

WINCHESTER CLUB - OXFORD.

Roy Gault

It's good for our hobby to experience a bit of excitement, and excitement there was on e-Bay in the middle of March! The cover illustrated below, postmarked '603' Oxford, 3rd May 1874, and bears a 1d Red plate 164 Perfined "W/C.O" (W1275.01). It was correctly described as being very rare, for currently the die is only known on two 1d Red plates 164 and 170.



It is in fact an identified cover as the coat of arms on the envelope flap bears witness, 'Winchester Club Oxford', along with the motto '*Manners makyth man*'.

The starting bid on the 8th March 2017 was a modest £10, but by the end of the auction ten days later it had risen to a staggering £512! At least the postage was free on the item.



But what can we deduce from the cover? I guess as good a starting point as any is the motto - *Manners Makyth Man*. An internet search reveals it to be the motto of **Winchester College** and **New College, Oxford**, so here we have an Oxford connection.

Winchester College is an independent boarding school for boys, founded in 1382 by William of Wykeham, (1324-1404), the then Bishop of Winchester. The first intake of pupils was in 1394.

New College (Oxford) was founded in 1379 (opened in 1386) in conjunction with Winchester College, which was envisaged as a feeder to the new college in Oxford. Originally established for the education of priests, New College (Oxford) is now one of the wealthiest of the colleges forming Oxford University.



But who could have written the letter? We have the surname **Caswall** and the place-name **Binfield**, so a quick search of the census reveals a well-to-do family living in the village. In 1871 the head of the household is Mary Elizabeth Caswall (born c1816 in Hackney, and a widow), along with four daughters. Looking back to the 1861 census, we pick the family up living in Newchurch on the Isle of Wight. This time there are two sons mentioned **Walter R. H. Caswall** (aged 7, born Jersey), and Robert R. K. Caswall (aged 6, born Binfield).

Knowing the names of the boys, an Internet search reveals that **Walter Randolph le Hardy Caswall**, 2nd son of Alfred Caswell, of St Saviour, Jersey, matriculated (i.e. entered university) at St John's College, Oxford, on 12th October 1872, aged 19. By the time the letter was written, Walter would be in his second year at St John's.

In the 1891 census, Walter is a Brewer in Dartford, and in 1901 as a 'Manager of a Mineral Water factory'. In between these two dates we pick him up in partnership with Herbert Taylor (dissolved 1st August 1891), and Charles Arthur Clarens Berrall, (dissolved 20th March 1893) running the Wilmington Brewery in Dartford. Sadly no "C&T" or "C&B" Perfins with Dartford postmarks!

A memorial plaque tells us Walter was born 19th Aug 1853,
and died on 21st June 1905.