

Further Sources for Wilson

Along with the material featured in this catalogue, Wilson was also responsible for annotating a copy of Ralph Thoresby's *Ducatus Leodiensis*, now held at the Central Library. You can read more about these marginalia on our blog:

secretlibraryleeds.net/treasures/ducatus-leodiensis

A note made by Wilson on a 16th-century Cistercian Missal, also now held at the Central Library, has allowed researchers to trace the provenance of this liturgical book to the pre-Dissolution Library of Kirkstall Abbey. Read more about this fascinating story:

secretlibraryleeds.net/treasures/cistercian-missal

Contact us:

Local and Family History department
Leeds Central Library
Calverley Street
Leeds
LS1 3AB
0113 37 86982

email: localandfamilyhistory@leeds.gov.uk

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Located in Local and Family History at Leeds Central Library, the Special Collections department boasts a wealth of rare books and items dating from the fifteenth century until the present day. The collection includes over 17,000 items. The brochure, *Treasures of the Library*, lists some of the most notable acquisitions in the Collections.

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Collected from Records
and
Manuscripts
by
Tho. Wilson of LEEDS.
Nulla Dies sine Linea.

Nulla Dies Sine Linea 'Not a Day Without a Line'

**Collections guide shedding light on the
tireless work of an unsung 18th-century
Antiquarian and Schoolmaster. A prolific transcriber
of manuscripts, documents and deeds:
Thomas Wilson of Leeds.**

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Manuscripts and Papers

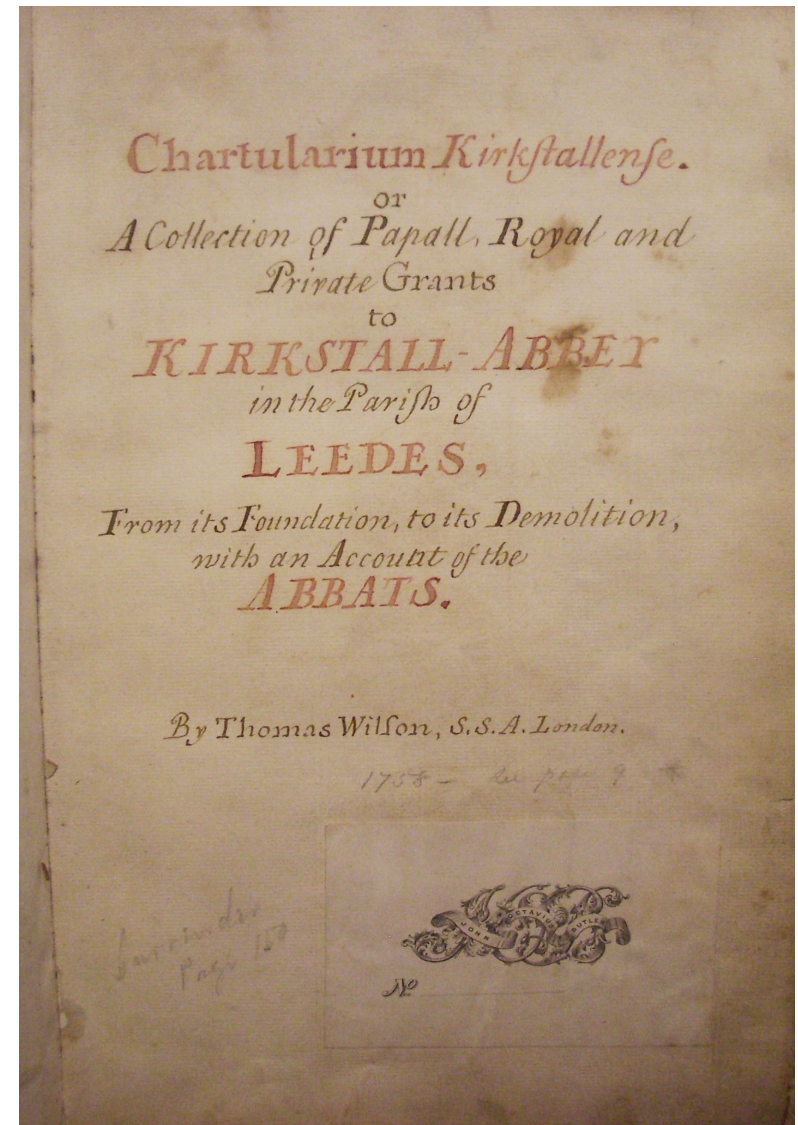
Written, Transcribed and Annotated by Thomas Wilson, F.S.A.

Leeds Public Library. Email: localandfamilyhistory@leeds.gov.uk

- *Chartularium Kirkstallense. or a Collection of Papal, Royal and private grants to Kirkstall Abbey in the Parish of Leedes transcribed by Thomas Wilson*
- *Liber judiciarius : or, Dooms-Day-Book, being a survey of the county of York; taken by order of William the Conqueror, Anno Dom. MLXXXII. Transcribed by Thomas Wilson.*
- *The First and Second Decree for settling the Committee of Pious Uses in Leedes. Transcribed by Thomas Wilson.*
- *Thoresby's Ducatus Leodiensis: or, The Topography of the Ancient and Populous Town and Parish of Leeds. Pub. 1715. 'The Annotated Ducatis' This copy was owned and heavily annotated by Thomas Wilson.*
- *Missale ad usum Cistercienci ordinis per que da eiusdem ordinis monachu studiosissime correctu, etc. Printed in Paris 1516. Annotated by Thomas Wilson.*

The Leeds Library. Email: counter@theleedslibrary.org.uk

- *Chartularium Melsense, a collection of Papal Bulls, Royal and Private Benefactions to the Abbey of Meaux, in the East Riding, Ex Bibliotheca Thorntonianæ, folio, 1746.*
- *The English Historian and Antiquary's Register, containing an account of all the English Historians and their Works, manuscript and printed, also of Foreign Historians that have written of English affairs, 2 vols., folio.*
- *Familiæ Lancastrienses, or Genealogical Descents of the Nobility and Gentry of Lancashire, from Original Records in several hands, and the MSS. Of Sir John Byron, Sir G. Booth, Mr. J. Hopkinson, R. Thornton, Esq., Ralph Thoresby, and John Lucas, folio.*
- *Liber Judiciarius, or Domesday Book, for the County of York, folio.*



Frontispiece for Wilson's transcription of over two-hundred deeds and documents relating to Kirkstall Abbey, held at the Central Library

Education in 18th-Century Leeds

Options for education in 1700s Leeds were few – and almost entirely dependent on finance or social standing. The Grammar School, situated between Briggate and Vicar Lane, was the primary choice for the wealthy, with some personal tutoring also available. Private academies emerged toward the end of the century, with a growing demand for a curriculum focusing on the skills required for commerce. The less well-off were almost entirely excluded from such choices: most poor children received no education at all, and literacy levels were extremely low.

The primary option for working-class families was the Charity School. Opened in 1705, situated in the recently-vacated Workhouse building at the corner of Vicar Lane and Lady Lane, the School's primary aims were to clothe, feed and educate a small selection of the so-called 'respectable poor'.

The long-term intention was for pupils to find apprenticeships in trade or go into domestic service. The school was funded by public subscription, the majority of which came from the flourishing merchant community. Church of England principles were adhered to and the pupils even had their own pew at the Parish Church.



Leeds Charity School at the former Workhouse building, 1715

In 1726 the School moved to the Chapel of Harrison's Almshouses, near to the Grammar School and St. John's Church. By the middle of the century, seventy boys - taught reading, writing and arithmetic - and fifty girls - taught reading, writing, sewing and knitting - were pupils at the School, all aged between seven and fourteen. School days were long and arduous: Wilson himself describes "ten hours fatigue in teaching a number of poor children."

By 1815 the School's home had fallen into decay and was rebuilt. In the 1890s the Charity moved to Chapel Allerton, where it became known as St. John's Home. Another move occurred in 1924, this time to Headingley, before the School finally closed in 1933.

- *Leeds Charities. The wills of Thos. Ward, Sir W. Sheaffelde, Josiah Jenkinson, J. Harrison, Rev. H. Robinson, Mrs. M. Potter, with the grants of Jno. Harrison and G. Bannister.*
- *Pedigrees and Arms of the Yorkshire Families, from the MSS of Jno. Hopkinson, gent., corrected by Mr Wilson, 4 vols., folio. (West Riding, 2 vols., North Riding, 1 vol., East Riding, 1 vol.)*
- *Sharp's (Abp.) Historical account of the Silver and Gold Coins in England, Scotland and Ireland, with account of his Life, by Mr. Wilson, 4to.*

Grammar School at Leeds Archives. Email: alumni@gsal.org.uk

- *Catalogue of Gentry, Barons, Knights of the Shire, and an Alphabet of Surnames ending in Son by R. Glover. Plus other MSS transcribed from the originals by Thos. Wilson, S.S.A.*
- *Collectanea, vel compotus Feodorum in honore Pontefracti: ab anno 1274 ad annum 1545 im. per Ricardo Barnard. transcribed T. Wilson, 1757*
- *A survey of the Manors of Leedes and Leeds-mainriding, taken anno dom. 1610. With addenda of Several Papers purchased among the collections of Mr. R. Thoresby, by T. Wilson, 1740.*
- *A Short Memorial of the Northern Actions during the War there from 1642 to 1644 by Thom, Lord Fairfax transcribed from the Originals by Thomas Wilson.*
- *A volume of MSS of Ralph Thoresby including Numismata, a Catalogue of Coins and Medals in the Musæum Thoresbyanum, &c. by T. Wilson.*
- *The Letters Patents of King Charles II for the Incorporating the Town of Leedes in the County of York. Transcribed from the Original.*
- *A survey of Cumberland and Westmoreland by Daniel Fleming, taken in the year 1671, (by Thos. Wilson, 1735,) in 8vo.*
- *The Memorials of Thomas Lord Fairfax. Also the journal of Brian Fairfax. Collected by T. Wilson, F.S.A., quarto.*

- *A short account of the Foundation and Dignities of the Cathedral Church of St Peter, in York, by Wm. Pearson, D.D., with an account of the sale of the Archbishop's Manors during the Usurpation of Oliver Cromwell, by T. Wilson, F.S.A.*

Brotherton Library. Email: specialcollections@library.leeds.ac.uk

- MS 723. *Miscellanae Pontefracti* collected from records and manuscripts by Thomas Wilson of Leeds.

York Minster Library. Email: library@yorkminster.org

- *The Diary and Journal of his Grace Toby Matthew, Lord Archbishop of York, from 3rd September, 1583, to the 23rd Sunday after Trin. 1622. transcribed from the original MS. in the library at Bishopthorp. With additions by Thomas Wilson.*

West Yorkshire Archive Service – Morley. Email: leeds@wyjs.org.uk

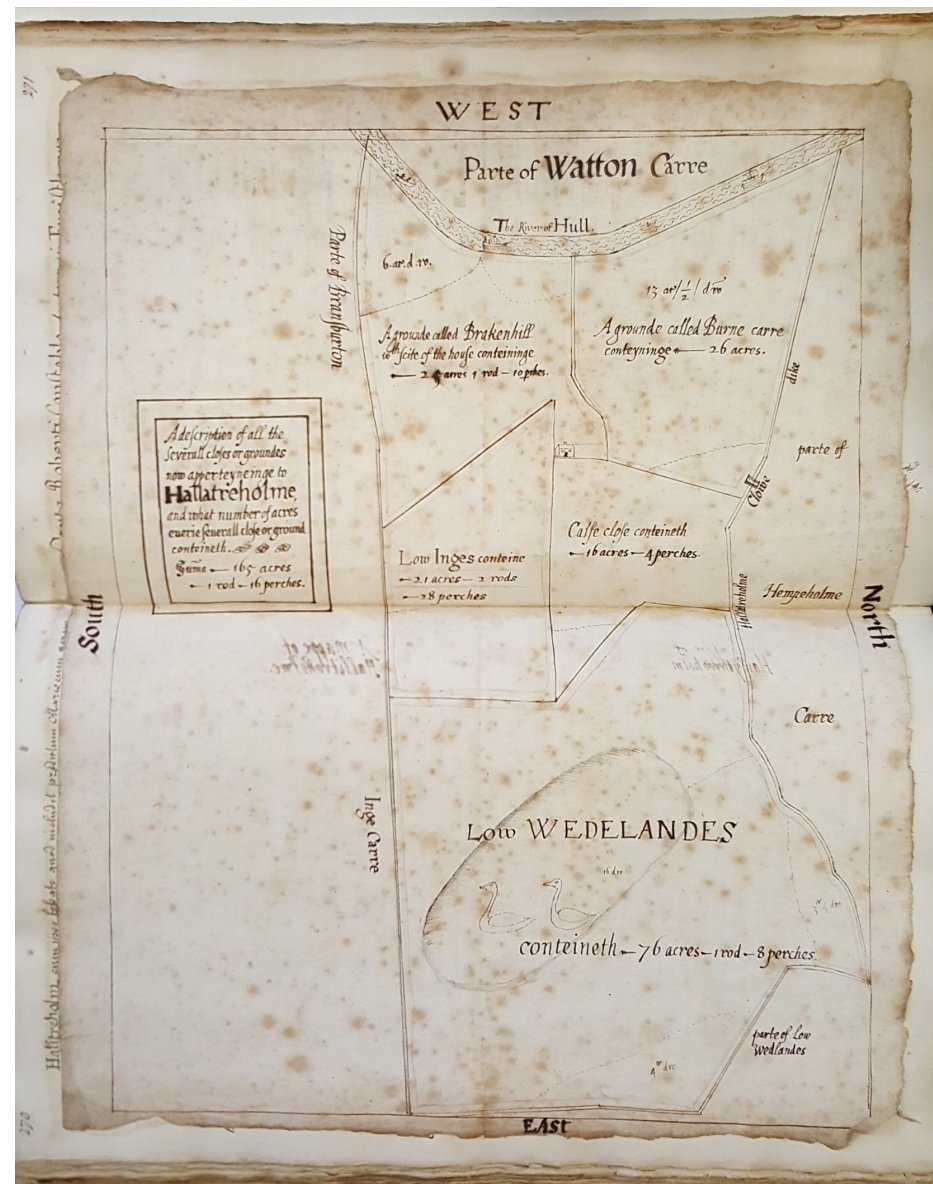
- *Thomas Wilson, Leeds, antiquarian papers. Re John Harrison, copies of Leeds Borough Charters, Leeds Pious Uses Committee and other charities.* WYL160/204
- *Pietas Leodiensis. Or an Account of the Benefactors, Gifts, Collections, Legacies to the Charity School in Leeds compiled by Thomas Wilson.*
- *Leeds St Peter's Parish Registers. 1735-1749.* Registers written by Thomas Wilson, including annotations of earlier entries.

British Library. Email: mss@bl.uk

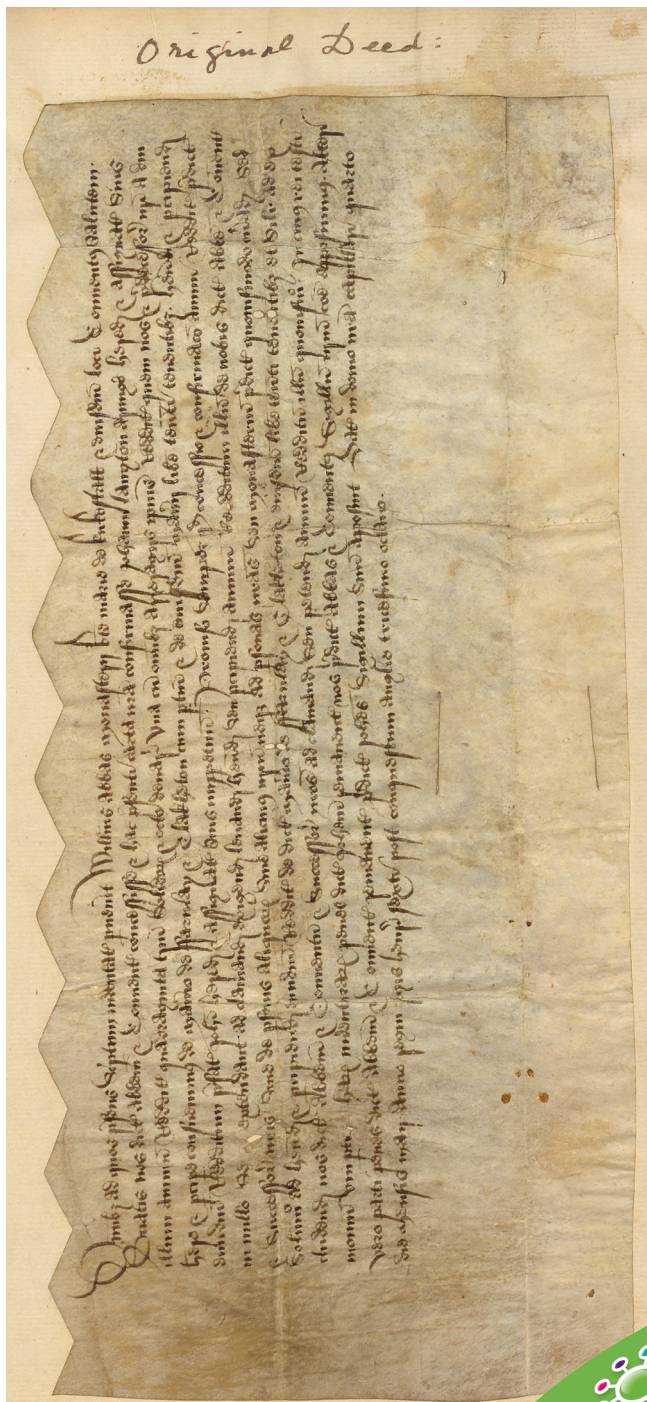
- British Library MS Additional 33770. *The Examinations and Confessions of the Persons concerned in the noted Plot at Farnely Wood in the Parish of Leedes and County of York; with Historical Remarks* by Tho. Wilson.

Houghton Library, Harvard University. Email: houghref@fas.harvard.edu

- MS Lat. 394. *A fragmentary thirteenth-century Latin Psalter with appended, hand-drawn facsimiles of Middle English religious verse.* Annotated by Thomas Wilson.



Wilson's sketch of the lands of Hallatreholme, from his *Chartularium Melsense*, now in the archives of The Leeds Library



Thomas Wilson, in the **Chartularium Kirkstallense**, transcribes over two-hundred deeds and documents relating to Kirkstall Abbey. These he then sent to Richard Rawlinson at the Bodleian Library. Seen here is the one remaining deed which he retained in the book. It describes a rental agreement relating to Kirkstall Abbey, dated 1460.

Beinecke Library, Yale University. Email: beinecke.library@yale.edu

- Thomas Hearne's *A Vindication of Those Who Take the Oath Of Allegiance* (1731). At the back of this copy Wilson has written, following a complete copy of Hearne's will, notes on Hearne's character as an antiquary, long passages from the testament of Richard Rawlinson, and comments concerning Rawlinson's and his own collections.

John Rylands Library, Manchester. Email:

uml.special-collections@manchester.ac.uk

- English MS 88. *Later Version Wycliffe Psalms, second half of 15th century*. Title page and flyleaf notes by Thomas Wilson.

There is little doubt that Thomas Wilson was responsible for producing more items than are listed here. Evidence of two of 'the lost items' is to be found in *A Catalogue of the Library collected by Miss Richardson Currer, at Eshton Hall, Craven, Yorkshire, 1833*.

- *An Account of all the Charters, Patents and Escheat Rolls in the Archives of the Tower of London; collected by John Burton, M. D. 1746; with compleat indexes of persons and places*. Transcribed by Thomas Wilson. M.DCC.XLVII.
- *Adversaria*, in MS, by Thomas Wilson of Leeds, *Collectiones ad Historiam famosissimi Coenobii Glastoniensi concinnandum etc.*

Further evidence is given by Wilson himself. In his letters to Richard Richardson, both father and son, he alludes to a number of manuscripts that he has transcribed, of which—as yet—there is no trace.



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Thomas Wilson F. S. A. (c. 1702-1761)

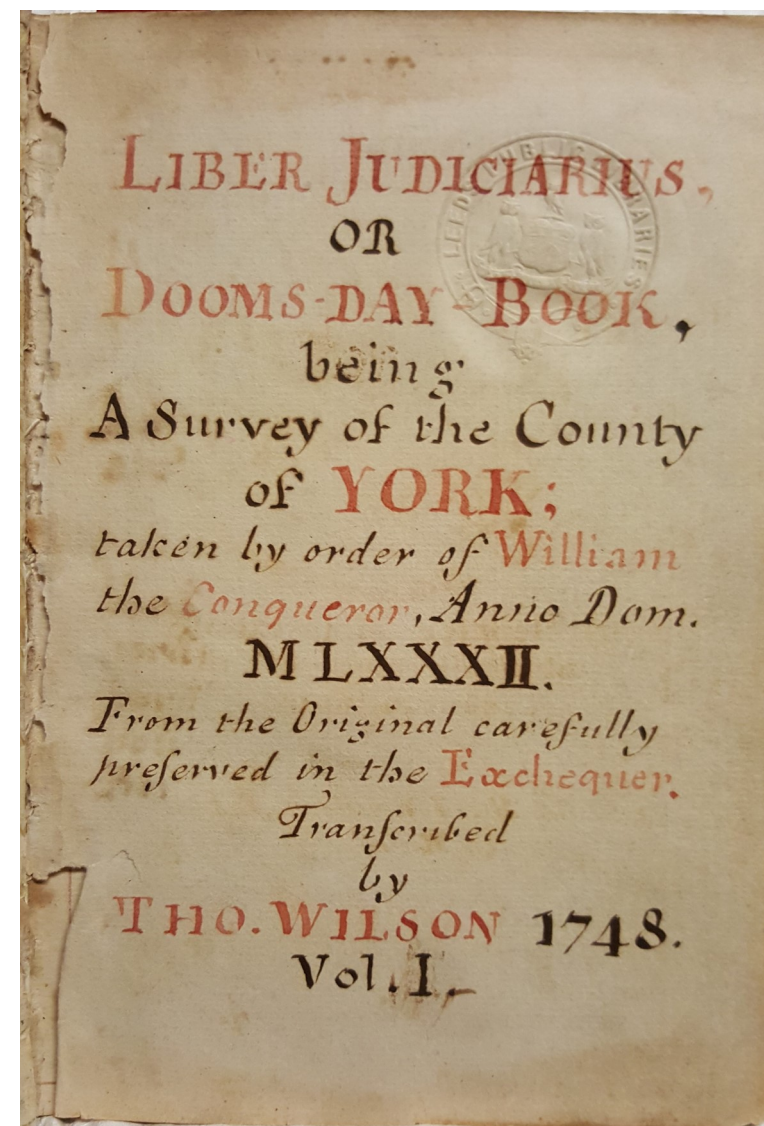
Little is known for certain of the life of Thomas Wilson, Leeds Schoolmaster and Antiquarian. Thought to have been born around 1702 in Wragby, near Pontefract, Wilson's first recorded appearance in the Leeds area was his marriage to Martha Ingham in 1727 at St. Mary's Church in Beeston; a year later Wilson is reported to have purchased a house in Leeds itself. Thomas and Martha are known to have had at least one child: Joseph, later a bookseller based on Kirkgate.

It is not known exactly when Wilson began teaching. However, in 1728, Wilson persuaded his 'most intimate companion' Thomas Kitching, dying tragically young of consumption, to bequeath two houses to the Leeds Charity School. Wilson is recorded in documents as the Master of the Lower School from 1731; in 1750, he was appointed Master of both the Lower and Upper Schools on the death of the former Master, John Lucas.

It is his Antiquarian work, however, that best recommends Wilson to posterity. While this work is now little known, it was esteemed enough in his own time that Wilson was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1750. Such work included transcriptions of manuscripts, deeds and documents of all kinds, including the *Chartularium Kirkstallense* (Charters relating to Kirkstall Abbey), the *Domesday Book* for the County of York, the 1610 *Survey of the Manor Leeds*, and a thorough annotation of Ralph Thoresby's *Ducatus Leodiensis*.

Wilson was likely a deeply religious man, working as the Parish Clerk from 1735 to 1749, where he recorded baptisms, marriages and burials, as well as annotating significant entries in previous registers. It was to the Almighty, in fact, that Wilson attributed his Antiquarian interests and abilities, writing that "It pleased God to implant in me a Genius truly historical".

Working tirelessly and diligently at these educational and scholarly pursuits - adopting the Latin *Nulla Dies Sinae Linea* ('Not a Day without a Line') as his motto - Wilson reported suffering from ill health in the 1750s, quite possibly an early manifestation of the fever from which he would die in 1761. He is buried in the cemetery of St. John's Church, near to the Charity School where he once worked so selflessly for the people of Leeds.



Frontispiece for Wilson's transcription of the Domesday Book for the County of York. Now held at the Central Library and thought to have been Wilson's personal copy