

# Treasures

of Hyde Abbey



6 March - 2 May 2010

## Introduction

This catalogue acts as a memento to the *Treasures of Hyde Abbey* exhibition, held in The Gallery at Winchester Discovery Centre from 6 March to 2 May 2010. It provides additional information about each of the main treasures borrowed for the exhibition, with the historical context provided by Professor Barbara Yorke of the University of Winchester who was the academic advisor to the exhibition team. Noted landscape architect and alumni of Winchester College Kim Wilkie rounds off the catalogue with an account of the creation of Hyde Abbey Garden, and the endeavour of Winchester's community to share the memory of this great abbey church.

*Geoff Denford*  
*Exhibition Curator*



*The Mayor of Winchester celebrates the announcement of the award of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant for the exhibition, with members of the Hyde900 Executive Committee and children from St Bede C of E Primary School in Winchester.*

*Front cover: Capital from Hyde Abbey. Image: John Crook*

## Foreword

Many people and organisations have played a vital part in bringing together this exhibition, which is one of the highlights of the celebrations being held this year under the auspices of Hyde900. This group came together five years ago to see how a small community - Hyde in Winchester - could commemorate the transfer, in 1110, of the remains of King Alfred, his queen and his son, from Winchester Cathedral to Hyde Abbey, just outside the north walls of the city. We also wished to leave a legacy for future generations to appreciate.

One local resident, Edward Fennell, had the vision to see how events at Hyde Abbey from 900 years ago and right up to the sixteenth century could be shown to be relevant today. This is how he explains his thinking and enthusiasm:

“ The original inspiration for *Treasures of Hyde Abbey* came from the realisation that although, on the surface, Hyde Abbey had been almost entirely swept away in the 1530s there was still a record of it. This was not just under the ground in Hyde Abbey Garden, but also scattered across Hyde itself and then, further afield, in galleries, libraries, churches and museums across England. In some ways this was a metaphor for the way that although history is often forgotten its effects are still felt centuries later. By re-uniting these treasures, few though they were in number and for just a couple of months, people today would get a deeper and richer insight into where they live and where they come from. That, in itself, seemed a very worthwhile enterprise. ”

*Edward Fennell, Hyde900 Executive Committee*

Winchester City Council immediately became supportive, with its Economic and Cultural Services Division taking responsibility for the staging of this exhibition. That this became possible is also thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund and its grant of £50,000, and to our generous sponsors.

The small group of us who form Hyde900 are enormously grateful to all who have supported us - and are still doing so. We hope that those visiting this exhibition will indeed become, as we have, even more aware of the significance of the past 900 years in the unique history of Hyde.

*Ronald Allison  
Chairman, Hyde900*

# Hyde Abbey

The Hyde900 celebrations have provided the incentive for this exhibition, but the 'treasures' brought back together from several different libraries and museums reveal far more than just the history of one suburb of Winchester. Hyde Abbey was one of the wealthiest monastic houses of medieval Britain. Its surviving manuscripts and artefacts are but a pale shadow of its former riches, but they enable us to recover something of the abbey's own history which in itself is a microcosm of 'our island story'. The surviving memorials from Hyde Abbey are typical of those produced by other medieval Christian communities, and encourage us to reflect on the nature and achievements of monasticism which were such an important ingredient of learning and culture in medieval Europe.

The Gallery at Winchester Discovery Centre opened in 2008 with an exhibition that explored the achievements of King Alfred and his links with Winchester. *Treasures of Hyde Abbey* takes up its story from where that exhibition ended. Hyde Abbey had its origins in a small community established near the cathedral in Winchester by King Alfred for the Frankish scholar Grimbold, whom he had invited to England to help with his campaign for the revival of learning. After Alfred's death in 899, King Edward the Elder (899-924), his son and successor, rebuilt this foundation on a much grander scale to serve as the burial place for himself, his father and mother, and several other members of the royal house. The scholarly Grimbold was buried there as well and became one of the major saints of the community that was known as New Minster to distinguish it from the cathedral community of Old Minster. These two great religious houses formed an architecturally imposing centre for Winchester, especially after they had been reorganised as fully monastic communities by Bishop Ethelwold (963-84). But space was restricted and that was a major reason for the decision, made nine hundred years ago in 1110, to transfer New Minster to Winchester's northern suburb of Hyde, which gave the community its new name. The new church built at Hyde was one of the most impressive Romanesque buildings in the country. The surviving architectural fragments on display in the exhibition, especially the capitals, reveal the high quality of its decoration. The imposing plan of the church, partly revealed in recent excavations by Winchester City Council's Museums Service, can be appreciated by a visit to Hyde Abbey Garden. The gateway and a few other fragments of the monastic forecourt can also be seen in the suburb.

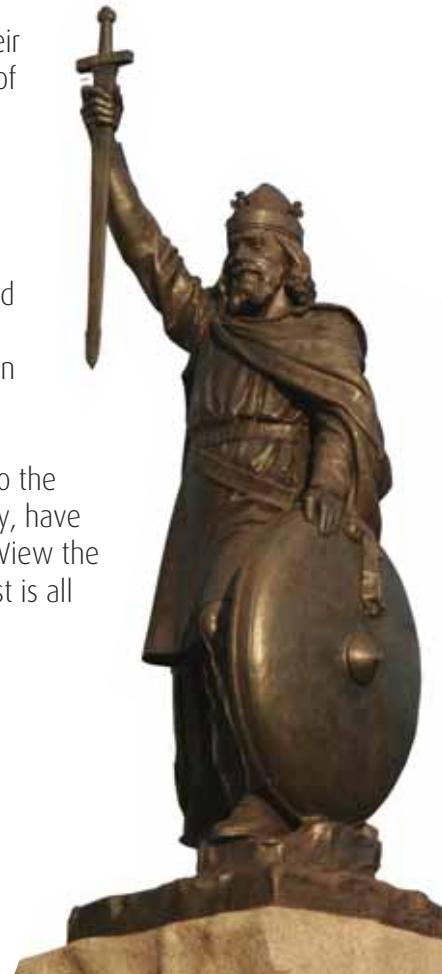


*Caption: Silver penny of King Alfred from excavations on the Cathedral Green.  
Image: John Crook*

Hyde's Anglo Saxon past remained of immense importance to it throughout the Middle Ages. The history of the abbey's links with the Anglo Saxon royal family, and the charters and other documents recording their gifts of land on which its great wealth rested, were recorded in the *Liber Monasterii de Hyda*. Such records not only enable us to reconstruct the early history of Hyde Abbey, but also to study many other aspects of the early medieval past. Its royal patrons were honoured as part of the daily round of monastic prayer and commemoration alongside lesser individuals whose names were also recorded in its *Liber Vitae* or 'Book of Life'. Hyde was a major landowner as well as a religious community, and landlord to large numbers of tenants and agricultural workers on estates throughout Hampshire. Their lives too are part of the history of Hyde Abbey. The present parish church of St Bartholomew in Hyde was also the parish church of the medieval predecessors of the modern inhabitants of the suburb.

For the historian of the Middle Ages, the story of the dissolution of Hyde Abbey in 1538 as part of the wider movement by which King Henry VIII divorced himself from Rome as well as from Catherine of Aragon, is a sad one. The way in which its building and treasures were dismantled and dispersed for short term financial gain has perhaps a warning for us all on how easily our historical heritage can be lost. But there is also the heartening story of how those who value the past, from John Milner, Winchester's great antiquarian historian of the late eighteenth century, to the skilled archaeologists of Winchester City Council's Museums Service today, have enabled the recovery of many aspects of the monastery and its history. View the exhibition, visit the remains in Hyde, and discover how our medieval past is all around us and has left a legacy for the modern world.

*Barbara Yorke  
Professor of Early Medieval History, University of Winchester*



# The Treasures



*Image: The British Library,  
Stowe 944*

## Liber Vitae

Although many religious houses would have had a *liber vitae*, this is one of only a handful that survive today. The book, started in 1031, was used and regularly updated for 500 years. It is written in Latin and Old English on vellum and provides a wealth of information about the abbey and a fascinating insight into life in the Middle Ages.

The *Liber Vitae* was the abbey's own version of the 'book of life' referred to in the biblical Book of Revelation. In the Middle Ages people believed that if their name was in 'the book' then they would not go to hell, so it includes lists of the dead which were read out daily to ensure the salvation of their souls.

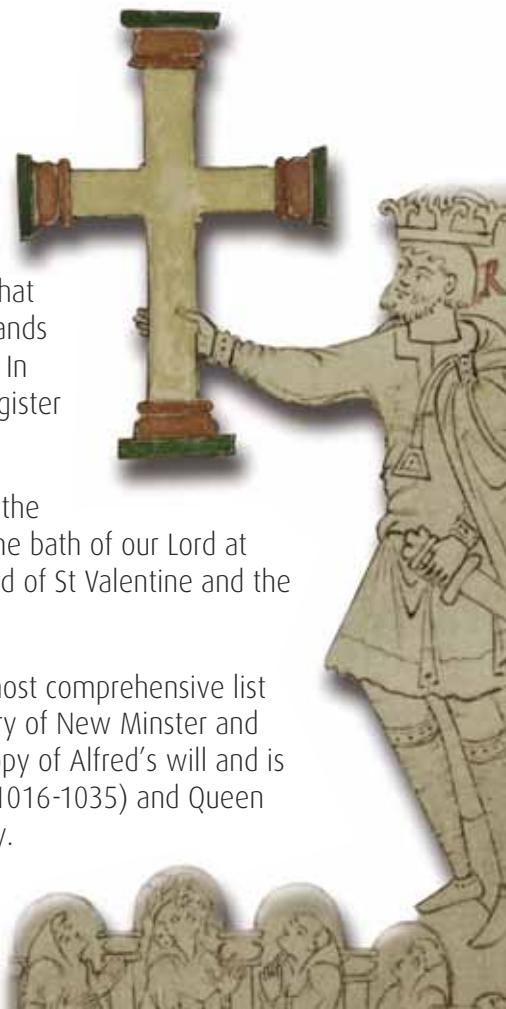
*And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

Revelation 20:15

These lists make up most of the volume: the names of abbots, monks and lay patrons. Names were also added in return for a charitable act or gift to the abbey. An 11th century entry records that Richard Palmer (palmer = pilgrim to the Holy Land) sent, by the hands of his wife Brihtgiva, a silver casket, or small shrine, to hold relics. In return, the abbot and monks agreed to enter his name into the register after his death so that his anniversary would be commemorated.

The book served as the inventory of the abbey's rural estates and the relics held at the abbey. The relics included the crown of thorns; the bath of our Lord at Jerusalem; a shirt of camel hair worn by St Cilicio and also the head of St Valentine and the arm of St Vincent.

The *Liber Vitae* includes a martyrology and provides us with the most comprehensive list of Anglo Saxon saints in existence today. It also includes the history of New Minster and Hyde Abbey, up to the Dissolution in 1538. The book contains a copy of Alfred's will and is particularly notable for the illustration, shown here, of King Cnut (1016-1035) and Queen Emma presenting the golden cross to the New Minster community.





*Image: V&A Images/  
Victoria and Albert Museum*

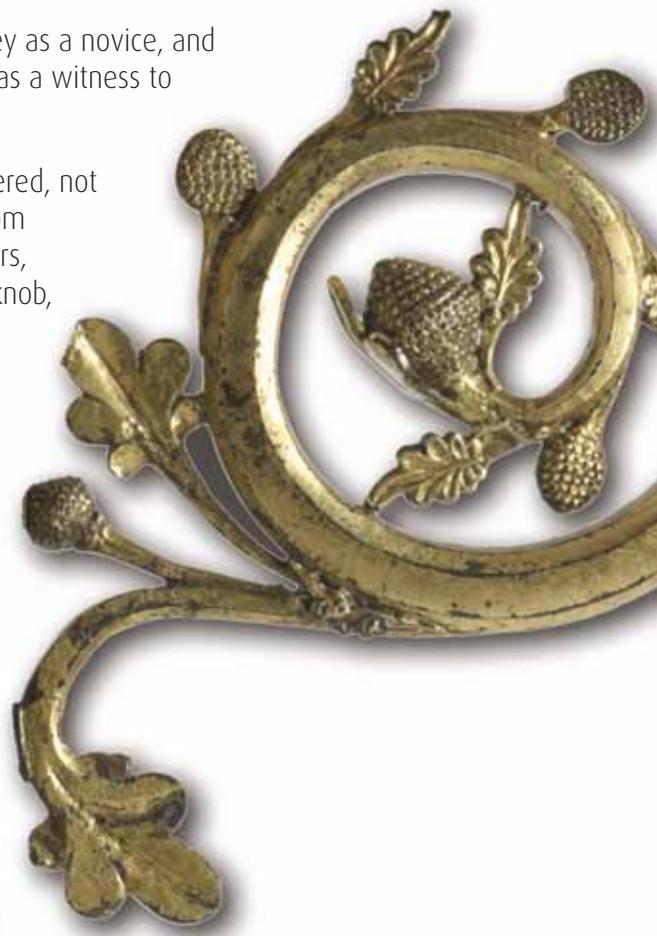
## Abbot of Hyde's crozier

The crozier was found in 1788, during the construction of the county bridewell on the site of the abbey church. The priest and catholic historian Dr Milner was present when a number of stone coffins were unearthed from which were recovered a variety of ecclesiastical objects including chalices and patens and velvet and gold lace belonging to chasubles and other vestments. One of the coffins contained the crozier.

A crozier, a staff with a crook or cross on top carried by an abbot or bishop, is a symbol of his authority over, and responsibility for, his flock. The abbot for whom this example was made is unknown, but its date 1200-1250, would fit with the abbacy of either Walter de Aston (1222-1247) or Roger de St Walery (1247-1263).

Abbot Aston was a local boy who entered Hyde Abbey as a novice, and was elevated by royal assent to abbot in 1222. He was a witness to Henry III's re-issuing of Magna Carta in 1225.

The crozier is made of gilt copper-alloy and is hammered, not cast. The crook is formed into an eight-sided stem from which spring finely chased leaves and rounded clusters, representing fruits. The lower parts of the stem, the knob, and the staff have a plain round cross-section.





## Liber Monasterii de Hyda

The *Liber Monasterii de Hyda* or *Book of Hyde* is a chronicle of the history of England and a chartulary – a collection of charters recording grants of land – of Hyde Abbey covering the period 455-1023. The manuscript, from the first half of the 15th century, contains copies of twenty-three Anglo Saxon charters, seven Anglo Saxon wills and one set of Anglo Saxon bounds, written variously in Latin, Old English and Middle English.

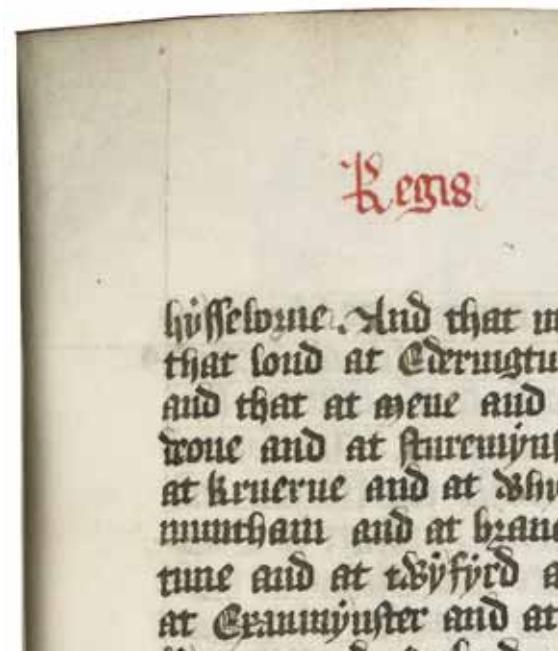
A narrative of Anglo Saxon history, composed in the 15th century, connects the documents. The history begins with the legends of the mythical figures Albina and Brutus and ends abruptly in the year 1023, mid sentence. It also includes brief histories of the Anglo Saxon kingdoms, followed by the chronicles of the Kings Alfred (871-899), Edward the Elder (899-924), Athelstan (924-939), Edmund (939-946), Eadred (946-955), Eadwig (955-959), Edgar (959-975), and Ethelred the Unready (978-1016).

Each regal chronicle has an appendix containing the charters, wills, and other documents relating to the endowments, privileges and history of New Minster and, later, Hyde Abbey.

Only two wills of Anglo Saxon kings exist, namely those of Alfred and Eadred, and both are included in the *Liber de Hyda*. Eadred's will survives uniquely in this manuscript; that of Alfred is also found as an 11th century copy in the *Liber Vitae*. In the *Liber de Hyda*, both royal wills are presented in Old English, Middle English and Latin versions.

The illustration shows part of the Middle English version of King Alfred's will that includes, at the bottom of the left-hand column, a bequest of fifty shillings to the church where he is to be buried.

*... and fyfty schylyng to dele amonge the powr peple  
and fyfty to the chyirche wher that I am byryyd.*





*Image:  
John Crook*

## Stonework from Hyde Abbey cloisters

The five stone capitals, one of which is shown here, are thought to come from the abbey's cloister arcade. They are of very high quality and were carved in oolitic limestone around 1125-1135 in the latest Romanesque style. Anglo Saxon England had continued to use the so-called 'Winchester School' art style, developed in the religious houses of the city in the 10th century and characterised by curling flutters of drapery and the widespread use of the acanthus leaf motif. This style, well known in Normandy, had had a strong influence on Norman painting and sculpture and had influenced the development of the Romanesque style.

The relief on the capitals is deeply undercut, and the range of motifs combines naturalistic elements such as leaves and flowers with the fantastic, such as the griffins and dragons. Three have medallions on each face, mostly beaded, with the spandrels between the medallions being filled with foliage. The other two lack any such framing.

The capitals are unlike anything still in existence. The nearest in character are fifteen capitals from Reading Abbey, founded by Henry I in 1121. Hyde Abbey was also largely built at the king's expense so a close co-operation between the two building sites would be understandable.

A springing-stone, also from the cloister arcade, reveals that the span of the arch was around 900mm. It has one face decorated with chevron ornament and the other with egg-and-tongue ornament.





Image: The Bodleian Library,  
University of Oxford,  
MS. Rawl. lit. e. i\*

## Breviary from Hyde Abbey

A breviary is a liturgical book defining the order of prayers and readings used by priests in the Divine Office, the liturgical hours that made up the monk's daily routine. This small volume is made of extremely thin vellum, fine parchment prepared from the skins of calves or lambs. Made for the use of Hyde Abbey, the breviary was probably written during the rule of Abbot Symon de Kanings (1292-1304). It was bound in its present form sometime in the 18th century.

The page illustrated here records the arrival of St Judoc's relics in Winchester, brought by the monks of Saint-Josse-sur-Mer, in 902. Following King Alfred's victory over the Viking Guthrum, Winchester must have been seen as a safe haven for the monks who were fleeing Viking raids in the Pas de Calais.

The life of St Judoc (variously St Josse, St Joce, St Joyce, St Iudog), a 7th century Breton prince who renounced royal power for the church, is recorded in the breviary. His cult spread rapidly through England and Wales and his relics were the abbey's prize possession. His name was invoked against harvest fire, fever, snakebite and storms: the Wife of Bath in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* swears 'By God and by Saint Joce'.

That the relics passed to New Minster, to consecrate the new church, can be attributed to Grimbald, the Benedictine monk who also came from the Pas de Calais area. He advised and assisted Alfred in translating key religious texts into Old English. Grimbald died in 901, most likely in Winchester, and was buried in New Minster of which he was seen as co-founder, along with the king.





## Monasticon

A monasticon is a book which gives accounts of the lives of monasteries, churches and priories. The one shown in the exhibition consists of thirteen disparate manuscripts, written in Latin on parchment and paper, collected in the 17th century and bound in its present form in the 20th century. It includes a 16th century copy of what appears to be a 15th century account of the history of the cathedral and Hyde Abbey.

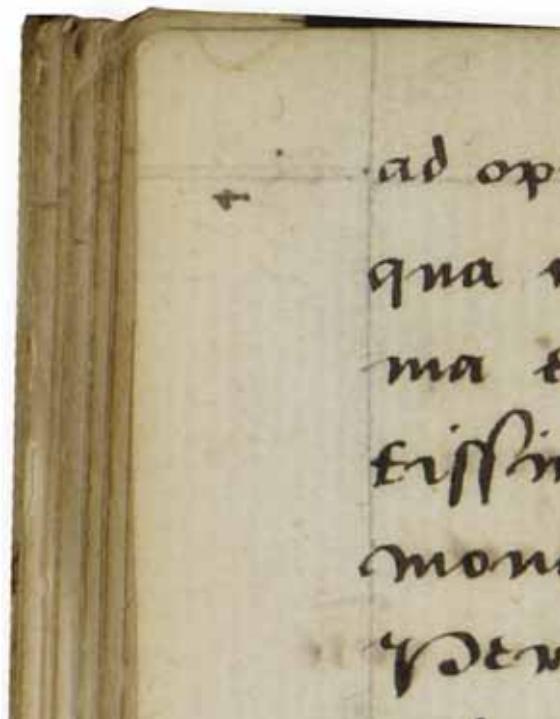
The page shown here refers to Hyde Abbey and includes a reference to the war between the rival claimants for the throne, Stephen and Matilda, following the death of Henry I in 1135. During the conflict, in 1141, much of Winchester was set ablaze. The Abbot of Hyde was a supporter of Matilda but the bishop, Henry of Blois, was Stephen's brother and ordered the burning of the abbey church at Hyde. Cnut's great golden cross was destroyed.

Lines 3-5 read:

*Eodem incendio nominatissima crux Christi a Kanuto rege novo monasterio collata in cineres redacta est.*

*In that fire, the renowned Cross of Christ, donated to the New Monastery by King Cnut, was reduced to ashes.*

The bishop took the melted remains: a valuable trophy as the cross was made from 30 marks of gold (15lbs) and more than 500 marks of silver (250 lbs). In 1149, the monks of Hyde went to Rome to bring proceedings against the bishop, hoping to recover the remains of this valuable and sacred cross. Eventually finding in favour of Hyde, the bishop, as an act of restitution, was obliged to present to the abbey a skilful reproduction of the cross.





*Image: The Bodleian Library,  
University of Oxford,  
MS. Gough Liturg. 8*

## **Psalter from Hyde Abbey**

A psalter is a volume containing the Book of Psalms from the Bible and often other devotional material. It is a part of a breviary, with the psalms arranged to be prayed according to the Divine Office, the daily cycle of prayer. The example on exhibition, from which a page is shown here, was made for the use of Hyde Abbey around the beginning of the 14th century. It is written in Latin on parchment and was once bound up with, and formed part of, the Hyde breviary. The many similarities in the style of script and decoration suggest that they may be the work of the same scribe and illuminators.

The monks used the psalter throughout the day, everyday. Countless fingers following the text and turning pages have worn many of the decorated initials and page corners. The miniature illustrated, part of the cycle depicting the life of Christ, depicts the Harrowing of Hell with Christ holding a staff with cross and pennant. He leads souls out of the mouth of hell, watched by a devil blowing a horn. The image of the devil is particularly worn.

The psalter was bound in brown leather in the 18th century.



Willelmus cum plures qui fuerunt quod Ego Henricus Episcopus Cantuarie et de me et de heredibus meis quatuordecim Walterus Abbas de Wyke et  
eodem Leou Conuincit eorum reddere annuatim que huiusmodi per annuam hereditate curatam Wynton ex parte occidentali deuenire quod est iuxta tenentur  
quod fuit Henrico Walter de Wyke et tenentur quod Godofredus Coe tenet de Leuincit et tenet sal. decem solidos annuam reddere unde  
Godofredus Coe tenet unum ageratum reddendo per annuam quatuordecim solidos ad quatuordecim annos. Et Henricus tenet unum ageratum reddendo  
per annuam ad quatuordecim annos. Henricus tenet unum ageratum reddendo per annuam ad quatuordecim annos. Duos solidos et octidennos per te  
net unum ageratum reddendo per annuam ad quatuordecim annos. Duodecim denarios. Habentes et tenentes et iure proprio possidentes. Libros et quatuor  
Ab omni hereditate et omni seculari exactione ad me et heredem meum peruenire. Valis uniusmodi de Wyke duobus solidis et sex denariis. Et ego Henricus  
quatuordecim annuam pro me et heredibus meis reddere. Abbas et Conuentus et successores sui et ecclesie suae et aliam quod habent vel  
habeant in prelo reddere vel tenentur per omnia seculorum suppetunt. Ego etiam Henricus et heredes mei hereditate debent eorum preteritum reddere  
deceat Abbas et Conuentus et eorum successores vel aliam deus unum omnes homines et feminas. Pro hac autem mea venditione et concessione et quod etiam  
et prius etate confirmacione dedimus unam predam Abbas et Conuentus quatuordecim annos et de hac mea venditione et concessione et quod etiam  
manu et confirmacione perire habebant robur debent. Prius etiam Henricus et heredes mei hereditate debent eorum preteritum reddere  
Cantuarie Wynton apud Wynton. Henricus et heredes mei hereditate debent eorum preteritum reddere. Henricus et heredes mei hereditate debent eorum preteritum reddere  
pater. Gilbertus de Wyke tunc abbas Wynton. Henricus et heredes mei hereditate debent eorum preteritum reddere. Henricus et heredes mei hereditate debent eorum preteritum reddere



Image: The Warden and Scholars  
of Winchester College

## Muniments from the abbey's archive

The four muniments, or title deeds, displayed once formed part of Hyde Abbey's archive. They record how, in the late 13th century, Hyde Abbey consolidated its claims over properties in the northern suburb.

A survey conducted in 1148 records that Hyde Abbey held all of the properties north of the Fulflood. Over time, the situation became confused, with sub-letting and other practices leading to the alienation of some of the properties. The muniments record the abbot's reconsolidation of the abbey's lands, bringing them firmly under his control.

The list of witnesses at the bottom of each muniment is interesting. The first name given is the mayor, followed by city officials – clerks, aldermen, bailiffs, sergeants – and, on one of them, two reeves – the king's officers. Those witnessing on the abbot's behalf appear to be the abbey's lay personnel: masons, a cellarer, and a cook.

The deed shown here, from the period 1222-1247, concerns the grant of a number of tenements, held by Andrew Pytard, from the west side of Hyde Street to Hyde Abbey. Today, the land in question extends from Sarsen Press (by the Fulflood) up to and including the Hyde News shop.

The Latin text reads:

*Andrew Pytard to Abbot Walter and Covenant the quitclaim of all rents he has from the west side of the Street Outside Northgate, from the tenements between the one of Walter de Andevora and the one which Godefrey Coc' holds of Lawrence Tresor: vis 10s, of which Godefrey Coc' pays 4s., Randolfe the Mason pays 3s., Andrew Pourai pays 2s., Alan Pie 12d.: saving to the Cellarer of Hyde Abbey 2s. 6d. Consideration 4½ marks.*



## Hyde Abbey Garden

Hyde Abbey Garden is an inspiring collaboration between a local community and its government. The ruins of one of the great sacred sites in England had been all but forgotten under a scruffy car park, until the valiant combination of the local residents and Winchester City Council came together to sweep away the cars and create a precious local garden, connecting Hyde back to the cathedral.

In 1110 the bodies of King Alfred, his wife Ealhswith and his son Edward the Elder were carried with great ceremony from their burial place in the New Minster, beside the cathedral, to a more peaceful resting place in Hyde Abbey. They remained buried side by side at the high altar until the cultural revolution of Henry VIII levelled the church to the ground. The site disappeared under prison grounds and then a municipal car park, until excavations in 1999.

*Image: Hyde Abbey Garden, painting by Kate Dicker*

*On display in **Re-imagining Treasures of Hyde Abbey** in City Space at Winchester Discovery Centre*



Barbara Hall (Friends of Hyde Abbey Garden) worked with Ken Qualmann and Dick Whinney (then of Winchester Museums Service) to protect and commemorate the archaeological remains. They created a simple modern garden of flint, gravel and stone above the ruins. Native plantings of oak, hazel and yew frame the garden and great cylinders of holly girded with stainless steel repeat the positions of the church columns. The memory of the church is evoked by a glass panel created by Tracey Sheppard, the renowned glass engraver who is also a local resident. Oak benches made by Mark Edwards are inspired by seats in the cathedral and extend to create an axial bridge over the river. Huge ledger stones mark the graves of Alfred and his family. The simple garden has become a focus for the local neighbourhood and a popular gathering place on the path to the centre of the city.

*Kim Wilkie*

*Landscape architect, and designer of Hyde Abbey Garden*



*Hyde Abbey Garden is always open and free to enter*



## Find out more...

Find out more about the sites connected with King Alfred the Great by following *The Winchester Walk*. Three different, self-guided routes around the city include *Alfred's Final Journey*, tracing the route of the procession from New Minster to Hyde Abbey. Ask for a copy at Winchester Tourist Information Centre or go to **www.visitwinchester.co.uk**

*Treasures of Hyde Abbey* is just the start of a year of celebrations organised by Hyde900. For a full list of events log on to **www.hyde900.co.uk**

There are also many lectures, talks, walks workshops and living history days connected with the *Treasures* exhibition. Pick up a brochure for Winchester Discovery Centre today for a full list.

You can take a guided tour of Alfred's Winchester at any time of year with the Winchester Area Tourist Guides Association. Visit **www.winchestertouristguides.com** or call the tourist information centre **01962 840 500** for details.

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