



## Ten Early Chester Deeds, 1270-1490

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IN 1888, 1890, 1895, and 1896, I exhibited and described a number of Early Deeds relating to property in Chester and the neighbourhood, which have been printed in Vols. II., III., V., and VI. of the New Series of the Proceedings of our Society; and I have been told by friends that those documents have been found useful as historical evidence on subjects relating to Chester and Cheshire history and genealogy. I have, therefore, been prompted to exhibit this evening ten more of these Deeds, and to give you some short description of the parties to them; of the properties transferred by them; and of the witnesses who were present when they were executed.

Dr. Stolterfoth has very kindly photographed the set, and has made slides, so that I shall be able, with the assistance of Mr. Siddall, to show these photographs on the screen.

They are all written in the abbreviated law Latin of the period, and relate to properties situated in the City: in Eastgate Street, Foregate Street, Fleshmonger Lane (now Newgate Street), Northgate Street, Watergate Street, and in Cuppin Street. Some of them are

undated, but as the Mayor and Sheriffs of the time are witnesses, we are able to fix their approximate date. The earliest was executed about 1270, in the reign of Henry III.; and the latest in 1490, in the reign of Henry VII.

The parties to them were leading citizens of the time, and the witnesses were in the same position of life; either the Mayor and Sheriffs for the time being, or others who had filled those or other important civic offices.

In those early days few could write, and, therefore, they affixed their seals in the presence of the witnesses, frequently in the City Court; the scribe who wrote out the documents adding the names of the witnesses at the end of the instrument, and, in the later ones, giving the date or regnal year.

The following is a translation of the first Deed :—

To all the faithful people of Christ who shall see or hear this present writing, Nicholas called Great [*dc̄s magnus*] sends greeting in the Lord everlasting.

Be it known that I and my heirs stand firmly bound by this present writing to pay to John de Stanlow, son of Thurstan de Stanlow, and his heirs, five shillings of silver at four terms of the year for certain land of his in "Forgatestrete" of the City of Chester, as it is contained in the charter which the said John has of the same land.

These being witnesses, John Arnewey Mayor of Chester, Matthew de Derisbury and William Cofin [?] Sheriffs of Chester, Robert Harre, John Meyler, Richard de Wych, Walter the Chaplain, and many others.

[Not dated].

In my Paper in Volume III. (New Series), on "Some Mediæval Chester Goldsmiths," the names of Matthew, Nicholas his son, and John, are each described as gold-





smiths. This "Nicholas the Great," from the next Deed I shall exhibit, I am inclined to think was the earliest known of these Chester goldsmiths, who seem to have been located about St. John Street, Foregate Street, and Frodsham Street (or Cow Lane as it was then and is still sometimes called). These goldsmiths were the early bankers, and it is curious that the Chester bankers of to-day seem to choose the same neighbourhood for their banking business.

The Stanlow family were leading citizens, and filled high office in the City.

It will be observed that the first witness to this Deed is the celebrated John Arneway, who was then Mayor. He is said to have been the patron and, possibly, founder of the Chester Mystery Plays, and "who gave of his worldly goods to God and St. Werburgh, and was buried before the altar of St. Leonard in the southern part of the Church of the Monastery"; so says the chronicle of Saint Werburgh. Sir John Arneway was Mayor of Chester from 1268 to 1276.

With reference to the surname "Harre," I suggest now that a family bearing that cognomen may have lived near to Trinity Street, and that the lane called "Alexander Lane Harre," mentioned in my Paper at page 154, Vol. II., may really mean Alexander Harre's Lane.

This old parchment Deed has been in the presence of the great Arneway, and seems almost to bring us in living touch with him.

The second Deed translated runs thus:—

Be it known to all that I, William de Donecastr, have made Richard Candelan, citizen of Chester, my attorney, to put Adam my son in seisin in one messuage with the appurte-

nances which I have of the demise of Julian de Euesham, together with the oven adjoining which I hold insecurely [*de infirmis*] of But'ton in "Estgatestrete" of the City of Chester, and in one messuage with the appurtenances which I purchased of Margery de Dereby in "Estgatestrete" of the same city, and in one other messuage with the appurtenances and a cellar which I bought of Nicholas son of Bertram the Goldsmith in "Estgatestrete" of the city aforesaid, and in one messuage with the appurtenances in "fforgatestrete" of the city aforesaid, lying between the land of Richard the Clerk, of Chester, on the one part, and the lane called Coulone on the other part. And in 7s. yearly rent to be received of Beatrice le Lokkere and her heirs for a certain place of land which she holds of me in the said lane of Coulone, the which messuages and yearly rent I have of the demise of the aforesaid Nicholas called the Goldsmith. Ratifying and confirming what the said Richard shall do in my name in the premises. In testimony of which thing I have caused these letters to be made patent by the impression of my seal.

These being witnesses, Alexander Hurel Mayor of Chester, Robert de Teruen, Roger Donfoul, Robert Ythel, John Donfoul, and others.

Given at Chester on Thursday next before the Feast of St. Mark the Evangelist, 28 Edward I.

William de Doncaster was the Mayor for the years 1316-17-18-19, referred to in my Paper of 1888.

Richard Candelan was Sheriff of Chester 1298-1300-5.

Both Adam de Doncaster and Juliana de Evesham are referred to in my Paper of 1888; and reference is made to the oven of St. Giles, abutting on to Eastgate Street, and not far from the Monastery of St. Werburgh. Margerie de Dereby I also mention in that Paper. The cellar would be the crypt of the house.

Nicholas son of Bertram the Goldsmith, I suggest would be a grandson of Nicholas who is called "the Great" in the last Deed. It will be observed that

Frodsham Street is here referred to by its ancient name of Cow Lane. I shall refer to the surname Loker later on.

Of the witnesses, Alexander Hurell was Sheriff in 1281-3-4-94; and Mayor 1282-97, and for the year in question, 1300. The surname Dunfoul is said to be synonymous with that of Domville. The Domville family had a considerable property in Wirral.

The Third Deed is translated thus :—

Know all men present and to come that I, Wenthlyan de Bikirton, in my pure viduity have given granted and by this my present charter confirmed to William son of William de Doncastr and Alice his wife, all my land lying in breadth between the land which was William de Gloucester's on the one part, and the land which was John Marescall's on the other part, in the lane of St. John the Baptist in the City of Chester, and extending in length from the said lane as far as the land which was Henry de Thelewall's, the which land Philip my son had of the gift and grant of William de Doncastr, senior, and bequeathed the same to me in his testament.

To have and to hold to the said William and Alice and their heirs or assigns, of the chief lords of the fee by the service therefor due and accustomed, freely, quietly, well and in peace.

These being witnesses, Hugh de Brichull Mayor of Chester, William the Clerk and Henry de Blakerode Sheriffs of Chester, Alexander Hurel, William de Dancastr, senior, Robert de Maclisfeld, Richard Candelan, Geoffrey de Teruin, Richard le Mercer, Clerk, and others.

[Not dated].

Wenthlyan is the English scribes orthography for the old Welsh female christian name "Gwenllian."

There is an entry on the Cheshire Recognizance Rolls which, I think, throws light on this Deed, and also

gives us some information respecting the Bickerton family and its connection with that of the early Chester families of David the Miller and of that of Doncaster, both of whom held high municipal office. The entry is: "1307. Charter of Philip son of William de Bickerton, dated Monday before the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, 1 Edw. II., granting all his lands and tenements in Bache and Newton, which he inherited on the death of his kinsman David called the Miller, citizen of Chester, to William of Donecastre, in exchange for one burgage in St. John's Lane, Chester, situated between the land which belonged to William de Gloverina and that which belonged to Thomas le Mareschal. Witnesses, Lord William de Orresby Justice of Chester, Ralph de Vernon, John de Arden, John de Orreby and <sup>1</sup>Robert de Pulford Knights, Ralph son of Ralph de Vernon, Richard de Fouleshurst, William Gerrard, John de Legh, Robert de Bebyngton, William de Lasceles, and Fulk de Moeles." David the Miller was Sheriff in 1290 or 1293, as shewn by the Deed mentioned in my Paper of 1888. There was a blank in Ormerod's list of Sheriffs for those two years, which that Deed assisted in filling.

The witnesses to the Deed named in this entry were leading county people near to Chester. Those to the one I now exhibit were leading citizens.

Hugh de Brickhull was fourteen times Mayor of Chester.

The Deed is undated, but Ormerod gives for 1303, Hugh de Brickhull Mayor, Henry de Blackrode and W. Fitz Peter de Bricland Sheriffs. This latter, I take it, is the "William the Clerk" of the Deed.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert de Pulford married Agnes daughter of Richard Lengenour.



The following is the translation of Deed No. 4:—

Know all men present and to come that I, Margerie daughter of Henry de Bostok formerly citizen of Chester, have given granted and by this my present charter confirmed to William de Donecastre, citizen of Chester, all my land with the appurtenances in "flesmongerlone" of the City of Chester, lying in breadth between the land of Hugh son of Robert le Proudmercer, on the one part, and the land of Alice de la More, my sister, on the other part, and extending in length from the king's street of "flesmongerelone" aforesaid, as far as the garden of Hugh de Brichull.

To have and to hold to the said William de Donecastre, and his heirs or assigns, of Roger Dunfoull and his heirs, freely and quietly for ever, Yielding therefor yearly to the aforesaid Roger and his heirs or assigns, 4s. of silver at four yearly terms by equal portions.

Moreover, for this gift and grant the said William de Donecastre hath given to me by hand 6os. of silver.

These being witnesses, Richard len Genour Mayor of Chester, Benedict de Stanton, John de Warwyk Sheriffs of the same place, Hugh de Brichull, Alexander Hurel, Roger Donfoull, Robert de Maclisfeld, Robert le Spicer, William de Waterfall, Reginald de Lene, Gilbert Dunfoull, and others.

[Not dated].

Fleshmonger Lane is the Newgate Street of to-day.

This Deed shows us that Hugh de Brickhull lived in or near to Newgate Street, as a former Deed showed us Richard the Engineer lived in Watergate Street.

Mr. Fergusson Irvine mentioned the name Proudmercer in describing the Aston Deeds. Here we have it again.

All the witnesses have been mentioned before, and their names will be found on the Municipal Roll.

Richard the Engineer and Architect, as this Deed shows, was Mayor. He was the founder of the Belgrave family. His daughter and heiress brought the Belgrave estate, by her marriage to Robert de Pulford or Eaton, into that family, and their descendant, Joan, passed it on to her descendants, the Grosvenors. Richard was lessee of the Dee Mills and Fishery from the Earl. He rebuilt both the mills and weir. He repaired and added to both St. Werburgh's Abbey and Rhuddlan Castle. He built Flint Castle for King Edward the First, and was with him at Carnarvon.

The fifth Deed translated runs thus :—

Know all men present and to come that I, William de Donecastr, citizen of Chester, have given granted and by this my present charter confirmed to William de Donecastr my son and Alice his wife, the moiety of one messuage with its appurtenances in "Watergatestrete" of the City of Chester, the which moiety lies in breadth between the Church of the Blessed Peter on the one part, and the land which belonged to Hugh de Brichulle and Marie his wife on the other part, and extending in length from the king's street in "Watergatestrete" as far as to my land.

To have and to hold to the aforesaid William and Alice and their heirs or assigns, of the chief lords of the fee by the service therefor due and accustomed, freely and quietly for ever.

These being witnesses, Hugh de Brichull Mayor of Chester, William the son, Peter the Clerk, Robert de Macclesfelde Sheriff of Chester, Alexander Hurel, Richard Candelan, John Blund, Richard Rossel, Benedict de Stanton, William de Waterfal, John the Clerk, and others.

Given at Chester.

[Not dated].

This Deed is undated, but I find the three first witnesses held office together in 1307.

There is little to note in it, except as to the position of the house named, being next to St. Peter's Church on the Watergate Street side.

I rather gather that the Doncasters lived in this part of Chester, which is the very centre of the City.

All the witnesses have been mentioned before.

The following is a translation of Deed No. 6 :—

To all the faithful people of Christ who shall see or hear this present writing Nicholas son and heir of Richard de Tyddinham sends greeting in the Lord everlasting.

Be it known that I have remised, released, and absolutely for me and my heirs for ever quitclaimed to Richard son and heir of Symon le Barker, formerly citizen of Chester, his heirs and assigns, all my right and claim in those two messuages with the appurtenances lying together in "Norgatestrete" in the City of Chester, viz., between the land of William de Doncastr the younger and Alice his wife on the one part and the land which belonged to John de Brichull on the other part, and extending from the king's street of "Norgatestrete" aforesaid in length as far as the land of Richard Russell. With clause of warranty.

These being witnesses, Richard de Wheteley Mayor of Chester, John Bars and Madock de Capunhurst Sheriffs of Chester, Roger Blound, Thomas de Strangewas, Thomas de Diddisbury, Thomas de Heghgreue, Adam del Wode, Robert de Hulton, Richard the Clerk, and others.

Given at Chester on Friday next after the Feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, A.D. 1333.

I do not find the surnames Tyddenham and Barker on the City Rolls; but on the County Recognizance Rolls there is an entry, in 1324, of a Recognizance entered into by Simon le Barker with the Earl of Chester for 100/-. Richard Russell was Mayor in 1324. Richard de Wheteley, otherwise Wheatley or Whitley, the Mayor,

had previously filled the office of Sheriff nine times. All the other witnesses were well-known citizens. Roger Blaund succeeded Wheteley as Mayor the following year.

This is the first Deed which gives the Anno Domini instead of the Anno Regni Regis.

The following is a translation of Deed No. 7:—

This Indenture witnesseth that I, Jordan, parson of the Church of St. Peter in Chester, have granted, surrendered, and demised to Richard Payn, chaplain, son of Henry le Cotiler of Chester, all those lands and tenements with the appurtenances in "Northgatestrete" of the City of Chester, of which the aforesaid Richard by his charter enfeoffed me, as in his charter is fully contained and limited.

To have and to hold to the aforesaid Richard for his life by the service of one rose per annum, and performing for me and my heirs to the chief lords of the fee the service therefor due and of right accustomed, with reversion to me the aforesaid Jordan.

These being witnesses, Richard de Wheteley Mayor of Chester, Madock de Capenhurst and John Bars Sheriffs of Chester, Henry Wade, Robert de Hulton, Henry the Clerk, and others.

Given at Chester the 20 Sept., 8 Edward III. [1334].

The grantor was Jordan de Marthale, who was presented to the living of St. Peter's by the Abbot of St. Werburgh, 5th August, 1320.

The witness Richard de Wheteley was Sheriff in 1309-11-14-15-18-21-22 and 24; and Mayor in 1333 and 1334. I am inclined to think, from other documents, that he or his family lived in Northgate Street; as did also the Payn family. Madoc de Capenhurst is mentioned in my previous Papers. He was Sheriff in 1327-9-32-3-7-41-2 and 4.

Deed No. 8 runs thus :—

This Indenture made between James del Hope, citizen of the City of Chester, on the one part, and Richard Smyth, citizen of the City of Chester, on the other part, witnesseth that the aforesaid James hath granted and to farm let to the aforesaid Richard, one messuage with its appurtenances in "Estegatestrete" of the City of Chester, lying between the land of the aforesaid James on the one part, and the land of St. Anne on the other part, and extending in length from the king's street of "Estegatestrete" aforesaid as far as the land of John Bromley Knight.

To have and to hold to the said Richard his heirs and assigns from the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord next coming to the end of the term of twenty years, at the yearly rent of 6s. 8d. With clause of warranty.

These being witnesses, William Lely Mayor of the City of Chester, William Rauson and William Thomasson Sheriffs of the said city, John Cotyngnam, John Sotheworth, and others.

Given at Chester the 12 Dec., 6 Edward IV. [1467].

I will refer to the lessor, James del Hope, in the next Deed.

The only reference I can find relating to Richard Smyth, the lessee, is on the Cheshire Recognizance Rolls, 27th April, 1473, when Richard Smyth, John Bunbury, Robert Grosvenor, Richard Osbaldeston, and Richard Bebynton, entered into a recognizance for £20 with Edward Earl of Chester, that Richard Smyth should keep the peace towards Thomas Whitof and Thomas Harwode.

The land of St. Anne was on the north side of Eastgate Street, not far from St. Giles' oven, and formed part of the possessions of the Chapel of St. Anne, within the precincts of the Collegiate Church of St. John.

Sir John Bromley, Knight, held considerable lands about Chester. His seat was at Badington, in the Hundred of Nantwich. His ancestor, Sir John Bromley, was one of the distinguished warriors of Henry V., in his French wars. His Cheshire property passed, by marriage of his heiress, to the Needhams, whose present representative is Lord Kilmorey.

William Lely or Lilley of Chester I find, in 1461, was one of the sureties for Thomas Bulkeley and Thomas de Swetenham for a lease of all fines for boiling salt, and of certain rents and customs of Courts and Fairs at Middlewich ; so he was evidently a man of importance.

The Sheriffs, Roosan and Thomasson, are named in the Remission to the City, in 1471, of £50 from its chief rent, and are described as "late" Sheriffs.

The following is a translation of Deed No. 9:—

Let all present and future people know that I, James del Hope, a citizen of the City of Chester, have given, granted, and by this my present indented charter confirmed to John Loker, a citizen of the said City, two messuages lying together with their appurtenances in "Estgatestrete" in the said City, situate in latitude between the lane called Saint "Werburlane" in the said City on the one part, and the messuage lately belonging to Thomas Sparke on the other part, and extending in longitude from the king's street of "Estgatestrete" aforesaid to the land which the said Thomas Sparke lately held under lease from William del Hope, my father. To have and to hold the said two messuages with all their appurtenances to the said John Loker his heirs and assigns for ever. Rendering annually to me, the said James del Hope, my heirs and assigns twelve pence stirling at the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel, the Nativity of our Lord, the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, in equal proportions, and performing for

the chief lords of the fee the service therefor due and by right accustomed. With clause of distress for non-payment of rent, and clause of warranty.

These being witnesses, John Sotheworth Mayor of the City of Chester, Roger Wermyncham and Henry Deye Sheriffs of the said City, John Cotingham, William Masey, John Pilkington, with many others.

Dated at Chester the fourth day of the month of July the First year of the reign of King Edward the Fourth after the Conquest of England.

The family of Hope of Broughton were well-known in Chester and Flintshire. They filled the civic chair on several occasions, and held the office of Sheriff for the County of Flint. James, the grantor of this Deed, does not appear to have aspired to civic honours. From the Cheshire Rolls it appears to have been doubtful at one time if this family were to be considered English or Welsh; for in 1427 a writ was issued to the Escheator of Chester to enquire if John del Hope, Mayor of the City of Chester, was wholly Welsh; and whether he had purchased land in the City of Chester contrary to the statute of 2 Henry IV., which prohibited any Welshman from purchasing lands or tenements "in the Towns of Chester, Salop, Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Lempster, Hereford, Gloucester, Wircestre, or in any other of the Marches of Wales."

John Loker is mentioned in these same Cheshire Rolls. Ormerod, in a note, says that the name of the Sheriff of the City in 1443, "Jenkin Lowther," in the Minister's Accounts, is given as John Loker.

The name of the witness John Sotheworth is given in the list of Mayors as John Southworth. He was Sheriff in 1449; and Mayor 1458-9-60-67-74-77 and 80.

William Massey was Mayor in 1449, when Southworth was Sheriff.

John Pilkington was Mayor in 1440. In 1461 he is described as "*Armiger pro corpore nostro*," and appointed for life Constable of Chester Castle; and in 1464, together with Sir William Stanley, had a lease of the "King's Pool," and the piscary of the same.

The Cottinghams were a well-known Wirral family, and filled the office of Mayor on several occasions; but I do not find the name of this witness on the Civic Roll.

The last Deed runs thus:—

Let all present and future people know that I, Thomas Belletur, a citizen of the City of Chester, have given, granted, and by this my present charter confirmed, to Hugh Hurlton of Chester, a messuage with a garden adjoining with their appurtenances situate in "Cuppyngeslane" in the City of Chester, in latitude between the land of the Hospital of St. John outside the North gate of the said City on the one part, and the land of William ffraunces, fishmonger, on the other part, and contain in latitude  $7\frac{1}{2}$  Royal Virgates, and contain in longitude from the king's street of "Cuppyngeslane" aforesaid to the land of William Troutbek, Knight, 28 Royal Virgates. To have and to hold all the said messuage and garden with their appurtenances to the said Hugh his heirs and assigns rendering to the chief lords of the fee the services therefor due and of right accustomed. With clause of warranty.

These being witnesses, John Barowe Mayor of the City of Chester, Richard Wright, draper, and <sup>1</sup>Richard Wyrehale Sheriffs of the same City, and many others.

Dated at the City of Chester the Friday next after the Feast of Saints <sup>2</sup> and Valerian in the Sixth year of the reign of King Henry the Seventh after the Conquest of England.

<sup>1</sup> There was formerly a window in St. Mary's Church, "Pray for the souls of Richard Wyrall, formerly Mayor of Chester, and Agnes his wife, and of their children, who caused this window to be made in the year 1521."

<sup>2</sup> Blemish in Deed—name undistinguishable.



On the Cheshire Rolls I find the name of a Stephen Belleyettor of Chester in 1421. Alexander Bellatur I find sometimes is called Bellezetere.

Hugh Hurdleston was Sheriff of the City in 1482; and Mayor in 1487.

We learn from this Deed that the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem had property in Cuppin Street.

Sir William Troutbeck was the last of his line. He died childless; and the Troutbeck Cheshire estates passed, through the marriage of his niece Margaret with Sir John Talbot of Grafton, to the Talbots, Earls of Shrewsbury. Sir William, whose house was, probably, in Castle Street, with land running backwards to Cuppin Street, was buried in the Troutbeck Chapel at St. Mary's, in September 1510.

Members of the Barrow family filled the office of Mayor and also of Sheriff several times; but John Barrow's name only appears as Mayor for 1490.

Richard Wright was Mayor 1502-9; and Richard Wyrehall or Wirral or Worrall in 1507. The well-known Chester surname of Worrall is evidently derived from the name of the Hundred of Wirral.

In conclusion, I heartily thank Dr. Stolterfoth for having so kindly photographed these old Deeds, and thus enabled me to present them to you on the screen in a more interesting form than they would have been had they been simply mounted on cardboard only. Nevertheless, they are so mounted also, and I invite your inspection of them.

I am glad to see some of the younger members of my own profession here to-night, and I take this opportu-

nity of asking them, whenever they come across any of these old Deeds, to pay respect to them, and not to throw them away. I know the modern conveyancer "cares not for these things." All the Deeds he respects are those that will make up the short title to property required in these days; but to students of local history these ancient little Deeds, usually labelled "useless," are invaluable.

