

XVI.—THE SECOND GREAT SEAL OF ELIZABETH I AND THE GREAT SEAL OF ELIZABETH II

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(Read on 26th August, 1953)

1. THE SECOND GREAT SEAL OF ELIZABETH I (plate XXIX).

The fine example of this seal, which I exhibit to-night, is attached to deed 78 of the Ravensworth Collection, dated 1 December 45 Eliz. (1602),¹ preserved in the Black Gate library.

It was designed by the miniature painter Nicholas Hilliard, $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches diameter with the traditional two sides—the seal and the counterseal—and noteworthy for the great improvement in design and engraving from that of Elizabeth's first seal,² which was of a very low standard of artistic merit.

Both sides present a lively portrait of the Queen amid an exuberance of decorative detail in costume, armorials, and heraldic badges with flowers scattered over the field.

The seal (obverse) (plate XXIX, fig. 1).

Elizabeth seated upon a high chair, crowned, wearing the coif of the period and the stiff, wide characteristic Elizabethan ruff-collar. Full sleeves, tight at the wrist, a jewelled and embroidered bodice and a wide skirt in rather tight folds. Her feet rest upon a square cushion, her mantle is held back from her shoulders, at each side, by a hand

¹ *Arch. Ael.* xvi, 68.

² *The Great Seals of England*, Wyon, 1887, pl. XXII.

and arm issuing from clouds. In her right hand she holds the sceptre with fleur-de-lis top, in her left the orb with cross. At each side of her head is a Tudor rose with below, at each side, a shield of the royal arms—France and England quarterly—each ensigned by the royal crown and surrounded by the Garter with its motto. The legend, in small roman capitals, reads:

ELIZABETHA · DEI · GRACIA · ANGLIE · FRANCIE · ET ·
HIBERNIE · REGINA · FIDEI · DEFENSOR ·

The counterseal (plate XXIX, fig. 2).

The Queen on horseback, facing left, her head in clouds, wearing a small crown, coif and ruff. Her bodice is jewelled and embroidered, the full skirt falls in folds at either side shewing a stiff, richly decorated petticoat; beneath is a square, embroidered saddle cloth. The lifelike Flemish horse paces slowly over a field pied with flowers, and roses creep up at each side. A wide jewelled and tasselled bearing-rein with richly decorated bridle and harness are his furnishings. Above his head is a crowned Tudor rose; a crowned fleur-de-lis is on the opposite side, beneath which is the harp of Ireland. The legend repeats that on the seal.³

2. THE GREAT SEAL OF ELIZABETH II (plate XXX).

The new Great Seal of the Realm was given into the care of the Lord Chancellor by the Queen in Council on 1 August, 1953. It is of silver, six inches diameter, of two faces in the tradition of wellnigh nine centuries; the motives are those which first appeared upon the Great Seal of William the Norman, but reversing the seal and counterseal. The severe monumental style of the design differs much

³ Elizabeth died 24 March, 1603. Her Great Seal was handed to James I at Broxburne on 3 May, 1603. It was defaced shortly afterwards in the presence of King James at Hampton Court.



FIG. 2.



FIG. 1.

SECOND GREAT SEAL OF ELIZABETH I—SEAL AND COUNTERSEAL.



FIG. 2.



FIG. 1.

GREAT SEAL OF ELIZABETH II—SEAL AND COUNTERSEAL.

from the wealth of decoration upon the second seal of Elizabeth I.

The seal (obverse) (plate xxx, fig. 1).

Her Majesty on horseback, pacing slowly to the left, in the uniform of Colonel of the Grenadier Guards, as she rode at the head of the Brigade of Guards at the ceremonial Trooping of the Colour in 1952 and 1953. The horse stands on a flat plinth beneath which is the royal monogram. The legend, in a graceful form of roman letters, reads:

ELIZABETH · II · D.G. BRITT. REGNORVMQVE SVORVM
CETER · REGINA CONSORTIONIS POPVLORVM PRINCEPS F.D.

The counterseal (plate xxx, fig. 2).

The Queen robed and crowned upon a throne, holding the sceptre and orb—symbols of sovereignty. The royal shield of arms is on each side of the throne and the Garter with motto at the back, upon a scroll beneath the footstool is DIEU ET MON DROIT. The legend reads:

ELIZABETH · II · DEI · GRATIA · BRITANNIARUM · REGINA ·
FIDEI · DEFENSOR