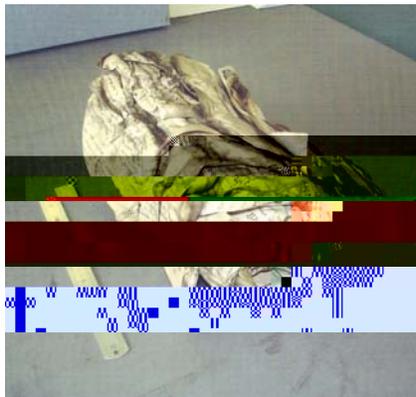


## Conservation of the college archives

A valuable link has been established between the college archives and the Hampshire County Record Office at Winchester, to document a conservation programme which has now been running for three years. It was particularly apt that the link started as a result of the conservation needs of the college's foundation charter and of other documents given to this college by archives as primary sources, but if those were too fragile to consult in their original form or even to be photographed, or published, then research necessity curtailed. New College has obtained very fine runs of medieval deeds and manorial records, but the record for their care over the past few years has not always been of the highest quality. Some of the documents have long been in serious need of help to remedy damage caused by damp, insects, rodents, bad storage and handling.

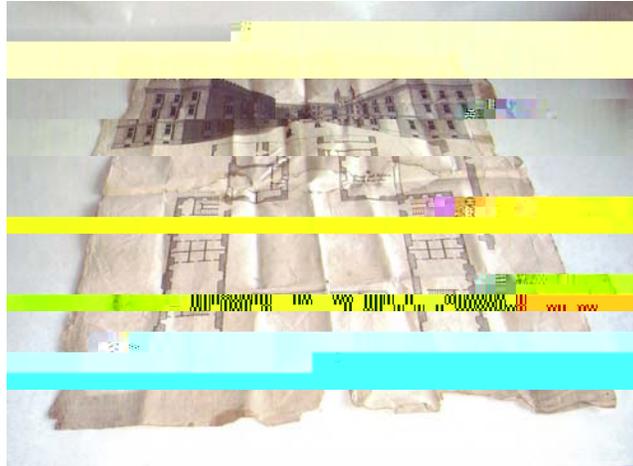


NCA 3758 manorial court roll of Writtle, Essex: before conservation

**and handled safely for the first time in over a century, and means that this document can take its rightful place again as part of the long series of court rolls dating back to the fourteenth century and William of Wykeham to this college of the manor of Writtle Rectory, and thus it forms an important source for the history of one of our estates.**

**NCA 11985 is a royal charter of all the college's lands and privileges in Newton Longville, Buckinghamshire, dating from January 1484. As such it continues the sequence of royal confirmations (necessary to the college's status and security of title) of the previous hundred years, and like all royal confirmations it was authenticated by the monarch's Great Seal – in this instance a large beeswax and resin seal, affixed by plaited cords of coloured silk and bearing on one side an image of the monarch enthroned, with orb, sceptre and other trappings of power, and on the other side an image of the monarch on horseback, riding into battle to defend the realm.**

Each monarch has a slightly different design of Great Seal, and NCA 11985 is particularly interesting as it provides an example of the Great Seal of King Richard III - comparatively rare because he was on the throne for three years.



NCA 1134 Byrd's plan of the Garden Quad buildings in 1682: before conservation

It took over six hours work to eliminate the damage, clean and flatten the document and make it stable enough to handle again.



NCA 1134: after conservation, 2012

Sometimes of course it is too late and conservation skills cannot come up with a treatment which is economically viable. In such cases, as for example the manorial court book for 1776-1918 of the college's estate in Hardwick, Bucks, seriously charred round the edges in a (hopefully off-site) fire many decades ago, preservation photography is the only affordable answer at present, and high quality digital images now make the information, if not the book itself, accessible again.

The New College Archives conservation programme is modest in its expenditure and its funding to date has been supplied out of the college library's budget. In this way some twenty or so medieval charters and manorial records, together with some eighteenth-century maps and plans, have been treated at

Winchester. The results are invaluable, and we are grateful both for the willingness of the Hampshire County Archives service to help New College in this way, and to the staff for