

## UNIV ONLINE CATALOGUES

### UC:E26 The Living of Kingsdon, Somerset 1773-1924

Kingsdon is a village situated in Somerset a few miles to the north of Yeovil. Its advowson was purchased by University College in 1829, as what would prove to be the last living acquired from the fund set aside for this purpose from the surplus of the income from the Linton estate (see R. Darwall-Smith, *A History of University College, Oxford* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 237–42).

At the same time as purchasing the advowson of Kingsdon, the College also bought two adjoining pieces of land, known as Tarr's and Well Close, presumably to enlarge the glebe.

As the number of Fellows of the College in holy orders declined in the second half of the nineteenth century, so the need to retain advowsons lessened, and in 1884 it was decided to seel Kingsdon. On 27 January 1885, therefore, the College sold the advowson of Kingsdon to William Neal of Kingsdon for £3500 (see **UC:EB/A1/6** pp. 271–2). As a result, the College only ever made one appointment to the living, namely that of Peter Hansell in 1835.

Hansell matriculated from Wadham College in 1822, but migrated to University College when he was elected to a Bennet Scholarship there in 1824. He was then elected a Bennet Fellow in 1829. He resigned his Fellowship upon his appointment to Kingsdon in October 1835, and remained Rector of Kingsdon until his death in 1897.

The new Rector was ambitious: he rebuilt the rectory at Kingsdon on a much larger scale, taking out a large mortgage, and hoping that he could fill it with pupils whom he would coach. Unfortunately, Hansell's career was ruined by scandal. In July 1844 he was accused before the Bishop of Bath and Wells of "committing fornication and incontinence" with Susannah Woods, who according to the 1841 Census had been working as his children's nanny (papers on the case may be found at the Somerset Heritage Centre, ref. D\D\Bd/1).

Hansell confessed to his part in the affair, and in September 1844 he was suspended from the execution of his ministry anywhere in Kingsdon or elsewhere in the diocese for seven years. Hansell retired with his wife and family to the commune of St. Servan, near St. Malo in Brittany, where in 1850–1 he was able to persuade three Anglican priests resident in that area to testify formally as to the propriety of his conduct, and he later served as a Chaplain at Caen in 1858–71. It was only in the early 1870s, after almost thirty years, that he returned to Kingsdon, having left the parish to be managed by curates in his absence, and remained there for the rest of his life.

Inevitably, Hansell's teaching plans came to nothing, and his new rectory proved a burden to him and his successors. A later incumbent, writing in 1923, claimed that Hansell himself died an undischarged bankrupt, and that Hansell's successor had found the rectory impossibly large to manage. In 1922, however, Hansell's rectory was destroyed in a fire, and no attempt was ever made to rebuild it. [The Archivist is grateful to Jim and Sally Smith of Kingsdon for providing information about the life of Peter Hansell and his rectory.]

It is at least possible that one of the reasons for the College choosing to sell the living of Kingsdon, as opposed to any other, was embarrassment at the conduct of the one rector whom they had appointed there.

All the documents in this collection were found in the archives during the stocktaking of July 1993.

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**UC:E26 The Living of Kingsdon, Somerset 1773-1924**

Catalogued in January 2016.

**UC:E26/D1 - TITLE DEEDS AND COPIES OF THE ADVOWSON OF KINGSDON AND ADJOINING LANDS**

This series includes documents relating to the advowson of Kingsdon, but also to Tarr's and Well Close, two small pieces of land adjoining the glebe, which the College purchased at the same time. Some deeds in the sequence (in particular the actual conveyance of this property to the College) are not in the archives: these deeds would have been handed over to the purchaser in 1884.

Many of these documents are copies made around the time that the College was negotiating to purchase the living in 1828–9, on account of doubts being expressed by their counsel on the vendor's title to the advowson.

**UC:E26/D1/1** **n.d. (c. 1828/9?)**

Document with copies taken from the Court of Chancery dating from 11 Dec 8 Henry IV (1406) and 12 Mar 8 Hen IV (1406/7) relating to an Inquisition *post mortem* on the possessions of Philippa, widow of Henry Lescrope, which included the advowson of Kingsdon.

**UC:E26/D1/2** **n.d. (c. 1828/9?)**

Copy of a plea from Hilary Term 2 Geo II (1728/9) relating to a dispute between John Pughe and Henry Trubshaw over the ownership of the manor of Kingsdon.

**UC:E26/D1/3** **n.d. (c. 1828/9?)**

Extract from the Registry of wills of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury relating to the administration of the goods of Charles, Lord Stourton to his widow Catherine, dated May 1753.

**UC:E26/D1/4** **3 Jun 1773**

Copy of a Common Recovery, dated 12 Feb 3 Geo III (1763)

**Parties:**

1. John Frederick, Esq.
2. Francis Fawkes, Gent.
3. Henry Lord Arundell of Wardour.

**Property:** The manors of Kingsdon and South Petherton, with appurtenances and 10 messuages, two mills, 10 gardens, 20 acres of land, 20 acres of meadow, 40 acres of pasture, and 1000 acres of furze and heath.

**UC:E26/D1/5** **n.d. (c. 1828/9?)**

Extract from the Registry of wills of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury of the will of the Hon. Thomas Arundell, dated 28 Apr 1764 and proved 8 Jul 1768, in which he appoints his wife Mary his executrix.

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Extract from the Registry of wills of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury of the will of George Chafin, dated 4 Nov 1763, and proved 20 Mar 1769, in which he bequeaths all his estate to his son George. There are copies of further documents relating to this will, dated 2 Dec 1777 and 28 Feb 1790, which discuss a mortgage made in 1738 from Henry Lord Arundell of Wardour to Chafin.

**UC:E26/D1/7** **n.d. (c. 1828/9?)**

Extract from the Registry of wills of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury of the will of Henry Stevens, dated 30 Aug 1771 and proved 23 Mar 1773, in which he appoints as executors his wife Elizabeth and his sons John, Thomas, and Henry.

**UC:E26/D1/8** **5 May 1828**

Copy made by G. D. Temple, Vicar of Shapwick cum Aschott, of the records of the marriage of Thomas Tucker and Mark Clarke in 1765, and of their eldest daughter in 1766.

**UC:E26/D1/9** **13 Apr 1828**

Copy made by George Messenger, officiating minister of Kingsdon, of the records of the baptisms of four children of Thomas and Mary Tucker, made between 1770 and 1781, and then of the burial of the eldest son, Thomas, in 1827.

**UC:E26/D1/10** **n.d. (c. 1828/9?)**

Extract from the Registry of wills of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury of the will of Morris Robinson, dated 16 Aug 1775 and proved 4 Nov 1777, in which he bequeaths all his properties to his brother Charles Robinson and Henry Hoyle Oddie of Grays Inn, Gent., upon certain (unspecified) trusts.

**UC:E26/D1/11** **n.d. (c. 1828/9?)**

Extract from the Registry of wills of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury of the will of Mary Maire, widow of John Maire, dated 1783, and proved 27 Apr 1784, in which she appoints Sir John Lawson of Brough Hall, Yorks., Bart., Henry Maire of Lartington, Yorks., Esq., and Michael Blount of Maple Durham, Esq., her executors.

**UC:E26/D1/12** **15 Apr 1793**

Lease for a Year

**Parties:**

1. William Howe of Somerton, Somerset, Esq.
2. The Revd. Thomas Tucker of Kingsdon, Somerset, Clerk.

**Property:** House, barn, stable, and garden, now occupied by Richard Tarr, situated in Kingsdon, lately purchased by 1 of John Palmer, Clark.

**Consideration:** 5s.

**UC:E26/D1/13** **16 Apr 1793**

Release following Lease for a Year

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**UC:E26 The Living of Kingsdon, Somerset 1773-1924**

**Parties & Property:** All as in **UC:E26/D1/12** above.

**Consideration:** £45.

**Comments:** 1 agrees to produce deeds (as set out on a schedule at the bottom of this document) for 2 at 2's request.

**UC:E26/D1/14****6 Nov 1809**

Lease for a year

**Parties:**

1. (a) Aaron Moody of Somerton, Somerset, Esq.  
(b) Stratford Robinson of Grays Inn Place, Middx., Gent.  
(c) Sir Richard Bedingfield of Oxbury, Norfolk, Bart.  
(d) Peniston, Viscount Melborne.  
(e) Sir George Wombwell, Bart. (1d–e are devisees of the trust estates of Henry, Earl of Fauconberg, decd., who survived George Fieschi Heneage, his co-trustee).  
(f) Charles Lord Clifford, Baron Clifford of Chudleigh, Devon.  
(g) William Sheldon of Greys Inn, Middx., Gent.  
(h) Nicholas Tuite Selby of Henrietta Street, St. Paul Covent Garden, Middx., Banker.  
(i) Mary Christina, Lady Dowager Arundell, universal legatee and devisee of Henry, Lord Arundell of Wardour, decd.
2. The Revd. Thomas Tucker of Kingsdon, Somerset, Clerk.

**Property:** The advowson of Kingsdon.

**Consideration:** 5s.

**UC:E26/D1/15****7 Nov 1809**

Release following Lease for a Year

**Parties:**

1. Aaron Moody of Somerton, Somerset, Esq.
2. Stratford Robinson of Grays Inn Place, Middx., Gent.
3. (a) Sir John Lawson of Brough Hall, Yorks., Bat.  
(b) Henry Maire of Lartington, Yorks., Esq. (the surviving executors of Mary Maire, late of Headlam, Durham decd., of whom 3b is the general legatee of her goods).
4. Sir Richard Bedingfield of Oxbury, Norfolk, Bart., cousin and heir at law of Mary Maire.
- 5 (a) Peniston, Viscount Melborne.  
(b) Sir George Wombwell, Bart. (devisees of the trust estates of Henry, Earl of Fauconberg, decd., who survived George Fieschi Heneage, his co-trustee).
6. (a) Charles Lord Clifford, Baron Clifford of Chudleigh, Devon.  
(b) William Sheldon of Greys Inn, Middx., Gent.  
(c) Nicholas Tuite Selby of Henrietta Street, St. Paul Covent Garden, Middx., Banker.
7. Mary Christina, Lady Dowager Arundell, universal legatee and devisee of Henry, Lord Arundell of Wardour, decd.
8. The Revd. Thomas Tucker of Kingsdon, Somerset, Clerk.

**Property:** The Advowson of Kingsdon.

**Consideration:** £750 from 8 to 6.

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**Comments:** The advowson of Kingsdon, along with the manor of Kingsdon, had been owned by Henry, Lord Arundell of Wardour, whose financial affairs had become greatly entangled. Parties 1–5 represent various creditors or their heirs. The deed explains their various roles in much greater detail. In addition, 8 agrees to produce deeds (as set out on a schedule at the bottom of this document) for 2 at 2's request.

- UC:E26/D1/16** **The morrow of All Souls 51 Geo III (3 Nov 1810)**  
 Final Concord  
**Parties:**  
 1. William Vale.  
 2. Thomas Tucker, John Tucker, Robert Tucker, Thomas Parker, and Elizabeth his wife.  
**Property:** A messuage and barn, two gardens, an orchard, 4 acres of land, 40 acres of meadow, and 40 acres of pasture in the parishes of Kingsdon and Baltonsborough, and the village of Chilton super Polden in the parish of Moorlinch.  
**Consideration:** £100 (from 1 to 2).
- UC:E26/D1/17** **4 Mar 1829**  
 Copy of an extract from the Enclosure award for Kingdson, made in 1810, concerning the land awarded under the Act to Thomas Tucker.
- UC:E26/D1/18** **n.d. (c. 1827/8?)**  
 Abstract of the title of John Tucker to some land called Well Close in Kingsdon, containing deeds extending back to 1778.
- UC:E26/D1/19** **n.d. (c. 1827/8?)**  
 Abstract of the title of John Tucker to a farm called Tarr's in Kingsdon, containing deeds extending back to 1793 (see **UC:E26/D1/12–13** above).
- UC:E26/D1/20** **1827**  
 Abstract of title to the advowson of Kingsdon. The document covers deeds extending back to 1728. At the end of the document are some comments added by a counsel acting for the College, dated 15 March 1828, seeking confirmation that the advowson of Kingsdon was appendant to the manor of Kingsdon.
- UC:E26/D1/21–25** **Apr–Oct 1828**  
 Notes and letters provided by the solicitors of the vendor of the advowson of Kingsdon, in reply to various questions posed by the College's counsel concerning the security of the vendor's title to the advowson. Eventually the counsel was satisfied.
- UC:E26/D1/26** **20 Nov 1828**  
 Affidavit of Robert Tucker on the history of some pieces of land at Kingsdon.

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**UC:E26 The Living of Kingsdon, Somerset 1773-1924****UC:E26/D1/27** **17 Feb 1829**

Agreement concerning the maintenance of an insurance policy of the buildings on the rectory of Kingsdon.

**UC:E26/D1/28** **17 Feb 1829**

Bond

**Parties:**

1. John Tucker of Taunton, Somerset, Esq.
2. The Master and Fellows of University College.

**Property:****Consideration:**

**Comments:** 1 had agreed to sell to 2 the advowson of Kingsdon as well as lands called Tarrs and Well Close, for £6900. He is now bound to 2 for £2000 to perform certain agreements specified in the bond.

**UC:E26/D2 - LATER DEEDS CONCERNING KINGSDON****UC:E26/D2/1** **7 Mar 1837**

Conveyance

**Parties:**

1. The Guardians of the Poor for the Langport Union.
2. Charles Aaron Moody of Kingsdon, Somerset, Esq.
3. The Master and Fellows of University College.

**Property:** The poor house at Kingsdon.

**Consideration:** £97 (from 3 to 1) and £3 (from 3 to 2).

**Comments:** 2 had been entitled to a quite rent of 2s a year on this property. The above consideration will release the College from all obligation to pay that money in the future.

**UC:E26/D2/2** **16 Dec 1874**

Copy of Conveyance dated 8 Nov 1837

**Parties:**

1. The Revd. Peter Hansell the younger of Kingsdon, Somerset, Clerk, late Fellow of University College.
2. George Henry, Bishop of Bath and Wells.
3. The Master and Fellows of University College.

**Property:** A parcel of ground in Kingsdon (as shown on a map).

**Consideration:** None given.

**Comments:** 1, with the support of 2, wishes to set aside a piece of ground belonging to the rectory on which he will build at his own expense a building to be used as a Sunday School. He therefore gives this land to 3 in trust to be used for this purpose.

**UC:E26/F1 - SOLICITORS' AND OTHER BILLS CONCERNING KINGSDON****UC:E26/F1/1** **1828**

Bill listing charges to be paid by the vendor in relation to the sale of the advowson of Kingsdon.

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- UC:E26/F1/2** 1828  
Solicitor's bill for University College for costs incurred in the purchase of Tarr's and Well Close, Kingsdon.
- UC:E26/F1/3** Dec 1828  
Solicitors' bill to University College for their work in regard to obtaining a licence in mortmain.
- UC:E26/F1/4** Apr 1829  
Solicitors' bill to University College for their work in regard to the purchasing of the advowson of Kingsdon.
- UC:E26/F1/5** Jan 1829  
Bill from Henry Dixon to University College for valuing and drawing maps of the rectory and advowson of Kingsdon.
- UC:E26/F1/6** 1829  
Charges to be made by the vendor and purchaser in relation to the purchase of the advowson of Kingsdon.
- UC:E26/F1/7** 1830  
Solicitor's bill (with receipt) listing the different sums owned them by the College.
- UC:E26/F1/8** 12 Mar 1830  
Receipt for payments to Henry Dixon for his work in valuations and other services in relation to the purchases of the advowson of Kingdson.
- UC:E26/F1/9** Jan 1841  
Solicitors' bill in relation to work carried out in relation to an exchange of land at Kingsdon.
- UC:E26/F1/10** 1841  
Solicitor's bill for University College in relation to costs incurred in 1839–41 concerning a proposed exchange of land at Kingsdon.

**UC:E26/C1 - CORRESPONDENCE**

- UC:E26/C1/1** n.d. (May 1835)  
Portion of a letter from C. A. Moody to Frederick Plumptre (when he was Bursar), which was evidently appended to a (lost) letter from Henry Cockeram, like **UC:E26/C1/2** below. It seems that the the living of Kingsdon had fallen vacant, Moody has some suggestions about the tenancy of the glebe, and the possibility of buying some land next to the rectory.
- UC:E26/C1/2** 27 & 28 May 1835  
Letter from Henry Cockeram (address, Kingsdon), to Frederick Plumptre, with an extra note added by C. A. Moody. Cockeram and Moody once again discuss arrangements concerning tenancies and freeholds in the light of the

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living having fallen vacant. Cockeram appears to have been acting as curate at Kingsdon, while the then rector lived elsewhere.

**UC:E26/C1/3****27 Nov 1840**

Letter from Peter Hansell (address, Kingsdon Rectory) to Frederick Plumptre. Hansell discusses arrangements which he has made for the exchange of some land for a tithe rent charge.

**UC:E26/C1/4****28 Nov 1840**

Letter from John Pyne (address, Somerton) to Frederick Plumptre. Pyne is also writing about the proposed exchange as discussed in **UC:E26/C1/3** above.

**UC:E26/C1/5****18 May (year not given; 1841?)**

Letter from Peter Hansell (no address given) to Frederick Plumptre. Hansell writes once again about the exchange of land discussed in **UC:E26/C1/3–4** above, over which some difficulties have arisen. Several passages have been deleted in this letter, apparently by Hansell himself.

**UC:E26/C1/6****19 Apr (year not given; 1845)**

Letter from Peter Hansell (no address given) to Frederick Plumptre. Hansell, who has been suspended from his living after his affair with his children's nanny was exposed (see the introduction to this catalogue), explains his difficult financial circumstances, and asks for his name to be removed from the College books (**UC:BU4/F/115**, the Buttery Book for 1845/6, shows that Hansell's name was deleted from there in May 1845). He expresses concerns about possible poor restoration work taking place on the chancel at Kingsdon Church, and urges Plumptre to keep an eye on matters there. He also discusses the repayment of his loan towards the rebuilding of the rectory there.

**UC:E26/C1/7****7 May 1844 (*sic*; *recte* 1845?)**

Letter from William Batchellor (address, Kingsdon Rectory, Somerton) to Frederick Plumptre. Batchellor dates this letter 7 May 1844, but it comes with an envelope (on which someone has inscribed "Kingsdon Mr. Hansell's Suspension") which is postmarked May 1845. The contents of the letter make it clear that it can only have been written in 1845.

Batchellor was appointed sequestrator of the living of Kingsdon in December 1844, following the suspension of Peter Hansell. He discusses the financial situation of the living, and the heavy financial demands made on it. He also described the new house which Hansell was building there, and its unfinished state.

**UC:E26/C1/8****5 Dec 1846**

Letter from William Batchellor (address, Kingsdon near Somerton) to Frederick Plumptre. Batchellor seeks Plumptre's advice on when he should pay rent on a piece of land adjoining the glebe.



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**UC:E26 The Living of Kingsdon, Somerset 1773-1924****UC:E26/C1/9****n.d. (Jun 1877?)**

Letter from Peter Hansell (address, Kingsdon Rectory, Taunton) to Charles Faulkner. Hansell asks Faulkner to lend him a map of Kingsdon. He is wondering whether to enlarge the churchyard, and asks whether the College can make a contribution towards repairing the wall in the school. On the back of the letter Faulkner has made a note of a reply which he sent in July 1877.

**UC:E26/C1/10****18 Oct 1877**

Letter from Peter Hansell (address, Kingsdon Rectory, Taunton) to Charles Faulkner. Hansell is glad to hear that the College will apply for a grant from the Linton Fund to help repair the school at Kingsdon. He encloses a sketch map of the glebe and churchyard (still extant) showing the portion of land which he would like to add to the churchyard. Hansell adds a private note regretting that he is unable to come up to the next College feast. He wonders whether two hooks are still hanging in the beam of a ceiling in the room under the "Dean's lecture room". They were installed by a keen hunting man from which he could hang his leather breeches, to make it easier for him to jump into them.

**UC:E26/C1/11****18 Mar 1878**

Letter from Peter Hansell (address, Kingsdon Rectory, Taunton) to Charles Faulkner. Hansell thanks Faulkner for the news that the College consents to use some glebe land to enlarge the churchyard. He regrets that the College cannot yet decide on the school, but provides some details on its history. (Permission was eventually granted to make a grant towards repairing the school; see **UC:V3/L1/17**).

**UC:E26/C1/12****15 May 1878**

Letter from Peter Hansell (address, Kingsdon, Taunton) to Charles Faulkner. Hansell enclosed a draft conveyance for the plot of glebe to be added to the churchyard. He reports that the school house has been damaged by a storm, and hopes for some help from the Linton Fund. He pleads his own poverty, having 13 children of his own.

**UC:E26/C1/13****14 Jul (corrected to Jun by Charles Faulkner) 1878**

Letter from Peter Hansell (address, Kingsdon Rectory, Taunton) to Charles Faulkner. Hansell hopes that the College can return the draft conveyance of glebe land (as in **UC:E26/C1/12** above) to the Registrar at Wells before the Long Vacation.

**UC:E26/C1/14****29 Sep–2 Oct 1920**

Letter from the Rector of Kingsdon (with a draft reply from A. B. Poynton) on whether the College had a record of the conveyance of the site of the old Sunday school (it did).

**UC:E26/C1/15****29 Feb 1924**

Letter to A. B. Poynton concerning a request from a Mrs. G. Neal of Kingsdon. She is planning to purchase the ruins of the rectory and the ground adjoining, and wonders whether the College is willing to sell some adjoining

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land there. Mrs. Neal is presumably a relation of William Neal, who had bought the advowson on 1885.

**UC:E26/M1 - MAPS**

- UC:E26/M1/1** **1873**  
 Map of Kingsdon Glebe  
**Draughtsman:** E. Vining  
**Scale:** 1 inch to 3 chains  
**Size:** 350 by 395 mm  
**Inscribed:** ["Kingsdon Glebe 1873" added later in pencil, possibly by Charles Faulkner. Buildings and fields are labelled]  
**Signed:** E. Vining. Yeovil  
**Dated:** [See above]  
**Medium:** Ink with pink, red and green washes.  
**Support:** Linen paper.  
**Format:** 1 sheet.
- UC:E26/M1/2** **n.d. (1870s?)**  
 Map of Kingsdon Glebe  
**Draughtsman:** Unknown  
**Scale:** 1 inch to 3 chains  
**Size:** 325 by 360 mm  
**Inscribed:** [Uninscribed, but buildings and fields are labelled]  
**Signed:** Unsigned.  
**Dated:** Undated  
**Medium:** Ink with red wash and brown crayon.  
**Support:** Linen paper  
**Format:** 1 sheet  
**Notes:** This map appears to be a rather rough copy of **UC:E26/M1/1** above.
- UC:E26/M1/3** **n.d. (mid-19th cent.?)**  
 Map of Kingsdon Glebe  
**Draughtsman:** Unknown  
**Scale:** Not given  
**Size:** 240 by 205 mm  
**Inscribed:** [Uninscribed, but buildings and fields are labelled]  
**Signed:** Unsigned.  
**Dated:** Undated  
**Medium:** Black and red ink.  
**Support:** Paper  
**Format:** 1 sheet