



## NEWS REVIEW

## Lincoln Record Society



## THE COUNCIL AND OFFICERS

would like to welcome you to the sixth edition of the News Review



Welcome to the sixth edition of the News Review. I thought our readers might find it interesting to learn a little bit more about what happens behind the scenes at the Lincoln Record Society. The Society's Finance and Publications Committee (FPC) meets four times a year and plans and monitors our finances under the direction of the treasurer, Ken Hollamby, and our extensive publications programme, under the direction of our general editor, Nicholas Bennett. Following our decision to create a distinct Kathleen Major Series to issue publications containing medieval documents, in which our county and diocese is so extraordinarily rich, we also have a general editor for that series, Dr Philippa Hoskin. It is she who is the editor of the first volume in that series, *Robert Grosseteste as Bishop of Lincoln: the Episcopal Rolls 1235 – 1253*, which was published recently.

Every year new proposals for future volumes are made to the committee,

and we have to judge whether the material it is planned to include falls within our remit; whether we are confident of the competence of the editor or editors involved, and their commitment to carrying the project through; and whether it is of such material as to be of interest to our members, or at least a significant proportion of them. If we give the editor our blessing to proceed with the volume, we monitor progress meeting by meeting, even if it is known that it is likely to take several years to complete. This enables us to plan the order in which volumes will appear and the approximate date, or at least the year, of publication. Decisions are also made as to whether to give financial assistance towards the research or publication costs of projects carried out by other organisations or individuals which applicants judge to be within our area of interest. We have set procedures for application in such cases, but there is nevertheless often a need to seek further information from applicants before a decision can be made.

Members of the FPC also undertake other regular duties; Alan Kissane, for example, is membership secretary, and Marianne Wilson edits the News Review. Special events, such as the recent conference on Magna Carta, entail considerable extra work involving organisation and liaison with partners and suppliers of services. All members of the Society should be aware of the considerable commitment of time and energy that is made by FPC members to ensure that our aims, objectives

and financial and legal obligations are met at the appropriate time, and that the Council and members attending the Annual General Meeting are fully informed so that they are in a position to endorse or question the decisions made by the Committee on their behalf.

We have a very full and interesting News Review in store for you this time around, our after dinner speaker from the Magna Carta conference, Lord Patrick Cormack, has written a piece about Lincoln's Magna Carta year and there is a write up of the Magna Carta conference by Marianne Wilson, with some photographs of the conference to accompany it. David Carpenter, our keynote speaker from the conference, presents a short précis of his keynote lecture. Michael Jones brings us the second part of his article on Medieval Lincolnshire Archives Abroad and I have written a longer obituary of our former president, Sir James Holt, which is particularly pertinent in this anniversary of Magna Carta. There is a write up of the 2014 book launch at Ayscoughfee Hall and Wendy Atkin brings us up to date with her current research on the back page. I do hope you enjoy it.

David Crook





## LINCOLN'S MAGNA CARTA YEAR

The Historic Lincoln Trust, of which I have the honour to be Chairman, is much involved in the celebrations for Lincoln's Magna Carta year.

We are proud to be associated with the LRS in the April conference. We are involved in a number of important and fascinating lectures at the Cathedral, including one from the Governor of the Bank of England on July 16th and another from Lord Powell of Bayswater, a Lincolnshire man himself, who will talk about Margaret Thatcher and his long working relationship with her, in the Cathedral on 15th May. We are also involved with the Eastern Three Choirs Festival, which will run over the long weekend of the 18th – 21st June, and in the commissioning of a special setting for the Te Deum by Michael Berkeley, which will first be performed at the service on June 8th, following the opening of the Magna Carta Vault in the Castle grounds, for which we have been responsible for raising most of the money. We are particularly grateful to the David Ross Foundation for a magnificent gift of £1.4 million and to the Garfield Weston Foundation for £100,000.

However, the most long-lasting and spectacular historical and artistic event in Lincoln this year will be Lincolnshire's Great Exhibition. With manuscripts and printed books in the Cathedral's Medieval and Wren libraries, and great national and local treasures in the Collection and Usher Gallery, this will be the greatest exhibition ever staged in Lincolnshire.

It is impossible to give the full and definitive list of exhibits at this stage but we are borrowing from most of the great national museums and galleries and from virtually all the great houses of Lincolnshire. Just to give a foretaste I can tell readers of this publication that in the Magna Carta Vault itself, side by side with Lincoln Cathedral's Magna Carta, and its Charter of the Forest, we will, by courtesy of the National Archives, be displaying one of the very rare 1225 issues of Magna Carta, in effect the definitive version of the charter. In the Cathedral library, for the first time in four centuries, the Chapter Bible will be reunited. Somehow one of the volumes went walk about early in the 17th century and ended up in Trinity College Cambridge. This year they will be reunited. Another of the treasures in the library will be Robert, Lord Burghley's, personally annotated atlas. In the Usher Gallery we will have a room devoted to topographical views of Lincolnshire and these will include not only a number of fine Turners but also the great and extraordinary Louth Panorama – the only work of its kind in Europe. Another room in the Usher will be devoted to the work of George Stubbs, who did his anatomical research at Horkstow on the banks of the Humber. And in the Collection we will have exhibits relating to many of the great Lincolnshire figures of the past, from Gilbert of Sempringham to Margaret Thatcher. We shall, for instance, have a remarkable altarpiece depicting St Hugh and St Ursula. But without doubt the jewel in the collection will be the Luttrell Psalter –

an exquisite fourteenth century illuminated manuscript and perhaps the greatest work of art ever to be associated with Lincolnshire. We are proud to be able to display the Luttrell Psalter in partnership with the British Library, to whom we are particularly grateful for this and other loans. The exhibition will open to the public on the 27th June and will close on the 27th September. Please come.

Patrick, Lord Cormack



## BOOK LAUNCH 2014

The Lincoln Record Society volume for 2014 was an invaluable volume of correspondence between two Lincolnshire antiquaries, William Stukeley (1687-1765) and Maurice Johnson (1688-1755). The Correspondence of William Stukeley and Maurice Johnson, 1714-1754, edited by Diana and Michael Honeybone, cover Johnson's work as a lawyer and the development of his cherished Spalding Gentlemen's Society, and Stukeley's career as a physician, his ordination in 1729, and eventual return to London in 1747. The two friends wrote on a wide range of topics, including current affairs, but the letters also reflect cultural life and portray the nature of life in South Lincolnshire. The volume was launched at Ayscoughfee Hall, Spalding, on Friday 26th September 2014. Michael and Diana gave an interesting lecture, providing some highlights from the correspondence which whetted our appetites to read on. The book was officially launched by Tony Worth, who was Lord Lieutenant of Lincolnshire at that time, and who made known his interest in the volume in a short speech. Tea and cakes followed this, a mainstay of all LRS book launches, which proved to be extremely delicious!

Marianne Wilson

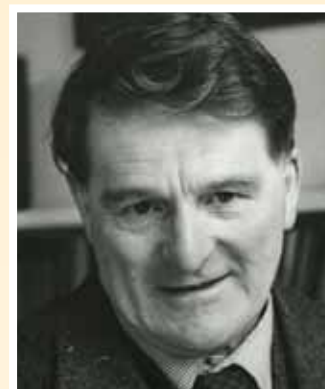


Left to right: Michael Jones, Tony Worth, Michael Honeybone, Diana Honeybone and Nicholas Bennett



## PROFESSOR SIR JAMES HOLT, 26 APRIL 1922 - 9 APRIL 2014

Sir James (Jim) always characterised himself a Yorkshireman, while conceding that both his parents were Lancastrians who migrated to the White Rose county after the First World War.



Brought up in Bradford and educated at Bradford Grammar School, he gained a place to study History at Queen's College Oxford, but his studies there were interrupted by the Second World War. He served in the Royal Artillery in continental Europe, and was one of the first British troops to

arrive at the Belsen concentration camp in 1945, an experience he never spoke about, even to his family. In 1945 he resumed his education as an undergraduate, and then began research as a Harmsworth Scholar at Merton College in 1947. His mentors during that period were the great medieval historians John Prestwich and Vivian Hunter Galbraith. He completed his doctoral thesis, on *The 'northern' barons under John*, in 1952, by which time he was working, initially as a junior lecturer, at the University of Nottingham. There he eventually wrote the two books on the reign of King John that made his name, and pencil markings still visible in the margins of editions of medieval chronicles in the university library bear witness to his research. At Nottingham he also married, in 1950, Alice Suley ('Betty'), who predeceased him; they had a son, Edmund.

After being promoted to the rank of professor in 1962, in 1966 he left Nottingham to take up the professorship of History at the University of Reading. He remained at Reading until 1978, a year after he published a history of the university's first fifty years. He was then appointed Professor of Medieval History at Cambridge, a post he held until 1988. Initially a fellow of Emmanuel College, from 1978 to 1981, in the latter year he became Master of Fitzwilliam College. There he directed important developments, including an ambitious building programme and the related fund-raising, after which he retired in 1988. During that period, he had been elected as a Fellow of the British Academy in 1978, and served as President of the Royal Historical Society from 1981 to 1985. He was knighted in 1990, and was presented with a festschrift by some of his former pupils (and one former mentor) in 1994.

In 1987, not long before his retirement, he took on the presidency of the Lincoln Record Society, highly appropriate because of personal links he had developed during his career. He had a longstanding friendship with Kathleen Major, and a close connection to Sir Frank and Lady Doris Stenton, who were still living in Reading when he took up his chair there; after their deaths, successively in 1967 and 1971, they were buried together

at Halloughton, near Southwell Minster.

In recent years, still very active in the affairs of the Society after stepping down from the presidency in 1996, Sir James was accustomed to attend meetings by travelling to Lincoln en route between his home in Barton, near Cambridge, and his Yorkshire home in Ilkley, which he used among other things as a base for his frequent visits to watch the Yorkshire cricket team play at Headingley, a favourite recreation. One of his own cricketing memories was of dropping a slip-catch off the bowling of England fast-bowler Bill Voce while playing in a match at Trent Bridge, and the reaction of the great man. An intriguing feature of the LRS committee meetings was his attempts to navigate his large car between the narrow and solid entrance posts leading to the meeting room in the Cathedral Centre, at least one of which was not entirely successful.

The first of his three great books, *The Northerners* (1961), was an account of the importance of the north of England in the growth of the opposition to King John, which eventually led to the grant of Magna Carta in 1215. In it, he included much material about Lincolnshire, which for the purposes of the rebellion was part of the north. Three of the most prominent Northerners, Thomas of Moulton, Alexander of Pointon and Gilbert de Gand of Folkingham, came from the very south of the county, while the importance of Lincoln in the events of the period was fully brought out. Four years later he produced the outstanding account of the Charter itself in *Magna Carta* (1965), which marked the 750th anniversary of its issue. Both works have a depth of detail, derived from his unparalleled familiarity with the record sources, combined with an acute analysis of the intellectual and social background. Subsequently he worked extensively on the history of the great landowning families of England during the period between the Domesday survey of 1086 and Magna Carta. Then, over a period of twenty years, and following an academic controversy with the late Rodney Hilton in the 1960s, he researched and wrote his third major work, on the legend of Robin Hood, published in 1981, which became, along with the new edition of the early texts by Barrie Dobson and John Taylor (1976), the acknowledged starting point for the now extensive academic study of the historical basis of the legend. All three of his books were revised for important second editions between 1989 and 1992.

Sir James died on 9 April 2014, early in the month which would have included his ninety-second birthday, and he failed by only a little over a year to live to mark the 800th anniversary of the great event with which his name will always be closely associated. A memorial service, at which the Lincoln Record Society was represented, was held in Cambridge on 25 October 2014.

David Crook







# LINCOLN RECORD SOCIETY PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

After a decade as President of the Society, Professor Michael Jones has signalled his intention to resign at the AGM in 2015.

The officers of the Society invite any member wishing to nominate a new President to do so in writing to Dr Paul Dryburgh, Honorary Secretary, c/o Lincoln Cathedral Library, Lincoln Cathedral, Minster Yard, LN2 1PX, or by email: [secretary@lincoln-record-society.org.uk](mailto:secretary@lincoln-record-society.org.uk). Members should have the prior agreement of their candidate that he or she is willing to stand and commit to chairing AGM and Council annually, attend quarterly meetings of the Finance and Publications Committee in Lincoln and otherwise represent the Society at events and in academic and public fora. The new President will be formally elected by members at the 2015 AGM, which will be held at Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln, from 2pm on Saturday 24th October.

## MEDIEVAL LINCOLNSHIRE ARCHIVES ABROAD, II

In the last News Review, I briefly described some on-line resources for the links between medieval Lincolnshire and Brittany which have recently become available.

The documents survive in the Trésor des chartes des ducs de Bretagne. This miraculously escaped destruction at the Revolution when the door to the chamber where they were housed remained hidden behind barrels of gunpowder in the castle at Nantes, when those sent to retrieve and burn them failed to gain entry. The Trésor was properly inventoried in 1395 by the earliest-known ducal archivist, Hervé Le Grant, and his inventory of 838 items was fully edited by your president in 2007.

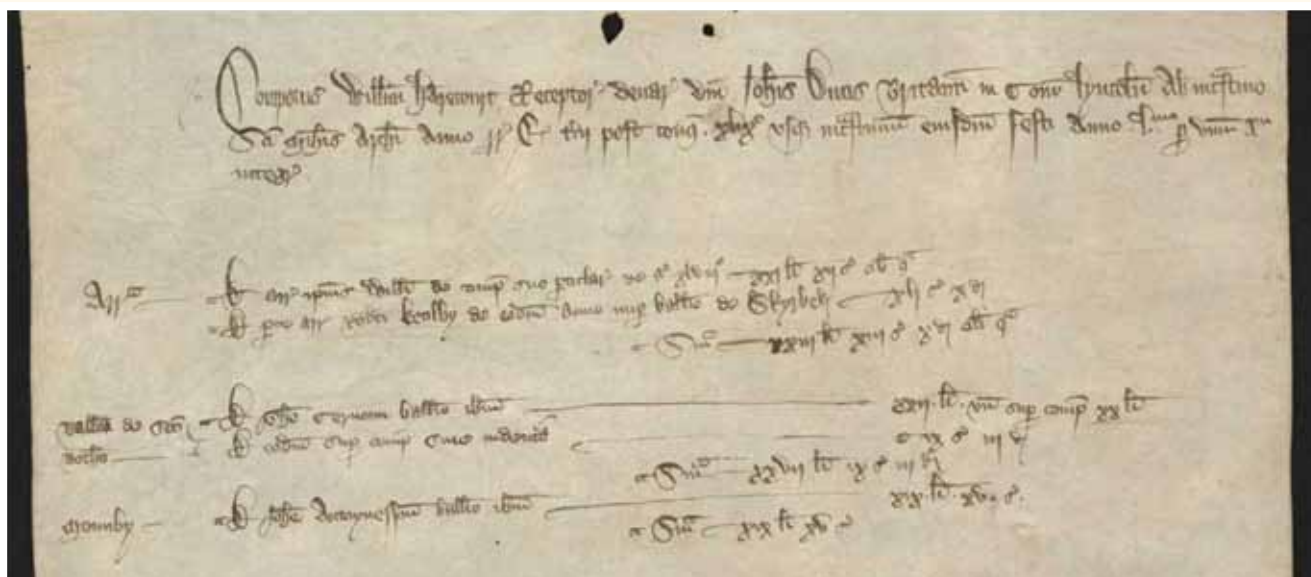
A high proportion of the documents Le Grant listed still exist. Several further fifteenth and sixteenth century inventories also survive, when individual documents were given reference numbers according to the cupboards and chestnut boxes in which they were then kept, in the form Armoire A, cassette A, item I, or briefly, AA 1, and so on. Eventually there were 22 cupboards and 118 boxes containing some 4500 documents.

The boxes still remain, but in 1879 a new classification of the 4090 then still surviving medieval originals was made. They were distributed into 248 liasses conserved in the series E, their contents briefly described in an *Inventaire sommaire* (republished in 1990) which continues to serve as the main guide to their riches. Arguments continue

over the peremptory fashion in which the nineteenth-century archivist imposed his own order on what he found in the Trésor: documents listed together in 1395 and relating to the same or similar subjects, for instance, are now widely separated. He did, however, bring together other items widely scattered in the 1395 or subsequent inventories. The section devoted to 'Relations between the dukes of Brittany and kings of England' (E 114-E 123) thus brings together most of the documents concerning Lincolnshire. It is to these liasses, especially E 118, that LRS members should first turn if they are interested in consulting late 14th century financial accounts for Boston and elsewhere. Evidence for Kirton, Leadenham, Mumby, Skirbeck, Swineshead, Washingborough and Wykes, as well as Boston itself is present, while similar material for other manors of the Honour of Richmond in Norfolk, Suffolk, Hertfordshire, Sussex and Wiltshire also survives here.

To access these documents go to: [http://archives.loire-atlantique.fr/jcms/chercher/archives-numerisees-fr-c\\_5562](http://archives.loire-atlantique.fr/jcms/chercher/archives-numerisees-fr-c_5562). From the opening menu choose the 6th option, Actes et délibérations, then Trésor des chartes; accept conditions, put in, for example, E 118, into relevant box and the list of accounts will appear with a link to their images. Happy browsing!

Michael Jones



The beginning of William Harcourt's accounts as receiver for John IV, duke of Brittany, earl of Richmond, in Lincolnshire, 29 September 1375-29 September 1376 (Arch. dép. Loire-Atlantique, E 118/37)



# LINCOLN RECORD SOCIETY AND UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN CONFERENCE

The Lincoln Magna Carta Conference keynote lecture: a brief summary



All historians agree that there survive four original engrossments of the 1215 Magna Carta. One of these, of course, is the Charter preserved at Lincoln. Another is that preserved at the cathedral of Salisbury. Then there are the two originals kept in the British Library, both having been part of the great collection made in the seventeenth century by Sir Robert Cotton.

In several respects the Lincoln Magna Carta in the 'best' of the four. Opinions will vary on the beauty of the hands, but to my mind, the Lincoln Charter is the most finely written. It is the only one where the clerk has spaced out the dating clause so as to make it cover the whole of the final line. The Lincoln Charter is also the one with the fewest mistakes. This copy of the Charter is also the one whose history is the most secure. It has 'LINCOLNIA' written twice on its back in large capital letters, quite probably by the same scribe who wrote out the Charter itself. Clearly, therefore, the scribe knew that the Charter he was copying was destined for Lincoln. Probably it was one of the two Charters handed over to the bishop of Lincoln, Hugh of Wells, on or soon after 24 June, this according to an official memorandum on the chancery rolls. The Lincoln Charter was certainly in the cathedral archives by the 1330s when (as a full collation I have carried out shows), it was copied into a cathedral cartulary known as the 'Registrum'.

It seems equally likely the Salisbury Magna Carta went to Salisbury cathedral in 1215, although there is not the same degree of proof. It was certainly there towards the end of the thirteenth century when (as I have established by a collation) it was copied into a cathedral cartulary. Exciting new research can now add a third charter to this quota of cathedral Magna Cartas. It can be shown that the copy of the 1215 Charter found in a Canterbury Cathedral cartulary of the 1290s was copied from one of the two originals of the Charter in the British Library. (The original sadly is the one more or less obliterated by nineteenth-century 'conservation'.) One cannot know for sure when this Charter entered the Canterbury cathedral archives but it seems highly probable that it was in 1215 itself. It can be known henceforth as 'the Canterbury Magna Carta'.

It used to be thought that in 1215 an engrossment of Magna Carta was sent to the sheriff of each county.

The evidence now suggests that this is wrong. The Charters in 1215 were sent not to counties but to cathedrals. This fits with the fact, as we have seen, that three of the four surviving originals were certainly kept in cathedral archives. (We know, as yet nothing about the early history of the fourth, the second in the British Library.) It fits too with memorandum about the Charters' distribution on the chancery rolls, a point first made by the historian Ifor Rowlands. The memorandum records that one Charter was received by the bishop of Worcester, two by the bishop of Lincoln (perhaps the second was for his brother, the bishop of Bath), while ten were received by the steward of the archbishop of Canterbury, Elias of Dereham. So there were thirteen Charters in all, and thirteen was the number of bishops in post in 1215. It was to the bishops, therefore, that Elias sent his ten engrossments.

It is easy to see why the Charters were sent to the bishops and the cathedrals rather than to the sheriffs. The sheriffs were the very people under attack in Magna Carta. They had no interest in preserving and proclaiming the Charter. If they had been sent the Charter, it would have disappeared into their castle vaults never to emerge. The attitude of the bishops was very different. This was thanks to a decision made by Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury, at Runnymede itself. The initial schedule of baronial demands which King John had accepted as a basis for negotiations at Runnymede had said nothing about the Church. It was during the negotiations that Langton changed this and at last put the Church into the Charter. In Chapter 1, King John thus guaranteed the freedom of the Church and confirmed his earlier charter allowing it to freely elect its bishops and abbots. As a result the Church had every reason to preserve and propagate the Charter.

It is possible that the bishop of Lincoln's support for the Charter went beyond its preservation. Ongoing research suggests that the Lincoln charter may actually have been written by a scribe of Lincoln's bishop, Hugh of Wells rather than a scribe of the king. John wanted everyone to know that he had graciously granted the Charter. For everyone to know its actual details was a different matter. Thus getting him to issue engrossments of the Charter was no easy business, all the more so as it took about eight hours to write an engrossment out. Hugh of Wells, therefore, may have solved the problem by supplying his own scribe.

The Lincoln Magna Carta has, therefore, a wider context. It came to Lincoln as part of the general support given by the Church to the Charter. Without that support, Magna Carta would not have survived.

David Carpenter







# LINCOLN RECORD SOCIETY AND UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN CONFERENCE

The Lincoln Magna Carta Conference 7 - 9 April 2015



Delegates assembling in the EMMTEC lecture theatre, University of Lincoln

The Lincoln Record Society and the University of Lincoln joined forces to present a conference to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta. We took over the EMMTEC building at the University of Lincoln for two days, and on the third day delegates were able to explore the highlights of Lincoln's historic attractions.

The conference commenced on Tuesday 7th April with an early career researcher's session, which showcased the best up and coming talent in this research area, and set the bar high for the rest of the conference. Will Eves and Joshua Hey from the University of St Andrews started us off with the session 'Magna Carta, Justice and the Barons'. Felicity Hill, University of East Anglia, and James Richardson, University of York, followed this up with a panel on 'Magna Carta and the Church in the thirteenth century'.

The event this evening was an excursion to Langton by Wragby, birthplace of Archbishop Stephen Langton (1150-1228), who was instrumental in the negotiations for the 1215 charter. The Cathedral Consort choir, led by Nicholas Bennett, sang Evensong in St Giles parish church, and our keynote speaker, David Carpenter, gave a fascinating address about Archbishop Langton's role in Magna Carta and its subsequent revisions. David Crook, on behalf of the Lincoln Record Society, presented to the churchwardens a facsimile of the charter held at the British Library which effectively proves that Archbishop Langton took his name from the village of Langton by Wragby, rather than from Langton by Horncastle, and strongly suggests that the moated site to the west of the church was his birthplace. In Lincoln Record Society tradition, this was followed by delicious refreshments, as well as celebratory bubbly, in the moated manor house where Archbishop Langton grew up.

On Wednesday 8th April, Michael Jones, President of the Lincoln Record Society, began the day's proceedings by introducing our keynote speaker, David Carpenter, King's College London. Professor Carpenter spoke eloquently and knowledgeably about the Lincoln copy

of Magna Carta and the discoveries that he has made in the course of the Magna Carta Project, which he is a researcher on (See: <http://magnacartaresearch.org/>). The day continued with excellent and engaging research from Stephen Church, University of East Anglia, and Frédérique Lachaud, University of Lorraine in a session entitled 'Magna Carta and Royal Power'. Delegates then relaxed and networked over a 'Tastes of Lincolnshire' lunch, including Grimsby cod goujons and Lincolnshire plum bread. There was also a book signing; David Carpenter was signing copies of his extensive new commentary on Magna Carta. This is the only book where the Latin text of the Lincoln charter is given with accompanying translation, and where all of the differences between the Lincoln charter and the other three surviving charters are indicated in the footnotes. Stephen Church was signing copies of his latest biography reinterpreting the reign of King John, *King John: England, Magna Carta and the Making of a Tyrant*. Church has deconstructed the popular view of 'bad' King John and delved into the context surrounding his life and reign, using court records, chronicles and other unpublished documents. After lunch, the next session turned things around slightly to examine 'Royal Power and Magna Carta' with interesting papers from David Crook, University of Nottingham/Lincoln Record Society and Dauvit Broun, University of Glasgow. Following a short break for tea and cake, the final session of the day was 'Looking Within and Beyond' and insightful papers from Louise Wilkinson, Canterbury Christ Church University, Jessica Nelson, The National Archives, and Helen Lacey, University of Oxford, explored related aspects of Magna Carta.

This evening's entertainment was the conference dinner, held in the atmospheric setting of Lincoln Cathedral chapter house. Delegates had the choice of a medieval style set menu provided by the Cross Keys Catering Company from Stow, which was delectable. Merry music was provided by the City of Lincoln Waites; a group of musicians recreating the sound, sights and atmosphere of a late medieval Mayor's Band. The after dinner speaker was Lord Patrick Cormack, Chairman of the Historic Lincoln Trust. He gave a compelling speech about the links between Lincoln and the Magna Carta and Lincoln's historic appeal more widely.



Conference dinner in the Chapter House, Lincoln Cathedral



Delegates networking in the Chapter House, Lincoln Cathedral

The final day of the conference afforded delegates the opportunity to choose a trip to one of Lincoln's historic attractions. Chris Johnson led a walking tour of uphill Lincoln, Nicholas and Carol Bennett provided a tour of Lincoln Cathedral Library and Mary Powell gave an introductory talk about the Lincoln Castle Revealed project, before allowing delegates to view the Magna Carta vault in Lincoln Castle. I decided to go the castle and have a look at the Magna Carta in its new home. The 1215 Magna Carta is now comfortably situated inside an underground vault, next to the 1217 Charter of the Forest, and a guest document. At the moment this is a charter of King John from 1213 granting liberties to Lincoln Cathedral. It was a good opportunity to see the document which we had been discussing so intensively for the duration of the conference, but to think about it in a new light, after reflecting on the thought provoking ideas which had been put forward over the previous few days. This was excellent way to round off the conference, which seemed to be enjoyed by all who attended, and has received some very supportive feedback. Thank you to all who attended and to all who worked hard to make this such a successful event.

Marianne Wilson



David Crook presenting the churchwardens of St Giles with a facsimile charter



Left to right: David Crook and David Carpenter outside St Giles church, Langton by Wragby



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Launch of Robert Grosseteste as Bishop of Lincoln: The episcopal rolls 1235-1253 edited by Philippa Hoskin

The first volume in the new Kathleen Major series will be launched on Friday 11th September 2015 at 4pm at Bishop Grosseteste University, in the Robert Hardy building, Seminar room 1. There will be a short lecture by Philippa Hoskin, followed by a light tea.

Notice of the Annual General Meeting of the Lincoln Record Society

The 105th Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held from 2pm on Saturday 24 October 2015 at Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln. All members are welcome. Please forward this notice to other interested parties.







## COMPLETED RESEARCH

*I was awarded a PhD from the University of Nottingham in 2008, having submitted my thesis under the supervision of Prof. John Beckett.*



Its subject is the provincial attorney-at-law in the late eighteenth/early nineteenth centuries, a period of upheaval from early industrialisation and agricultural improvement. The aim of the study was to determine how

such changes and their wider effects impacted on the work and status of attorneys in this relatively isolated and rural county of Lincolnshire, in particular the small market town of Sleaford.

Attorneys formed a significant sector in the growing urban elite and were leading players in the newly emerging middle classes. One such was Benjamin Cheales (1757–1824) of Sleaford. Joined in 1808 by his partner and successor, William Forbes (c1780–1842), the practice encompassed the usual functions, as well as a number of lucrative local government offices, including clerk of the peace for Kesteven and clerk to the gaol sessions. The firm's papers, deposited at Lincolnshire Archives, form the basis of my original research, which involved a statistical analysis of every entry from the client account books, spanning the 40 plus years of Cheales' legal career – over 2,100 database records. The results, in brief, showed a general trend of a gradual decrease in the amount of court work and an increase in everything else. This correlated with both local and national conditions. Cheales and Forbes' clients were certainly no more immune to changing economic trends and processes than

those in other parts of the country.

By 2011 I was keen to get back into the learning environment and study a different period, so I became one of eight students who formed the first cohort of the newly established MA in Medieval Studies at the University of Lincoln. The final six months of the course were spent researching a 15,000-word dissertation on the surviving accounts of the Holy Trinity religious guild of Sleaford, 1477–1544, for which I was surprised and delighted to receive a Lincoln Record Society prize of £100 and three years' free subscription. The dissertation set out to determine the structure of the guild and the profile of its membership (in the absence of any admissions register) from internal evidence in the accounts. Other documents, such as the Lay Subsidy of 1526 and a handful of wills, proved very useful in determining the relative wealth of individual members and the importance of reciprocal networks and social hierarchy amongst members. The chief purpose of the guild was religious, providing intercession for the souls of its members and their families, financed by annual payments called 'soul scot'. The opportunity to celebrate religious occasions and to gather and dine socially was also evident in the annual lists of pewter plates, payments to minstrels for music and to carpenters for a stage and props to celebrate Corpus Christi.

In the longer term I hope to revisit the subject and explore it further, particularly in relation to individual members named in the accounts.

*Wendy Atkin*

