

UC:MA36 Papers of John Browne (Master 1745-64)

John Browne was the sixth son of Richard Browne of Marton, Yorkshire. He matriculated at University on 23 May 1704, and was elected a Browne Exhibitioner on 16 November 1705. On 27 October 1708 he was elected a Freeston minor Exhibitioner 27 Oct 1708, and then on 23 August 1711 he was elected a Skirlaw Fellow. During the next decade he performed various College duties, such as Registrar, Dean, and Praelector in Greek, and also took on several pupils as a tutor. In c. 1714 he was presented to the living of Long Compton, Warks.

In the Mastership dispute which followed the death of Arthur Charlett, Browne took the side of Thomas Cockman, supporting him enthusiastically. Browne had a position of some power, in that he was Bursar when Charlett died, and retained this post for the next seven years, only laying it aside in 1729, when Cockman was installed as Master by the Royal Visitors.

On 22 March 1738/9, after a year's grace, Browne resigned his Fellowship, and soon after became Archdeacon of Northampton. However, he returned to Oxford when, on 22 February 1744/5, following the death of Thomas Cockman, Browne was unanimously elected his successor as Master, a post he held until his death at Long Compton on 7 August 1764.

Although Browne did serve as Vice-Chancellor in 1750–3, his term of office as Master was not marked by any major events. Perhaps his greatest service to the College was posthumous: on his death, he left the house immediately to the east of Logic Lane (now the site of Durham Buildings) and an estate at Great Marlow to trustees to endow two new scholarships, and also to augment the stipends of some existing scholarships whose worth had decayed over the years. He also left his library to be kept in the Master's Lodgings, for the use of successive Masters of the College, and it remains there to this day. See further Robin Darwall-Smith, *A History of University College, Oxford* (Oxford 2008), pp. 266-74.

Apart from papers relating to his benefactions (which are listed elsewhere), the only document in the archives relating to Browne is this bond, dating from the time of the Mastership dispute.

Catalogued in June 2004.

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15 Mar Geo I (1723/4)

Bond

Parties:

1. Cavendish Neville, John Browne, and Thomas Cockerill, MA's of Oxford.
2. Gerrard Croke of Sandford, Gent.

Comments: 1 are bound to 2 to repay a loan with interest, amounting to £303 15s. Inside the bond are notes of repayments of the loan made between 19 Sep 1724 and 12 Mar 1729 [*sic*; this could be 1729 or 1729/30].

On the back of this document someone has written 'The Bond for 300 li, which was Borrow'd, & Interest payd for it during the Disputes.' Since all the parties in 1 supported Thomas Cockman, one presumes that they took this loan out to pay for their legal costs in the struggle with William Denison's supporters.

Archivist: Dr Robin Darwall-Smith E: Robin.Darwall-Smith@univ.ox.ac.uk T: +44 (0)1865 276 952