

# Archives Newsletter

Updates from Barts Health NHS Trust Archives



Feedback from Oxford and Cambridge University colleagues

## VISITORS TO THE ARCHIVES

In July we were thrilled to host the City Archivist Group (CAG) annual conference. It was the first event we have hosted in our search room since opening in February 2022. We welcomed archivists from city livery companies, banking groups and Oxford and Cambridge colleges. It was a brilliant opportunity to hear from our colleagues in different services and learn about their work. The conference featured talks on AI transcription, the Barbican Estate and Centre and Lloyds Register. There was also a tour of the St Bartholomew’s Hospital museum and the wider site, showcasing the history of the hospital. Hosting the conference was an excellent experience for us to test out our space for large groups, which is something we look forward to doing more of in the future.

Then, in August, we welcomed the team from Tower Hamlets Local History Library Archives. They looked at collections relating to the Royal London Hospital, Mile End Hospital and Poplar Hospital, alongside a visit to the museum. It was an opportunity for us to share our experiences and discuss the overlapping and complementary collections that both services hold. We also discussed the new town hall at the former Grocer’s Wing of the Royal London Hospital, and opportunities for future collaboration.



Archivist Kate Jarman addressing CAG



Our Tower Hamlets Archives colleagues visiting the North Wing and museum





## RESEARCHER PROFILE: DR JOHN MCEWAN, THE DIGISIG PROJECT

We recently had Dr. John McEwan visit the archives to look at the wax seals in our estates records as part of the Digisig Project. Dr McEwan and a team of undergraduates are using machine learning to study seals and sealing practices in fourteenth-century Europe. The Digisig Project is based in the Walter J. Ong S.J. Center for Digital Humanities at Saint Louis University, which is a leading resource for information about medieval seals and is used by scholars around the world.

To better understand how seals changed the team are using machine learning to automatically refine the dating of thousands of seals. The team is enhancing the dataset with new information gathered over the summer from various archives in England, including from the records of St Bartholomew's Hospital.

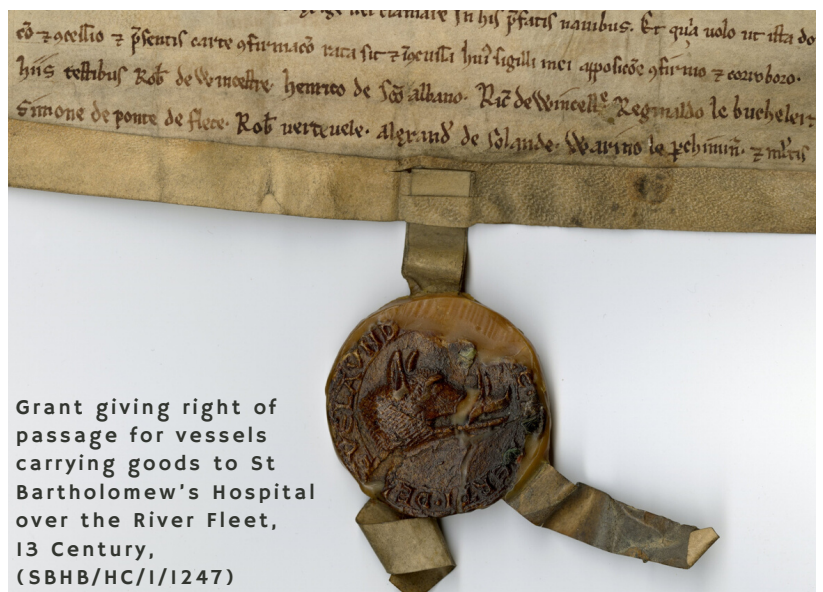
Dr McEwan focused on 14 Century deeds found in the Estates Records [SBHB/HC/I](#) series and methodically photographed and recorded the seals attached to the documents. These photos will then be added to the project's dataset and used for research in the future.

Seals were used by individuals from all strata of medieval society to authenticate records. The words and images on seals thus enable scholars to explore the ideas, values, and beliefs of both men and women from many different social groups, from the nobility to the peasantry, and to trace changes in those beliefs over time. Consequently, seals are valued by historians, art historians, and archaeologists, and by members of the public interested in heraldry, genealogy, and local history.

Further information about the project and its results is available to the public on the [project website](#).



Seal of Ralph de Beverlaco, 1310  
(SBHB/HC/I/517)



Grant giving right of passage for vessels carrying goods to St Bartholomew's Hospital over the River Fleet, 13 Century,  
(SBHB/HC/I/1247)

## Other ways to follow our service

To learn more about our collections visit our [website](#) where you can search the Barts Health NHS Trust Archives online [catalogue](#), and find out how to book a visit to the search room at St Bartholomew's Hospital.

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