

# Archæologia Cantiana.

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## KING WIHTRED'S CHARTER OF A.D. 699

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BY the excellent gift of Sir Albert Stern, the County of Kent has become possessed of a more ancient charter than even the British Museum can show in the original form as it was first written. It takes us back to far off times when Kings of the line of Hengest reigned at Canterbury—and found their subjects far less docile than we are today. Translated into English, with the names of the witnesses omitted, the charter reads as follows :—

In the name of the Lord God our Saviour Jesus Christ.

I, Wihtred, King of Kent, considering the future of my soul, have been careful to make this provision because of various calamities threatening the churches of God and the monasteries which exist in this (kingdom of) Kent, with the consent of my chief men whose names are to be written below.

That they may be free, from the present day and time, from all demand for public taxation and charge or vexation.

They are to show to me and my posterity such honour and obedience as they used to show to my royal ancestors, under whom justice and liberty were secured to them.

And I decree that both I and my posterity shall hold fast in this pious determination : nor are those things which have been rightly allowed by us and our predecessors to be brought to nought by any chicanery whatsoever, but, as is now said at this time, they are to be preserved with the Lord's guidance from henceforth and for ever. In full confirmation whereof I have with my own hand portrayed the sign of the Holy Cross and have called upon the most reverend Beorhtweald, the archbishop, to subscribe, together with the most holy bishop Gemmund, as well as venerable presbyters and religious abbots, in the presence of the renowned abesses, that is, Hirminhilda, Irminburga, Aeaba and Nerienda.

Done on the sixth day of the Ides of April in the eighth year of our reign, in the twelfth indiction, in the place named Cilling.

It is now proposed to discuss the particular points of interest which are to be found in this Charter.

## I. IS IT AN ORIGINAL ?

The first question to be decided about this charter is the fundamental question of whether it is an original writing of the date which appears upon it or whether it is a later copy, or even a contemporary copy—for such copies were quite often made.

The best proof that it is original is to be found in the character and spacing of the letters and words in the charter. These documents were written by clerks, i.e. by the religious. The first stage was to prepare, in anticipation of a Royal Council, so much of the charter as could be foreseen. Most of this would be taken from a book of formulæ applicable to such grants as were usually made. Since the names of grantor and grantee were likely to be known beforehand these could be incorporated in the chosen formula and the first few lines of the charter could then be completed without difficulty. Often enough the clerk knew so much about the proposed grant that he could complete the body of the charter also, in time to present it to the king on the morrow. But he could never be quite sure if it was really complete, for Kings sometimes change their minds and he might have to put in something more. It was, therefore, very usual to leave a space between the charter proper and the names of the witnesses. In later days this space was often used for the insertion of the boundaries of any land granted. In the time of King Wihtred it seems to have been no more than a general precaution in case the king might choose to amplify his grant. This space occurs in the charter before us and it is worth noting that it also appears in our only other original charter of Wihtred (*BCS 98*) whereas it is absent from a strictly contemporary copy of the same charter (*BCS 97*) (*Arch. Cant. XLVI*).

Consideration of the manner in which the names of witnesses are recorded gives further evidence of originality. The first two names, those of the king and archbishop, with their words of attestation, stretch right across the parchment and were certainly inserted before the others. Then we come to three columns of names. The first column reads as follows :

Ego gemmundus ep̄is	rogatus testis	subscripsi
Ego tobias	p̄rb	rogatus testis
Ego aeana	p̄rb	rogatus testis
Ego uinigeld	p̄rb	rogatus testis

The spacing is roughly represented here. It is the spacing which would be adopted by a clerk who was not worrying about how much room was available, and this particular column of names was probably inserted before the Council met. It comprises the clerics not attached to monastic houses and they are in order of seniority, first the bishop (of Rochester), then Tobias who was later to succeed

+ Iste munda in p[ro]p[ri]e[ti]a[m] s[ua]m [...]

+ E[st] d[omi]n[u]s [...]

+ S[an]ct[us] [...]

+ B[e]n[e]d[ic]t[us] [...]

+ G[ra]t[us] [...]

+ S[er]v[us] [...]

+ D[omi]n[u]s [...]

+ 50 annos p[ro]p[ri]e[ti]am [...]

+ 50 annos [...]

+ 50 annos [...]

+ 50 annos [...]

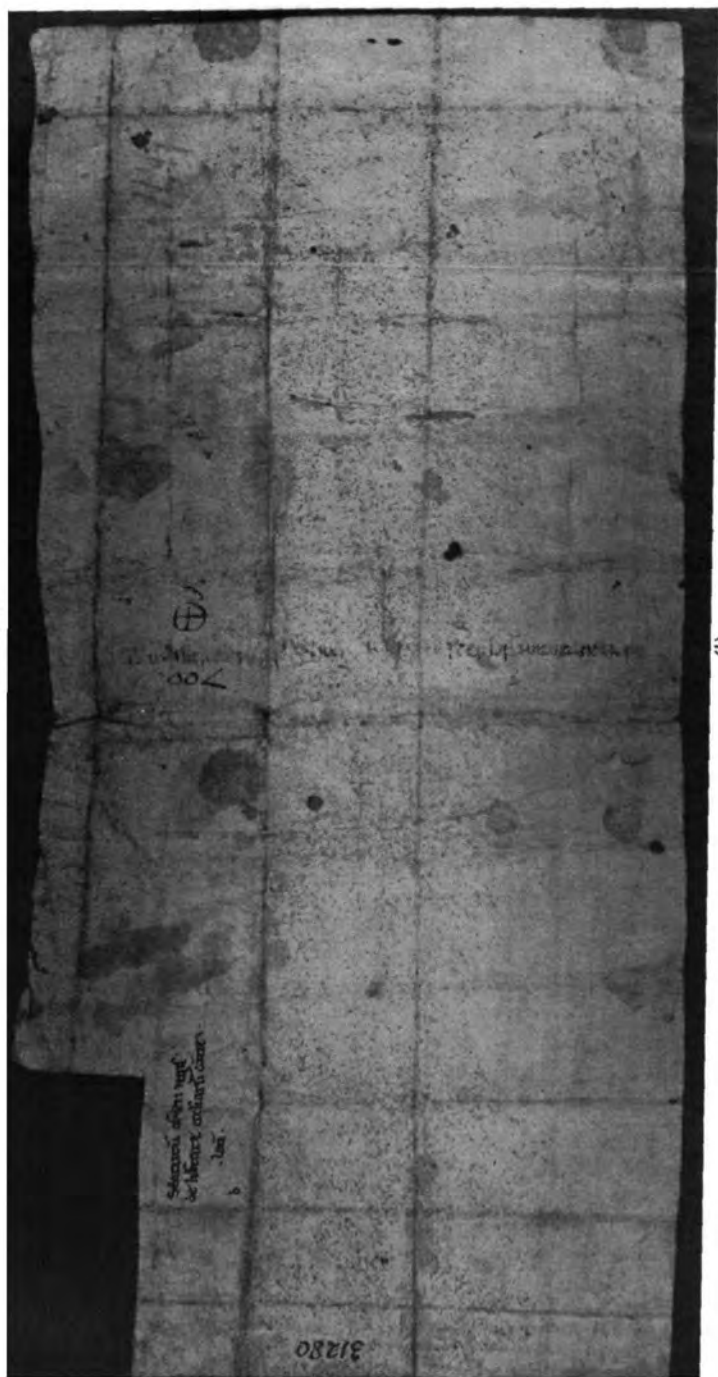
+ 50 annos [...]

+ 50 annos [...]

+ 50 annos [...]

PLATE I. CHARTER OF KING WILTRED. A.D. 699. Original is 13½ ins. × 6½ ins.

(iii)



(iii)

(iii)

31280

(i)

PLATE II. BACK OF CHARTER, WITH ENDORSEMENTS.

him, and later two presbyters not otherwise known to fame although they would be well known to the clerk who wrote the charter. The next column shows a different frame of mind. This includes laymen only and the clerk would not know what or how many names would need to be included. He therefore commenced his second column (written, one supposes, more or less as the Council was assembling—we must imagine the clerk at a trestle table with his ink and parchment) close up to the first. In the third column the spacing becomes wider again. The clerk now realized that he still had plenty of room.

Thus it appears that the differences in spacing accord well with what we may reasonably conjecture about the way in which this charter was prepared. They could scarcely appear in a copy however careless and thoughtless the copyist.

There still remain five witnesses. These are inserted below all the rest and the first two read as follows:—

- + Ego hadrianus indignus mōnc̄ rogatus testis ss
- + Ego aedilmer abb̄ rogatus subscripsi

The first of these is a very famous man who is here described as "indignus monachus" (unworthy monk) but elsewhere as "abbas indignus" (*BCS 88 of the year 696*), terms which must have had his own approval. His name was usually written "Adrian" in later days (e.g. in the famous "Textus Adrianus" of S. Augustine) and he was now abbot of St. Augustines, but as far back as about 665 he had been nominated by the Pope for election as Archbishop of Canterbury. He asked that the post might instead be given to Theodore of Tarsus. The Pope said he would agree to this if Adrian (who was an African) would promise to accompany the new Archbishop as adviser. This he did, and the two arrived in Canterbury one May morning just thirty years before King Wihtred assembled his council at Cilling. Theodore had died in the year 690, when he was well over 80 years of age, and Adrian was doubtless well advanced in years when this charter passed the Council. How comes it then that so venerable and famous a man should attest after several laymen and humble presbyters? I think there is little doubt that he was not present at the Council, perhaps by reason of age, and that the charter was carried to him later so that he and abbot Aethelmer of Reculver could act as witnesses by touching the crosses set against their names.

The names of the three remaining witnesses, Headda, Beornheard and Headda, seem to belong to the column immediately above them (i.e. the third column) for only so can one explain the necessity for the "ss" abbreviation of "subscripsi" which follows the name of abbot Adrian. It should perhaps be noted that a glance at the folds on the back of the charter shows that the piece cut out of the parchment

was removed long after the charter was written and so had no share in causing the particular positions of the different attestations.

The fact that abbot Adrian's attestation takes so lowly a place is thus explicable by the customs of those far off times. It is a sign that this is an original charter for a copyist would tend to correct an error of this sort and it is worthy of note that it is actually so corrected in the copies upon which Birch relied for his transcript in the *Cartularium Saxonicum*. Thus we add one more item of evidence in support of the contention that this is an original charter of 699.

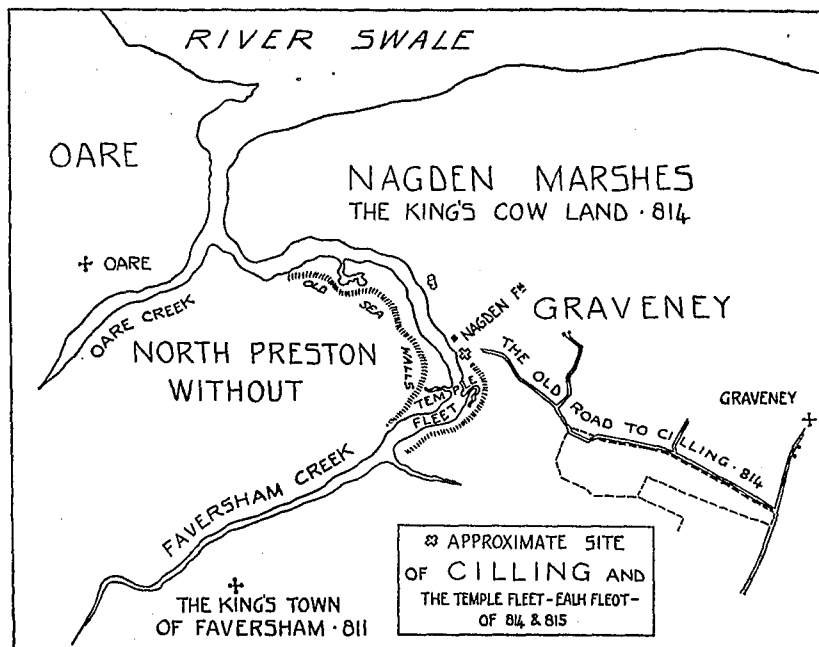
There are other minor points worth a short note. For example, the punctuation marks, five in number, suggest an original rather than a copy. The absence of any editing such as is usual in later copies, especially by introducing a less archaic spelling of personal names, is also evidence of freedom from the hand of the copyist. Finally, except for what follows, there is no reason at all to discredit the status of this charter. The matter of it, the way in which it is set out, the handwriting, the ink, the state of preservation, and the contemporary and later endorsements are all such as we expect to find present in an original charter, but absent in a copy. Indeed, the first endorsement alone, its position, its presence and its calligraphy, are almost sufficient evidence that this is an original charter.

Nevertheless there is one piece of evidence which we must not overlook. It is clear that all the crosses before the witnesses' names were made by the same hand; they are precisely similar in shape and size. How comes it then that the king declares that he has "impressed the sign of the cross with his own hand," that the archbishop swears that he has "subscribed" and many others describe the cross as their "signum manus"? All these phrases imply, in their natural meaning, that the witnesses did actually write, although it is abundantly evident that none of them did so. Here is a difficulty which might easily be overcome by supposing that we were dealing only with a copy. It might even seem that no other explanation is possible. Yet this assumption would be quite wrong. All these words are the normal usages of Saxon charters. There are thousands of attestations so expressed but there is not a single instance in which there is the slightest evidence that the witnesses made their own crosses. These had, in fact, become merely formal words. It is quite likely, although we do not know for certain, that the witnesses did touch their crosses or acknowledge them in some other way, but it is quite certain that they did not write. In fact, the clerk, sometimes made more crosses than there were witnesses available and there they stand upon charters to this day to witness that things are not always what they seem. Those who would pursue the matter further may well study Kemble, *Codex Diplomaticus*, page xcix, where he will find that even the phrase "pro ignorantia litterarum" was a mere formality

long before Wihtred's day. There is no evidence in the words of attestation quoted above to invalidate the conclusion that this is an original charter and no copy.

## II. KING WIHTRED AND THE CHURCHES

Having decided that this charter is an undoubted original, it is now necessary to consider its purport and significance. Although we have long known of copies of this charter and it is no news to



us that the transaction described took place, an original charter is far more useful, informative and above all authoritative, than any copy can be. A copy can never be wholly trusted, and some of our extant copies of old charters are so bad that we can no longer be sure what the originals had to say. It happens that our copies of King Wihtred's charter do not deserve so severe a judgment, but we could not be sure of that until the original turned up, and could therefore only discuss the Council at Cilling with all sorts of reservations which are now no longer necessary.

The charter tells us that in the year 699 King Wihtred called his Council together at a place called Cilling, which is near Faversham,

and that he was then worried about the future of his immortal soul. In order that he might obtain some easement of his worries, he secured the consent of his chiefs to an edict which freed the churches of Kent from what we should now call rates and taxes. In return for this high privilege the churches were to do him "such honour and obedience" as they had paid to his predecessors. All these things the King now proclaims, and invites several important people to subscribe their names in confirmation of this grant. This is impressive and it is sad to have to record that many of these words are a matter of common form, current in the church at Rome long before King Wihtred was born, and that exactly the same words would probably have been used whatever the real motives behind the transaction. The church might have paid heavily for these privileges. We should not expect to find this specified in the charter. King Wihtred might have been wholly sceptical as to the existence of his immortal soul, but no clerk would have permitted himself to hint at so dreadful a state of affairs by any variant from the usual form. The councillors were quite possibly most unwilling witnesses of the King's bounty, and some of them may well have made up their minds that the church should have no such immunities in their own particular territories, but they would not therefore refuse to have their names added to the charter, for this would have amounted to a public declaration of high treason.

The true significance of the charter is not therefore to be judged by so much of it as is written in formulæ hallowed by long use but rather by the sense of the main grant and by the occasional departures from these formulæ, and by what is otherwise known of the persons concerned. We will leave these departures aside for the moment and consider what we know of King Wihtred in relation to the churches of Kent. The cumulative evidence is so strong that there will remain little doubt that the King was a convinced Christian, intent not only upon church privileges but also upon church reform. He did not become king *de facto* until some time in the year 692 when the last archbishop, Theodore, had been dead at least two years and his seat had remained vacant. Wihtred's first concern was to have a new head for the church appointed. Beorhtweald was consecrated on 30 May 693. Wihtred's next task was probably the collection of the blood money for Mull—a usurping king from Wessex whom the people of Canterbury had recently burned in his palace. This was paid over to Ina, king of Wessex, in 694 (*ASC*). In 696 was held the great Council meeting at Bearsted (*BCS* 88, *Text. Roff.*) at which laws were issued for the whole kingdom and certain privileges were renewed to the nunnery of Minster in Thanet. The former, of course, would be additional laws needed at the moment, or re-affirmations of some that had been neglected, and not a complete codification of all that was



enshrined in the common law of the realm. It is significant that the roll of these laws commences :—

The Church shall enjoy immunity from taxation.

The King shall be prayed for, and they shall honour him freely and without compulsion.

There follows many other laws inculcating decent behaviour, for example :—

Foreigners, if they will not regularise their unions, shall depart from the land with their possessions and with their sins.

These foreigners were perhaps men of Wessex who had followed the stars of Caedwalla and Mull when they had ravaged Kent two years in succession, less than ten years previously. The next council of which we have any record was that at Cilling and at this the laws about the freedom of the church were once more reduced to writing, no doubt because there was still great need for such a step. Christianity was as yet comparatively young in the land and the Laws show us that men still made offerings to devils. Soon after this—so far as we can tell—Werburch founded her nunnery at Hoo (*Arch. Cant.* XLVII, 127) and the king founded the monastery of St. Martin at Dover (*Lib. Vitæ*). At a later date (which would appear to lie between 702 and 708) the Bapchild Council was held (*BCS 91-95*) and there the King and the councillors took a further step and laid down laws against laymen usurping the rule or property of houses of religion. They were confirmed at another council, held at Cliffe-at-Hoo, in 716 (*BCS 91*). This brief survey of the known activities of the king shows him as tremendously pre-occupied with the affairs of the churches and we can clearly see through mere formulæ in charters to the man behind these instruments. The care taken to ensure the attestations of the Abbots Adrian and Aethelmer, and the presence of the Abbesses, is further proof of an intention beyond any mere formality. He was of the royal line of Hengest and in that line the men were seldom, if ever, weak or foolish, and the women even less so. If King Wihtred says in his charters or laws that the churches are to have such and such privileges there can be no doubt that he did his best to make it so, and that those who desired to live in peace followed his example. This makes it all the more interesting that we should now have in Kent, in the hands of the Kent County Council (whose Chairman and Clerk correspond pretty well to the King and Archbishop of 699), the only surviving original record of the privileges upon which King Wihtred so often insisted.

### III. WHICH WERE THE CHURCHES ?

The churches to which the charter refers were in 699 divided into two groups. There were two non-monastic churches, at Christ Church,

Canterbury, over which Archbishop Beorhtweald presided throughout the king's life, and the church of St. Andrew at Rochester, under the guidance of Bishops Gemmund and Tobias. The convents for men were at Canterbury, dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul and founded by St. Augustine, at Reculver where Abbot Aethilmer, who witnessed this charter, seems to have succeeded Beorhtweald, and just possibly at Dover but the balance of evidence suggests that this was not yet founded. There were four nunneries, at Minster in Thanet, Folkestone, Lyminge and Minster in Sheppey. Of the four abbesses present at Cilling one only can perhaps be assigned to a particular nunnery. The abbess Aeaba is presumably the mother of Saint Mildred of Thanet and better known as Aebba or Domneva. Since St. Mildred was already in office it is likely that her mother had by now given up control of the nunnery but retained the courtesy title of abbess which she had long enjoyed. Nevertheless it is difficult to understand why her name should be only third on the list and it may be that an unknown "Aeaba" has been too hastily identified with the famous "Aebba." The abbesses Hirminhilds, Irminburga and Nerienda are not known apart from this charter. It is worthy of note that King Wihtred was surely most tolerant of women's rights. He alone of our early kings invited abbesses to his great Councils and he had moreover three wives—not all at once, of course.

#### IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CHARTER.

This charter is an important historical document for various reasons. Firstly, it is our oldest original charter, that is, the oldest charter which remains with us today in the form in which it was first written. This statement is one which needs a little support for there are some five or six charters which actually bear earlier dates and are written in a manner usual at that time, but every one of these is a copy of an original now lost. They can be adjudged to be copies by critical examination which would be out of place here. In most of these cases it is allowed by all interested that we are dealing with copies. In the single case concerning which I could find no record of anyone else's opinion (the charter numbered 81 in the *Cartularium Saxonicum* and reproduced in *B.M. Facs. i, 2*) it seems to me that no doubt can possibly arise. It is not only a copy but is clearly a copy line by line, each line of the vanished original being allotted a single line in the copy—with a very irregular and odd-looking result. But it is not possible to date these copies since they are written in the formal hand employed before and until long after the year 700. It is, I suppose, possible that some of them [e.g. the Kentish charter dealing with Reculver, and dated 679] may be copies of a date earlier than 699. There is, therefore, an element of doubt as to which is our earliest writing remaining today, but there is no doubt at all

that the Kent County Council possesses our oldest original Anglo-Saxon charter.

The second way in which this charter has particular historical significance is in its writing. It was usual about this time, and later, to employ a very formal and rather beautiful hand for such important documents as royal grants of liberties, service books, etc. This hand was based ultimately upon the lettering which we find upon Roman monuments. This lettering is still regarded as the finest example of "capitals" which the ancient world produced, lettering which the modern world can scarcely equal. But it was a hand which took up quite a lot of time in the writing and, side by side with it, there existed a common cursive freehand which mankind (those who could write) used for every-day matters. Of this latter hand we have few early specimens and this charter is our earliest, whether in an original or a copy.

Thirdly, this charter is important just because it is an original charter. The discussion already entered upon in this paper is evidence of the sort of information and human interest which one can extract from an original charter but which could never be found in a copy.

Of the various other points of interest which need mention, we deal next with the endorsements.

#### V. THE ENDORSEMENTS.

The first endorsement on the back of this charter was apparently made by the clerk who wrote it. At a later date the charter was refolded and one of the folds passed right through this endorsement so that it became almost impossible to read. However, the following letters and words can still be made out:—

LIB UUTHREDI REGIS . . . ORUM IN CANTIA

This is very much the endorsement one would expect and its meaning is obvious.

The second endorsement in point of time is written in Latin and reads as follows, the letters omitted in the original and indicated by a mark of contraction, being here italicised:—

Statutum *oswii* regis  
de *libertate* *eccliarum* *cantie*  
. latin .

b

This is an extremely careless endorsement in a hand which is often found in this position on documents which were formerly preserved at Christ Church. The word "eccliarum" ought obviously to be "ecclesiarum" and there was no King Oswy of Kent at any time.

There was a King Oswin who reigned from 673 to 675 and if the clerk who wrote this endorsement had come across a charter of this king he would almost certainly have mistaken his name for that of the famous King Oswy of Northumberland. Perhaps this is what happened and the clerk merely changed over the endorsements on two charters. We cannot go further than this but it is pleasant to have even so oblique a suggestion of the existence of a charter of King Oswin at Canterbury when this endorsement was written, which may have been at some time towards the latter end of the twelfth century.

The third endorsement contains three parts, namely, the date "700," the Greek letter delta, and a circle surrounding a cross. All these marks were made by Sir Edward Dering, a famous figure in Kentish history, between the years 1638 and 1644. It was in 1638 that he established with some of his friends a system of press marks which should show which of them had seen various ancient documents which they were accustomed to circulate amongst themselves and what each had done in the way of making notes about them. The subject is discussed at some length in *Arch. Cant. Vol. I, p. 61*. The date is that which Sir Edward ascribed to this charter, the Greek letter showed that he had made an extract from the document but not a complete copy, while the cross within a circle represents very roughly the Dering arms. Sir Edward died in 1644 and we know nothing of the whereabouts of this document for many years thereafter. It is likely that it remained in the vast collection for which Surrenden Dering became famous.

The last endorsement takes the form of the number "31280" and this is the number which this manuscript bore in the Phillip's collection.

A final "endorsement" is not upon the Charter itself but was on a small slip of paper enclosed with it. It consisted of five lines, as follows, but with the syllable "Whit" crossed through between lines three and four :

PUTTICK  
July 10 1861  
Lot 935 Kent  
Charter of King Wihtred 699  
MS 31280

This endorsement has reference to the sale of the document by auction in the year 1861.

#### VI. THE KING'S COUNCIL

This was a meeting of the wise men, what our history books call a witenagemot, but it must not lightly be assumed that all were necessarily very wise or very disinterested. They were just the most prominent men in the kingdom.

First amongst them was the archbishop Beorhtweald. This priest had been nurtured under the rule of Theodore of Tarsus and Hadrian the African monk who had between them rebuilt the church in this country many years before. His name shows that he was of native birth, long resident in Kent, and perhaps of Kentish birth. He had been abbot of Reculver almost since its foundation. He lived to be a very old man and was famous as an able administrator throughout the whole country and also as a supporter of missionary enterprise. Two very famous evangelists, Wilibrord and Boniface, went forth to preach in Frisia and Germany in Beorhtweald's time, and the latter at least has left a record of how much he owed to the encouragement of Beorhtweald.

Next in learning and importance to the Archbishop was Abbot Adrian of St. Augustine's. He had been sent into this country by the Pope as a companion to Theodore, to see, it is said, that the latter did not introduce any Greek heresy into the church of England. We have not many details of Adrian's life but Thorne's *Chronicle* (*Ed. Davis, p. 22*) says that he was present at the synod of Heathfield in 677 and "outshone all the others in the light of his knowledge and understanding." This is a late authority but we have no other.

Gemmund, bishop of Rochester, was also an eminent man. He had taken over that See immediately after Cuichelm, who had refused to stay because he could not find the necessities of life, a state of affairs due to the deliberate ravaging of West Kent by Aethelraed of Mercia in 676. He made a good job of rebuilding the See and was prominent at royal councils during his lifetime. At the time of the Cilling Council he had been bishop for 22 years and was doubtless an old man.

Next to him in the list of witnesses we meet with Tobias, who succeeded Gemmund twelve months later. He also was a disciple in the famous school (for it was famous) of Theodore and Adrian, and Florence of Worcester tells us that he had studied Greek and Latin so well as to understand and employ them as easily as his native English, thus elaborating the statement of Beda (*v. 8*) that he was learned in the Greek, Latin and Saxon tongues, as well as possessing much other erudition.

Of the lay members of the King's council there is much less known. Beornhard was perhaps the senior in years. He had belonged to the councils of King Hlothair, Oswin and Swaebheard. The latter was a usurper and Beornheard was presumably a Kentish nobleman whose private interests prompted an attitude later to be copied by the Vicar of Bray, an attitude, however, in which he did but follow Theodore and Adrian. Ecca also had attended King Hlothair, and so had Aethelfrid and Hagana. Ueba had advised King Oswin. The new names, men who may have come from Mercia with Wihtred were

Cyniad and Scirieard and it is abundantly evident that the clerk did not know how he ought to spell their names. Cyniad attests another charter (*BCS 96*) as "Cynyad" and his real name was perhaps "Cyneheard" or "Cyne-weard," both of which names are well attested. Scirieard is probably the same man as the "Scirheard" who attests in 716 (*BCS 91*) but the name is not otherwise known.

It is sometimes thought that these witnesses were the companions of the king and were bound to him by such ties of loyalty as were mentioned by Tacitus, the chief tie being a willingness and indeed a duty to die with their lord rather than survive his defeat. Such men would be landless and their witnessing to such a charter as this could be of little value. Moreover, to serve both King Oswin and the usurper Swaebheard would have been impossible for any man bound to his lord by such personal ties. The King's council was probably composed of the high ranking churchmen and the more important land-owners of his kingdom. Kent had been an organized Anglo-Saxon kingdom for 250 years when this charter was witnessed and the king's character as chieftain and dispenser of bracelets and weapons had probably been altogether divorced from his duties as monarch and administrator. It is the latter phase of monarchy which we find reflected in the charters.

#### VII. WHERE WAS CILLING ?

Although this has been briefly discussed in *Arch. Cant.*, *XLVI*, a few words may be added here. It was clearly a place of some importance but our only other record of it is the mention of "the ancient street which leads to the port named Cilling." This road is a boundary of certain land granted to Christchurch in 812. The old road still exists and is a parish boundary which indicates its considerable antiquity. It leads to the Swale, i.e. the creek upon which Faversham is placed, then called the Swale, at a point considerably nearer the sea than the present town. There is, at or near this point, a "fleet" or expansion of the Swale where it is joined by a short tributary from the east bank, as may be seen on the 6 inch map. In the charters this fleet is called *Alhfleet* and *Ealhfleet*. This name means "The Temple fleet" and tells us that there was formerly, probably in pagan times, a place of worship there. Cilling may well have been a manor and port belonging to the king, and perhaps one of his places of residence, for the pastures near were known as "Cyningges Cua Lond" ("the King's cattle pastures") in 814 when he gave them to the archbishop. It was perhaps this change of ownership which allowed Cilling to decay since the Archbishop would have little need for a harbour near the King's town of Faversham, his interests being much better served by the river Stour at Canterbury.

## VIII. SUMMARY

So by the munificence of Sir Albert Stern, and his willingness to seize a rare opportunity, the Kent County Council has become possessed of a most important and ancient charter which might otherwise have left this country for ever. This charter bears date in the year 699. It is our oldest existing original charter and also our earliest example of the ordinary informal handwriting of those far off days, a matter of no small importance to students. Thus the official records of the County of Kent, housed in its record office, now extend over more than twelve hundred years.

## TRANSCRIPTION OF CHARTER.

(ABBREVIATIONS HAVE BEEN EXTENDED.)

In nomine domini dei salvatoris nostri Jhesu Christi Ego Uuihtredus Cantie consulens anime meae imposterum hanc providentiam pro diversis calamitatibus imminentibus ecclesiis dei atque monasteriis que in hac Cantia consistunt, una cum consensu principum meorum, quorum nomina subter scribenda sunt, facere curavi ut ab omni exactione publici tributi atque dispendio vel lesione a presenti die et tempore liberae sint mihi que et posteris meis talem honorem vel oboedientiam exhibeant qualem exhibuerunt antecessoribus meis regibus sub quibus eis justitia et libertas servabatur; et ut tam ego quam posteri mei in hac pia definitione permaneant decerno nec per quamlibet tergiversationem quae a nobis et precessoribus nostris recte indulta sunt concutiantur sed ita ut jam jamque dictum est inperpetuum abhinc et deinceps domino gubernante custodiantur; ad cujus cumulum firmitatis manu propria signum sancte crucis expressi et tam reverentissimum Berhtwaldum archiepiscopum atque Gemmundum sanctissimum episcopum quam eciam venerabiles presbyteros et religiosos abbates presentibus itidem clarissimis abbatissis hoc est Hirminhilda Irminburga Aeaba et Nerienda ut subscriberent rogavi. Actum die vi Idus Aprilis anno regni nostri viii indictione xii in loco qui appellatur Cilling.

- + Ego Uuihtredus rex Cantie ad omnia suprascripta et confirmata atque a me dictata propria manu signum sanctae crucis pro ignorantia litterarum expressi.
- + Ego Berhtwaldus archiepiscopus ad omnia suprascripta rogatus a Uuihtredo rege testis subscripsi.
- + Ego Gemmundus episcopus rogatus testis subscripsi.
- + Ego Tobias presbiter rogatus testis subscripsi.
- + Ego Aeana presbiter rogatus testis subscripsi.
- + Ego Unigeld presbiter rogatus testis subscripsi.

- + Ego Hadrianus indignus monachus rogatus testis subscripsi.
- + Ego Aedilmer abbas rogatus subscripsi.
- + Signum manus Uihtgari.
- + Signum manus Cyniadi.
- + Signum manus Ecca.
- + Signum manus Ueba.
- + Signum manus Suithbaldi.
- + Signum manus Sciricardi.
- + Signum manus Eadilfridi.
- + Signum manus Hagana.
- + Signum manus Headda.
- + Signum manus Headda.
- + Signum manus Beornheardi.