

**A SCHEDULE OF THE
RECORDS AND OTHER
PUBLIC DOCUMENTS OF THE
CORPORATION OF BEDFORD**

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A Schedule of the Records and Other Public Documents of the Corporation of Bedford by
Various

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VARIOUS

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RECORDS AND OTHER
PUBLIC DOCUMENTS OF THE
CORPORATION OF BEDFORD**



Corporation of Bedford.

3rd Dec. 1883.

Sir,

I enclose a copy of the
Schedule of the Records of
the Corporation of Bedford,
recently prepared by me

Yours truly,
Sheed Wm Pearse
W. P.

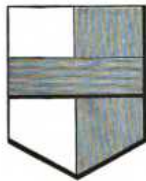


The Librarian
Bodleian Library
Oxford.



Facsimile of the Earliest Charter in the possession of the Corporation,
granted in the Reign of Henry II.

A SCHEDULE
OF THE
RECORDS AND OTHER
DOCUMENTS
OF THE
CORPORATION OF BEDFORD.



(THE TOWN ARMS AND CORPORATION ARMS CONFIRMED BY
CLARENCEAU, KING OF ARMS, 7TH JUNE, 1556.)

Printed by Order of the Corporation.

BEDFORD, 1883.

THEED WILLIAM PEARSE,
TOWN CLERK.

J. E. PORTER, PRINTER, BEDFORD.

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BOROUGH OF BEDFORD.

SCHEDULE OF
Charters and Documents of Early Date
IN THE POSSESSION OF THE CORPORATION.

THE Corporation Records were formerly kept in the Evidence House of the Corporation, which was probably in the Mote Hall or Guildhall of the Town. The records were removed to St. Paul's Church in pursuance of a resolution passed 5th July, 1736, which states:—

That "Mr. Mayor shall prepare, make useful, and
"cleanse the Evidence House in such manner as he
"shall think most expedient, and he shall employ such
"persons as he shall judge proper to inspect, sort, and
"file in proper order all the writings, records, and papers
"that are now therein lodged, and shall agree with and
"order payment to the persons therein employed what he
"shall think they deserve for their care and trouble. And
"whereas the Rev. Mr. Hunt has consented that the
"chests and papers in the Evidence House may be
"lodged in the vestry of St. Paul's Church, during the
"time the said Evidence House shall be repairing, and
"that the key of the said vestry shall be delivered to the
"Mayor. It is hereby ordered that Mr. Mayor shall
"give directions for removing all records, writings, &c.

“ he shall think necessary into the said vestry, the key
“ of which he shall take charge of, and see the said
“ records, papers, and writings duly returned when the
“ Evidence House shall be repaired and cleansed.”

Subsequent resolutions of the Corporation direct that documents be deposited in the Evidence House, but it does not appear whether any documents were returned from St. Paul's Church to the Evidence House, nor, if returned when they were again removed to the Church, but it is probable that if any of the records were returned to the Evidence House after having been removed therefrom in pursuance of the above stated resolution, they were again removed to the Church on the disuse of the Guildhall in 1753.

There is no evidence amongst the Corporation records, except the resolution above referred to, to explain the rights or privileges of the Corporation with respect to the use of the chamber in the Church.

The Schedule is prepared in the following order:—

1. The Corporation Charters and documents relating to the rights, liberties, and customs of the Corporation.
2. The Books containing the proceedings of the Common Hall at which the Mayors were elected; of the Court of Aldermen, constituted by the Mayor, Aldermen and Bailiffs, who nominated the officers and admitted the freemen; and of the Common Council.
3. The proceedings of the Ancient Court of Pleas of the Borough, of which the Mayor and Bailiffs were judges, and which had jurisdiction over all causes of action arising within the Borough; with some specimens of the process in the time of Henry IV.

4. The proceedings of the Leet Court.
5. The "Black Booke."
6. Commissions of the Peace and other documents relating to this subject.
7. A terrier of the Corporation Estates, and of the earlier "hagable" or quit rent roll, and of the demesne rent roll.
8. The grants, leases, and alienations to and from the Corporation, and documents of the same nature connected with estates in which the Corporation have at some time had an interest.
9. All other documents not comprised in either of the above-mentioned heads.

CHARTERS.

The earliest Charter in the possession of the Corporation was granted by Henry II., who Henry II. confirmed to his Burgesses of Bedford all "liberties and free customs which they had in the time of Henry his grandfather, as they were recognized in the County of Bedford as the Burgesses of Oxford had them.

A Charter of this reign is referred to in a Charter of Henry IV., but a memorandum Richard I. dated 1780, states that the Charter of Richard I. was not then with the Corporation records.

A Charter of Henry III. confirmed to the Burgesses of Bedford all the liberties, customs Henry III. and laws, which they had in the time of Henry II.,—it enumerates—"A guild merchant with all "their liberties and customs in land, in islands, in