suggests that the entry in the parish register of the burial of William Arnold alias Goverson, 12 Mar. 1636/7, may refer to the architect-mason.

⁷ Sir Edward Hext served as sheriff of Somerset, 1608, and as knight of the shire in several parliaments. He died in Low Ham, 22 Feb. 1623/4 (Rev. John Collinson, *The History and Antiquities of Somerset*, i, xxxvii, iii, 445).

NANCY BRIGGS

me, and my men also, as we would aunswere hit at the dredfull daie of Judgment, that we shuld never departe with the money, untill the lande were purchased. Neyther will we for anye respectt in the worlde. And therefore doe praie you (my good brother) to stopp all courses to the contrarie, for hit would gretlie offend my conscience to violate anye jott of my husbandes will. . . .

The chronology of the negotiations for a site for the College is far from clear. By 27 February 1609/10 the idea of an approach to Jesus College or Gloucester Hall seems to have been abandoned, but the agreement of that date does not mention any approach to the City of Oxford for the present site, although on 23 February the City Council resolved to demand £1,000 for the freehold.⁸

(D/DP Q13/3/8) 27 Feb. 1609/10.

Febr. 27 An Agrement in a course of proceedinge for the erectyng of Wadham
1609 Colledge made by the lord Petre the L. Bysshop of Bath and Wells and
Sir Edward Hext.

To send to Sir Henry Savyll to procure viij acres of ground belonginge to Martyn Colledge to buyld Wadham Colledg uppon, and yf the Colledge cannot passe yt to procure an act of Parlyament for the confirmation of yt.

That where ther be dyvers leases and other estates to be made towards the buylding of Wadham Colledge that the same estate be made presently.

That the Lord Petre wilbe pleased to procure the Parsonage of Hockley in Essex with the vycarage adjoynyng for 1500^{li}.

That Sir Edward Hext will procure the Parsonage of Sydmouth in the county of Devon for 1500^{li} more.⁹

That the moytye of the Parsonage of Abbottesbury in the county of Dorset be offred to Sir John Strangways¹⁰ for 1200^{li} and yf he refuse yt that then yt be granted to the Colledge and 1200^{li} be taken out of the 6000^{li} for the buylding of the same Colledge.

That present order be taken for the provysyon of tymber & stone to buyld the Colledge, and contract to be made with Martyn Colledge or with them that have power to do yt for a quar to dygge stones.¹¹

That William Arnold be employed in the provysyon of tymber & stones for Wadham Colledge as also for drawyng of a plott & for the bylding of yt.

As far as can be deduced from the existing letters, John Petre was afraid that his sister's anxiety to fulfil her husband's wishes in her lifetime—she was then about seventy-five years of age—would out-run her discretion and financial resources. Her reply shows that his remonstrances had no effect on Dorothy's determination.

⁸ Jackson, *op. cit.*, 22.

⁹ For the purchase of these properties, see Wadham College Deeds, Hockley Rectory, 7-11. Hockley was purchased from John Cliffe of Ingatestone, 21 May 1610, for the stipulated £1,500 and is still a college living. For the endowment of the College, see Appendix I.

¹⁰ Sir John Strangways was the son of Nicholas Wadham's sister, Joan, and one of his co-heirs. (Jackson, *op. cit.*, 28.)

¹¹ For building materials, see Jackson, *op. cit.*, chap. iii; no mention is made in the building accounts of a quarry owned by Merton.

FOUNDATION OF WADHAM COLLEGE, OXFORD

(D/DP Q13/3/9) 4 Mar. 1609/10. Copy of a letter from John, Lord Petre, to Dorothy Wadham, opening with disapproval of her course of action.

. . . And that is that you should intermingle the estate of the Colledge with your owne particuler and more playnly to expresse my selfe, that you should begynne the work with those monyes that should rise from those thinges that my brother did especially limitt and intend to that use whereof by your warrant I have gyven the Bysshop a particular and which by your lettres unto hym you have engaged your selfe ever to mayneteyne to be true against any informacions to the contrary whatsoever. This manner of proceedinge from the begynninge I held the most discreete and safe for you, and am now of late muche more conformed in that opinion, because I fynde it begynneth to be apprehended here that you are infinitely tyed to buyld this Colledge, and that your husbände ment your whole estate should be engaged in that trust, which if it be true, then what you shall doe is but of duty, and so you are robbed of thanckes or rewarde. Howe much more convenyent were it for you fyrst to spende that which is specially appointed and what you shall fynde necessary to add to doe it of your selfe, so as the workes of your husbändes and your owne maye be distinguished, and so may leave to posterity a commendable remembrance of your name. And so much of that matter. The fyve hundred powndes that I disbursed to Mr. Maynwaringe¹² and Mr Arnold for your occasions I have receyved agayne of Peter Whetcombe who hath delyvered unto me more of your viii^{li} which shalbe allwayes ready to be disbursed uppon such employmentes as you shall gyve me directions for. If the act of Parliamēt doe likewise proceede for assuraunce of the landes from Marten Colledge I will see all the charges defrayed. . . .

Postscript. My sonne & I have appoynted Peter Whetcombe¹³ for us to joyne with suche others as the rest of the feoffees shall agree uppon to take out those landes that are appoynted for the of the Colledge, to the ende noe delay bee used therein but money presentlye made to beginne the worke.

(D/DP Q13/3/10) 17 Mar. 1609/10. Dorothy Wadham to John, Lord Petre. Good brother, your late lettar, importing a consenting course, by you, and others, for the speedy proceeding in the college busines, dothe . . . greatly comforte me . . . I will remembar those here unto whom the trust was commytted, to dispatche the sale withe as myche convenient speed as maye be, but yf suche thinges to be solde, do not come to a sufficientt some for the defrainge that charge, I must then be driven to geve a supplie owte of myne owne private store, being to that effectt willed in secrete by my deceased housbond, and tyed in consiens not to violate his truste. I do hartely thank you for the fyve houndred pounds disboursed for me, the whiche by your lettar, I understand you have recevid. I . . . am bold to leave other moneis

¹² Christopher Maynwaring was a trustee appointed by Nicholas Wadham to make estates for three lives or ninety-nine years in some of his property to provide endowments for the College (see Appendix I).

¹³ Peter Whetcombe of Writtle (alive 1634) was the son of Edward Whetcombe of Exeter, whose mother is said to have been a sister of Sir William Petre (Harl. Soc., xiii, *Visitation of Essex*, p. 521), but the Petre pedigree given by J. J. Howard, *Roman Catholic Families*, does not mention this relationship. The doubtful wisdom of appointing Peter Whetcombe as a colleague in the trust is shown by letters from Dorothy Wadham to the College, 3 Feb. 1613/14, 28 Mar. 1614, 12 June 1615 (relating to a fall in rents from the Essex estates), 15 Oct. 1616, 25 Sept. 1617 and 21 Oct. 1617, printed by R. B. Gardiner, *op. cit.*, 24-28, 33-34, 39-40, 48-52.

NANCY BRIGGS

withe you, to be ymployed theare when occacions shall requier the same to the youse of the colledge.

The negotiations for the purchase of the present site, that of the former Augustinian Friary, for the College and the opposition to the scheme both came to a head in the second half of March 1610.

(D/DP Q13/3/11) 19 Mar. 1609/10. Sir Edward Hext to John, Lord Petre. Right honorable & my very good L., before my comyng out of the cuntry your honorable syster & I resolved that ys (*sic*) was necessary Sir Edward Phelipps shold be retayned to be towards her in all causes that myght concerne her or her Colledg, and accordingly she gave order to Mr. Whetcombe to performe yt, who having omytted yt, hath wrytten unto me to effect yt with speede & the rather for that Mr Edward Wadham & others in behalf of him & the coheyes have geven out that all the landes left to feoffees in trust for the buyldinge of this Colledge belonges (*sic*) to some of them. And Mr. Edward Wadham & his assistantes styck not to give out that your worthy sister canne grannt no coppyes in any part of her joynture, & that the leasses & many estates made by Mr. Wadham are voyde because he was butt tenant for terme of lyef him self. . . .¹⁴ Our dread soveraygne hath seene the plott & doth so greatly approve of yt as he hath most graciously promysed to give yt all furtheraunce. So hath my Ll. the Archbisshopp, the L. Chauncelor & L. Threasorer who lyke yt all so well as they have promysed the lyke. And since your L. departure my L. Bysshopp hath byn throughly satysfied that the Fryory ys the only meete place to buyld this Colledg in, which, he having sertyfied unto his majestie his majestie hath promysed him his earnest lettres unto the mayor & aldermen of Oxford to depart with yt for a valewable consideracion. The lyke lettres hath the L. Archbisshop & the Lord Chauncelor who ys Steward of the towne promysed to wryte, all which ettres my L. Bisshopp hath assured me I shall have within these too dayes.¹⁵ I have

¹⁴ For Sir Edward Phelipps (?1560-1614), lawyer and politician, see *D.N.B.* For Edward Wadham's interest, see Appendix I. He was Nicholas Wadham's first cousin, being the son of his uncle, Giles Wadham of Barton, co. Somerset (Jackson, *op. cit.*, 28). The order, 3 May 1611, in the case, *Dorothy Wadham v. Edward Wadham and Hugh Worth*, recites that the leases appointed by Nicholas Wadham to be sold for the endowment of the college cannot be put on the market, because the defendants maintain that they were entailed, but cannot prove this (P.R.O., C. 33/119, f. 803). Hugh Worth, the defendant, may perhaps be identified with Humphrey Worth stated by Jackson to have married Edward's sister, Dorothy. The order mentions that Dorothy Wadham has already disbursed £4,000 of her own money towards the building of the college. The decree, 5 June 1611 (P.R.O., C. 33/119, f. 1126v), ordained that the leases were valid and should be enjoyed regardless of the pretended title of Edward Wadham.

¹⁵ The City records clearly state that 'whereas his Majestie hath written to this Citie for the Augustine Friars to be sold unto Mr. Waddames heirs', a committee was appointed on 6 Mar. 1609/10 to confer with Mrs. Wadham's agents, who only offered £600. The Council seems to have voted in favour of this the same day. The King's letter has not survived, but Salter printed Ellesmere's as undated (*Oxf. Council Acts* (O.H.S.), 197, *Oxf. City Properties* (O.H.S.), 358-63). There must have been a second royal letter, since, on 18 Mar. 1609/10, the Bishop of Bath and Wells wrote to Sir Thomas Lake, clerk of the signet, asking him to draw a letter for the King's signature to the Mayor and aldermen of Oxford (*Cal. S.P. Dom. Additional, 1580-1625*, p. 523). I owe this reference to Mr. Lawrence Stone). The Bishop pleads that 'There is no place thought so fit to set it upon as the Augustine Friars', a view which Wadham men may like to compare with Chamberlain's opinion, 11 August 1612, that Mr. Wadham's new college would have been handsome if better placed (*Cal. S.P. Dom., 1611-1618*, p. 143). The deed of sale by the City is dated 29 May 1610 (Wadham College Deeds, Augustine Friars no. 6).

FOUNDATION OF WADHAM COLLEGE, OXFORD

byn ill & kept my chamber these 4 dayes & do assure my self to procure leave of the House to go into the cuntry & do intend to ryde by Oxford to see what I canne do with the mayor & his brethren uppon these lettres & will thence presently advertyse my L. Bisshopp & your Lordship of the successe. Yf this be gotten we neede no Act of Parlyament ; yf not, my L. Bisshopp hath already delt so effectually with Sir Henry Savill as he hath promysed the other ground which ys the second fytttest place in all Oxford. And yf to that we be dryven my L. Bisshopp hath faythfully promysed me so fymely to joyne with your L. in passing that bill & to do what els you shall thinck fyttting for the Colledge as I shall not neede to stay about yt, which I protest I cannot do without daunger to my helth. I have caused Arnold the worke-man (who spendes every day a whole houre in private with my L. Threasorer about his buyldinges) to move for tymber, & my L. hath promysed we shall have what we will for reasonable uses, & I hope some tyme to morrowe we shall have a warrant for a 1000 trees with barke, shrowdes & all, which will in some good measure qualyfy the pryce of the tymber, & yf we canne save any we will gayne by yt.¹⁶ I will also take order for a quarre of stones which we will procure exceeding reasonable. I have geven Sir Edward Phelipps x^{li} which he hath & will well deserve, for Sir John Davys was with him before & desyred to retayne him agaynst your sister, but he denied him. And after that he requested Sir Edward to tell him playnely whether yt weare trewly ment this Colledge shold be sett forward with that speede & that chardg bestowed one yt that was geven out. And Sir Edward assured him yt wold be performed & that spedely, to which Sir John annswered that then wold meddle no farder in yt, & so mych he told Arnold not 4 dayes since. And yet yesterday my L. Bisshopp wrote unto me that he had bynne with him & trobled him out of measure, but my L. is resolved & I thinck delt playnly with him, & so praye your L. to do yf he come unto you. As for hys instrument all thinges considered ys of no moment neither ys it of any valydytye in lawe. And hath so wonderfully abused your worthy sister both in court & cuntry as she ys absolutely resolved he shall never have the leaste medlyng with yt. And my self being one day att Mr. Cofers¹⁷ at dynner, yt was ther openly affirmed that your sister indevored by all means to convert to her owne use all such somes as weare left for the buyldyng of the Colledge all which I so confidently falsified as owt of myne owne knowledg as they all weare satysfyed of her integrity in that businesse. I have also geven Arnold v^{li} who hath well deserved yt in drawing the plott & attending this busines these fyve weekes, & within these too dayes my Lord Threasorer sendes him to Cranborne about his workes there, but I have charged him to attend your L. erre he go which he will do tomorrow about noone.¹⁸ If I had not tyed him fast to this businesse we shold hardly keepe him ;

¹⁶ On 15 Nov. 1610 Arnold the freemason was paid £40 in part of the full £250 for 'a tarryce and a kitchine' at Cranborne (Receiver-general's accounts of Robert, Earl of Salisbury, *Hatfield House, Private and Estate MSS.*, Accounts 160/1). In the same year a letter reports that building is going on at both ends of Cranborne, and that delay is due to the 'surveyor' not being present very much in person and neglecting the work. (*Hatfield House MSS.* 128, f. 153.) Arnold had begun to draw his salary from the middle of April 1610 (Jackson, *op. cit.*, 34). I owe the Cranborne references to Mr. Lawrence Stone ; I am grateful to the Marquess of Salisbury for permission to use information from the Hatfield House MSS.

¹⁷ Sir Robert Vernon is described as Cofferer of the Household, 12 April 1610 (*Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1603-1610, p. 600) and Sir Henry Cocks, who previously held the post, as Cofferer of Prince Henry's Household, 9 February 1609/10 (*op. cit.* p. 587).

¹⁸ Arnold had also received £5 for drawing a plot for Cranborne on 15 Dec. 1609 (Receiver-general's accounts, as above ; see also A. Oswald, *Country Houses of Dorset*, pp. xviii-xix, for this reference).

NANCY BRIGGS

he ys so wonderfully sought being in deede the absolutest & honestest workeman in England. I pray your L. to tye him in lyke sort by his promys to you never to departe from this worke whiles yt ys on working. I have some other thinges to be donne for your sister & she sayd I shold alwayes send to your Lordship for any monyes I wanted, do therfore pray your L. to send me by this bearer xlii for which I send you by him an acquittance. . . .

(D/DP Q 13/3/12) 21 Mar. 1609/10. Sir Edward Hext to John, Lord Petre.

Right honorable & my very good L., Sir John Davys, as your L. hath already hard, having geven owt both in courte & cuntry that your honorable syster dyd by all means indevor to suppress and convert to her owne use all such guyftes as were geven by Mr. Wadham for the buyldyng of the Colledge, hath nowe, as I am credyibly informed, signyfyed unto the right honorable Earles Suffolke, & Northampton, that Mr. Wadham gave to eche of them a legacy of xlii which she lykewyse suppresseth, so as he ys not satsfied in tayntyng her reputacion, but indevoreth to bereve her of her honorable fryndes. In both which to my certayne knowledge he most uncristianly slandereth her, for your worthy sister sending for me instantly uppon her worthy husbondes death, she dydd att my comyng presently acquaynt me with his will & with the legacies he had geven to my L. Threasorer & my L. Bysshopp of Bath and Wells.¹⁹ And him self being at one tyme present when yt was spoken of in the presens of Mr. Bartlett²⁰ & Mr. Arnold, her servantes, who weare privy to all Mr. Wadham dyd, sayd not a word that ther was any legacy geven to any of those honorable Earles, butt moved her that he myght presently ryde to London to present those too legacies to my L. Threasorer & L. Bysshopp & wold have donne the lyke for the other yf ther had bynne any such matter, but God ys my wytnesse I never hard any such matter. And I knowe that to gayne a kyngdom she will not vyolate the least jott of her husbondes will. Besydes she hath often acknowledged unto me that she & Mr Wadham weare as much bounden unto those too honorable personages as to any whosoever & therfore wold not for any respect depryve them of yt, yf any suche guyft had bynne. And for such thinges as weare geven to the Colledge, she intreated me to wryte a lettre in her name unto my L. Threasorer & my L. Bysshopp wherein she signyfyed that her deare husbond had lefte her meanes sufficient to buyld the Colledge & that she wold, according to her worthy husbondes trust reposed in her performe yt whatsoever yt cost her, which was long before him self went up to slannder her. And toching the trust he so greatly vaunteth was reposed in him self, Mr Bartlett and Mr Arnold will both depose that too dayes before ther masters death Sir John Davys was sent for to come unto him & at his comyng Mr Wadham told him that he had loked into his estate & nowe was resolved to buyld a Colledg, & where he had often told him he cold do him great pleasure yn yt, yf he tooke any paynes yn yt worthy thanckes his paynes shold be considered. And Sir John departing, the next mornyng he brought him the instrument he nowe hath & importuned the sealing of yt, Mr. Wadham beinge in greate weakenesse & dying within xxiiij houres after. Att the tender whereof Mr. Wadham was greatly offended & said, Sir John Davys, this is more then nedeth; my wyf knoweth my mynd. Notwithstanding, by meanes of his importunytie he sealed yt. And Sir John being departed, he called his wyf, Mr Bartlett & Mr Arnold unto him & chardged them, as they

¹⁹ See Appendix II.

²⁰ John Bartlett was one of the trustees for the Wadham settlement; see Jackson, *op. cit.*, 12, 15, 17, and Appendix I below.

FOUNDATION OF WADHAM COLLEGE, OXFORD

wold aunswere yt att the dreadfull day of Judgment, that none of his mony shold come in his or any mans handes untill the land weare purchased, so lyttle he trusted him or respected him, who, afterwarde begging some thing of him most shamfully, as his servantes canne wytnesse, gave him not a penny. And had he meant to joyne him in equalle trust with his wyfe for buylding of this Colledge he nether cold nor wold have left him so unconsidered for so great a travell. Yf your deare syster shold heare howe these too worthy & honorable personages have bynne incensed agaynst her & that they rest unsatsfyed, yt wold greve her mych, and therfore do humbly pray your L. to satsfy them in yt tomorowe, that I may carrye her word that they rest satsfyed which wold comfort her mych, for I certainly knowe that she doth mych honor them both. . . .

(D/DP Q 13/3/13) 27 Mar. 1610. Sir Edward Hext (at Oxford) to John, Lord Petre.

My very honorable good L. Having bynne att Oxford with his majesties most gracyous lettres, my L. of Cant' & L. Chauncelors, to the mayor & aldermen of the Cyttye of Oxford for the obtaynyng of the scyte of the late dissolved Fryory of St Augustynes, the same lettres have so mych prevayled with them as we have compounded for viij^e lx^{li} & have for our mony xxvij^{li} xiiij^s rent & a fyne newe house which cost cc^{li}, a backesyde cont' half an acre, which ys most necessary to lay yn our tymber & stone, & about yt many hangyng houses which will serve to hewe our stones in or work in tymber in all weathers, & the house necessary for our worke-man and his wyfe to be yn, that he may contynually attend the worke, & after will serve for a landry or many other uses for the Colledge, or lett out for a rent and the backesyde for a woodyard being close adjoynyng to the place where the Colledge shalbe seated. The ground wheare the Colledg shalbe buylt contayneth betwene 4 and 5 acres & ys the most absolutest place that Oxford canne yelde, & hath a very strong wall about yt of viij foote highe, which will save 300^{li}. This ground was lett for x^{li}, which rent wilbe drowned.²¹ Then will ther remayne xvij^{li} xiiij^s land to the Colledge which the lease being expired will well be worth doble the rent, which I accompte to be worth uppon the poynt of 400^{li}, which she may take out of the 6000^{li} & leave the land to the Colledg, which will dayly increase in valewe the Colledg being buylt yn the benyfytt of the wall, & the new house & backesyde for 14 lx^{li}, which is an excellent good bargayne. So nowe our next work ys to lay the 6000^{li} in land that benyfytt may growe of yt to help buyld the Colledge, wherein yt please you to talke with my L. Bysshopp. He will cause my nephew Dackomb, an inward man with my L. Threasorer, to meete you one afternowne att my L. Bysshopps lodging, who cann help you to an excellent peece of land rychly worth your mony. . . .²² I pray

²¹ For the site and the agreement with the City, see above, note 15 and Jackson, *op. cit.*, 20-23, and Plate IV. The discrepancy between Hext's purchase price of £840 and the £600 given by Jackson may be roughly accounted for by taking the £840 to include the house valued at £200, the rent of £27 14s., and perhaps the 'drowned' rent of £10. The College buildings actually covered only 2 acres (*V.C.H. Oxon.*, III, 279).

²² John Dacombe was the Earl of Salisbury's solicitor, handling all his legal affairs (*Hatfield House, Private and Estate MSS.*, Accounts 7/1, ex. inf. Mr. Lawrence Stone; see also *Cal. S.P. Dom.* 1603-1610, p. 613, *Cal. S.P. Dom.* 1611-1618, pp. 134, 372). The latter reference is to Dacombe's knighthood and appointment as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1616. He married Anne, eldest daughter of William Hartgill of Culmington, co. Somerset (*Visitation of Dorset*, 1623; Hutchins, *History of Dorset*, I, p. 299). The exact relationship to Hext is not clear. No Dacombe is mentioned in the latter's will (printed F. A. Crisp, *Abstracts of Somerset Wills*, 2nd ser., 56-58).

NANCY BRIGGS

my L., lett us go cherefully one with yt, according to your deare systers desyre, & make no accompt of the idle speches geven out yn the cuntry, for there ys no dought but we shall easely inforce them to performe the trust comytted unto them by ther deare unkle. . . .

The controversy with Sir John Davis must have been the chief reason for a suit being brought in Chancery to settle the trust, although Hext's last letter reinforces the idea that Wyndham and Strangways were also obstructive. The following three documents and the consent of Sir Edward Phelips as counsel for the defendant to Tyndall's report²³ provide the only evidence traceable for this suit, in the absence of Davis's 'instrument'.²⁴

(D/DP Q13/3/15) 23 June 1610. Dorothy Wadham to John, Lord Petre. Good Brother . . . doe pray you, that my desyred purchase may proceede by your good meanes and derection; and that my cosen Whetcombe doe take a survoye thereof and so conclude for thasureance of the same.²⁵ And whereas presantt paye is required I know not what to do therein, unles I may intreat your selfe and my cosen Whetcombe, to make some meanes there for the procuringe of so much until I may conveniently send ytt up unto you, which shalbe with as greatt speede as may be hadd. And further doe thaunk you for your good derection that a motion may be made by the kinges Atturney for a decree graunted by my Lord Chauncellor. I now have verrey happiley mett with a sufficient honest man both of judgmentt and otherwise, one Mr. Everye of Oxford, who hath, upon request taken upon him to doe me his best helpe and furtherance for the well lookinge to the Colledge buyldinges. . . .

(Wadham College, MS. 11). Examined copy of Order in Chancery.

Mercurii xxvij die Junii Anno Regni Jacobi Regis viij Inter Henricum Hobart mil' Attornat' general' domini Regis Tam pro domino Rege quam pro bono publico quer' Dorotheam Wadham vid' Willelmum Petre Johannem Windham mil' Hugonem Wyatt Ar' Johannem Bartlet et Johannem Arnold gen' et al' defendantes.

Plaintiff's bill recites provision for endowment of Wadham College.²⁶

They the said defendants by the Answers confesse the matter of the said bill and offer to abide the order of the Court therein saveinge that the said Sir John Windham²⁷ by his answer supposeth that he ought not to performe the said trust untill the said Colledge be built. Wherefore it was now desired by the saide plaintiff that the confession of the design might be entered to thende the Colledge might be buylt and endowed accordinge to the intencion of the saide Mr. Wadham. It is

²³ Wadham College, MS. no. 13.

²⁴ The decree in Edward Wadham's case (see above, note 14) orders John, Lord Petre, Sir William Petre, and Christopher Maynwaring to make the necessary conveyances to the use of the College. See also Appendices I and II.

²⁵ It is not clear what property this refers to; the part played by Whetcombe suggests that the premises were in Essex.

²⁶ See Appendix I, para. 1-5.

²⁷ Sir John Wyndham was the son of Nicholas Wadham's sister, Florence; as one of his co-heirs he inherited Merifield (Jackson, *op. cit.*, 28, 106). For the memorandum associated with his name (printed by Jackson, *op. cit.*, 12-14) see Appendix II. For the other defendants and trustees, see Appendix I.

FOUNDATION OF WADHAM COLLEGE, OXFORD

thereuppon ordered that if Sir John Tyndall knight one of the masters of this Courte shall upon consideracion by him had of all the defendants answeres fynde and report that the defendants have confessed the matter of the plaintiffs bill as aforesaid. Then this Court doth thinke fitt that the said trust should be performed accordinge to their said confession withall the convenient speede that maye be.

(Wadham College, MS. 12.) Copy of Report of a Master in Chancery.

Quinto die Julii 1610 (Plaintiff and defendants as in Wadham College, MS. No. 11).

Accordinge to an order of the 27th of June last I have considered of the bill and of all the defendants answeres and finde them to confesse the substance of the plaintiffs bill and all of them to be willinge and ready to performe any trust in them reposed towards the rection and foundation of a Colledge in the Universitie of Oxford to be called Wadham Colledge and especially the saide Dorothe Wadham in whome the cheife trust as it doth appeare by most of the said answeres was reposed for the effectinge and accomplishinge of the same. But she is unwillinge that the saide Sir John Davys in the bill named should have any meddling with the rection of the saide Colledge. And the saide Sir John Windham particularly further saith that he is and alwayes wilbe readie to performe such conveyances and assuraunce of the Mannors Landes and Tenements in the saide Bill mencioned appointed for the indowment of the saide Colledge when it shalbe erected and founded accordinge to the trewe intent and meaninge of Nicholas Wadham Esquier named in the said answer as in and by the same bill is required which I finde by the answeres of thother defendants is to be employed in suche sorte as in the saide Order of Refference to me is expressed. The further consideracion whereof I leave to your good Lordship.

Jo. Tyndall.

The being of the College was virtually assured now that the trust was settled; the thoughts of Dorothy Wadham and her brother seem to have turned to the selection of a Warden. It is not clear what part Sir John Davis played in this, or whether the next letter does in fact refer to Dr. Osborne, John Petre's candidate for the post.

(D/DP Q13/3/16) 28 Aug. 1610. Dorothy Wadham (at Merifield)²⁸ to John, Lord Petre.

Good Brother. . . . This last of youre, althoughe written from the country, sheweth a promise begotten in the cytty. I am not sory that the same was forgotten, or at the least forbore untill nowe, the knight haveinge been in this meane tyme with me and beinge ignorant of the cause of his comminge, returned from me as wise as he came; yett shall he in tyme be made acquainted with your respectyve sollicitacion, which shall preveyle with me so farr as by the rules of Christian charity I am bownde. Can he alleadge what he did against me to be in discharge of his consience, except he would accuse me of corrupcion that waye. I only touch this pointe, and leave it to you, whoe can best discerne the weight of his suggestion; and, when I have all sayde, I must conclude that he which is faithlesse to one, will hardly be faythfull to any. The personne you recommended unto me, I doe muche esteeme, his desertes well

²⁸ Dorothy Wadham appears to have spent the period June to October in 1610 at Merifield, in Ilminster, co. Somerset, where her husband had died; she normally spent her time at Edge in Branscombe, co. Devon.

NANCY BRIGGS

deserving the same, uppon whom I have thought, when I have not seene and for whom I meane to doe, whatt I forbear to write, which now may seeme so much the less gratfull, by howe much your honnorable respect of him inciteth me thereunto, not doutinge but you, whoe so justly consider his destresse, will joyne with me to yeve him the better comfortt. . . .

(D/DP Q13/3/17) 10 Oct. 1610. Dorothy Wadham to John, Lord Petre.
My very good Brother . . . wherefore as I have ever principally depended on you to be advised in the whole course of my dealinges so I will not leve to intreat that in this worke you would contynue your care of me for direction, and to that ende I have sent unto my workman to send you a plott whereby you may judge of his intencion, for yet, it resteth only in his braynes to worke his pleasure, uppon that your selfe, by waye of caution, and some others thought the first modell to spacious and sumptuous, whereupon that was suppressed and so hetherunto left to the workmans controlement; and with all do earnestly intreat you to assist me in the procuringe of the mortmayne, for my desier is that both workes may goe on hand in hand. . . .²⁹ Your former sollicitacion for Doctor Osborne if I did not remember I should much forgette and blame my selfe. I do approve of the man upon your reporte, whoe seemeth to be no lesse then you make knowen, haveinge benne lately with me.³⁰ I desier when my Lo. of Bathe commeth upp you would conferr therof togeather, and then to settell hym in some certentye, whereby he may have a carefull eye to the worke, and bend his endevors therein as you shall directt and thinck most expedient. . . .

(D/DP Q13/3/17) A cotype of my lettre to my sister Wadham xix^{mo} Novembris 1610.
This bearer, Mr. Arnolde, that brought me a lettre from you, did withall tell me by woorde of mouth that you hadd passed a seconde graunte of the hedshippe of Wadham Colledge to one Doctor Wright, which I confesse I did not beleve, neyther shoulde uppon anye reporte had I not seene yt confirmed under your hande in your lettres written to my Lo. of Bathe & Welles, knowing how faythfully you hadd promysed me that place for Doctor Osborne long before, which first I receyved by dyvers messangers from you, and lately by your lettres, & which was made knowen to my late Lo. of Canterburie, & the electyon approved both by him & by my Lo. of Bathe & Welles, the intended Visitor of the said Colledge.³¹ But when I did

²⁹ The existence of two 'plots' is of interest, as is the way the design for the building, which had begun in April, must have been left to Arnold after the suppression of the first plan. On 3 Dec. 1610 Sir Thomas Lake wrote to Salisbury about the grant of a charter for the foundation of Wadham College by the purchase of mortmain lands; license was granted on 20 Dec. for the foundation of the College (*Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1603-1610, pp. 650, 653; Wadham College, Charters no. 1, whereby the college was licensed to receive and hold land to the annual value of £1,500).

³⁰ William Osborne of Devon, gent. matriculated at Exeter College 11 Dec. 1584, aged 19, D.D. 6 July 1609, prebendary of Penell in collegiate church of Chumleigh, co. Devon, 1601, rector of Calstock, co. Cornwall, 1608 (Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*). He is the only Oxford D.D. of the name, and as a member of Exeter College is likely to have attracted the attention of John, Lord Petre.

³¹ For Robert Wright, who was instituted on 20 April 1613 and resigned in Sept. 1613 on marriage, see Jackson, *op. cit.*, 67-68. He probably became known to the Wadhams on his appointment in 1601 as Canon and Treasurer of Wells Cathedral. Wright, who subsequently became Bishop of Bristol, was named as an executor in the will of Sir John Davis (see Appendix II). Presumably Lord Petre is referring to Davis or some other unknown persons, rather than to John Arnold, the bearer of his letter, when he speaks of pressure being brought to bear on Dorothy Wadham to revoke her first grant.

FOUNDATION OF WADHAM COLLEGE, OXFORD

concyder how forcible the importunite of suche persons myght bee, that had taken power over you, to worke uppon your weaknesse, I did so muche commiserate you, as condempne them that had no care nor made consyence to compasse ther owne endes by the shipwracke of your credite and reputatyon. But yett I doe not beleve but, uppon better concyderatyon, you will perceyve how muche this busynesse doth importe you & my self that ame ingaged in yt by your warrant, & will honorablye mayntayne your first promesse, & seeke to delyver your self from the seconde surrepticiouslye gotten, which they that procured ytt will not farther presse (yf they love you), knowing how you weare formerlye tyed, wherin I deasyre to here your intentyon by your next lettres. And so much of this matter. I have receyved by Mr. Arnolde this day Cxxxiiijth vjth viijth, which maketh all accomptes even betwixt you & me at this present. . . .

Before receiving her brother's letter, couched in a tone of patient reproof, Dorothy Wadham had written again on 28 October.³² She had arranged with her cousin Strangways for the payment of £1,500 for which her brother and the Bishop of Bath and Wells are to take security.³³ Her defence, written two days later, is a very feminine exposition of her point of view.

(D/DP Q13/3/19) 30 Nov. 1610. Dorothy Wadham to John, Lord Petre, in reply to his request for information as to her intentions.

Good Brother. . . I am charged with often promyses, and manye former messages tendinge to a consentt for Doctor Osborne to be hedd of Wadham Colledge, and the licke in effectt (as is said) delivered unto him self att his beinge with me. I should be over forgettfull, to denye of anye mocion made for hem, but cannot remember, that I did passe anye absolute assentt, ether unto himselfe, or anye other, who mighte, as allso they that moved for him, mystake my meanyng, and made a wronge interpretacion. But to goe onward—the greatest ymputacion which will moste touche my reputacion (as is alleaged) is the writinge of my lettre unto you, allowinge therein Doctor Osborne for the place. I must confesse a lettre was broughte for me to putt my hand unto, but doe assure you, I never read, nor harkned to the contentes, my mynde beinge att that tyme caried awaie with manye other occacions. And yf the said lettre did ymporte my willinge disposition for D. Osborne, hit was farr from my meanyng. I know not whatt was written, your lettre, and the copie of my aunswere, beinge not to be founde here. The which, having bene lefte with me, myght have putt me in mynde how farr I had engaged my selfe, and thereby geven cause to have respected my proceadinge for a tyme, untill I had made you acquainted of my intencion for Doctor Wrighte.³⁴ But now I finde the proverbe not soe olde as trewe—Everie one that lyveth, although he have seane many yeres, may dailie lerne to knowe more. And I hope, as long as I lyve, to lesson myself, not superficiallic to passe anye thinge hereafter under my hand,

³² D/DP Q13/3/18.

³³ As security is to be taken, this transaction probably refers to the purchase of the moiety of the parsonage of Abbotsbury by Sir John Strangways, which should have only cost £1,200 (see Appendix I).

³⁴ The letter of 10 Oct. 1610, to which Dorothy Wadham may be referring, is in the hand of an amanuensis. Only the letters dated 22 Jan. 1609/10, 10 Feb. 1609/10, 17 Mar. 1609/10, are in her own hand.

NANCY BRIGGS

without a deliberate consideration. And so mytche concernynge Doctor Osborne, hartelie beseeching you to be pleased, that I may deliver some thinge in the defence for my choice of D. Wright, wherein hit shalbe needles to open mytche of his worthynes, who, for his grave presence, his places of estymacion, sufficiencie in habilitie, and good carage in all his courses, dothe well deserve the place ; wherein I am not partiall in my opynion, but, if neede so requier, may be seconded by others of greater place and judgmentt. I commende not the one to ye dispraise of thother, but if I maye (without offence) deliver what I have harde, Doctor Osborne not so fitt as thother, who havinge some spirituall lyvinge, or lyvinges, I knowe not whether hathe departed with them, not longe sithens, and brought to his purse some fyve or six hundred poundes, which will geve cause to myndes well effected to be carefullie advised before suche a governor be chosen, fearinge least in his governmentt buyinge and sellinge of places wilbe practized, and accompted no faulte. My husband, before he died, gave spetiall caveates to take care, that none soe suspected shuld have anye place there ; I will obaie his pleasure aswell therein, as in all other truste commytted unto me, to thuttermost of my power. The Kinges Majestie doth knowe that Doctor Wrighte is chosen, and of my assurance paste by an instrument under hand and seale, who, beinge his Chaplen, alowethe well the choice. My Lo. Thresorer, acquainted allso therewith, applaudethe the same, and others of place geve there allowance. Yf I should abuse so mightie and grete personages, I were worthie to be reckoned more than weake, and shuld wishe rather to dye then abide the disgrace, earnestlie prayinge you to be pleased with this my resolucion, that I maye not revoke what I have paste for Doctor Wrighte, beinge the rather affected unto hem, for that my husband took notice of hem, when he lived. The foresaid reasons leade me to mayntayne my reputacion for hem, who hathe besides, by my order, preferred a petition unto his Majestie, and is entred allredie into the busynes of mortmayne. . . .

[Ends with a request that, out of brotherly love, he will not hold her to a prior promise.]

(D/DP Q13/3/20) 20 Jan. 1610/11. Dorothy Wadham to John, Lord Petre.

Good Brother, The greate desire I have to goe onward with the truste reposed in me, by my deceased husband, for the buyldinge of his Colledge, makethe me to omytt noe meanes for the spedie and well effectinge of the same. And where hit hath pleased his Majestie, upon petition, willinglie to graunte a mortmayne, which hath received some farder proceedinge, yet for that the originall deedes of all the landes purchased in Essex are not seane, there can not passe suche due performaunce in all respecttes as is required. In consideration whereof, doe hereby righte hartelie praye you, yf anye suche writinges be in your kepinge, they maie not onlie be delivered unto my servantt Arnold, but also that hit would please you, yf you knowe that anye doe remayne in the custodie of others, by your helpe he maye likewise receive them, who hath order, and is apoynted to shewe all unto lernid counsell, to thendd thinges thereunto appertayninge maye passe in good saftie. . . .

[Remainder of letter relates to a suit in which her Ilton tenants were involved.]

(D/DP Q13/3/20) Draft reply in the hand of John, Lord Petre.

Sister, for aunswere to your lettre recyved by this bearer, Mr. Arnolde, you shall understande that never anye suche deedes or writinges of the landes in Essex came

FOUNDATION OF WADHAM COLLEGE, OXFORD

to my handes, or remayne in my custodye, but remayne with Peter Whetcombe, who hathe (as I understande) delyvered all suche notes & particulars out of them to Doctor Wright as may any way conduse or further his proceedings in the mortmayne....

... I wishe I could not remember the manner of dealing towards me in the choyse of the head of your Colledge, for had I receyved but anye knowledge from you eyther of your dislike of of (sic) Doctor Osborne, or of your intentyon of Doctor Wright (whom in my consyence you never dreampt of in a longe tyme after I hadd by dyverse messages receyved your promesse for the other), yf, I say, you hadd sent me the lest inclinge of your mynde therin, I had rested, satsfyed. But when you carryed me still alonge with hopes, and by your lettre gave warrante to assure Doctor Osborne of ytt, & not muche more then sixe daye afterwarde made your graunte thereof to an other, & then by your lettres to my Lo. Threasorer & to the Lo. Bisshoppe signefyed what you hadd donne, at the same instante wrote to me & mentyoned not a woorde therof, wherby yt might fall uppon me, & uppon my fryende with the more desgrace, I must confesse I did not expecte I shoulde have receyved suche unrespective dealing from a sister that I have so well deserved of.³⁵ But when I bethought me that this was not your selfe, but the practesse of those that bee powerful with you, & peradventure thincke they have not so good a meanes to assure their owne endes, as by throwing a bone betweene you & me, & by bringing all my doinges in suspityon with you, I resolved rather to swallow up the wronge, then to bring your name in questyon, or to minister fuel to the fyre of unkindnesse which they hadd kindledd. And so not mynding heerafter to call yt into further remembraunce, doe rest your assured loving brother.

(D/DP Q13/3/21) 7 April 1611. Dorothy Wadham to John, Lord Petre.

Good Brother,

I have receved your late letter, yeldinge you manye due thankes for the same. The passinge of the busynes for Moore Hall hathe bene in perticuler sufficientlie made knowne unto me, beinge sorrie the sute hathe fallen out to be so chargeable and troblesome to my frindes that have followed the same, but hit dothe well contentt me to understand of any endd.³⁶ Concernynge the mocion made you, by the Schollmaster of Paules, for the election of some of the choice scollers out of that schole from tyme to tyme to supplie the voide places in Wadham Colledge, I have noe likinge to harken unto anye of those projectes, myndinge to be at libertie, and not tyed to one place, for yf I had any opynion to such a course, their is greater reason to cull oute some schollers of scholles in this countrie wheare Mr. Wadham was borne, and ever lyved, then to be chosen out of a place so farr remote, who hathe lefte manye of his kyndredd, and children of his nere frindes, that will desire to be preferred before strangers. Yf hit shalbe in your owne particuler likinge to have anye felowes or

³⁵ The chronology, unless some letters are missing, is rather obscure. Dorothy's letter dated 10 Oct. suggests approval of Osborne; eighteen days later (D/DP Q13/3/18) there is a significant postscript, 'All other actions this bearer Arnold cann lett you understand'; Petre writes on 19 Nov. that Arnold has told him of Wright's appointment—since the harm was done, he may have waited until Arnold was returning to the West Country before protesting to his sister.

³⁶ Moor Hall in Writtle, co. Essex; see Appendix I.

NANCY BRIGGS

schollers nomynated, upon notice from you, I shalbe moste willinge to graunt your desire therein, when hit shall please you. . . .³⁷

Unfortunately, circumstances forced Dorothy Wadham to refer again to the question of Dr. Osborne. It is the last letter in the group written to her brother, who died on 11 October 1613, at the age of sixty-three.

(D/DP Q13/3/23) 10 Nov. 1611. Dorothy Wadham to John, Lord Petre.

Deare lovinge Brother, the occasions at this present offered me would requier a large discourse ; but I take no pleasure to call to mynde suche forepast actions, because they revive matter of discontent on every side, to you especially, and that, by weaknes partely, and partely by a kynde of coercion. Well, to you was the wronge donne (if any) and in you is the redresse, therefore to you principally I flye, and the cause is thus : it is very lately made knowne unto me by my honorable Lorde the Bishopp of Bathe that Doctor Osborne indevoeth to crosse my guift of the Warden-shipp of Wadham Colledge by petition to his Majestie, whereby, how unjust soever his complainte be, some scandall may arise to my name, and question my reputacion, which cannot be without touche to your honor, either of which I esteeme as deare as my lyfe, and, therefore, do instantly praye you, that, as you fyrst commended the person unto me, so now you would (as I conceyve you may) commaunde hym to surceasse his enterprise. The show of this his sute must be groundd uppon a primer graunte of the place ; next, he would labor to prove that corrupcion hath wrought in D. Wright. For the fyrst, I wilbe scilent because to none it is better knowne then to your selfe, and for the latter, yf it could be truly maynteyned, I should then take other course without mediacion to his Majestie. I do, therefore, in all brotherly love intreate you to take the paynes to conferr with my L. the Bisshopp of Bathe uppon this pointe, and to consider of such allegacions as D. Osborne can sett down

³⁷ This letter has been printed with an introductory note by Mr. P. D. Whitting in *The Pauline*, vol. LXXXIII, no. 448 (June 1955), 61-62. He identifies 'the Schollmaster of Paules' with Alexander Gill, High Master from 1608-1635. For the West Country character of the College and the supplementary Statute giving preference to Founder's Kin, see Jackson, *op. cit.*, 64-65.

Of the original Fellows, four were from Exeter College, two of these, William Smith, Sub-Warden and later Warden, and Daniel Estcot, his successor as Warden, had acted as tutors to the sons of William, and Lord Petre (E.R.O. D/DP A31, A33 ; see also Giles E. Dawson, 'A Gentleman's Purse', *Yale Review*, Summer 1950). Of the Scholars, William Boswell, who became a Fellow in 1622 (for his career, see Jackson, *op. cit.*, 74), was a nephew of Kenelm Carter, an original Petrean fellow of Exeter College, and subsequently tutor to the sons of John, Lord Petre (Carter's will, P.C.C. 21 Meade ; E.R.O., D/DP A20-22). A list of the Fellows and Scholars, headed by Wright, in the hand of William, Lord Petre (D/DP Q13/3/25) includes the names of three 'Fellows' who are not connected with Wadham : Patrick Young, M.A., St. Andrews, incorporated 1605, Grecian and Royal Librarian, buried at Broomfield, co. Essex, 1652 ; John Giles, M.A., of Somerset, pleb., matriculated at Exeter College, 1595 ; Edward Bentley, M.A., who is probably to be identified with the Cambridge graduate of that name, born at West Horndon, co. Essex (a Petre seat) c. 1578 and educated at Westminster (Venn, *Alumni*). John Bentley, a trusted servant of John Petre, in his will dated 26 Feb. 1596/7 (E.R.O. D/ABW 5/365) mentions his son Edward, who is also known to have been educated at Westminster (D/DP A22). It seems more likely that the Petres would favour this man connected with their household than Edward Bentley of Warwickshire, B.A., from St. Edmund Hall, 1582 (Foster, *Alumni*). The name of Edward Hext appears on Petre's list of Scholars ; this may be a reference to Edward Hext of Somerset, gent., matriculated Queen's College, 29 Nov. 1605, or a mistake for Amias Hext, one of the original Scholars (Foster, *Alumni*). Amias Hext was Sir Edward's cousin and received a bequest of £10 in the latter's will (F. A. Crisp, *loc. cit.*).

FOUNDATION OF WADHAM COLLEGE, OXFORD

therein, and as you fynde so to censure, from which if I swarve, refuse me for ever, so to your consideracion, I submitt me. . . .

[Refers to the suit concerning her tenants at Ilton.]

The college was constituted on 20 April 1613, when the first members of the new society with Wright at their head were admitted to the University.³⁸ The financial position of the College was not very sound during the foundress's life. As a trustee of the Essex estates, William, 2nd Baron Petre, found his aunt no less obstinate than his father had done.³⁹

(D/DP Q13/3/24) 3 Feb. 1613/14. Dorothy Wadham to William, Lord Petre. My honorable good Cosen,

I am by these to acquaynte your Lordshipp that I have by a deed under my hand and seale passed all my landes in Essex unto the Warden, Fellowes and scollers of Wadham Colledge in Oxforde, desireinge your Lordshipp that, when they shall repayer unto you for ther evidences, you will take such ordre as that they maybe saflye delivered unto them, which will bringe unto my minde a greate quietnes to see in my liffe time all thinges fully setled that was by Mr. Wadham apoynted for the same. In what ordre it is left unto them, this bearer, my servant, cann acquaynte you. . . .

(D/DP Q13/3/24.) Draft reply in the hand of William, Lord Petre.

Good Awnte : I have received by your servant, Arnold, the ixth of this instant monthe a letter from yew, wherein yew doe desier that all the evidences touchinge your landes in Essex shoulde be delivered to Wadham Colledge, for that you have alleredie passed them away, by deed under your hand & seal unto the house. The case standes thus : Sir John Windeham, Mr. Wiatt, Mr. Bartlett, & my selfe are absolutelie possessed of these landes by the instrument made not longe before my uncles deathe (whereby he declared his intention of the disposition of them), are tied to pay unto yew during life the profites & issues risinge owt of them. So that now I doe not see whoe have power to alter this truste, hee beinge gonne whoe have enjoyed hit us. Besides, though yew have to lett hit reste as hit does, and as it seemes to bee plainelie meant hit shoulde doe, hit will still reste in your power to lett them enjoye the whole benefit of the land, or so muche of hit as you shall best like of, & so be your owne paymaster & so retayne hit allwaies in your selfe eather to enlarge your hart or streighten hit towards them accordinge to their desertes, which, no doubt, will everie way bee the most discreet course & keepe them beste in obedience & respecte towards hit. For these reasons, I thought good to make stay of doinge anie acte till I mighte make yew acquainted ; upon the which, notwithstanding, I will not so insiste, but that yf yew shall continue your resolution to doe hit, &

³⁸ *V.C.H. Oxon.*, III, 279.

³⁹ The foundress's letter, 3 Feb. 1613/14, to the College, printed by R. B. Gardiner, *op. cit.*, 24-26, tells of her intention to make over to the College the profits of the Essex lands with which it was to be endowed after her death, retaining £200 a year for herself from the average rental of £470. She enclosed a deed passing the lands to the College at a rent of £200. For the trust, see Appendix I. The scheme took effect, despite Lord Petre's objections ; see Dorothy's letter of 12 June 1615, reducing the reserved rent to £100 (Gardiner, *op. cit.*, 33-34 ; *V.C.H. Oxon.*, III, *loc. cit.*). Moor Hall and Montpeliers in Writtle and the manor of Fryerning were conveyed to the College by Dorothy Wadham, Sir John Wyndham, Hugh Wyott and John Bartlett, 7 Aug. 1615 (Wadham College Deeds, Moor Hall, no. 49).

NANCY BRIGGS

that hit may appear unto mee that hit may bee effected without breache of truste, I shall bee readie to joyne with the reste wher they have begunne, which sooner I see not how I may doe eather as an honeste man or as a true frinde. Besides, I remember when I was laste with yew, yew weare otherwise determined, & perhappes, (thoughe yew now desier hit) this beinge a good parte of your revenue, may live to wishe hit undonne againe, & so blame your frindes for overhastinesse in concludinge yew. . . . Lastelie, I cannot omitte to lett yew know what a scandalous reporte is heere frequent in everie mans mouthe, raised no dowte by those whoe woulde faine caste some blemishe upon your reputation, which your modeste & grave carradge hitherto in the worlde hath gained hit ; which thought I know to bee false, & so neather cann nor even will beleewe hit, since theare are so manie circumstances of shame & disproportion incident thereunto. Yet must I needes, as a frinde, & so lesse partiall, & as a kinseman & so sensible of your honor & good name, give yew this advise that theare is no way to preserve bothe & stopp these reportes, but by removinge the occasion for them from yew, without the which, how sincere soever your intentions bee, the worlde will speake. . . .

These letters, taken with those of later date printed by R. B. Gardiner, have a good claim to give a vivid picture of the character of the founder of an Oxford college. Dorothy Wadham shows herself determined to found a West Country college out of devotion to her dead husband, whose wishes permeate the letters. For the student of Jacobean architecture, it is satisfying to have William Arnold associated clearly as architect-mason with both Cranborne and Wadham. Some light has been thrown on Sir John Davis, his connection with Gloucester Hall, and the obscure part he played in the negotiations preceding the foundation of the College. Unsolved problems remain, of course; it is perhaps significant, if natural, that the scheme to found a Catholic college at Venice, mentioned by Anthony Wood, is conspicuous in these letters by its absence. The details of the approach to Gloucester Hall and to Jesus College, and, indeed of Davis's intervention, are not yet clear but are not perhaps of primary importance to the history of post-medieval foundations in Oxford.

APPENDIX I

THE ENDOWMENTS OF WADHAM COLLEGE

1. £6,000 in cash in the custody of Wadham's servants, John Arnold and John Bartlett, to purchase lands for the present endowment of the intended college.
2. Manors of Fryerning and Moor Hall in Writtle, and farm of Montpeliers in Writtle, Essex, of the annual value of £400, conveyed to Sir William Petre, Sir John Wyndham, Hugh Wyott and John Bartlett in Trust for Dorothy Wadham for life, with remainder to the college.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ For conveyances to trustees see Wadham College Deeds, Moor Hall, no. 31, 10 Feb. 1604/5 ; Fryerning no. 13, 30 Nov. 1606 ; Montpeliers no. 22, 22 Dec. 1605.

FOUNDATION OF WADHAM COLLEGE, OXFORD

3. Moiety of parsonage of Abbotsbury, Dorset, with the advowson of the vicarage conveyed to Sir William Petre, Sir John Wyndham, Hugh Wyott and John Bartlett for sale. Estimated value, £1,200.

4. Capital messuage and lands called Brooke Place in Cullompton, Devon, and lands called Hewenbear in Somerset. John, Lord Petre, Sir William Petre, Sir John Wyndham, Hugh Wyott and John Bartlett were authorized in writing by Nicholas Wadham to make estates either for the term of three lives or 99 years determinable on lives. Estimated value of these leases, £2,000.

5. Capital messuage and lands called Wadham in Somerset, and a tenement and lands in Silvertown, Devon, to be estated by Hugh Wyott, Christopher Maynwaring and John Bartlett. Estimated value, £700.

*6. Manors devised in Nicholas Wadham's will to Edward Wadham for life to be surveyed and estated two years after his death; ⁴¹ two parts of the fines to be paid to Dorothy Wadham for college purposes. Estimated value, £1,000.

*7. Lands in Purbeck, leased within ten days of Wadham's death to his nephew Sir John Strangways, to be estated. Proceeds, estimated at £200, to be paid to Dorothy Wadham as above.

*8. Estimated total (sales and lands estated), £5,300.

This list has been compiled from the instructions for the Attorney-General to move in Chancery for the performance of the trusts and for the estating of the lands appointed for the erection of the College.⁴² This 'brief' has been collated with the order of the Court of Chancery, 27 June, partly printed above,⁴³ and Dorothy Wadham's declaration,⁴⁴ material marked with an asterisk (*) being found only in the latter document. The 'declaration' must apparently be dated before the trustees' approach to Oxford City Council in February 1610,⁴⁵ on the evidence of its concluding section:

Propositions to be offered unto the Lordes to receyve there opynions and directions therein

1. Fyrst whether the erecion and foundation of this Colledge shalbe made uppon Gloucester Hall or Jesus Colledge⁴⁶ if they may be gotten which are places designed and named by the said Nicholas Wadham, or a new structure owt of the grownde in some other convenyent place to be bought in or neere Oxforde.

2. How the six thowsande poundes in ready money shalbe presently employed.⁴⁷

3. What course shalbe held for sale and estatinge of the landes formerly sett downe.

4. What allowaunce shalbe thought fitt to be gyven to Sir John Davys in the tymes of his employmentes in these businesses.⁴⁸

⁴¹ Edward Wadham's will was proved 17 Jan. 1613/14 (P.C.C. 5 Lawe).

⁴² Wadham College MS. no. 10.

⁴³ Wadham College MS. no. 11.

⁴⁴ E.R.O. D/DP Q13/3/3.

⁴⁵ Dorothy Wadham suggested William Arnold should ride to view a potential site in Oxford in her letter of 9 Feb. 1609/10 (D/DP Q13/3/7); see also the agreement of 27 Feb. 1609/10 relating to a site owned by Merton (D/DP Q13/3/8), although at a Council held on 23 February the citizens resolved to demand £1,000 for the freehold of the Augustine Friars site (Jackson, *op. cit.*, 22).

⁴⁶ No trace is known of any approach to Jesus College.

⁴⁷ If the cash was to be invested (*V.C.H. Oxon.* III, p. 279), £3,000 of it must have been spent on the purchase of the advowson of Hockley and the parsonage of Sidmouth, cf. agreement of 27 Feb. (D/DP Q13/3/8), which, however, suggests that the £6,000 was to be spent on the buildings.

⁴⁸ See Appendix II.

NANCY BRIGGS

APPENDIX II

SIR JOHN DAVIS

Jackson⁴⁹ and R. B. Gardiner⁵⁰ were unable to identify the fellow-trustee whom Dorothy Wadham accused of being more than obstructive.⁵¹ The letters in the Petre archives name him as Sir John Davis as early as 24 January 1609/10;⁵² this information could have been derived from the copy in the Wadham College archives of Sir John Tindall's report, 5 July 1610.⁵³ I have ventured to identify Sir John Davis with the soldier and mathematician of that name, who is described as of Bere Court, Pangbourne, co. Berks., in his will, dated 6 April 1625 and proved 13 May 1626.⁵⁴ John Davis took his B.A. from Gloucester Hall on 1 July 1577, and proceeded M.A. on 4 July 1581. He is described as an eminent mathematician, and was made knight banneret for his presumably professional services at the taking and sacking of Cadiz, 15 September 1596, becoming surveyor of the ordnance in 1598. The favour of the Earl of Essex led to his temporary downfall since his implication in the Rebellion earned him a sentence of hanging, drawing and quartering. Davis was, however, pardoned by July 1601, and his property in St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, restored to him on 26 November 1610. He purchased the manor of Pangbourne in 1613 and died at Bere Court on 14 May 1625.⁵⁵ Sir John Davis of Pangbourne thus satisfies the requirement that the fellow-trustee should be one able as a graduate of Gloucester Hall to secure favourable terms in negotiations for founding the College there.⁵⁶ His more famous namesake, Sir John Davis of Englefield, co. Berks., the Irish solicitor-general and Silver poet, did not have any opportunity to see Nicholas Wadham in his last illness.⁵⁷ There is no evidence for any close relationship between the politician and the Founder.⁵⁸ The mathematician's second wife was Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas White of Fiddleford, co. Dorset. She was the grand-daughter, or possibly the great-grand-daughter, of Margaret, sister of Nicholas Wadham, who had married Nicholas Martin of Athelhampton, co. Dorset.⁵⁹ As Davis's daughter, Elizabeth, was 'now entringe into sixteene yeares of age' in April 1625, it is feasible to suggest that this marriage had taken place by 20 October 1609, when Nicholas Wadham, whom he would thus have been able to address as 'uncle', died. It is

⁴⁹ *Op. cit.*, 15-16.

⁵⁰ *Op. cit.*, 9.

⁵¹ See her letter to Salisbury, above (p. 61).

⁵² D/DP Q13/3/6 (see above, p. 62).

⁵³ Wadham College, MS. 12 (see above, p. 71).

⁵⁴ P.C.C. 69 Hele.

⁵⁵ Foster, *Alumni*; Wood, *Fasti*, I, 206, *Athenae*, II, 373. For his part in the Essex Rebellion see *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1598-1601, passim, especially p. 584 where he is said to be known in Oxford as a conjuror and caster of figures; for his release, see *Cal. S.P. Dom. Add.*, 1580-1625, p. 409. For his estates, see *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1603-1610, p. 647, *V.C.H. Berks.*, III, 304-5.

⁵⁶ See letter to Salisbury 28 Nov. 1609 cited above (p. 61); for the scheme to use the site of Gloucester Hall, see *V.C.H. Oxon.*, III, 279.

⁵⁷ For Sir John Davis of Englefield, see *D.N.B.*; Davis was in Ireland from June 1609 to Feb. 1609/10 as attorney-general there (*Cal. State Papers Ireland*, 1608-1610, pp. 292, 300).

⁵⁸ The namesakes may have been connected; Sir John Davis of Englefield, Knight, serjeant at law, is named as an executor in the other's will, although no relationship is given.

⁵⁹ *Visitation of Berkshire*, 1665-1666 (Harl. Soc., 56) s.v. Davis of Bere Court by Pangbourne. Fiddleford is to be identified with Fittleford in Sturminster Newton, a manor held by Thomas White who married Frances, daughter and co-heiress of Nicholas Martin of Athelhampton (Hutchins, *History of Dorset*, IV, 341). See also Wadham pedigree, Jackson, *op. cit.*, 27-28.

FOUNDATION OF WADHAM COLLEGE, OXFORD

also significant that Sir John Strangways of Melbury, co. Dorset, perhaps to be identified with Wadham's nephew, was one of Davis's executors.⁶⁰ The name of Wadham's other nephew, Sir John Wyndham, was associated by Jackson with the memorandum of an interview with the Founder on 16 October 1609.⁶¹ The detail and evidence of earlier interest taken by the writer contrasts somewhat with Sir John Wyndham's contention in Chancery that the trusts were not to be executed until the College was built.⁶² The memorandum states that the writer was sent for to his Uncle Wadham on 16 October 1609; Dorothy, Bartlett and Arnold were also present. There follow details of the provision for the proposed College, and a promise to defray the writer's charges. Wadham is said to have expressed a hope that Dorothy would also devote some of her income to the College. Sir Edward Hext, writing in indifferent health on 21 March 1609/10, says that Bartlett and Arnold are ready to depose that Sir John Davis was sent for *two* days before their master's death and that he forced Wadham to seal the instrument the next morning.⁶³ The memorandum confirms that the deed was sealed on 19 October, but a discrepancy of two days has to be admitted, and can be perhaps more easily discounted than the idea of two missing death-bed trust deeds. The memorandum mentions among other legacies, bequests of plate worth £50 a piece to Northampton and Suffolk. Hext, in the same letter, repeats Davis's accusation that Dorothy has suppressed legacies of £40 to each of them, and points out that not only did she not mention these bequests to Hext immediately after her husband's death, but Davis himself offered in the presence of witnesses to deliver two other legacies in London but never mentioned those in question. Besides these minor discrepancies of fact, there is one other argument against casting Sir John Davis as the villain of the piece. The writer of the memorandum gives himself the credit for suggesting the Bishop of Bath and Wells as Visitor, and Jackson regarded Montague as a zealous adherent of the Reformation.⁶⁴ Davis, up to the time of the Essex rebellion, seems to have been regarded as a recusant,⁶⁵ but it is hard to test the validity of such accusations.

Davis's will has several interesting provisions, including instructions to make his monument, which still survives, 'from my Chalke at Shooter's Hill'.⁶⁶ Among his executors, in addition to those already mentioned was one last link with Wadham College, Dr. Robert Wright, the first Warden, afterwards Bishop of Bristol.

⁶⁰ Davis's will.

⁶¹ Printed by Jackson, *op. cit.*, 12-14; this only survives in a copy (Wadham College MS. 9). It may be possibly identified with the 'unwarrantable notes' mentioned by Dorothy on 24 Jan. 1609/10. (D/DP Q13/3/6).

⁶² See above, Wadham College MS. no. 11.

⁶³ D/DP Q13/3/13; see above (p. 69). See Appendix I for the question of an allowance to Sir John Davis for his employment in the affairs of the College. As early as 24 Jan. 1609/10 (D/DP Q13/3/6) Dorothy complains that Davis was arrogating more than an equal power under the instrument and that he is accusing her of backwardness. On 19 March 1609/10 (D/DP Q13/3/11) Hext mentions the rumour that Dorothy is converting to her own use sums left for the building of the College. Dorothy told her brother that Davis offered his instrument to her husband not two days before his death, and that he was only accepted as a trustee because of his influence with Gloucester Hall (D/DP Q13/3/7).

⁶⁴ *Op. cit.*, 11. It could also be said that the necessity for a Visitor was more likely to be seen by Davis as a graduate than by any other of the founder's nephews.

⁶⁵ Wood, *Athenae*, II, 373; at his trial he was described as an Oxford man and a recusant (*Cal. S. P. Dom.*, 1598-1601, pp. 566-7).

⁶⁶ About 1 mile N.W. of Pangbourne on the road to Lower Basildon (1 in. O.S. Sheet 158, Nat. grid ref. 621774).