Bringing the Godwine Charter home

2013 proved ‘the Year of the Charter’!

In spring 2013 the Cathedral Archives brought home to Canterbury ‘the Godwine Charter’, an exceptionally rare document, written between 1013 and 1020. It is older than any of the cathedral buildings which can be seen standing today. The charter was written in Canterbury, and was cared for at the cathedral until the 17th century, when it passed into the hands of Sir Edward Dering, collector and antiquarian.

The charter records the sale of some land in West Kent from a certain Godwine to Leofwine the Red. The sale was agreed in Canterbury, before Archbishop Lyfing, the Abbot of St Augustine’s Abbey, the monastic communities of the abbey and the cathedral, three young noblemen and various ‘good men’ of the City of Canterbury and beyond. It is written in Old English, a language very different to the English of today. On the reverse of the document a monk-archivist of the cathedral priory has written a description of the document.

The Godwine Charter is of great interest and importance for a number of reasons. It provides evidence for ways in which business was carried out in Canterbury some 1000 years ago, and the role of the cathedral priory in the community at that time. It is important for the development of language: it is written in a form of Old English which would have been understood in the city at that time. Recording a standard business transaction, it helps bring the Canterbury of a millennium ago to life. In 1011, only some years before the Godwine Charter was written, Canterbury had been sacked by the Vikings, with Archbishop Alphege captured. Alphege was killed by the Vikings in 1012.

At the Cathedral Archives, the charter is reunited with some 30 original charters, dating from before the Norman Conquest of 1066. These Anglo-Saxon charters are the oldest part of the written heritage of the cathedral and the city.
The Godwine Charter was purchased as a private treaty sale from the Schoyen Collection through Sotheby’s, with generous support from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Friends of the National Libraries, the Friends of Canterbury Cathedral, the Coral Samuel Charitable Trust and private donations. Because of our limited display facilities at the Archives, the Godwine Charter was on display at the Beaney Museum and Art Gallery in Canterbury until January.

On 17th October, we celebrated the publication of an edition of the texts of all Christ Church Anglo-Saxon charters by Prof Nicholas Brooks and Dr Susan Kelly. Prof Brooks presented us with a copy of the two-volume work before giving a lecture entitled ‘The fascination of the early charters of Canterbury Cathedral’. The Anglo-Saxon charters of the cathedral, some held here, but the majority held elsewhere, make up a highly important body of material, dating from the 7th century onwards. Prof Brooks’ and Dr Kelly’s publication is the product of many years’ work, and is a highly important contribution towards the scholarship of this era.

On 26th October, we held at the Beaney an Anglo-Saxon family activity day, run jointly with Beaney staff. Activities included making Anglo-Saxon brooches and sundials, writing in Anglo-Saxon script and taking part in a trail through the galleries. Godwine himself was represented by cathedral guide Hugh Elsom in authentic costume. Much fun was had by all!

The charter arrived in a ‘double frame’ – one frame framed into another. On the back of the frame was a handwritten transcription of the charter text written in blue ink. It was previously mounted onto a heavily discoloured paper support board and must have been displayed under severe light conditions for a long period of time as the support board showed strong discoloration and heavy foxing marks (brown stains) all over. There was also a previous repair with self-adhesive tape on the board which showed discoloration and permanent staining.

The charter itself was in very good condition showing its previous folding marks. The writing (ink) is very clear and in very good condition considering its age.

We were very saddened to learn of the death of Professor Brooks on 2nd February. Professor Brooks had served on the Cathedral Fabric Advisory Committee for many years, and was also a great friend at Canterbury, as well as a great scholar.
The parchment charter was previously mounted onto the support board with four glue dots. During the de-framing the charter was already loose and only held down by the glass.

The glue dots turned out to be non-reversible (non-removable). They also contained some paper residues from the support board.

As the charter must have been mechanically removed from the board in the past, the parchment showed skinning (thinned, loss of fibre) in the glue dot area.

Minimal conservation was undertaken in the form of mechanical removal of paper residues and thinning down the previous glue residues.

Parchment reacts to humidity changes really quickly in form of planar distortion or cockling.

To make sure the charter is fully supported during the exhibition period, 8 hinges were made of Japanese Paper and attached onto the verso of the charter using a reversible (removable) adhesive. Those hinges were slotted to a new acid-free, archival mount board to fully support the charter during float mounting even in case of fluctuations.

A window mount was cut and attached onto the new back board.

_Ariane Langreder_
In 1979/1981 I directed the project to catalogue the pre-1801 printed books in the Cathedral Library funded by the British Library. One of the innovations we planned was that we would record the names of previous owners of the books. Canterbury Cathedral was one of the first libraries to record provenance data in this way in a computer-based catalogue. Because of restrictions both of cataloguers’ work rate and of limits of data storage at the time, we were only able to record brief entries for former owners. ‘Smith, John (donor, Canterbury, 1778)’ would represent a very full entry. In particular, it was not possible to record a transcription of ownership inscriptions or descriptions of bookplates and binding stamps.

Since that time there have been very considerable advances in work on the field of provenance studies, which has become an important area of book history. Internet access to catalogue records has become an important resource for this research area and so I arranged about ten years ago for the pre-1801 provenance data to be made available through the provenance area on the web site of the Consortium of European Research Libraries where I worked at the time.

As part of my more recent research on the history of the Chapter Library in the seventeenth century, I became more aware of the need to enhance the recording of provenance data for the earlier collections. I arranged to receive an extraction of the provenance data from the catalogue records on the OPAC at the University of Kent for the Cathedral’s books printed before 1900. From this I have created a spreadsheet of the core Chapter Library books (excluding collections which have their own provenance history such as the Howley-Harrison and Elham collections).

For the past few years (when not prevented by the periods of closure), I have been working along the shelves in the Wolfson Library checking book-by-book and recording full transcription and descriptions of all provenance information. This has involved correcting some of the earlier data which had errors in transcription and adding entries which had been missed. I am also adding where possible full name forms from external authority files for the identifiable persons. One of the purposes of this re-recording is to provide enhanced provenance entries which could be uploaded to the OPAC to replace the existing provenance data.

This activity has led to two further outcomes: significant new data on the history of the Library and the Cathedral community in the seventeenth century and beyond; and a growing web resource documenting the early provenance history of the Chapter Library. This has also resulted in several public lectures and publications.

**Publications**


**Provenance web resource**

As well as planning to enhance the provenance data in the OPAC records for the Cathedral Library,
I have also investigated other ways of making these data visible on the internet. As an experiment, I have designed a web site using Semantic MediaWiki software: History of the Cathedral Library in Canterbury and its collections (http://ccl-history.referata.com/). This website contains a selection of entries for previous owners of the Cathedral Library’s books, concentrating on members of Chapter, donors to the Library, and well-known figures whose books have found their way into the collections through purchase (mainly in the nineteenth century). The entry for each name contains brief biographical information and links to some of the books which are to be found in the collections, each giving a transcription of ownership or presentation inscriptions, book plates, binding stamps, etc. The Semantic MediaWiki software is well-suited to classifying these entries. It is possible to see automatically generated lists for such categories as Deans, Canons, Kentish clergy, armorial book plates, and much more. A full list of these categories can be seen at http://ccl-history.referata.com/wiki/Special:Categories. The project is under constant modification and may well never be concluded.

David Shaw

At the beginning of September the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) Rare Books and Special Collections Group held its annual conference in the Cathedral Lodge. The theme was digitisation and papers covered a wide range of issues including the planning, implementing and sustainability of digital projects. Delegates were offered the opportunity to visit the Cathedral Library, Archives or the roof spaces; alternative visits were offered to the University of the Creative Arts and the University of Kent Special Collections and the British Cartoon Archive. The conference was attended by over 90 delegates and their response to the conference was overwhelmingly that it was a great success!

Medieval Pirates: Pirates, Raiders and Privateers 1204-1453

Jill Eddison is an author, teacher and historical researcher who, in this book, brings us a highly original study of medieval piracy. Its focus is principally on the English Channel from the early thirteenth to the mid fifteenth century when England was faced by a hostile France, with which it engaged in recurrent phases of military conflict.

The study ends with the conclusion of the Hundred Years War in 1453, and encompasses periods during which the Normandy coastline was firmly in French hands. We are shown how the lack of strong political controls on either coast bordering the Channel made that waterway vulnerable to disorder, in particular privateering. We are reminded how sailing techniques and contemporary maritime technology exposed ships to great risks in open water, inclining mariners to hug the coastline and, therefore, exposing them to attack from privateers.

The Future of the Past: Digitisation of Rare and Special Materials

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This year sees the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War I, the ‘Great War’. This will be remembered in many ways over the following years. At the Cathedral Archives and Library, and also at the library and museum at the Beaney, we have been looking through our collections to identify material of relevance to the war. This is partly because of a project led by the Schools of Arts and History at the University of Kent, working with the sixth forms of the Langton Boys and Girls schools. As part of this project, school pupils will prepare an exhibition commemorating the war’s centenary, to be displayed at the Beaney next October. The pupils will make use of evidence and resources from the Cathedral Archives and Library, the Beaney, and other local libraries and museums, and have visited us for an introduction to our collections. They will be helped in their research by academics and student helpers from the University.

There is a wealth of historical material here relating to Canterbury during World War I. This includes newspapers, photographs, correspondence, diaries and artefacts. Of great interest are the records of the war hospital, known as a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) hospital, which was in Dane John House. There are photographs of nurses and staff with patients, still and calm; the reality of life in these hospitals will have been harsh and challenging.

We have letters from soldiers from the front, including from the trenches, which can tell many personal stories. Many of these soldiers died in action. There is a diary maintained by Frederick Sanders Maxted of the East Kent Yeomanry, giving details of his service. Maxted returned home after the war, and tells us about going shopping for clothes, and how odd it felt not wearing his uniform after so many years.

We have information relating to daily life in Canterbury during the war years, and how the city was run. There is also much information about the construction of war memorials in the city and local churches, and about commemorations after the war. In a scrapbook there is an early remembrance poppy from 1921.

Much of this material has been little-used by historians. Indeed, we are much more familiar with the history of our city during World War II. There many stories here for the Langton pupils, and any others with an interest, to explore. The exhibition in the autumn promises to be very fascinating and also very moving.
The DocExplore project, which has been featured in previous newsletters, is now nearing completion, with the DocExplore software launched here in September. DocExplore is a collaborative project between IT specialists, historians and archivists in Canterbury and Rouen, supported by EU INTERREG IVa funding. The DocExplore software enables digitised versions of historical manuscripts to be explored via a touch-screen, simulating, as far as possible, the experience of accessing the physical object itself. For further details of the project, see www.docexplore.eu

Presentations using the software have been prepared using manuscripts from the Archives and Library, and also from the Municipal Library in Rouen. High-resolution images from the manuscripts have been used, with further content added by students and academics to explain the manuscripts, including commentary, photographs, film and sound. The items from our collections which are currently featured are the 17th-century travel diary of John Bargrave, early charters of French kings, and an illuminated prayer book known as a ‘Book of Hours’. Further presentations based on Canterbury manuscripts will be completed in due course.

We showcased the project over the weekend of 14th September 2013, as part of the Heritage Open Days initiative. Some 340 people visited over two days. We had three touch-screens demonstrating the software, panels explaining the project, and a complementary manuscript exhibition. The feedback from those visiting was extremely positive. The presentations can still be explored using the touch-screen in our reading room. Do have a go, and let us know what you think!

Opening up the Archives
**Library Accessions**

N.P. Brooks and S.E. Kelly (Eds.)
Charters of Christ Church Canterbury: (Anglo-Saxon Charters)
OUP/British Academy (2013).


**Archives: recently catalogued (selection)**

**Parish Records**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>Date Period</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adisham, Holy Innocents (U3-155)</td>
<td>1815-1840</td>
<td>Liturgical books, 1815-1840</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barham, St John the Baptist (U3-163)</td>
<td>2006-2011</td>
<td>Registers of marriages, 2006-2011</td>
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<td>Canterbury, St Alphege (U3-8)</td>
<td>1964-1971</td>
<td>Register of services, 1964-1971</td>
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<td>Canterbury, St Peter (U3-90)</td>
<td>1890-2010</td>
<td>Register of baptisms, 1890-2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chartham, St Mary (U3-154)</td>
<td>1890-1925</td>
<td>Registers of services, 1890-1925</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chilham, St Mary (U3-191)</td>
<td>1980-2009</td>
<td>Registers of marriages, 1980-2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deal, St George (U3-67)</td>
<td>1809-1810</td>
<td>Sextons’ registers, Appointment of curate, 1718, Parish magazines, 1955-1975</td>
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<td>Eastry, St Mary the Virgin (U3-275)</td>
<td>1983-2013</td>
<td>Registers of marriages, 1983-2013</td>
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<td>Kingsdown, St John the Evangelist (U3-270)</td>
<td>1990-2013</td>
<td>Registers of marriages, 1990-2013</td>
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<td>Littlebourne, St Vincent (U3-73)</td>
<td>1922-1972</td>
<td>Register of baptisms, 1922-1972</td>
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<td>Petham, All Saints (U3-84)</td>
<td>1926-2011</td>
<td>Register of marriages, 1926-2011</td>
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<td>Reculver, St Mary the Virgin (U3-99)</td>
<td>2008-2012</td>
<td>Register of marriages, 2008-2012</td>
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<td>Ripple, St Mary the Virgin (U3-132)</td>
<td>1884-1996</td>
<td>Register of marriages, 1884-1996</td>
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<td>St Andrew’s Reading Street</td>
<td>1905-1910</td>
<td>Papers relating to the church, 1905-1910</td>
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<td>Sturry, St Nicholas (U3-48)</td>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>Parish magazines, 2011-2012</td>
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<td>Sutton by Dover, SS Peter &amp; Paul (U3-142)</td>
<td>1883; 1914 &amp; 1979</td>
<td>Register of marriages, 1883; 1914 &amp; 1979</td>
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<tr>
<td>Woodnesborough, St Mary (U3-64)</td>
<td>1883; 1914 &amp; 1979</td>
<td>Papers relating to Patronage, 1883; 1914 &amp; 1979, PCC account books, 1957-1978</td>
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**Canterbury City Council**

Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution (CC-F/H)
Subscription payments, 1825-1827, Account books, 1825-1847

Canterbury Gaol (CC-J/Q/P)
Misconduct Book, 1844-1867

Printed Books (CC-M/4/3)
Relating to the Poor Law

**Dean and Chapter of Canterbury**

Godwine Charter, 1013x1018 (DCc-Chant/S.458)
Designs of St Martin’s Chapel, 1920s-1930s (DCc-Plan/573-574)
Photograph of the Cathedral from the North West (DCc-Photo)
Map of woodlands in Chartham and Godmersham parishes, 1717 (Map/218)

**Parish Council**

Harbledown Parish Council (PC9)
Minutes, 2003-2012

**Unofficial**

Friends of Canterbury Cathedral:
Death mask of Miss Margaret Babington, 1958 (U167)

**Dates for your diary**

Archives and Library Closed: 11th – 28th April 2014 inclusive