



Brasenose College keeps 1509 as its foundation date because the foundation stone was laid on 1<sup>st</sup> June in that year. Two and a half years later this charter was obtained, marking an important step in the inauguration of the new body.

This document gave (and gives) the Governing Body the right to make its decisions, by turning a group of individuals into a corporate body. If property and legal rights were invested in an individual they had to pass to another when that individual died. But a corporate body was self-renewing, never dying so long as one member remained. Money, land and power acquired by a corporate body remained with it.

The Founders probably paid an additional sum for the illuminated decoration, which includes a representation of the Trinity. The Father sits above the capital H of 'Henricus' and breathes the dove of the Holy Spirit into the Annunciation scene; the gold lines of breath go clean across the intervening foliage and behind Gabriel. Jesus is depicted in the Crucifixion to the right.

Henry VIII's Coat of Arms is in the bottom half of the H. At this early stage of his reign the King used the supporters favoured by his father, Henry VII, whose claim to the throne was through his mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort. On the right is a greyhound, associated with the House of Lancaster and the Beauforts. On the left is the dragon traditionally associated with Cadwalader, the last native king of Britain from whom the Tudors claimed descent. Henry VIII later favoured the lion and the dragon. The unicorn belonged to the Scottish royal arms, and was not added until after the succession of James I in 1603.

At the bottom right hand side of the text the name 'Yong' can be seen. John Yong was the Master of the Rolls, which official was occasionally Keeper of the Great Seal and responsible for the reproduction of documents under the Seal. The remains of the Great Seal of Henry VIII are still appended to the document on the original silk cords. Until 2011 the Great Seal was in either green or neutral coloured wax and depicted the monarch enthroned on the obverse and on horseback on the reverse.