SELECTED CHESHIRE SEALS (12TH — 17TH CENTURY) FROM THE COLLECTIONS IN THE JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY.

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The twenty seals relating to Cheshire brought together below from the various collections in the Library's Charter Room range in date from the early twelfth to the seventeenth century. All, it may be fairly claimed, have an interest not only for the local historian, but also for the student of sigillography in general, for few, if any, of them could be described as common; at least one, the fine seal of Ranulf II, Earl of Chester, is apparently unique. They have been arranged in the following order: Nos. 1–3, Earls of Chester, 12th–13th century; 4–6, Princes of Wales and Earls of Chester (the Black Prince and Henry of Monmouth, later King Henry V), 14th century; 7, Henry de Lacy, 3rd Earl of Lincoln and Constable of Chester, c. 1300; 8, The County Palatine of Chester, 1531; 9–12, The County Palatine of Chester and County of Flint, 17th century; 13, St. Werburgh’s Abbey, Chester, 10 September, 1538; 14–17, Ecclesiastical Seals (The Dean and Chapter of Chester Cathedral, 1541; John Bird, 1st Bishop of Chester, 1549; Adam de Stanford, Archdeacon of Chester, 1272/74; The Officiality of the Archdeaconry of Chester, 1384), 13th–16th century; 18, Chester, Privy Seal of the Mayor, 1462; 19, Statute Merchant Seal of Chester, 1589; 20, The Earl of Derby as Steward of the Halmote Court of Macclesfield, 1376.

The selection could have been considerably widened without much difficulty, for the Library is rich in materials for the history of this county. A separate and lengthy section, for example, could have been devoted to private seals of heraldic or patterned design, among which the old county families and their branches
are well represented. At the risk of allowing this brief introductory note to develop into a list, attention is drawn to the following, which provide representative examples of this type of seal: Sir William de Boydel, 1344 (Rylands Ch. 1742); Sir William de Brereton, 1418 (Mainwaring Ch. 208); Robert de Brescy, early Edward I (Rylands Ch. 1790); Ellen, wife of Geoffrey de Bromale, 1420 (Mainwaring Ch. 218); Henry de Delves, 1383 (Rylands Ch. 1851); Matthew de Fouleshurst, 1360 (Mainwaring Ch. 140); Adam de Hooton, late 13th cent., (Rylands Ch. 1634); Roger Jodrell, 1401 (Jodrell Ch. 24); William, son of William Lancelyn, late Henry III or early Edward I (Rylands Ch. 1542); John, son of Robert de Legh, 1395 (Mainwaring Ch. 174); Robert de Legh, 1364 (Jodrell Ch. 207); Ranulph Mainwaring, 1395 (Mainwaring Ch. 176); Thomas de Mainwaring, temp. Edward I (ib. 85); William Mainwaring, 1393 (ib. 172); Sir Geoffrey de Mascie of Tatton, 1447 (Mascie Taylor Ch. 51); John de Meeres, 1405 (Crutchley Ch. 620); William de Mobberley, temp. Edward I (Mainwaring Ch. 86); Ralph, son of William de Northwich, and his wife Sibilla, temp. Edward I (Rylands Ch. 1811); Joan de Storeton, early Henry III (ib. 1808); John, son of Richard de Sutton, 1374 (Jodrell Ch. 212); William, son of Robert de Tabley, 1248 (Mainwaring Ch. 16); Robert Tatton, 1539 (Tatton Ch. 448); John Touchet, Baron of Audley, 1406 (Hatton Wood MSS., Legh of Booths Ch. 2); William de Venables, 1284/87 (Mascie Taylor Ch. 23); and Ralph de Wettenhall, 1437 (Mainwaring Ch. 251).

In the descriptions below the following information has been given about each seal, where possible:—

(1) A brief title. (2) The date of (a) the seal itself, where such a date occurs in the legend (see also 10 below), or (b) the document to which it is attached.

(3) Finding reference in the Library. (4) Colour. (5) Size. If round, the diameter is given in millimetres. If an oval or a pointed oval, this is indicated and both diameters are similarly given. No other shape occurs here. (6) Condition of seal, perfect or imperfect; if the latter, an attempt is made to indicate the extent of the imperfection. (7) Condition of impression(s).
Note: To avoid confusion it has been found convenient to indicate such particulars of a counter-seal as differ from those of the obverse under 9(b) below.

(8) Method of attachment: (a) Pendent from a doubled strip of parchment, or (b) on a tongue. In the latter case, the length and breadth of the tongue and the length from the root to the edge of the seal are given in inches. The presence of a tie beneath the tongue is noted.

(9) Description of device(s): (a) obverse, (b) reverse or counter-seal, where found.

(10) Legend(s) and border, if other than a mere line. In present circumstances it has not been found possible to have the exact form of all the letterings of the legends reproduced in type.

(11) A general note, if considered necessary. The references given here do not pretend to be exhaustive.

1. RANULF II (‘DE GERNONS’), EARL OF CHESTER, A.D. 1129/39. (Pl. I, fig. 1.)

[Rylands Ch. 1807.] Uncoloured, yellowish-brown wax. 78 mm. in diameter. A small piece is broken off at the bottom and the edges are somewhat chipped; these small imperfections, for purposes of description, affect only the legend, not the device. Good impression.

On a tongue 4\(\frac{1}{8}\)" long and \(\frac{3}{8}\)" broad, the top of the seal being 1\(\frac{1}{2}\)" from the root.

A helmed figure on horseback, to the right. He is leaning slightly backwards and showing, apparently, full face. In the hand of his extended right arm is a sword with a wide groove, held at an acute angle, the point terminating above his head. In his left hand is what appears to be a kite-shaped shield, showing the interior. The horse is standing, its left fore-leg raised and bent. Mane, saddle, stirrup, reins and breast-band are visible.

[\* SIGILLVO]· RANNVLF1· C[OO]TIS· CEST]RIEN-

SIS·

Beaded border.

This seal is apparently unique. See R. Stewart-Brown,
"The Charter and Horn of the Master-Forester of Wirral" (reprinted from *Trans. of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, vol. 87, 1936), particularly pp. 104 sqq. and the references there, where it is considered; a photograph is given *ib.*, facing p. 104, and the charter and seal are shown on the plate facing p. 97. The description above is fuller than that given by Mr. Stewart-Brown. For charters of Ranulf II see H. A. Cronne's article in *Trans. of the Royal Hist. Soc.*, 4th Ser., vol. 20 (1937).

2. HUGH II ("OF CYVEILIOG"), EARL OF CHESTER. LATE HENRY II.

[Rylands Ch. 1436.] Uncoloured wax, which has lost much of its nature and is now brittle and whitish-yellow. A large fragment only, measuring c. 40 × 56 mm., sewn with green thread in a round, parchment cover. Good impression.

Pendent from a doubled strip of parchment.

Ø. An equestrian figure in armour, wearing spurs, to the right, the horse with a long, ornamental saddle-cloth. [The body of the figure, the head and front legs of the horse, and the legend not included.]

R7. A small, oval counter-seal, measuring 28 × 25 mm. Impression of an antique intaglio gem, subject uncertain, surrounded by the legend: *SECRETVM·ME-CHI.*


[Rylands Ch. 1783.] Bronze-green wax. 75 mm. in diameter. The edges are chipped, but the device is not affected. Fine impression.

Plate I.
1. Adam de Stanford, Archdeacon of Chester, a.d. 1272/74.
2. The Officiality of the Archdeaconry of Chester, a.d. 1384.

Plate II.
SELECTED CHESHIRE SEALS

Pendent from a doubled strip of parchment.
A heater-shaped shield on which is a lion rampant.

✠ SIGILL · · · · · · F · · · MIT · · · CES · · · E :


4. CHESTER EXCHEQUER SEAL OF THE BLACK PRINCE AS EARL OF CHESTER, A.D. 1349. (Pl. II, fig. 3.)

[Rylands Ch. 1283.] Uncoloured, yellowish-brown wax. 42 mm. in diameter. Perfect save for a little chipping of the edges, affecting the legend slightly. Fine impression.

Pendent from a doubled strip of parchment.
An upright shield of arms: three leopards of England, over all a label of five points. Within a carved Gothic panel of eight cusps, ornamented with ball-flowers along the inner edge.


For photographs, from examples in the P.R.O., see Tout, Chapters in Medieval Administrative History, vol. v, pl. V, fig. 1; R. C. Fowler, "Seals in the Public Record Office" (ap. Archaeologia, vol. 74), pl. 34, no. 63. Another seal of the Black Prince, applied to a pass granted in 1355 to William Jodrell, one of his Cheshire archers, is described in the Library Bulletin, vol. 7 (Margaret Sharp, "A Jodrell Deed and the Seals of the Black Prince"); it was not included in the Jodrell deeds deposited in the Library. For the Black Prince's seals see Sharp, op. cit.; Tout, op. cit., pp. 421 sqq. and the references there.


[Rylands Ch. 1334.] Red wax. 40 mm. in diameter. Perfect save for a slight chipping of the legend. Good impression, with a number of the details rubbed.
Pendent from a doubled strip of parchment.

An upright shield of arms: quarterly, 1, 4, France (ancient), 2, 3, England, over all a label of three points. Within an elaborately-carved Gothic panel of eight cusps with ball-flower ornaments, the cusps being pierced with tracery. In the cusp above the shield is a diminutive lion rampant, and in the cusps to the left and right an oak-branch, placed horizontally.

[S'Edwardi P'nogeti Regis Angl' & Franc' P'ncipis Wall' Ducis Cornub' & Com[li't' Cestr'].

Another example, imperfect but showing a fine impression, is attached to Rylands Phillipps Ch. 23 (A.D. 1347), for which see B. Wilkinson, "A Letter to Louis de Male, Count of Flanders," in the Library Bulletin, vol. 9. For a photograph from an example in the Public Record Office, see Tout, op. cit., vol. v, pl. V, fig. 2. An illustration of another example, attached to a certificate respecting Thomas de Prayers of Barthomley, co. Chester, is given in The Archaeological Journal, vol. 14 (1857), p. 351. The shield is inadvertently described as couché in Birch, op. cit., no. 5558 (a plaster cast). See also Tout, op. cit., p. 422 and the references there.

6. HENRY, PRINCE OF WALES, DUKE OF AQUITAINÉ, LANCASTER AND CORNWALL, EARL OF CHESTER
(AFTERWARDS KING HENRY V), A.D. 1399.

[Rylands Ch. 1309.] Red wax. 70 mm. in diameter, when complete. Imperfect, somewhat more than the left half only having survived. Fine impression.

On a tongue 6 4/" long and 1" broad, the top of the seal being 2 1/" from the root. Backed with paper cut to the shape of the seal.

A shield of arms couché: quarterly, 1, 4, France (ancient), 2, 3, England, over all a label of three points. Surmounted by a closed helm, with mantling, above which, on a cap of estate, is the crowned lion crest of England gorged with a label of three points. In the field on the left, a swan, crowned on the neck and chained, [supporting a labelled ostrich feather in its mouth;
here lacking]. The remainder of the seal, including the right supporter, is missing.

S' Henrici - - - - - - - - - - - Aqutan * lancastri * cornu[ - - - co]mit * ce[itr].

The legend is on a belt, of which the buckle and tongue are at the bottom of the seal. The head of the lion crest extends into the top of the belt, where it separates the beginning and end of the legend.

Beaded borders.

Another example of this seal, also imperfect, is attached to Ryl. Ch. 1310 (A.D. 1400). Cf. Fowler, op. cit., p. 115 and pl. 34 (no. 62).

7. HENRY DE LACY, [3rd] EARL OF LINCOLN, CONSTABLE OF CHESTER, c. A.D. 1300. (Pl. I, fig. 2.)

[Rylands Ch. 1266.] Dark-green wax. 60 mm. in diameter. Perfect save for some chipping of the legend on the obverse. Fine impression.

Pendent from a doubled strip of parchment.

Ø. An equestrian figure, galloping to the right, wearing a plumed helmet with vizor closed, hauberker of mail and surcoat. Sword, held at an angle towards the body, in the hand of the extended right arm. On the left arm, held close to the body, is a shield of arms, slung with a strap over the right shoulder: quarterly, a bend, over all in chief a label of three points. The horse is caparisoned, its flank-cloth being in the shape of a shield of arms, charged as above. The horse's fore-legs, hind-legs and ears and the rider's sword and helmet project into the space reserved for the legend.

S' HENRICI DE LACI COMIT' LIN[COLN]IE ET [CONSTABVLAR' CE]STR'.

R3. A small counter-seal in red (sic) wax, 20 mm. in diameter. An upright shield of arms as on the obverse, between two garbs (for Chester), surrounded by the following legend, within beaded borders: * SECRETVM : HENRICI : DE : LACI.

Another example of this fine seal is described in Birch, op. cit., no. 6159, with illustration (pl. XI). Birch's suggested reading of the legend on the reverse is confirmed by the Rylands seal.
8. COUNTY PALATINE OF CHESTER, A.D. 1531.

[Rylands Ch. 916.] Uncoloured, brownish-yellow wax. 90 mm. in diameter. Perfect, with a repairing in one place. Good impression. Shows marks of the studs or pins used to steady the matrix.

Pendent from a doubled strip of parchment.

Ø. The King, armed cap-à-pie, on horseback, galloping to the right. In plate-armour, with closed helmet, cap of maintenance, and crowned lion crest. His right arm is extended and bent almost at right angles at the elbow; in the hand is a heavy sword, held at an angle towards the body. In the left hand is a shield of arms, showing front view, slung with a strap over the right shoulder: the Royal Arms of England as borne by King Henry VIII. The horse is caparisoned and has a plume of three feathers on its head; its tail is extended. The bearings of the caparisons are the same as those of the shield. The background of the device is diapered in a lozenge pattern, with a fleur-de-lys at each intersection and an ostrich feather in each space. A heavy border, ornamented with ball-flowers or quatrefoils along the inner edge, separates the device from the legend.

Sig' † henrici † dei † gra¬ † regis † angl' † et † franc' † ℣ dūl † bib'n' † comitatus † palatini [a sprig of foliage] ſui ceſtre [sic, followed by a sprig of foliage].

R7. An upright shield of arms: per pale, dex., as on the obverse; sin., three garbs (Chester). Above is a covered crown of five roses and four fleurs-de-lys, alternately. Supporters, two dragons, sitting, addorsed, each holding an ostrich feather with label inscribed: tcb dien. The heavy border between the device and the legend is ornamented along the inner edge with ball-flowers or quatrefoils.

Sigilli † henrici † dei † gra¬ † regis † angl': ℣ franc': ℣ dūl † bibnie † comitatús: palaci: ſui: ceſtre [sic].

Two other examples of this seal in the Library, although slightly imperfect (the legend only, in each case, is affected), show particularly fine impressions; they are attached to Tatton Ch. 543 and 558. The sulphur cast described by Birch, op. cit.,
no. 4802, shows some differences in the legend compared with
the Rylands seals, notably in the style. On the Palatinate seals
of Chester see Hilary Jenkinson, “The Great Seal of England:
Deputed or Departmental Seals” (ap. Archaeologia, vol. 85),
pp. 332–33.

9. COUNTY PALATINE OF CHESTER AND COUNTY
OF FLINT. JAMES I, A.D. 1603.

[Mainwaring Ch. 405.] Uncoloured, light-yellow wax. 95
mm. in diameter. Perfect. Good impression. Shows marks
of the studs or pins used to steady the matrix.
Pendent from a doubled strip of parchment.

Ø. The King on horseback, galloping to the left, on a mount
replenished with herbage and flowers. Armed cap-à-pie in
plate armour, with cuirass, closed helmet and gauntlets. The
helmet is ensigned with the royal crown and from it fly back-
wards, falling down the King’s back, three short and two long
ostrich feathers. In his right hand he brandishes a sword with
a blade short in proportion to the large, heavy hilt; the blade
passes behind his crown. In his left hand are the reins. The
horse wears a stiff caparison, the details of which are not clear.
Its neck and forehead are protected by plate armour and a pro-
jecting spike, and on its head is an aigrette and a plume of four
ostrich feathers; its long, flowing tail is bound with three fillets
at the root.

★ SIGILLVM ★ IACOBI ★ DEI ★ GRACIA ★ ANGLIÆ ★
SCOTÆ ★ FRANCÆ ★ ET ★ HIBERNIÆ ★ REGIS ★
FIDEI ★ DEF ★

7. An upright shield of arms: per pale, dexter, the Royal
Arms of King James I, with a label of three points; sinister,
three garbs (Chester). Above is a royal crown, jewelled, with three
crosses paty and two fleurs-de-lys. The supporters are two
dragons, sitting, addorsed, each holding in one paw an ostrich
feather.

COMITATVS ★ PALATINI ★ SVI ★ CESTRIÆ ★ ET ★
COMITATVS ★ SVI ★ FLINT ★ A° ★ DNI ★ 1603 [continued
from the obverse].
The borders are carved.
This seal is attached to a document dated A.D. 1604. See also Birch, op. cit., no. 4808 and illustration (pl. V).

10. COUNTY PALATINE OF CHESTER AND COUNTY OF FLINT. CHARLES, PRINCE OF WALES, DUKE OF CORNWALL AND YORK, EARL OF CHESTER (AFTERWARDS CHARLES I), A.D. 1616.

[Mainwaring Ch. 429.] Uncoloured, yellowish-brown wax. 95 mm. in diameter. A little imperfect and chipped. Fine impression.
Pendent from a doubled strip of parchment.
Ø. On horseback, galloping to the left. Armed cap-à-pie in plate armour, with cuirass, closed helmet ensigned with a coronet, plume of five ostrich feathers (three short and two long) falling down his back, scabbard and gauntlets. In his right hand he brandishes a sword, the blade passing behind his head. In his left hand, held at waist level, is a shield of arms, front view: three garbs (Chester). The horse wears a stiff caparison, the pattern being a diaper lozengey with, alternately, an ostrich feather and a garb in each space, an ornament at each intersection, and a border composed of roses and fleurs-de-lys, alternately disposed. On the horse's head is an aigrette and a plume of four ostrich feathers; its tail, which is long and flowing, is bound at the root with a wide fillet of diaper lozengey pattern.

[SIGILL]VM * CAROLI * PRINCIPIS * WALLIÆ * DUCIS * CORNVBI[Æ * ET * EBORVM * ET * COMITIS * CESTRIÆ].

Rv. An upright shield of arms, charged as on the obverse. Above is a jewelled coronet of four fleurs-de-lys and five pearls on rays, alternately disposed. The supporters are two sitting dragons, addorsed, each holding an ostrich feather.

* CO[MITATVS]S * PALATINI * SVI * CESTRIÆ * ET * FLINT * ANNO * 1616 [continued from the obverse].

Carved borders.
This seal is attached to a document dated A.D. 1638. Another example, perfect but with a less fine impression, is attached to
SELEcTED CHESHIRE SEALS


11. COUNTY PALATINE OF CHESTER AND COUNTY OF FLINT. CHARLES II, A.D. 1660.

[Jodrell Ch. 98.] Uncoloured, yellowish-brown wax. 90 mm. in diameter. Perfect. Fine impression, now a little rubbed.

 Pendant from a doubled strip of parchment.

Ø. The King, with head turned to show full face, on horseback, galloping to the left. Most of the details of his attire are rubbed. On his head is a plume of feathers, at his side a scabbard; a sash flows behind him, at waist level. His hands, gauntleted, are held in front of him; in the left hand are the reins, in the right is a sword held upright, the point penetrating into the space reserved for the legend, where it separates the N and S of DEFENS. The horse, which is left plain, is galloping on rising ground. In the field above its tail is an ornamental shield of arms: three garbs (Chester).

♀ SIGIL · CAROLI · II · DEI · GRATIA · MAG · BRITAN · FRAN · ET · HIB · REG · FIDEI · DEFENS

R7. As the reverse of the preceding seal (no. 10), save that the tails of the dragons are intertwined.

♀ COMITATVS · PALATINI · SVI · CESTRIÆ · ET · FLINT · AN° · 1660 [continued from obverse].

This seal is attached to a document dated A.D. 1671.


[Rylands Ch. 2102.] Uncoloured, yellowish-brown wax, 100 mm. in diameter. Perfect. Fine impression.

 Pendant from a doubled strip of parchment.

Ø and R7. A copy of the preceding seal (no. 11), save that here the sword which penetrates into the space reserved for the legend on the obverse separates the D and E of the last (abbreviated) word.
13. BENEDICTINE ABBEY OF ST. WERBURGH,
CHESTER, 10 SEPT. 1538.

[Rylands Ch. 1850.] Yellowish-white wax. Imperfect, consisting of a large fragment (c. 57 × 46 mm.) of the centre portion; when complete the seal would be c. 3" long. Good impression.

Pendent from a doubled strip of parchment.

Ø. A Gothic church shown in elaborate detail in elevation and section, with transepts and pinnacled tower, at the angles of which are flags. In the pediment of the tower is a countersunk trefoil enclosing a monk’s head. On the base of the pediment is the following ornamentation, from left to right: a trefoil reversed, three lancet-shaped niches (or windows), and a trefoil. Under the tower arch, which is round-headed and has a cinquefoiled inner arch, is St. Werburgh, seated on a carved and cushioned throne, a pastoral staff in her right hand and in her left, which is held in front of her body, a book. The vertical face of the church on each side of the saint is divided into two sections, the first (i.e. the one nearer to the saint on each side) being of six panels of equal size with the following decoration, one in each, from top to bottom: three lancet-shaped niches, a pierced triangle, two lancet-shaped niches, a quatrefoil, one lancet-shaped niche, a trefoil. The second section (which is the face of the transept in each case) is lacking on the left but contained the same decoration as that on the right, namely, from top to bottom: three lancet-shaped niches; a monk’s head enclosed in a quatrefoiled panel; and a monk standing beneath an arch, full-length and facing inwards, with hands clasped as if in prayer. On the carved plinth at the base of the seal is a quatrefoiled panel enclosing a monk’s head, with
two lancet-shaped niches on either side. The remainder of the obverse, including the legend, is missing.

R7. A similar building. The pediment of the central tower is missing but its base remains, decorated with a quatrefoil between two lancet-shaped niches. Under the tower arch, which is round-headed and has a trefoiled inner arch, is a King with crown, seated on a carved and cushioned throne; in his right hand, which rests on his knee, is a sceptre fleury, in his left an orb surmounted by a cross. In each transept, separated from the King by a pillar, is a full-length figure, front view; on the left St. Peter, on the right St. Paul, each, with his usual emblems, standing under a trefoiled arch, above which is the base of the transept pediments, decorated in each case with three lancet-shaped niches. In a quatrefoil in the carved plinth at the base of the seal is a monk’s head, on each side of which are three lancet-shaped niches. The remainder of the reverse, including the legend, is missing.

A drawing of the St. Werburgh seal, from an impression in the Augmentation Office, is given in Dugdale’s Monasticon, vol. ii (1819), pl. XIII, and a photograph of another, earlier, example, less perfect than the one described above, will be found in Gale Pedrick, Monastic Seals of the XIIIth Century, pl. XIX. Shorter descriptions occur in Birch, op. cit., no. 2913 (an imperfect sulphur cast), and Pedrick, op. cit., pp. 50–51. For suggested identifications of the King represented on the reverse see Birch, “On Some Manuscripts Relating to St. Werburgh’s Abbey, Chester, Preserved in the British Museum” (ap. Journal of the Chester Arch. Soc., N.S. 3), p. 7; Pedrick, op. cit., p. 50.


[Tatton Ch. 1368.] Red wax. 80 mm. in diameter. Imperfect at the top, but only the legend is seriously affected; repaired in one place. Fine impression, a little rubbed in places. Pendent from a doubled strip of parchment.

Ø. On the left the Virgin, with large nimbus, reaching to her shoulders, facing front and wearing a cowl and long, flowing
robe, kneels in prayer behind a carved reading-desk, the front of which is ornamented with scrolled foliage and upon which rests an open book with clasps. Behind her is a closed window. To her left, under an ornamental canopy, stands our Lord, with cruciform nimbus, full length and facing front, wearing a long robe, the collar fastened at the front with an ornament; the robe is drawn up to knee-height, the legs and feet being bare. In the right hand, held at His side, is a long cross. The left arm (which is badly out of perspective) is stretched across the body to the right side, and from the left hand a scroll flows across the left half of the device, passing over the Virgin's head. It bears the words: SALVE * SCT * PAR ENC. Set in the background between the two figures is a tall pillar ornamented with foliage decoration. The remainder of the seal, to our Lord's left, is filled with architectural details which here, as elsewhere on the obverse, are in Renaissance style. The floor is tiled.

[* SIGILLV ♠ COMVNE] ♠ CATHED' ♠ ECCLESIE ♠ XPI ♠ ET ♠ BEATE ♠ MARIE ♠ CESTRIE ♠ 1541.]

R7. Henry VIII, crowned, wearing royal robes and ermine tippet, and with sceptre and orb, seated on a carved throne, the canopy of which is supported by two slender, elaborately-carved pillars; two roses and two fleurs-de-lys form the corners of a square enclosing the King's head on the back of the throne. On each side is a full-length figure with nimbus, facing front. The one on the King's right is wearing a long robe and tippet and carrying a sceptre and orb; at the side of the right knee is the letter O (for "Oswaldus"). On the King's left is the Virgin, with crown and book, and the letter V (for "Virgo") above her right foot. At the top of the seal, on each side of the canopy, are H.R. (left) and 8 (right). At the base two ecclesiastics, facing each other and looking upwards, kneel in prayer in the space reserved for the legend, their bodies extending into the device. Between them are the letters GP, and behind each the letter T (left) and D (right).

[FACTVM ♠ ANNO] ♠ GRACIE ♠ 1:5 [the two ecclesiastics] 4·1 ·10 ♠ DIE ♠ IVLII [♠ ANNO ♠ H EN : 43 (sic).]

This seal is attached to a document dated A.D. 1549. Two other examples, both in red wax and each consisting of a large
fragment only, but showing a fine impression, are in the Library; they are attached to Tatton Ch. 413 (A.D. 1542) and Mainwaring Ch. 344 (A.D. 1542). A facsimile of a drawing from another example by Hugh Cholmondeley, Dean of Chester, is given in Helsby's edition of Ormerod, vol. i (1882), p. 265; this shows one or two minor differences from the Rylands seals, but these are almost certainly due to careless drawing. A sulphur cast from a chipped impression is described in Birch, *Cat. of Seals in the British Museum*, no. 2432, where it is stated that the scroll on the obverse bears the words: SALVE * SCA * PAR. REG. The lettering cited above from the Rylands seal (SCT for Birch's SCA, and ENC for his REG; Cholmondeley reads INC) is confirmed by a description made in 1878, "after close inspection" of the matrix itself at Chester, to settle a similar difference (see *The Cheshire Sheaf*, vol. i, pp. 26, 50 and, particularly, 53-54). Birch, *loc. cit.*, has a note on the obviously incorrect regnal year (43 Henry VIII) given in the legend on the reverse.

15. JOHN BIRD, 1st BISHOP OF CHESTER, A.D. 1549.

[Tatton Ch. 1368.] Red wax. A pointed oval, measuring 70 × 47 mm. Slightly imperfect at the bottom, but the legend only is affected. The device shows a good impression, somewhat rubbed in places; the impression of the legend has slipped in one place.

Pendent from a doubled strip of parchment.

A carved, double-arched niche of late style, with a slender pillar at each side. On the left, our Lord, with nimbus, his right hand raised and in his left hand an orb. On the right, the Virgin, with nimbus and rays of glory, her hands clasped in front as if in prayer. Both figures are full length and facing front, in long robes. Above the head of each hovers a bird, presumably a dove. In the base, between two sprigs of foliage, is an ornamental shield of arms, the upper portion of which is illegible. On the lower portion is clearly visible a pastoral staff in bend dexter crossed by a mace in bend sinister.
A rough drawing of another, imperfect, example of this seal, attached to a deed then in the possession of Sir Philip Egerton, is given by the Rev. W. H. Massie in his "Remarks on the History of Seals, with Local Illustrations" (ap. Journal of the Chester Arch. Soc., vol. i), plate facing p. 164, fig. 5. Mr. Massie notes that the device is "in evident allusion to the title of the cathedral, changed from St. Werburgh to 'Christ and the Virgin Mary'" (ib. and p. 176). Bird's arms are given as: "Sable, a mace or in bend dexter, crossed by a pastoral staff in bend sinister argent headed or, on a chief argent three shovellers sable," in Bedford's The Blazon of Episcopacy, 2nd edn., p. 147; also cited by Rev. F. Sanders, "John Bird, D.D., Bishop of Chester, 1541–1554" (ap. Journal of the Chester Arch. Soc., N.S., vol. xiii), p. 124. On the Rylands seal, however, the pastoral staff and mace are quite clearly the other way round, as described above. It is interesting to note that John Wilkins, Bishop of Chester from 1668 to 1672, also had as the device on his seal a niche of late style containing our Lord with nimbus and orb and the Virgin with rays of glory, with a shield of arms in the base (see Birch, Cat. no. 2420, a sulphur cast).

16. ADAM DE STANFORD, ARCHDEACON OF CHESTER, A.D. 1272/74. (Pl. II, fig. 1.)

[Rylands Ch. 1421.] Brown wax. A pointed oval, measuring 40 × 25 mm. Perfect, with a repaired crack in one place. Fine impression.

Pendent from a doubled strip of parchment.

The Archdeacon, full length and facing front, standing on a corbel which exhibits some sculptured work. Before his breast he holds a closed book, his right hand on the top of it, his left hand beneath it. In the field on each side of him is a star (at shoulder level), a crescent (at elbow level) and, much larger, a garb (at knee height).


17. THE OFFICIALITY OF THE ARCHDEACONRY OF CHESTER, A.D. 1384. (Pl. II, fig. 2.)

[Rylands Ch. 1319.] Green wax. A pointed oval, measuring 35 × 23 mm. Perfect, save for a little chipping which does not affect the legibility of the legend or the device. Fine impression.

On a tongue 6\(\frac{3}{4}\)" long and 1\(\frac{5}{6}\)" broad, the top of the seal being 3\(\frac{7}{10}\)" from the root. Underneath is a narrow tie.

The device is divided into two about two-thirds way down by a trefoiled arch. In the upper portion is a half figure, facing front, his body, which is very narrow waisted, issuing from the top of the centre arch, his head projecting into the space reserved for the legend at the top of the seal, where it separates the beginning and end of the legend. He wears a tall cap and tight-fitting, high-collared garment marked down the front with two parallel stripes, above which is a cape-like garment, the ends falling on each side of him into a cone-shaped pattern. His hands are crossed in front at waist level. Above each side arch is an annulet. In the lower portion of the device is a garb (for Chester) under the centre arch, between on the dexter the forepart of a lion, on the sinister its forked tail.

S’ OFFICIALITATIS : CESTRIE

Beaded borders.

The whole appearance is of fineness and delicacy and the seal is thin and wafer-like. An imperfect example of A.D. 1343 is described by Mr. Hunter Blair in his “Durham Seals” (ap. Arch. Aeliana, 3rd Ser., vol. 15), p. 115. The Rev. W. H. Massie (op. cit., pl. facing p. 165, fig. 4) gives a rough sketch of a later “seal of the office of Archdeacon of Chester,” dated 30 Henry VI (A.D. 1451/2), from a deed then in the possession of Sir Philip Egerton. Although this bears a general resemblance to the Rylands seal and the Durham seal, it differs in the legend and in that portion of the device above the arch, where is a large
garb instead of the half figure described above. Mr. Massie appears to be in error here; the half figure, if badly rubbed, would have the superficial appearance of a garb.


[Rylands Ch. 1619.] Red wax. 45 mm. in diameter. Imperfect, but only the legend is seriously affected. Fair impression, somewhat rubbed.

On a tongue 6½" long and 1½" broad, the top of the seal being 1½" from the root. Underneath is a narrow tie.

An upright shield of arms, suspended by a strap [from a loop]: England, with a label of five points. At each side, inclined at the angle of the sides of the shield, is a garb (for Chester).


An illustration, from a silver matrix owned in the middle of last century by a Mr. Broster of Chester and "now in the possession of the Corporation, having a few years since been recovered by John Walker, Esq., the Town Clerk," is given in Helsby's edition of Ormerod, vol. i (1882), p. 204. See also Birch, Cat., no. 4812 (13th cent., sulphur cast).

19. STATUTE MERCHANT SEAL OF CHESTER, A.D. 1589.

[Rylands Ch. 1530.] Brownish-red wax. 44 mm. in diameter. Perfect. Good impression, somewhat rubbed. The wax has overlapped the legend in one place on the obverse.

On a tongue 7" long and 3" broad, the top of the seal being 1" from the root.

Ø. King's bust, full face, beardless, with long side curls; crowned with an open crown of three fleurons. Round his neck is an ornamented line, which may represent either a necklace or, more probably, an embroidered collar. On his breast is a leopard of England. In the field on each side, at shoulder level, is a small castle with a central tower and battlements surmounting the walls on both sides.
S'. [- - - RE]G'. ANGL' : AD RECOGN'. DEBITOR' APD' : CE[ST]RIAM ; this legend is preceded by a garb.

Beaded borders.

R7. At right angles to the impression on the obverse, a shield, hexagonal, within a beaded border of the same shape, measuring $23 \times 40$ mm. On the shield: a sword between two garbs. No legend.

An illustration from the obverse, only, of a matrix owned in the middle of last century by the Mr. Broster referred to in the note to no. 18 above, is given in Helsby’s edition of Ormerod, vol. i (1882), p. 204. The sketch by the Rev. W. H. Massie (op. cit., pl. facing p. 164; see also ib., p. 176) and the brief description by C. S. Perceval (ap. Proc. of the Soc. of Antiquaries of London, 2nd Ser., vol. 7, p. 114) were also made from Mr. Broster’s matrix. These, too, are of the obverse only, as is also the short description, from a sulphur cast, given by Birch (Cat., no. 1070), who refers to Mr. Massie. See also Proc. of the Soc. of Antiquaries of London, 2nd Ser., vol. 15, p. 66.


[Jodrell Ch. 7.] Red wax. 29 mm. in diameter. Perfect. Fine impression of the device; the legend has been carelessly impressed in places, but is legible.

Pendent from a doubled strip of parchment.

Three human legs in armour conjoined at the upper part of the thighs, flexed in a triangle, garnished and spurred (Isle of Man), between as many eagles’ legs erased (badge of Stanley).

Sigillā thome Comit' de derbei Senescall' de Macclesfield.

Carved borders.

Another example of this seal, perfect and showing exactly the same device and legend, is attached to Jodrell Ch. 41 (A.D. 1529). Earwaker, in his East Cheshire, vol. ii (1880), p. 8, has a full-size illustration of another example, again identical in device and legend with the above, from a charter of A.D. 1532 then owned by Mr. Holland Hulley of Macclesfield; he
comments (ib., p. 8 note), "It is the most perfect specimen of this curious seal which I have met with, for, as a rule, they are generally broken or illegible." The seal described by Birch (Cat., no. 13,665; dated A.D. 1485/1504) reads "Senechball" in the legend, but otherwise agrees with the examples cited here in both legend and device; he notes that the device provides an interesting example of the combination of heraldic charges not on a shield. See also St. John Hope, Heraldry for Craftsmen and Designers, p. 183.