CHAIRMAN’S INTRODUCTION

There are frequent references to Magna Carta in this edition of the newsletter, not surprisingly. Cathedral libraries and archives are making a very substantial contribution to the national observance of this important anniversary. Shortly before the General Election I had the pleasure of showing the then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Mr Sajid Javid, the exhibition we have opened in Worcester Cathedral tracing the Worcester connections to the story of Magna Carta and King John. He acknowledged the contribution made by cathedrals to the life of the nation, not only by way of the architectural heritage but also through their educational and cultural activities, in which libraries, archives and other collections play a very important role. This has been an important factor in opening the door to direct government funding for cathedrals, and places cathedral collections at the forefront of the continuing case for such funding.

Triennial Conference
I am very glad to say that the Triennial CLAA Conference will be hosted at Worcester Cathedral from the afternoon of Wednesday 29th September to the morning of Saturday 1st October 2016. This is later in the year than our conferences have usually been, but is made necessary by a major King John conference which we are holding earlier in the year. My colleagues and I look forward to welcoming delegates from across Britain and Ireland, and sharing with you the riches of the Worcester Cathedral Library and Archive. There are other places of interest in and near Worcester as well: the ‘Hive’, Worcester’s new joint city and university library, incorporating the record office, and the magnificent Hurd Library at Hartlebury Castle. Please make a note of the date now.

Peter Atkinson, Dean of Worcester

EDITOR’S INTRODUCTION

Magna Carta and Cathedrals
The Magna Carta anniversary in June is of great significance for cathedrals and their collections. Thus, this newsletter is inevitably something of a ‘Magna Carta Special Issue’!

Three of the four surviving copies of the 1215 Magna Carta have been identified as coming from cathedrals: Salisbury, Lincoln and Canterbury. The 1215 Magna Carta is now thought to have been distributed to bishops, rather than to the King’s sheriffs, for publication through each diocese and for safe-keeping. Cathedrals were strongholds of record-keeping, with muniments kept securely alongside manuscript books and other precious collections. Other cathedrals hold later issues of Magna Carta and documents relating to the Magna Carta story, including Durham, Hereford, Worcester and Christ Church Cathedral Dublin. The major exhibition at the British Library, ‘Magna Carta: law, liberty, legacy’, includes loans from a number of cathedral collections. The cathedral cities of St Albans, Bury St Edmunds and Canterbury are amongst the five designated Magna Carta Towns of England as is the City of London, because of their links with the Magna Carta story.
Magna Carta is a key document for the history of the Church: one of the three clauses which remain on the statute books today states that the ‘English church is to be free’. This adds yet another reason for its anniversary to be commemorated by cathedrals. That the anniversary falls in the summer months is particularly fortunate, as the good weather and long days provide opportunities for a wide range of commemorative events. This June we can highlight the important role cathedrals have played in the history of our country and draw attention to our rich written collections. We can also bring medieval history to life with some mid-summer joy.

Cressida Williams

NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Canterbury Cathedral
At the end of last year, the Archives and Library continued to mark the anniversary of the outbreak of World War I. On 8th December, the Archives produced a display to commemorate HMS Kent and the Battle of the Falklands. This was viewed by descendants of those who served on the ship, who were very moved to see the documents and memorabilia on show. Items exhibited included the collection of the ship’s captain, Captain Allen, which is now on deposit with the Cathedral.

At the beginning of the year, the discovery of the ‘Canterbury Magna Carta’ was announced. One of the two copies of the 1215 Magna Carta held at the British Library was identified by Prof David Carpenter as the copy formerly held at Canterbury Cathedral. This document was removed from the Cathedral’s archive in about 1630 by Sir Edward Dering and entered the collection of Sir Robert Cotton. Badly burnt in the 18th century, it is one of the last exhibits in the British Library exhibition. The visitor is struck by the fact that such a visually unimpressive item can have had such an extraordinary legacy. This discovery added to Canterbury’s links with the Magna Carta story. Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, was a central figure in the negotiations leading to the agreement of 1215.

Eight items from the Cathedral’s collections have been lent to the British Library’s exhibition. These include items from the tomb of Archbishop Hubert Walter (d1205), our medieval seal press and a letter sent to Langton by papal commissioners relating to the excommunication of rebellious barons. We will be lending further items to Canterbury’s museum, at the Beaney, for its ‘Canterbury in the Age of Magna Carta’ exhibition.

The Cathedral has been working with local partners on a programme of commemorate events. These include a service with a parade, a family trail and a 6th form conference. Details are available on our website.

The Archives and Library introduced a self-service photography pilot in our reading room in April, in response to requests from researchers. We will monitor comments from users and staff on the service.

Dr Sarah Turner joined the Canterbury Journey project team as Collections Manager at the beginning of June. Our Head of Book and Paper Conservation, Ariane Langreder, secured ICON accreditation at the beginning of the year. To our knowledge, Ariane is the only paper conservator employed by a cathedral in the UK and Ireland. We intend to expand our paper conservation service and to take in more external work. If other cathedrals are interested in this service, please do get in touch.

Cressida Williams,
Canterbury Cathedral Archives and Library
Dublin, Christ Church Cathedral

Those members of the CLAA whom we had the pleasure of welcoming to Christ Church in 2013 may recall that among our treasures is the Liber Niger, a 14th-century collection of documents brought to the Cathedral by Prior Henry la Warr, an Augustinian canon from Bristol who became Prior in 1300. The Liber Niger assumes particular importance in 2015, for it contains medieval copies of a text of Magna Carta. No original copy of the charter is to be found in Ireland, but that is not to say that Magna Carta holds no interest for us. Indeed, because the Great Charter was intended to protect from royal tyranny not only the barons but also the Church, among those present at Runnymede was the Archbishop of Dublin.

John was King of England and Lord of Ireland, and so his rule extended to this country, at least in theory. Thus, the charter was of significance for the Irish feudal lords of the time. There was a similar Irish charter promulgated in 1216, Magna Carta Hiberniae, and it came as a surprise to many of us to learn that elements of that charter, which derives from that of 1215, survive among the laws that at present constitute the statute book of this Republic!

So Magna Carta has an Irish dimension, and the Cathedral is co-operating with the Irish Legal History Society (a body that embraces members of the legal profession and the judiciary in both the Republic and Northern Ireland) and with the Church of Ireland Historical Society in arranging events to mark the 800th anniversary of both charters.

We are opening in June a permanent exhibition in the Treasury which will endeavour to explain the importance of Magna Carta for Ireland today as well as yesterday, and have little doubt that this will be of interest not only to local visitors but also to those from overseas, not least those from Great Britain and the United States. We are also arranging an autumn series of popular lunchtime lectures on the same subject. The Irish Legal History Society proposes to mount a conference on Magna Carta at Christ Church in November 2016 to mark 800 years of Magna Carta Hiberniae.

As many will be aware, the MC800 Committee, chaired by Sir Robert Worcester, is supporting the huge number of celebrations that are taking place in Britain, and because of the events that we are planning at Christ Church we were invited to a stakeholders meeting at the Temple in March, when I had an opportunity to tell people about the Irish dimension, and I discovered how many cathedrals are involved.

One final word about the Christ Church, Dublin, connection: King John died very shortly after the issuing of Magna Carta and the aftermath of its promulgation was largely in the reign of his successor, Henry III. But Henry was a minor, so regents ruled on his behalf. And one of the regents, most conspicuous where the implementation of Magna Carta was concerned, was William Marshal, son-in-law of Richard de Clare (Strongbow), who is buried at Christ Church and whose monument our guests may remember seeing in the nave of the Cathedral.

Dr Kenneth Milne,
Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin
Magna Carta was reissued in Durham Cathedral on 12th November 1216 at Bristol. The circumstances of this were very different to those of Runnymede in the previous year. King John had just died and been buried in Worcester. His nine-year old son had just been crowned as Henry III in Gloucester Abbey. His principal supporters, William Marshal Earl of Pembroke and the papal legate Guala, were in a major fight with the French Prince Louis and his supporters who controlled much of the south and east of the country. Support for the royal party needed rallying. Magna Carta, far from being imposed on the king, was now reissued in a bid to rally support to the king. As well as having a very different purpose, it was also a very different document, with the number of clauses considerably reduced. This included the dropping of the proscriptive council of 25 barons as Marshal and Guala had no desire to have their authority impugned.

This reissue was the start of a series of reissues during the rest of the century which helped to establish Magna Carta as the seminal document it is today. The next reissue, in 1217, saw clauses relating to forest law extracted and much amplified in a separate Forest Charter. Durham Cathedral holds copies of three of the Magna Carta reissues (1216, 1225 and 1300) and three of the Forest Charters (1217, 1225 and 1300). From June to August in 2015, the 1216 Magna Carta and the 1217 Forest Charter will be the centrepieces of an exhibition put on by Durham University Library in its Palace Green Library, adjacent to the Cathedral at the heart of Durham’s UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The ‘Magna Carta and the Changing Face of Revolt’ exhibition proceeds from these documents as the outcome of an act of rebellion, in which the barons were acting no longer as loyal subjects but, in their political engagement, as rebels and citizens. It will look at the subsequent long history of the contested identity of the citizen: who has the right to speak and act against authority, and are there limits on what citizens can say and do? The charters will be displayed alongside further documents from the Cathedral’s archive, items from the university’s collections and loans from other regional and national collections. The university and Cathedral will also run an engaging programme of related activities alongside the exhibition, from public lectures and family activities, to hands-on workshops to re-enactment events.

Dr Michael Stansfield,
Durham University Library
Durham's 1216 Magna Carta. Reproduced by kind permission of the Chapter of Durham Cathedral.
Hereford Cathedral

Five books from Hereford Cathedral's Chained Library are on display in the National Library of Wales's exhibition ‘Publisher and Plunderer? Sir John Prise and the First Welsh Books' until 27th June 2015.

Sir John Prise, administrator, antiquarian and henchman of Thomas Cromwell, played a direct role in the dissolution of the monasteries and drew up documents relating to Henry VIII’s divorces of Anne Boleyn and Anne of Cleves. He was also a bibliophile and lover of the Welsh language who preserved the earliest surviving Welsh manuscript, the Black Book of Carmarthen, in his own library and was responsible for the publication of the first book to be printed in Welsh, a collection of basic texts for religious observance, Yny lhyvyr hwnn. He also wrote a book defending the view of early British history put forward in the 12th century by Geoffrey of Monmouth, which passed on ancient legends about Merlin and King Arthur and traced the origins of Britain back to Brut, said to be the great-grandson of the Trojan hero Aeneas. John Prise died at his Hereford home, the former Benedictine priory of St Guthlac, in 1555, and left around 60 books to Hereford Cathedral Library.

Four medieval manuscript books—John's plunder from the monasteries he dissolved, including Gloucester Abbey and Cirencester Abbey—and one early printed book from his bequest, usually to be found within the Cathedral's Chained Library, are on display in the Hengwrt Gallery until 27th June. Is it too far-fetched to think that one day Thomas Cromwell may have been visiting John Prise and picked up one of these books in his library?

Rosemary Firmin, Librarian

Hereford Cathedral Library and Archives holds two Magna Carta related documents: one a 1217 revised Magna Carta issued by Henry III through his regents which, when reissued under his Great Seal in 1225, became the definitive, and subsequently enrolled, text of Magna Carta, the other a writ of King John issued from Runnymede on 20th June 1215 to the Sheriff of Gloucester and Hereford. It is the sole surviving example of the letter sent by the king informing his officials of the peace made with the barons and instructing them to ensure the terms of the charter be publicly known and kept. They are required to swear an oath to the Council of 25 and also to set up a jury to enquire into the evil customs of all royal officials. The sheriff who received this was Engelard de Cigogné. He would find that he was personally named in Magna Carta along with other members of the Atheé family, all of whom were to be immediately stripped of office for being particularly reviled agents of King John.

Hereford is mounting a number of exhibitions and events throughout 2015. Magna Carta is on display in an exhibition with documents, books and artefacts from the Cathedral and county museum collections entitled ‘Magna Carta: Icon of Justice, Pledge of Freedom’, which looks at the story of the 1217 issue, the law of the time and Magna Carta's influence on the law today. The writ of King John is included in the British Library's exhibition 'Magna Carta: law, liberty, legacy' which runs until 1st September. The writ will then be on display in Hereford. Additionally throughout the main body of the Cathedral, banners, pop-up displays and ‘hands on’ interactives tell the story of Magna Carta, its legacy, the part Hereford and the people of the Marches played in its making and life in the 13th century. For detailed information go to http://www.herefordcathedral.org/

Rosalind Caird, Archivist
The beginning of July marks the completion of a 16-month project to catalogue the archives of the Church of England Board for Social Responsibility and Board for Mission and Unity and predecessors. Made possible thanks to a generous grant from the Andrew Mellon Foundation via the National Cataloguing Grants Programme, the completed catalogues will provide online public access to a rich resource, offering insight into the thinking of the Church of England on a plethora of subjects during a period when the social fabric of nation and the world as a whole changed irredeemably.

The Board for Social Responsibility (BSR) was formed in 1958 as an Advisory Committee to the Church Assembly. An amalgamation of two earlier central Church bodies, it aimed ‘to promote and co-ordinate the thought and action of the Church in matters affecting family, social and industrial life’. Such a remit resulted in the Board becoming a central ‘think-tank’ within the Church of England and the archive it created provides an in-depth record of the Church’s role in the religious, political and social history of England and beyond. The decriminalisation of homosexual acts, threat of nuclear war, political unrest in Northern Ireland and South Africa, growth in multinational companies, and the demise of England’s industrial heartlands and resultant urban decay and deprivation are just a taster of the issues BSR investigated at length.

These investigations were generally carried out by means of a working party comprised of individuals of standing in the particular field under scrutiny. Drawn together regardless of faith, the party would, after much discussion and theorising, set their findings before General Synod and/or publish Reports. Further tasks falling to BSR included: advising clergy and laity at parish level on matters of social responsibility; accepting requests to provide evidence to central Government, Royal Commissions, departmental and Select Committees; writing reports on issues and briefs for bishops involved with debates in the House of Lords.

The history of the Board for Mission and Unity (BMU) is traceable back to 1884 and the formation of the Board of Missions of the Province of Canterbury. A subsequent survey carried out to ascertain ‘the spiritual wants’ of countries was the Church’s first tangible step in co-ordinating the previously piecemeal work of missionary societies. The results of the survey, it was hoped, would ‘direct attention to the openings providentially placed before the Church’.

Over time the work developed and expanded as the nature of mission transformed both at home and overseas. This evolution is perhaps best illustrated by the name changes the ‘Board’ underwent in the ensuing years. United Board of Missions, Missionary Council, Overseas Council, Church Assembly Council for Ecumenical Co-Operation and Missionary and Ecumenical Council of Church Assembly all preceded the formation of the BMU in 1972.

The BMU operated as the principal channel of communication between General Synod and the British Council of Churches, World Council of Churches, and the Council of European Churches, and devoted considerable time to building relationships with the dioceses and provinces of the
Anglican Communion. It also remained at the forefront of the reappraisal of how the Church of England engaged with world mission when publishing a Mission Audit in 1981. The unity aspect of the Board’s mandate manifested through constituted committees of the Board, such as the Committee of Roman Catholic Relations who were tasked to ‘guide and develop’ contact with the Roman Catholics and the Faith and Order Advisory Group, which advised on theological and ecumenical matters, particularly on plans for church union overseas.

The BMU archive dates back to the initial survey in the late 19th century and totals around 600 boxes of material. The BSR archive, which dates from its inauguration in 1958, is of similar size. Taken as a whole the archives will prove an invaluable resource to a broad spectrum of researchers affording, as it does, a multi-faceted, non-politically biased window into the changes experienced by society since the middle of the 20th century, both at home and abroad.

The catalogues are searchable on the joint catalogue of the Church of England Record Centre and Lambeth Palace Library, available at http://archives.lambethpalacelibrary.org.uk/CalmView/

Simon Sheppard, Assistant Archivist (Projects)

Lincoln Cathedral

Lincoln Cathedral’s Magna Carta is one of only four remaining original exemplars sealed by the authority of King John in 1215. Hidden in the Cathedral Archives for many years before coming to light, it spent the years of World War II in America for safe keeping. Churchill is said to have intended the Lincoln Magna Carta as a gift to the American people after the war. Happily for Lincoln, this plan never came to fruition and Magna Carta was returned to its rightful home. The first of April 2015 saw the opening of the new Magna Carta vault in Lincoln Castle where Magna Carta is on display alongside the Cathedral’s 1217 Charter of the Forest.

Many lectures and events are taking place in the Cathedral this year to celebrate this anniversary. The Library is taking part by having two special exhibitions. During April, May and June we have ‘Magna Carta: 1215 and beyond’, which includes a selection of manuscripts and early printed books which illustrate the way in which Magna Carta influenced thoughts on Common Law in, for example, The Reports of the Tudor lawyer Sir Edward Coke, and in Sir William Blackstone’s 18th-century Commentaries on the Laws of England. As a symbol of civil rights, the charter inspired the American colonists. Echoes of it appear in their Abstract of the Lawes of New England of 1641 which is also on display. Amongst the manuscripts will be Ralph Niger’s late 12th-century Commentary on the First and Second Book of Kings. Niger, a canon at Lincoln, had strong opinions on kingship, stemming from his outrage at the murder of Archbishop Thomas Becket, supposedly on the orders of King Henry II. Niger’s thoughts on the Old Testament Book of Kings reflect on what a king should be. His ideas influenced Stephen Langton, who as a boy from Langton by Wragby in Lincolnshire, is believed to have studied at the nearby Schools of Lincoln, centred on Lincoln Cathedral. As Archbishop of Canterbury, Langton advised on the wording of Magna Carta.

Throughout July, August and September the Library is one of the venues taking part in ‘Lincolnshire’s Great Exhibition’. The Usher Gallery, The Collection and the Library will be displaying a selection of Lincolnshire’s ‘treasures’. Of particular interest to me and the team of library volunteers is the fact that after almost 350 years we will finally be able to display the New Testament volume of the 12th-century Lincoln Chapter Bible alongside its Old Testament counterpart. The former somehow found its way to Trinity College Cambridge in the mid-17th century and the two volumes are finally being re-united for the duration of the Great Exhibition. Lincoln Cathedral’s Chapter Bible has international significance as the earliest English illustrated Romanesque Bible. Also on display will be the writ of William the Conqueror in which Remigius, the first Norman Bishop of the diocese, was given instructions to move to Lincoln in order to build a cathedral here. The exhibition will also include a selection of seals, atlases, manuscripts and charters which are not normally on display, some belonging to the Cathedral and some being loaned by, amongst others, the Spalding Gentleman’s Society and Burghley House at Stamford.

Julie Taylor, Cathedral Librarian

Cathedral Libraries and Archives Association Newsletter Summer 2015
The library of St Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny, has been transferred on long term loan to the Library of the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. Negotiations are continuing to secure an agreement to transfer the Bolton Library belonging to Cashel Cathedral to the Library of the University of Limerick.

Representative Church Body Library, Dublin
The library of St Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny, has been transferred on long term loan to the Library of the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. Negotiations are continuing to secure an agreement to transfer the Bolton Library belonging to Cashel Cathedral to the Library of the University of Limerick.

Lincoln’s writ of William the Conqueror

As part of the RCB Library’s project to digitise the Church of Ireland’s collections of architectural drawings of churches, work has begun to catalogue and digitise the architectural drawings of Christ Church Cathedral. This work will be undertaken, on a contract basis, by the architectural historian, Dr Michael O’Neill. The drawings of St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin, have already been digitised and may be viewed at www.archdrawing.ireland.anglican.org

An exhibition of archives and architectural drawings to mark the 150th anniversary of the restoration of the St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin, by Sir Benjamin Lee Guinness is being prepared. The exhibition will open in the Irish Architectural Archive in June and will be accompanied by a lunchtime lecture series.

Raymond Refaussé, Librarian and Archivist

Salisbury Cathedral
Salisbury Cathedral is fortunate to have today within its archive collection one of only four surviving original Magna Cartas from 1215. Traditionally it was thought that up to 40 copies (one for each county) were originally made and distributed to the sheriffs in England. However, it is now considered possible that only 13 copies were made and distributed to cathedrals for publication and safe keeping. The fact that of the surviving four 1215 documents, three have so far be proved to have historically been held by cathedrals, supports this theory. Salisbury Cathedral Archive also contains a 13th-century cartulary in which Magna Carta has been copied. The existence of this copy in the cartulary is only now becoming widely known and further research is needed on the text.
At Salisbury Magna Carta would originally have been received and stored at the Cathedral’s original site on the outskirts of modern Salisbury. Construction on the current Cathedral began in 1220 being substantially completed by 1258, during this time Magna Carta would have been transferred to the Cathedral’s Muniment Room where it was kept until the 19th century. It was then on display in the Cathedral Library and latterly in the Chapter House where it can be seen today. (Interestingly during the Second World War Magna Carta was stored for safe keeping at a government repository at Westwood Quarry, near Bradford on Avon. The quarry was later used for growing mushrooms!)

Salisbury has another important connection with Magna Carta through Elias of Dereham. Elias was the Archbishop of Canterbury, Stephen Langton’s, steward and right hand man. Langton had been the chief negotiator between John and the barons and Elias was commissioned with the distribution of ten charters: it is highly likely that Salisbury’s charter is one of these ten. From 1220 onwards Elias became a canon at Salisbury and is known as the mastermind behind the plans and construction of the new cathedral.

Another Salisbury connection is that of William Longspee, Earl of Salisbury (?1167-1226). William was John’s half-brother and is mentioned in Magna Carta’s preamble. Both William and his wife Ela were sheriffs of Wiltshire and laid foundation stones of the Cathedral. William was also the first person to be buried in Salisbury Cathedral.

Salisbury’s Magna Carta, although it has always been held at the Cathedral, has had a varied history regarding its care and storage. One of the medieval cupboards or ‘presses’ in which documents were stored still survives in the old Muniment Room and Magna Carta would probably have been kept in this. At some stage in the past, together with other charters in the archive, it was treated on the reverse with leather dressing. There also seemed to be a particularly non-typical method of folding documents at the Cathedral and several charters in the archive bear signs of the seal having been torn rather than cut off, as is also the case with Magna Carta.

The Salisbury Charter has often been described as ‘the best preserved’ or ‘the most beautifully written’ of the surviving four 1215 Magna Cartas. There is a particular difference between the script on Salisbury’s and the other three. The script on Salisbury’s is known as ‘Book Hand’ and would have traditionally been used when creating manuscript books: the script of the other three surviving Magna Cartas are in a ‘Chancery Hand’, a style commonly used in the royal chancery for all official documents. The ink on Salisbury’s is particularly clear and strong and appears to be the most stable. The recipe used for this batch of ink must have had just the right balance of ingredients to ensure that the colour intensity was strong and that it did not readily bleed when exposed to moisture. As a result the text is clearly legible even after 800 years, making it easy to read. It is also very fortunate that previous restoration treatments have not caused as much potential damage, particularly from the over-zealous use of water to flatten the parchment, as they might have done.

For the 800th anniversary the Cathedral was very fortunate to have received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a new display, interpretation and exhibition of Magna Carta together with a wide range of community engagement activities. The new interactive exhibition opened on 6th March and for the rest of the year events planned include: a lecture series, two themed Magna Carta light installations, a gala concert, ‘Magna Cantata’ (a newly commissioned musical work performed by children over four nights, performances of Shakespeare’s ‘King John’ by The Globe Theatre within the Cathedral, special commemorative services, a ‘Magna Flora’ flower festival, a free ‘LiberTea’ Party in the Cathedral Close, family and children’s workshops including spotlight talks on the Library and Archive collections, and a Barons’ Trail around Salisbury city centre.

Also as part of the HLF funding we have been able, for the first time, in collaboration with Chris Woods of the National Conservation Service, to undertake a full condition assessment of Magna Carta which will act as a base record for future monitoring and inspections. The new display case aims to improve visibility to Magna Carta for visitors and for the first time we are able to fully monitor the temperature, humidity and light conditions.

Emily Naish, Cathedral Archivist
Westminster Abbey

Like many of you, Westminster Abbey has received increased interest this year in its engrossment of Magna Carta. The Abbey owns one of the 24 original engrossments, a fine copy of the reissue of the charter by Edward I on 28th March 1300 (WAM LX). It is one of only six surviving engrossments of this particular charter. It is in good condition, in a fine Chancery-style hand over 63 lines of text. However, it has nothing left of the royal seal that would originally have been appended to it, fixed through the surviving slit in the bottom fold of the parchment. Part of this fold has at some point been trimmed away. William Blackstone, writing in 1759 in his important work The Great Charter and the Charter of the Forest, recorded of this copy that until recently ‘the word ‘Wilts’ was to be seen at the bottom... which was then unwisely cut off.’

Quite why the copy of the 1300 charter originally sent in to Wiltshire made its way quite early to Westminster is unclear, as the Abbey owned few estates or foundations in the county. Why, for example, did it not follow one of the surviving 1215 charters to Salisbury? Or the copy of the 1225 charter sent to Wiltshire, which was deposited at Lacock Abbey for safe custody at some point in the 13th century, and, remaining there, descended after the Dissolution to the Talbot family of Lacock, before being given to the British Museum by Miss Mathilda Theresa Talbot in 1945 (now British Library Add MS 46144)? If serendipity turns up any reference to why this might have happened, we would be delighted to hear of it.

The Abbey’s 1300 engrossment of Magna Carta will form the centrepiece of a display at a free exhibition at the Supreme Court around the corner from us on Parliament Square from late July until September this year.

Matthew Payne, Archivist

Worcester Cathedral

Since last winter all the books and archives have been packed and moved out of the Library’s main room, whilst the ceiling was repaired. This was possible thanks to a grant from the government’s First World War Centenary Fund. In the end the architect recommended that the nature of the repair work could well cause the books to suffer various problems if they were left in situ. Scaffolding and a hoist was constructed up the west face of the Cathedral to a library window. This was partly for the benefit of the workmen, but also proved invaluable in moving so much heavy material down to ground level.

The process saw each book wrapped in acid free tissue paper and then boxed up. The boxes had to weigh no more than 15kg. The books were protected in the boxes by bubble wrap and filling material. The historic books and archives are currently being kept in a specialist storage facility. In the end we had about 1500 boxes of material to move. There were roughly 1.5 kilometres of books and archives to prepare. The Library Assistant has worked out that once boxed up it was almost the equivalent in weight of a T34 tank that had to be taken outside. Charters and maps had to be removed from plan chests and carefully wrapped up, as well as artefacts and oil paintings. The Cathedral Library staff were overwhelmed by the kindness of cathedral volunteers and members of the congregation, as well as members of the public who heard about the scale of the problem and came to assist at very short notice. It is hoped that the books will be returned to the Cathedral in early June. The Library and Archive should reopen in August if all goes to plan.

Whilst the Library and Archive are not available for the moment the Librarian has been able to develop and prepare new tours on King John, and royal visitors to Worcester. This last project is something that the Cathedral is doing in co-operation with the Museum of Royal Worcester Porcelain to produce a joint day out for tourists.

After the success of his first exhibition, the Library Assistant Tom Hopkins has started work on his next one in our temporary office. He has chosen to look at the Nuremberg Chronicle as part of an exhibition about medieval printed books, and the medieval world view. His placement has been funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund’s Skills for the Future Scheme.

For the British Library’s exhibition on Magna Carta, the Dean and Chapter lent some relics of King John. It is expected that these will be returned in September this year. We were ably assisted by conservators who advised on condition reports, repaired textiles, and arranged for the making of boxes for the items.

David Morrison, Librarian
York Minster
The team spent much of the second half of 2014 developing a five-year Forward Plan as part of our Arts Council England (ACE) Accreditation Return. The plan was adopted by Chapter in November and since then has directed all work, enabling a more cohesive way of working. We divided the plan into four sections: Collections Development, Collections Information, Collections Access and Collections Care & Conservation.

Collections Development: Since January the team has embarked on a Collection Review and Profiling project to understand the quantity, quality and usage of our collection. We have been using various tested methodologies to help us understand better all elements of our collection to ensure it remains coherent, relevant and sustainable for our users and potential users. On 27th February we submitted our Accreditation Return and hope to hear whether we have maintained our Full Accreditation status by 31st August. We have also been reviewing our Library Partnership Agreement with the University of York. The Partnership Agreement provides the Chapter with our library staff and catalogue system to deliver our first class library service. The agreement is in place until 2020 and this is therefore a mid-term review to ensure it remains fit for purpose. Work has included a review of the document, a stakeholder engagement survey and a full review of the library service.

Collections Information: Work has begun on a review of Chapter’s Data Protection System which will result in a new policy being submitted for adoption in June. Work has also continued on our inventory to add categories that were initially not included such as monuments and windows. This work is being overseen by staff but mostly carried out by a team of volunteers. The inventory is also being transferred to CALM software which is making identification of material much easier.

Collections Access: The team delivered four adult learning sessions under the banner ‘Collections Unlocked’. The sessions looked to use the collection as a springboard for discussion around various topics and included a session looking at what we can learn about religious extremism through examination of the English Reformation, and a session entitled ‘Praying for Victory? The legacy of War’, which explored how prayer is used in times of war. We have also begun a close relationship with the army regiments based in York to help deliver some of their training around their values and standards. This uses objects from the story of Jonathan Martin who burnt down the Minster in 1829, probably as a result of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). The sessions have focussed on the importance of Codes of Ethics and the consequences of living outside of society’s codes. In addition we welcomed 1,530 people to the Old Palace in the first quarter of 2015, retrieving 555 objects for use by users or staff and lending 226 items from the Library. In March we received revalidation of the Customer Service Excellence Award for which we are a full partner with the University of York.

Collections Care & Conservation: Our NADFAS team has been working on our folio collection focusing on creating book shoes. We have also begun a storage audit to assess the capacity, environment, fittings suitability and accessibility of all our stores to help us determine what is best stored, where.

We have also enjoyed some personal successes with Library Assistant Maria Nagle being awarded a customer service award in March.

Sarah Griffin, Minster Librarian
THE CATHEDRAL LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES ASSOCIATION

The aims of the Cathedral Libraries and Archives Association are:

To advance education by the promotion, preservation and protection of cathedral libraries and archives in the United Kingdom and Ireland
The provision of appropriate access thereto

For our webpages, see http://cathedrallibrariesandarchives.wordpress.com/

Enquiries about membership should be directed to the Honorary Secretary or Treasurer.

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We aim to produce two issues of this letter each year, in summer and winter. Any contributions should be sent to the Editor, Mrs Cressida Williams, either by email to cressida.williams@canterbury-cathedral.org or by post to her at Canterbury Cathedral Archives and Library, The Precincts, Canterbury CT1 2EH, to reach her by 31st October for the winter issue, or 30th April for the summer issue. She would also welcome comments or suggestions for content.