

THE PENYSTON SEAL

By W. J. HEMP

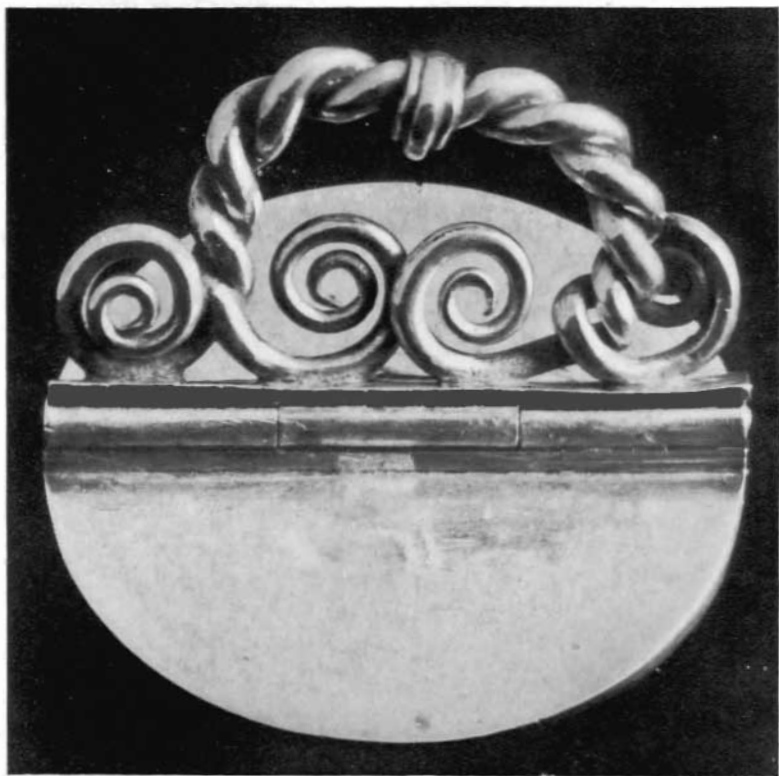
The Penyston seal matrix is of silver. It weighs $3\frac{3}{8}$ ounces and is $2\frac{3}{16}$ inches in diameter. It now belongs to the writer of these notes, having been purchased by the late Mr. J. Challenor Smith, F.S.A., in the latter part of the nineteenth century, following a dispersal of the family property after the death of the heiress of Peniston, of Cornwell House, Co. Oxon, about 1880.

The inscription, 'HEC FVERVNT ARMA ET INSIGNIA DE PENYSTON A° 1448' does not record the actual date of the matrix, which must be placed in the early years of the seventeenth century.

The arms consist of twenty quarterings and twelve crests, selected from the twenty-five quarterings cited in a confirmation of arms by Cooke, Clarenceux to 'Thomas Penyston, Lord of Hawruge, in the County of Buckingham, Esq.,' dated February 8, 1573. The choice of the crests seems to be arbitrary and in one case there are no corresponding arms on the seal.

The differences in the treatment of the fields and charges by dots, hatching, etc., are only to give variety and in no way represent the conventional methods of indicating the colours.

As the confirmation was printed at length in *The Genealogist* for 1877, and as it records the pedigree of the family and the source of the quarterings, it will be sufficient here to quote the names and arms of those families only which are represented on the seal. The spelling throughout is that adopted in the confirmation, as it appears in a copy in MS. Harley, 1470, f. 156. Another version, accompanied by drawings of the quarterings and crests, is to be found at fo. 106 of Harley, 1507.



THE PENYSTON SEAL (Scale about $\frac{1}{2}$)



THE PENYSTON SEAL, IMPRESSION (Scale nearly $\frac{1}{2}$)

ARMS

1. *Peniston*: siluer three Cornish Choffes proper.
2. Sr. Gregory *Fawconbridge*: siluer a Lyon rampant a border Asuer. (The bordure is omitted.)
3. Sr. William *Harpden*: siluer a Mollett of six pointes gules persed gold.
4. Sr. Ralfe *Hosterley*: Barry o six siluer & sable.
5. John Lord *Beawchamp*: Gules a fesse between six billets gold.
6. *Vrsors* Earle of Worcester: per pale gold & gules three rounds Counter changed.
7. Lord *Vfflett*: siluer on a fess asure three flower de luces gold.
8. Sr. Richard *Mowbray*: gules a lyon rampant siluer a cressant sables. (The crescent is omitted.)
9. *Chesham*: vert on an inschochon siluer a Hartes head caboshed gules.
10. Sr. John *Bruse*: azure a lyon rampant semy crosscrosselettes gold crowned gules.
11. Sr. Phillip *Hereis*: azure a Cheveron ermines betweene three hereseis gold.
12. *Hames*: sable a fesse gold betweene three sinckfoiles ermine.
13. *Willcotts*: azure & Eagle displaid siluer beaked & membred sables.
14. *Arderburgh*: siluer a cheveron engrailed betweene three escallops sables.
15. *Purcell*: varye siluer & gules on a bend sables three boares heads siluer Tusked gold.
16. Sr. William *Shershall*: siluer three bends asure on a canton sables a Lyon passant gold.
17. Sr. John *Marshall*: gules a bend fuzeley gold.
18. Sr. Henry *Cowsell* (sic for Gowsell), Kt.: gold three barres azure a canton ermins.
19. *Daynton*: per bend indented gold & sable.
20. *Crossell*: gold a crosse formy vert.

CRESTS

The identification of the twelve crests presented some difficulty. Seven are specified in the confirmation, of which six appear on the seal, the omission

being *Wilcotts*. The confirmation also mentions 'the other Creaste or cognizances assigned unto him by William Harvy, Esq., alias Clarenceux . . . ye eight of July . . . 1564,' but does not recite them. M.S. No. iv, in the collection of the Society of Antiquaries entitled 'William Tyllotson his book curat at Cawell a^o Dni 1594' and containing various heraldic notes, has a long list of 'The Armes of Penistons petgre,' beginning at fo. 97, while at fo. 110 are the crests, without, however, any clear indication of the families to which they owe their presence. The disentangling is not made any more easy by the fact that Tyllotson writes in the vilest of hands, and gives Peniston 209 quarterings to his shield, some of which quarterings are subdivided into sixteen and eighteen coats. However, the following list of the crests on the seal may be taken as correct; the numbering begins with the Peniston crest placed over the Peniston arms in the first quarter. The letters C and T following a blazon indicates that it is quoted from Cooke's confirmation or Tyllotson's book, as the case may be.

1. *Peniston*: a griffin passant valant (sic) sable (C).
2. *Harpeden*: a hundes head or (T).
3. *Beawchampe*: a swanes neck partye at the brest ar and g enter 2 wynges and y^e beke sa (T).
4. *Hosterley*: an Eagle displaied siluer in a crowne gold (C).
5. *Bruse*: a leons paw or out of a crowne g (T).
6. *Gowsell*: an Unicorne passant gold (C).
7. *Marshall*: a Tegar gold (C).
8. *Shershall*: a leon seyant his tayle cast between his legges sab. (T).
9. *Hereis*: a Dragon passant gold (C) wth a smale wrythed tayle (T).
10. *Ursors*: a beare couchant ar mossld (T).
11. *Chesham*: a Falcon volant proper colour (C) a hawk proper redy to flie legges or (T).
12. *Mauduit Earle of Warwicke*: a demy griffon ar winges elevat before and behind ar out of a crown or (T). This crest is inserted in the border at the end

of the inscription, apparently as an after thought. The coat of Mauduit does not occur among the quarterings.

The matrix is a good example of the craftsmanship of its period, and the heraldry is well drawn, reflecting the traditions of an earlier date; a finer specimen, possibly by the same hand, is the Towneley seal, now in the British museum, made for Richard Towneley who died in 1628. The technique is much the same; there are three crests only, but each rests on a helmet, and the mantling covers the remaining space which is occupied by crests on the Penyston seal.

Of about the same date is the private seal of Sir Walter Raleigh, also in the British Museum; this displays sixteen quarterings, their crests, supporters, and rather meagre mantling.