



Royal Charters and Grants to the City of Chester

BY JAMES HALL

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CHESTER is fortunate in possessing to-day an unbroken series of original charters commencing in the latter half of the 12th century, when kings first began to grant charters to English towns, and ending towards the close of the 17th century, when royal charters altogether ceased.

Not only have these charters been in safe keeping and known to lawyers and antiquaries all through the centuries, but as far back as 32 Henry VIII. (1540), during the mayoralty of Henry Gee, they were transcribed into a paper book; and again copied in 18 Elizabeth (1576), during the mayoralty of Henry Hardware, into a bulky volume of vellum strongly bound in leather, which also contains copies of the later charters and other records of local importance. This Hardware chartulary, formerly kept at the Pentice in Chester, is still preserved among the city muniments.

In the year 1878 Mr. J. C. Jeaffreson, who was officially appointed to examine, catalogue, and describe

the city records, expressed a wish that the Corporation would render their valuable and instructive documents accessible to students of history. He suggested that some system of instruction might be adopted whereby the study of palæography, legal forms, and the knowledge of civics might be encouraged; and further recommended that historic documents should not be consigned to the shelves of a dark chamber, to be consulted only by persons of exceptional tastes and opportunities, but judiciously placed where they could be seen by the community to whom in a certain sense they belong.

In the year 1910, at the instance of the then ex-Sheriff, Mr. H. B. Dutton, the first step in that direction was taken. Eighteen dust-proof cases with glass tops were provided by the Corporation for the reception of the city charters and other parchments, numbering in all sixty-one documents; which heretofore, in tied-up parcels, had been hidden away in a wooden box. It was my pleasing task, in June of that year, to unfold and arrange them in order; and on several occasions the cases have since been exhibited on the wainscot of the Assembly-room of the Town Hall for inspection.

In the year 1894 the city charters from the time of Henry II. to that of Queen Elizabeth were fully printed in extended Latin with translation by the Rev. Rupert H. Morris, in his "*Chester in the Plantagenet and Tudor reigns*," pp. 480-552; and now some consideration of their significance in the light of history, together with a description of the original parchments and seals, may be helpful to those who wish to understand them; but before dealing thus with them one by one, allow me first to explain what was meant by a charter.

The word *charter*, or *chartre* as Chaucer wrote it, was literally a paper, or writing. In the form *cartula*, the diminutive of the Latin *carta*, it signifies a small writing—a meaning that is curiously borne out in fact; for, as will presently be seen, the older the charter, the smaller it is. Royal charters were written documents delivered by the Sovereign, or in this county Palatine by the semi-regal Earls of Chester. In later times they were issued by authority of the Legislature, although then running in the King's name. Under the earlier form they were witnessed by the King's intimate friends or advisers; whose approval or assent is indicated by the mention of their names and titles in the body of the instrument. Frequently the expression "witness our hand," or "given by our hand," occurs; but it must be clearly understood that no king or earl ever put his signature to a charter. Its force and validity, however, was rendered unmistakable by the impress on wax of the royal seal attached to the deed either by parchment label or silken cord; the obverse generally representing the King enthroned with emblems of majesty, and the reverse showing the King as a warrior on a galloping horse with drawn sword and shield of arms. Time, unfortunately, has been more unkind to seal than charter; for most of the seals have sustained damage, whereas only few parchments have suffered injury.

As a public and legal document it was usually addressed to the sheriff, judges, barons, and others the King's subjects; and its purpose was to confer on the inhabitants and corporate body of a place special powers, privileges, benefits, or liberties, which were to be enjoyed during the pleasure of the sovereign. Hence, when a monarch died, or even before his death

under certain circumstances, it was customary to obtain either a new charter, or the renewal of a former one. The express terms of the charter, which were enforceable in courts of law, could neither be annulled nor altered by any authority except that of the King; but non-user, or non-acceptance might occur; and two instances of voluntary renunciation by the citizens of Chester will be pointed out later on.

Very early charters, as has been said, were small in size; so small indeed, that the first five were formerly contained in a leather-covered box, $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. \times 4in. \times $1\frac{1}{2}$ in., which as a curiosity is still preserved. They were also undated; for it was not usual to date deeds of any kind before the early years of the 13th century. Of these there are eight, hereunder classified for convenience under two heads, namely, (1) Royal Writs, relating to the shipping trade between Chester and Dublin; and (2) Charters by Norman Earls of Chester for the internal benefit of the city.

I. Royal Writs

(12th century)

The earliest document is that granted by HENRY II. who styles himself *Dei gratia* King of England, Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and Count of Anjou. It is addressed to the bailiffs of Dublin, who are directed to allow the burgesses of Chester to have the same rights, liberties, and free customs of trade in Dublin as in the time of his grandfather Henry I. (1100-1135). Witnessed by William FitzAudelin the king's dapifer, or steward; promulgated at Winchester; and authenticated by royal seal affixed to parchment label; it is

written on a thin strip of vellum, three inches by two inches, as supple as a lady's glove, in a little over four lines of minute but clear script, consisting of 64 Latin words, mostly contracted; and, although more than 750 years old, is still clean, perfect, and legible. The seal in reddish-brown wax, originally perhaps two inches in diameter, is now much worn away on the edge; but sufficient remains to indicate on the obverse the enthroned king with sword and orb; and on the reverse, the king on horse to the right, with a long sword, and a shield of Norman convex type. The text is as follows:—

“H[enricus] di gra' Rex Angl. & Dux Norm' & Aquit' & Com[es] And'[egavie] baillivis suis de Duvelin. Sal[u]t[em]. | Precipio q[uo]d Burgenses Cest'[rie] possint eme'[re] & vendre ad detail apud Duvelina[m] h[abe]ndo & | faciendo easde[m] consuetudines quas facieba[n]t te[m]po Regis H[enrici] avi mei & easde[m] ibi h[abe]ant | rectitudines & libertates & liberas consuetudines quas te[m]pore illo h[abe]re solebant. T[este] will'o fil Ald'[elin]¹ | Dap'[ifero]. Ap[u]d Wint'[oniam].”

The allusion here to trading rights between Chester and Dublin half a century before is noteworthy. It has been said that Henry I. was the first Norman monarch to grant privileges of trade to towns; but, according to Domesday Book of 1086, it is clear that

¹ The contracted surname of the witness has been extended into *Aldhelm*, or *Aldelm*; but his true name was *Audelín*. It may be pointed out that the scribe who wrote the first syllable of the name as *Ald* intended the sound of *l* preceded by the vowel *A* and followed by a consonant, to have the phonetic force of *u*. In other words, towards the end of the 12th century, the written *Alde* was pronounced *Aud*. Similarly, in the Domesday Book for Cheshire, the place *Alde-lime* was then, as it is now, called *Aud-lem*.

Chester carried on trade with Ireland in the time of Edward the Confessor.

Although undated, this writ was probably issued in 1172, or early in 1173. Henry II., having in 1171 made himself feudal lord of Ireland by force of conquest, and by compelling oaths of fealty from tribal chiefs and petty kings, granted in 1172 to Bristol and its burghers the privilege of colonizing Dublin and monopolizing its trade. That grant aroused jealousy in the Chester merchants, who hastened to secure this royal writ for the renewal of their former privileges and customs. In the spring of 1173 the King sent his steward, William FitzAudelin to Dublin as governor, who also carried letters from Pope Alexander III., authorizing the Romanizing of the Irish Church, which Audelin publicly read at Waterford. Doubtless, Audelin would also enforce the King's order in favour of Chester until he was re-called in 1177.

Ireland continued in a distracted and unsettled state; and the next governor, Hugh de Lacy, was murdered in 1186. Meanwhile, Prince John had been created *Dominus Hiberniæ* in 1184, to whom Chester owed the next three documents confirmatory of its foreign trade, which, of course, could only be granted by royal authority, and not by the local Earl of Chester.

Richard I., the absentee King, granted no charter to Chester; but his brother JOHN, as regent, styling himself Earl of Moreton and Lord of Ireland, issued two mandates from Lutgareshall² castle in Wiltshire, addressed to justices, constables, and bailiffs in Ireland,

² The modern spelling is Ludgershall; but the castle disappeared long ago; and the place is now a small village.

commanding them to protect Chester merchants and their goods from injury or annoyance. Both documents are witnessed by the Chancellor, Stephen Ridell, and by two persons named Roger. The seals in green wax are appended by parchment label. One is broken to fragments; while the other, though imperfect, shows on the obverse a head within a double oval border (as if the stamp of the jewel stone in the Prince's ring); and on the reverse the King, or Prince, on horseback.

The first dated charter, which is a confirmation of the foregoing ones, is in the name of King JOHN. It is similarly addressed to Ireland; attested by Herbert bishop of Sarum, T. Fitz Peter earl of Sussex, William the Marshall, and four other prominent men; and promulgated by Simon archdeacon of Wells, at Marlborough, on 3rd May in the third regnal year, that is, in 1201. The impress of the great seal in light-red wax attached by double cords, represents the King on obverse and reverse in the usual way; and the shield, which is suspended close to his body, bears the three lions of England.

It may here be asked, How came these four documents, which were commands rather than grants, and which were addressed to authorities at Dublin, to be among the Chester records? When a royal missive was issued, a copy was enrolled, and a sealed duplicate was kept in the King's Court of Chancery; so that if the original by mischance were lost or destroyed, and a law-suit arose in which the terms of the document were in dispute, the text could be obtained from the Chancery records, which were always accepted as evidence in courts of law. Cheshire, as a county-

palatine, had its own chancery and exchequer court within the castle walls at Chester; and these four documents, still among the city archives, are most likely the authorized duplicates kept in the chancery here; which was the repository of all kinds of legal records from the time of Henry II., when great changes took place in judicial proceedings, and documents were required to be preserved under official custody.

II. Charters of Norman Earls of Chester

(13th century)

There are still to be mentioned four other undated charters all directly relating to internal affairs of the city; three of them granted by RANDLE III., surnamed Blundeville, the greatest in dignity and power of all the hereditary semi-regal Earls of Chester, and addressed to his constable, steward, justices, sheriffs, barons, bailiffs, and all his men both French and English.

(a) One is witnessed by Roger constable of Chester; Ralph of Mold seneschal of Chester; Thomas the Earl's secretary and writer of the charter; and other Cheshire gentlemen. Issued at Chester probably before 1202,³ it had two seals in light-red wax with double cords. One consists now of two small fragments. The other exhibits on obverse the Earl with helmet; and on reverse the Earl on horseback; but the impress is in an imperfect state. This charter confirms to the citizens their *Merchant Guild* with all the liberties and free customs which they had more freely and quietly in the times of his ancestors, and forbids anyone to disturb them under the very excessive penalty of £10.

³ Philip de Orreby, one of the witnesses, afterwards became Justice of Chester 1202-1231.

The text of this early charter is as follows ;—

“Ranulphus Comes Cestr[ie] Constab[ulario] suo & dapifero Justic' & Vicecomit' & Om[n]ibz baronibz & Ballivis suis & Omibz | hominibus suis francig' [ensis] & Angl'[icis] tam futuris q[ua]m presentibz sal'[utem]. Notu[m] sit vobis Omibz me dedisse | & concessisse & presenti Carta mea Co[n]firmasse Omibz Civibz meis de Cestr' Gildam sua[m] mercal[e]m | cu[m] Omibz lib'[er]tatibz & lib'[er]is co[n]suetudinibz quas illi unq[uam] meli'[us] & lib'[er]ius & quietius habueru[n]t | Temp[or]ibus antecessor[um] meor[um] in p[re]dicta Gilda. Et p[ro]hibeo sup[er] forisfactura[m] meam X libra[r]um | ne aliquis eos inde disturbet.

Testibus hiis—Roger[o] Constab[ulario] Cestr[ie], Rad[ulpho] de monte alto senesc[allo] | Cestr', Rad[ulpho] de mesnilwar[in], Will'o & Rob'to Patric, Philippo de orrebi, Ric'o & Will'o de Boidelei, | Ric'o phitton, Liulpho de Tuamlawa, Ran[ulpho] de Davenh[am], Warino de Vernu[m], Rob'to fil | Picott, Petro cl[erico] Comit[is], Ric'o piscer', Hub[er]to de Pulford, Will'o de Verd[on], Thoma cl[erico] | Comit[is] p[re]sentiu[m] scriptore. Et multis aliis. Apud Cestr[iam].”

(b) Another, promulgated at Chester, similarly witnessed and sealed in red wax, of which only a fragment now remains, confirms (probably before 1202) to the citizens former liberties and customs—“quittance and release of recognizances and proportament [that is, delivery of assize] in the city forever”—and concedes to them the power of settling disputes of bargain, sale, loans and sureties; and of making good their wills in their own courts. Anyone disturbing them in these privileges shall forfeit to the Earl £20.

(c) The third, which is a few years later but not before 1208, and from which the seal is gone, grants and establishes that no one may buy or sell any kind of merchandise which shall come to the city by sea or land but the citizens themselves, or by their favour, except on the annual fair days of 24th June and 29th September. This charter is witnessed by Hugh abbot of Chester (1208-1226), Philip de Orreby then justice of Chester, and by many Cheshire gentlemen.

(d) The last of the undated charters, which includes as witnesses Richard Fitton justiciary (1234-1237); Henry Audley, and Hugh Cholmondeley, is that of JOHN, Earl of Chester; who confirms the foregoing charters of his uncle Randle III.; but claims from the citizens the sole prerogative of "caption," or preferential value of necessaries supplied to himself and his justiciary. The seal is gone, leaving only a trace of green colour on the parchment label.

In these early charters, which confirm rather than create, details are few, and information scanty; but, like the pillars and arches of St. John's church in this city, they are the witness of Norman power and enterprise.

III Royal Charters and Grants

(13th to 17th century)

On the death of Earl John without legitimate issue in 1237, his earldom, rights of land-tenure, and demesnes lapsed to the Crown. Consequently at that crisis, this city for better security of its ancient gild, customs, courts, and civic status, applied to the King for protection, with the result that HENRY III. granted three

*Inspeximus*⁴ charters; and thus began for Chester the age of royal charters. These documents are addressed not as was the manner of the Earl to his men both French and English in the county-palatine, but in general to "archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, earls, barons, justices, sheriffs, reeves, ministers, bailiffs, and all the King's faithful subjects"; and in them the three several charters of Randle Blundeville, encouraging mercantile adventure, and enforcing justice alike to French, English, and Welsh citizens—charters that had been for Chester what the *Magna Carta* of 1215 had been for the nation—are recited and ratified without any additional concession.

Two of Henry's charters, witnessed by John de Lacy Earl of Lincoln and Constable of Chester, Simon de Montfort then risen to notoriety, and others, were promulgated at Westminster on the same day, 8th Dec. 1237, by Ralph Neville bishop of Chichester and Chancellor. The great seal impressed on light-green wax is much decayed; but the broken pieces are kept together in a bag of coarsely-woven yellow cloth.

The third *Inspeximus*, witnessed by Richard Earl of Picardy and Cornwall (the King's brother and wisest adviser); John de Lacy; Humphrey de Bohun; Stephen Segrave (the justice whom the King had dismissed in 1234); and others; is authenticated "by our hand" at Westminster on 23rd Oct. 1239 with the same seal; but only traces of it are left on the twisted red silk cord.

Henry III. reigned 33 years longer. During that time, on 26th March 1254, he created his son Edward,

⁴ So called from the commencing Latin word signifying "We have inspected"; and synonymous with the modern lawyers' term *perused*.

then 15 years of age, Earl of Chester; who as first Royal Earl visited Chester in 1256 and 1257; and again as King in 1275, 1277, 1282, and 1294. After tranquillity had been restored to North Wales, and Wallace had been defeated in 1298 at Falkirk, he, as King EDWARD I., in the 28th year of his reign (1300) granted the next charter to Chester, which became the governing instrument of the city for 200 years, and thus marked a new era in the city's history.

THE FIRST GREAT ROYAL CHARTER OF 1300

EDWARD I., in this important document, styles himself King of England, Lord of Ireland, and Duke of Aquitaine, but not of Normandy, nor of Anjou, because those titles had been renounced by his father in 1259; and addresses the charter in the usual way to archbishops, bishops, &c.

He begins by declaring that he has inspected the three charters of his late father—a clear proof of no missing charter for 60 years previous—which were confirmations of those of earl Randle III. 100 years before, which he recapitulates and ratifies. Then he proceeds to grant to the Mayor [Alexander Hurel] and citizens, who had agreed to farm the fee of the city from the Crown, the following concessions, by which it will be seen that charters were not laws, but exemptions from law.

Firstly. They shall hold the city with its liberties and free customs from the King by the perpetual annual rent of £100 payable at the Exchequer within Chester Castle to the Chamberlain there in moieties at the

usual two terms then in vogue, namely, at Michaelmas and Easter.⁵

2. They shall henceforth elect *coroners* who shall take oath before the Mayor of the city to be faithful in the discharge of their duties in the *crown-mote*.

3. They shall hold courts of pleas before the Mayor and bailiffs of the city; and receive fines &c. that heretofore belonged to the king.

It may here be pointed out that the head-borough, or chief bailiff of Chester had been styled *Mayor* at least 43 years before the date of this charter. William Lynnet occurs as mayor in 1257. No charter of incorporation is known; nor is it likely that any such grant was made either by Earl or King. Municipal rights gradually grew out of customary laws; but the origin of merchant gild and corporation, like the origin of the city itself, is lost in obscurity. Charters recognise and reform but do not initiate institutions.

4. They shall have in their jurisdiction of *soc* and *sac*⁶ the right of imposing fines; and of claiming toll and custom duties on imported goods.

5. They shall have the right of seizing a thief within or without the city; and of trying the thief within their jurisdiction.

⁵ Some estimate of the comparative value of this fee-farm rent may be arrived at by reference to the *Chester Chamberlains' Accounts* for 1301-1360 in vol. 59 *Lanc. & Chesh. Record Society's Publ.* (1910). The salary of the Chief-justice for the counties of Chester and Flint stands at exactly the same sum, £100. The Chamberlain's annual salary is £20, or about 1s. 3d. per day. The King's cook at the castle receives 2d., and the gardener there 3d. a day. A pig costs 3s. 4d.; an ox 6s. 0d.; and the rent of an acre of land is 8d. a year.

⁶ *Soc* signifies the privilege of holding courts; *Sac*, the right of holding pleas.

6. They shall be exempt from all outside taxes, levies, duties or tolls. For instance, they shall not be called upon to contribute for armies going across the seas (*passagio*); nor for unloading ships at other ports (*lastagio*); nor for maintaining walls or defences in other cities (*muragio*); nor for repairing beyond the precincts of the city either highways (*pavagio*),⁷ or bridges (*pontagio*); nor for Danegeld and Geywit, two obsolete taxes, put in to swell these concessions but really amounting to nothing.

7. They shall, under certain restrictions, be free from arrest outside the city.

Lastly. They might build on vacant places within the liberty of the city except on the King's demesne land.

This charter did not constitute Chester a free city. The freedom of the inhabitants was far from complete; for the king retained more than he had relinquished; and his officer continued to collect rents from tenants, and to guard the royal feudal rights, as will be seen from the following list of crown rents.

*Rents, duties &c. due annually to the King (1302-3)*⁸

	£	s.	d.
Chester mills, bridge, and fishery let to Richard the engineer.....	200	0	0
Chamberlain's Rents—from lands, tenements, gardens &c. in Northgate, Wolfuldgate, Sadlers Row, Eastgate-street, Pepper-street, Brugge-street, Watergate-street, the Crofts,			

⁷ Not *panagio*, as Canon Morris prints the Latin word, and explains it to mean licence to feed swine in the forest.

⁸ See these and other details in the Chamberlain's Accounts for the year following the date of this charter. (*Lanc. and Chesh. Record Society Publ.* vol. 59, pp. 36 and 73). From Norman times the customs have been a source of royal revenue.

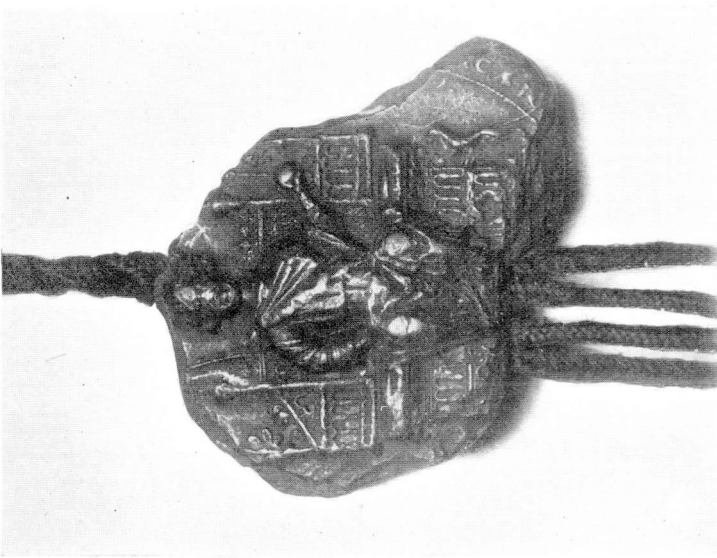
Castle-lone, a burgage near St. Bridget's church, Four shops, Nets and five boats on the Dee, Two forges in Foregate-street.....	3	10	7½
From Alexander Hurel [Mayor] for land, messuage, and yard in Honnebrugge	6	6	
From the Abbot of Chester	1	0	
From prisage of wine sold	10	0	0

The charter is witnessed by Walter bishop of Coventry and Lichfield; John bishop of Carlisle; Roger le Bigod earl of Norfolk and earl-marshal of England; Walter Beauchamp the King's steward; and others. It was promulgated by the King himself at York on 12th June in the 28th year of his rule, 1300; and was authenticated by the impress in dark green wax of the great seal, about 3½ inches in diameter, attached to the deed by a green and brown twisted cord.

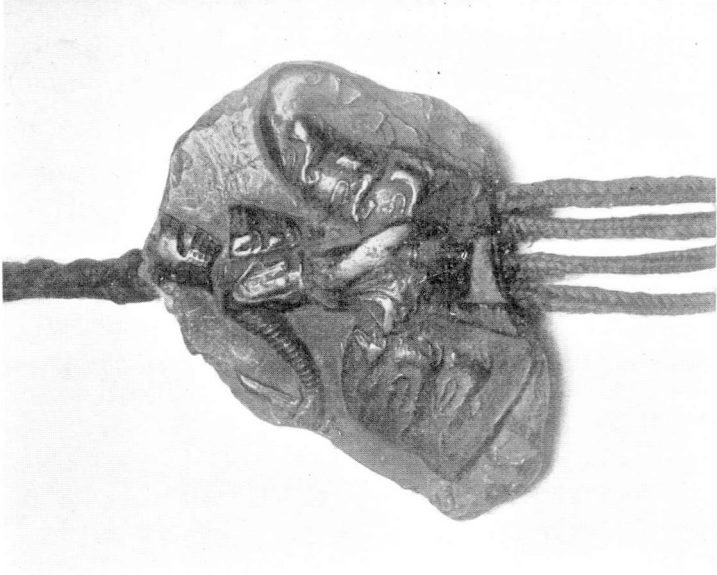
Obverse. Crowned King enthroned holding sceptre in right hand, and orb in left. The throne is richly decorated with arcading and tabernacle work, trefoil ornament, crockets and finials; and at the foot, as supporters, a greyhound. Legend worn away.

Reverse. King on galloping horse to the right. He has chain-mail armour with surcoat; and helmet ensigned with crown. In right hand a broad sword elevated; in left, a Norman shield of the three lions of England. The horse is caparisoned with the same arms.

The charter concludes with these words (translated):—"by a *fine* payable at the Exchequer before the Chancellor and Baron"—a phrase that requires explanation. When a charter had passed the great



(OBVERSE)



(REVERSE)

Great Seal of Edward I. 1300

seal, it was placed in the royal hanaper, or hamper—a wicker basket in the Chancery department—until the fee for the sealing and enrolling had been paid. For although charters were donations from the Sovereign, they were by no means free gifts. The legal expenses, which were heavy, are here only indicated by the word *fine*, a technical term for the ending of the business. Some of the charters record on the bottom margin of the parchment the fine, or fee charged, and the signature of the Chancellor of the Exchequer as receiver.

Edward II. made no grant to Chester, either as Earl or King. The next charter is an *Inspeximus* in the name of EDWARD III., given at Worcester on 25th Dec. in the first year of his reign, 1328. It confirms but makes no addition to the charter of 1300; and a marginal entry states the *fine* paid to have been £10. It is witnessed by John bishop of Ely then Chancellor; Henry Earl of Lancaster; Roger Mortimer; Gilbert Talbot; John Roos the King's steward; and others. The great seal in dark green wax, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, attached by silken cord, resembles that of his grandfather's in design, shield of arms, &c. On each side of the throne is represented for the first time a single fleur-de-lis. Only a few letters of the legend are left; otherwise this fine seal is in good condition.

Two contemporary transcripts of this charter are preserved; and on all three parchments the initial E has never been finished beyond pencil outline; while along the top line of all the written documents certain letters are carried upwards into the margin with a curious pear-shaped flourish, thus forming an ornamental border. One duplicate has on its parchment

label the stamp of the King's palatine seal as Earl of Chester in red wax, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter, representing the three lions of England with a label of five points. The shield is suspended by strap from a loop; and outside the shield on either side is a garb, or sheaf. The whole is contained within a circular beaded border, and the curious but now worn away legend—SIGILLUM SECRETI MAIORIS CESTRIE—seal of the unseen Mayor of Chester, *i.e.*, the King. The other duplicate charter has the King's great seal, now in a broken state, but the pieces contained in a linen bag.

King Edward III. bestowed the earldom of Chester on his first-born son, Edward, then in his third year, on 19th March 1333; who, at the age of 16 fought at Créci, and was afterwards known as the Black Prince. On 11th Novr. 25 Edw. III. [1351] the Black Prince, being then 21, issued a writ by letters-patent addressed to the Mayor and citizens of Chester commanding them to pay the annual fee-farm rent of £100 to Richard, Earl of Arundel, a Sussex nobleman related by marriage to the royal house of Plantagenet, for his lifetime, in recompense, or pension, for loss of office as Justice of North Wales. This document, which is not a charter, is written in French, and is specially interesting for the Prince's very beautiful seal of arms in red wax, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter on the parchment label, still in perfect condition, representing France and England quarterly:—1 & 4 France ancient (*i.e.*, *semé fleurs-de-lis*); 2 & 3 the three lions of England; over all a label of three points. The shield is within a scalloped border of eight points terminating with a quatrefoil. Other ornaments are a sprig of broom (*planta-genista*) a rose, and a lion.



Palatine Seal of Edward III. as Earl of Chester 1328
(From a modern matrix in the Muniment Room at Chester Town Hall)

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Frank Simpson, Photo.



Seal of Edward the Black Prince 1354

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Frank Simpson, Photo.

The next charter is an *Inspeximus* granted in person at Chester by EDWARD the Black Prince and Earl of Chester, independently of the King, on 9th March 1354, to which is still attached by silken cord a thick lump of dark green wax impressed with the Prince's arms and the legend—SIGILLUM EDWARDI FIL. REGIS ANGLIE COMITIS CESTR. It is attested by Roger bishop of Coventry and Lichfield; Bartholomew Burghersh Justice of Chester; Edmund Wanney the Prince's steward; Hugh de Venables, John de Legh, Peter de Thornton, *knights*; John de Brunham Chamberlain of Chester; and others.

Herein the Prince and Earl recites and confirms the charters of his father Edward III., and great-grandfather Edward I.; and further adds that the Mayor for the time being shall be his Escheator in Chester; that the citizens shall have plenary rights of toll, customs and dues on imports on the Dee between Chester and Arnold's Eye [Hoylake]—a truly liberal provision—and, what must have been a great benefit to Cestrians, for the city had lacked expansion, the borough limits should be extended to the bounds which have been assured to them ever since. The extent of the rural area is particularized by names for the most part still unchanged. Beginning with Heron Bridge the southern boundary follows watercourses by Claverton, Lache, and Saltney; then on the sea-land side of Dee, at that time a tidal marsh, the boundary is formed by streams at Stone-bridge, Bache-pool, and Flookersbrook; then eastwards through Boughton to Dee-banks and Huntington-wood as far as Heron Bridge.⁹

⁹ From the same vol. of Chamberlains' Accounts it appears that this acquisition of land cost the city the large sum of 500 marks [£333 6s. 8d.] which was paid to the Prince and Earl in four annual instalments of £83 6s. 8d. Canon Morris (*Chester* pp. 211-218) gives detailed accounts of perambulations of the city boundaries in 1540, 1573, and 1593.

On the death of the Black Prince in 1376, his son Richard was created by Edward III. Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester,¹⁰ who on 21st June 1377 succeeded to the throne as RICHARD II., styling himself King of England and France and Lord of Ireland; but not Duke of Aquitaine as his predecessors had done. Cestrians regarded him with affection for the sake of his heroic father; and were ever loyal to him for the gift of a civic sword in 1394,¹¹ and for two charters in his name; one granted at the beginning, the other at the end of his reign. Both are simply *Inspeximus* charters exemplifying and ratifying the preceding grant of 1354.

(a) The first is remarkable for the introduction of a saving clause which makes it clear that the mis-use or non-use of any privilege shall not involve loss of the charter; but the terms of it "shall be fully used and enjoyed without let or hindrance from us, our justices" &c.—an instance of legal acumen and foresight then only coming into vogue, though frequently found in charters of later date. It is noteworthy, too, that the young King selected distinguished persons as advisers and witnesses, namely:—William Wykeham bishop of Winchester; John Harewell bishop of Bath and Wells; Thomas Brantingham bishop of Exeter "our treasurer"; Richard Earl of Arundel; William Ufford Earl of Suffolk; Richard Scrope "our Chancellor"; William Beauchamp "our Chamberlain"; John Fordham "Keeper of our privy seal"; Albert Veer "our sub-chamberlain"; Robert de Rous Knight; &c., and this is the last royal charter of

¹⁰ Since that time one patent has created both titles.

¹¹ See Ormerod's *History of Cheshire*, 2nd edit., vol. I., p. 195. At some subsequent date, unknown, the sword disappeared from the city regalia.



(OBVERSE)



(REVERSE)

Great Seal of Richard II. 1379

ancient form to be so witnessed. Succeeding ones, although still in the King's name, are no longer issued under his sole prerogative and on the advice of his personal friends; but by the assent of the House of Lords; and, being classed among documents called Letters Patent,¹² usually conclude with these words:—
 “In witness whereof we have caused these our letters to be made patent by writ of privy seal, and by authority of Parliament.”

This charter is dated at Westminster, 10th Decr. in the third regnal year corresponding to 1379; and is promulgated by writ from privy seal for a fine of £20 paid in hanaper. The great seal in green wax, 5 inches in diameter, appended by strands of green and red silk cords, is the most beautiful of the whole series, the matrix being constructed when heraldry and artistic design were at their zenith.

Obverse. The throne in Gothic tabernacle work with side niches as rich in detail as the carved wood-work of the stalls in Chester Cathedral. In the centre, under a canopy with Virgin and Child, is seated the crowned King holding sceptre and orb; at his feet on each side a greyhound sejant. In the side niches, a tree from which depends by strap a shield of arms, Quarterly, France (*semé*) and England. In the outside niches, a standing man-at-arms.

Reverse. The King on galloping horse, caparisoned, armed *cap-à-pie*; with drawn sword; and shield as on the obverse.

¹² *Patent* means *open*; and is used to show that a charter became an open, authoritative document; just as we say a fact is patent, when we mean it is plainly clear and certain. *Letters* (*litteræ*) in the legal sense of written records, or formal writings by persons in authority. See use of this term in Ezra v., 6, &c., and Isaiah xxxvii., 14.

(b) The second *Inspeximus* of RICHARD II. confirming the former one of 1379 and his father's charter of 1354, without further addition, was given in person at Chester on 19th July, in the twenty-second regnal year, 1398. There is no list of witnesses. It concludes thus:—"In witness whereof we have caused these our letters patent to be made, and sealed with the seal of our *Principality* of Chester." The impress in yellow wax, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, appended by parchment label of the then new and unique Principality seal, is still in good condition, although the legend is partly gone.

Obverse. The King, in chain-mail and surcoat, with drawn sword in right hand, and on left arm the shield of England (three lions), is riding a horse caparisoned with the same arms.

Reverse. A shield of arms of cross fleury, between five martlets, impaling the three lions of England. The shield is ensigned by a jewelled coronet of 5 fleurs-de-lis and 4 trefoils, disposed alternately; and is supported by ostrich feathers stuck through a scroll-label.¹⁸

On the deposition of Richard II. 29th Sept. 1399, the Principality of Chester was abolished, and the above seal destroyed, never to be renewed.

HENRY IV. granted no beneficent charter to Chester; but on 3rd Nov. in the fifth year of his rule, 1403, by letters patent he issued a *Pardon* to the citizens for their treasons in the Percy rebellion of July in that year. This document illustrates a method much practised

¹⁸ Canon Morris figures this reverse in red ink outline on the title-page of his *History of Chester*, and marks *Ich Dien* on the scroll-label; but that inscription does not appear on the original seal.



(OBSERVE)



(REVERSE)

Principality Seal of Richard II. 1398

during the civil wars of the 15th century for obtaining Crown revenue. Cestrians, charged with treason or suspected treason, were liable to lose their houses and lands; but they might retain them, as the preamble says, "of our special grace, and at the supplication of our most beloved son, Henry, Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester";¹⁴ but really, because the Mayor and citizens had paid for the real or supposed misdemeanors a penalty of 300 marks [£200], and had also promised to find sufficient men, victuals, and shipping to relieve Beaumaris castle. The pardon was promulgated at Cirencester on the above date, and enrolled at Chester on Tuesday next after the Epiphany 5 Hen. IV. [Jan. 1404]. The great seal (now half gone) in yellow wax attached by parchment label, is from the same matrix as that of Richard II. in 1379.¹⁵

This document is the first in the series now partly illegible in consequence of damp stain. Nothing, not even fire, destroys parchment more effectually than damp-mould. Moisture washes out the arsenic or saline preparations used in the process of converting a skin into vellum; and so the unprotected material perishes, and writing becomes effaced.

HENRY V., as King, granted no charter to Chester. But when he was fourteen years old, as Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester he confirmed the charters of Edward III. (1328), Edward B.P. (1354) and Richard II. (1379) by an *Inspeximus* at Kenyngton, witnessed by Guy bishop of St. David's; John Trevor bishop of St.

¹⁴ He was so created on 15th Oct. 1399, at the age of twelve.

¹⁵ Canon Morris has figured a very different seal below the text of this Pardon (*Chester*, p. 508), describing it as the "Palatine Seal of Henry IV."

Asaph; Richard Yonge bishop of Bangor; Reginald Grey of Ruthin; Henry de Percy Justice of Chester; Hugh le Despenser Knight; Hugh Holes Knight; Peter de Melburne Chamberlain of Chester; and others. It is dated 23rd Feb. 2 Hen. IV. [1401] and has a depending plaited red and green silk cord, but the seal is gone.

The same HENRY, Prince of Wales, Duke of Aquitaine Lancaster and Cornwall, Earl of Chester, by letters patent at Chester 5th March 8 Hen. IV. [1407] granted power to the Mayor and commonalty for five years from the feast of Easter next coming to receive the profit from "*prise and caption*" of murage within our city, provided one moiety be expended on the walls, and the other moiety upon the completion of the tower on Dee Bridge begun by the ministers and officials of our Castle of Chester in the time of Richard II. This is authenticated with the Palatine or Exchequer seal of Chester in white wax appended by parchment label.

Obverse. The King with drawn sword and royal shield (France and England) riding galloping horse. Background of stars.

Reverse. Shield of Arms; Quarterly, 1 & 4 France ancient (*semé*), 2 & 3 England (three lions). Over all a label of three points. *Supporters*; an ostrich feather piercing a scroll-label. *Crest*; a swan with wings elevated. Legend; gone.¹⁶

No later Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester ever conferred any benefit on this city by charter.

¹⁶ Canon Morris figures this reverse in his *Chester*, on p. 509; but the scroll should not be inscribed *Ich Dien*.

The next *Inspeximus* and confirmation of the former charters of 1354, 1379 and 1401, without additional privileges, is by letters patent in the name of King HENRY VI., who was never made Earl of Chester. He was born at Windsor in 1421; and, consequently, was only four years old when this charter was promulgated at Westminster, on 20th Novr. 1425. In it the infant king is formally stated to have approved, ratified, and confirmed all the donations, concessions, confirmations, liberties &c. made by his predecessors to the citizens with the advice and assent of the lords spiritual and temporal in the Parliament then assembled by writ of privy Seal; "examined," as the margin states, "by Wm. Prestwyk" and "John Stopyndon," clerks; although the amount of "*fine*" is not recorded. The great seal in green wax, $4\frac{7}{8}$ inches in diameter, appended by red and green twisted silk cord, resembles, although from a different matrix, the seal used by Richard II. in 1379.

Twenty years later, that is in 1445—the year the King was married to the brave and noble lady, Margaret of Anjou—HENRY VI., visiting Chester, granted by letters patent the first reduction of the annual fee-farm rent. Briefly the preamble runs thus:—

"Know ye that by the humble supplication of our beloved lieges the Mayor and citizens of our city of Chester, we have understood how the said citizens hold the city in fee-farm of us, paying annually £100 by virtue of a charter of Edward I.; And as there was then a good harbour to make a convenient port to the great profits and increase of riches of the citizens And as the harbour is now and for 40 years past destroyed by the wrack of sea-sand, so that no merchant-ship can

approach within 12 miles of the city; And that during the Welsh rebellion [of 40 years before] no one was able to sell, or buy victuals, or traffic in any other merchandise with any Welshman, the city being guarded night and day against Welshmen, And that many citizens are withdrawing from the city, and dwelling elsewhere on account of the burdens of their fee-farm; so that the city is wasted, desolate, and ruinous, and very sparsely inhabited”

The King states, We therefore exonerate our said citizens and their successors £50 annually of the £100 rent during the 50 years next coming. Witness myself at Chester 24th Aug. in 23rd year of our reign [1445] by the authority of Parliament. A fine impression of the royal palatine seal of Chester¹⁷ in light yellow wax, 3½ inches in diameter, is appended to the charter by parchment label.

Obverse. King in armour on galloping horse with flowing caparisons; in right hand drawn sword; on left arm shield of arms, Quarterly, France (*modern*) and England. Background ornamented with leaves on branches and stems.

Reverse. Shield of arms; Quarterly, France (*modern*) and England, impaling Chester (three garbs). The shield bordered with stars, ensigned by coronet; and supported by ostrich feather stuck through a scroll-label.

For the first time in this series of seals the arms of France are reduced from *semé fleur-de-lis* to the three golden lilies on a blue shield. In that form they are

¹⁷ This seal is figured, both *obv.* and *rev.*, by Canon Morris (*Chester* p. 508) but mis-called *Henry IV.*'s palatine seal.

known as "France modern," and are so used ever after by each succeeding English monarch down to 1800, when that coat was dispensed with altogether.

Henry VI., the last Lancastrian King, was the only one of that dynasty to render assistance to Chester. Nearly forty years passed—a time of insecurity and civil war—before the next grant was made by the last Yorkist king, Richard III.; and meanwhile three successive Earls of Chester had come to untimely deaths; namely—

Edward, only son of Henry VI., created Earl 15th March 1452; murdered after Tewkesbury battle in 1471.

Edward, son of Edward IV., created Earl 26th July 1471; became Edward V., but was murdered in the Tower 1483.

Edward, son of Richard III., created Earl at 10 years old, 8th Sept. 1483; died at Middleham castle 9th April, 1484.

The Corporation still complaining of the insupportable fee-farm rent, which had somehow and somehow increased to £70 a year, sought relief from RICHARD III., then at Chester, and obtained from him by writ of privy seal and by authority of Parliament that the fee-farm rent for the next ten years should be reduced to £30 *per annum*; and the Chamberlains' rents, which had remained at about £3 10s. 1½d. since the time of Edward I., should be no longer collected by the King's officer. This is dated, 10th April 1 Ric. III. [1484]; and the fine impress in light-brown wax, 3¾ inches in diameter, of the King's palatine seal attached by parchment label is as rare as the principality seal of Richard II.

Obverse. King on galloping horse; drawn sword; shield of arms, Quarterly, France and England; the field diapered lozengy with a flower in centre spaces, and at the knots.

Reverse. Shield of Arms, Quarterly. France and England, impaling Chester (three garbs):¹⁸ ensigned by jewelled coronet; supported by a lion and a boar. Background diapered lozengy with rose and fleur-de-lis in alternate spaces.

Following the precedent of other reigns, the city petitioned HENRY VII., soon after his accession for further alleviation from the same crown rent, setting forth that Chester, "one of the ancient cities of England built for the safe-guard of the Marches, or Welsh border, with a port once crowded with foreign traders at the Water-gate but then in decay, the river channel having been so long obstructed by silting sand that ships were unable to reach within twelve miles of the city; the walls having fallen into ruin, and nearly one fourth of the city having become depopulated and desolate, could no longer out of the port-dues, customs, and profits of trade raise the crown rent and maintain the walls in good repair." Accordingly the King, being at Chester, issued a writ by letters patent dated 21st March, in his first regnal year, 1486, reducing the fee-farm rent to £20 *per annum*; and sealed the grant with his palatine seal¹⁹ in brown wax, now imperfect, which differs from that of Richard III.'s mainly in having ostrich feathers for supporters.

¹⁸ This seal is figured in Morris's *Chester*, p. 517; but there should have been no dividing line between the *garbs* in the illustration.

¹⁹ Canon Morris (*Chester*, p. 523) describing the seal says, in error, the three *garbs* are on the dexter, instead of on the sinister, side of the shield.

Excepting these remissions of fee-farm rent, no beneficent charter had been granted during the 15th century; but with the beginning of the following century, notwithstanding the continuity of feudal law, the city entered on a new phase of its history. HENRY VII., again visiting Chester in the year 1506, gave the city its *Magna Carta*; under which the citizens were governed for more than 300 years until the passing of the Municipal Corporations' Act of 1835.

THE SECOND GREAT CHARTER OF 1506

The preamble says:—"Know that we for the great affection we bear to our city of Chester and in consideration of the good behaviour and great expenses of the inhabitants as also the voluntary service rendered against our adversaries and rebels²⁰ willing the better estate of the city, and especially to provide for the convenience and quiet of the citizens we give and grant—"

"That the city with its suburbs (excepting our Castle within the walls) be exempted from our shire of Chester, and be a county distinct and separate and named the *County of the City of Chester*."²¹

²⁰ The allusion here is to the bravery of Sir John Savage, Kt., son of Sir John Savage, mayor of Chester 1484-1486; and of other Cheshire men at Bosworth-field, the success of which battle had given the King his crown.

²¹ Under the plenary local powers thus conferred the city sheriff used to attend all criminal executions within the city, besides other duties as conservator of the peace, &c.

The distinction '*City and County*' is not rare, as it belongs to thirteen cities in England namely:—Bristol, Canterbury, Chester, Exeter, Gloucester, Hull, Lichfield, Lincoln (as early as 1409), Newcastle-on-Tyne, Norwich, Nottingham, Worcester, and York.

The following places are designated '*Town and County*':—Berwick-on-Tweed, Carmarthen, Haverfordwest, Poole and Southampton.

Besides conferring this dignity, which still attaches to the city, the charter mentions *en passant* that the King presented a civic sword as emblem of power and justice, which is preserved to this day among the city regalia.²²

It may here be mentioned on the authority of Randle Holme of Chester,²³ although not alluded to in the charter, that King Henry, at the same time, granted the city its Royal Arms:—Half England and half Earldom conjoined; with a sheathed sword for crest; and for supporters, a lion *Or* and a wolf *Argent*, gorged with crowns counter-changed; and the motto, *Antiqui colant antiquum dierum*.²⁴

Henry VII.'s charter, in great minuteness of detail, firmly re-establishes the constitution of the ancient corporate body and local courts; finally abolishes certain crown officers; and creates an entirely new official, named the Recorder. The main provisions are as follows:—

²² This sword has come to honorable notoriety at various times; and recently so at the investiture of H.R.H. Edward as Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester at Carnarvon. on 13th July 1911, when in the absence of the state sword it was borne before King George V. and the Prince by Earl Beauchamp.

²³ *Academy of Armoury*. vol. ii., book IV., chap. 9, p. 369 (Printed by the Roxburgh Club, London, 1905).

²⁴ There is in the Muniment Room, Case 12, a richly illuminated parchment deed, dated 3 Sepr. 22 Eliz. [1580], confirming that grant of arms at the Visitation in that year. It bears the signature of William Flower, Norroy King of Arms; and also the later signature underneath of Richard St. George, Norroy King of Arms at his Visitation in 1613. The deed is very beautifully written in the Italian Style which was coming into vogue in the time of Queen Elizabeth.

Dr. Ormerod (*History of Cheshire*, 2nd edit. vol. I. p. 203) spoke inadvertently of this Latin deed as the *original* grant of arms; but in a foot-note on the same page, he allowed it was a *confirmatory* deed.

The city council shall consist of 24 aldermen (one of whom shall be the Recorder) and 40 common councilmen; of a Mayor; who shall be escheator and clerk of the market; of two sheriffs as from ancient times; of two coroners and two muragers;²⁵ all of whom shall be elected by the citizens according to specified regulations.

The mayor, recorder, and such aldermen as have borne the office of mayor, shall be justices of peace.

The corporation shall have power to make its own by-laws.

The mayor, sheriffs and recorder shall have cognizance of pleas in the Common Hall, (but not in the Castle and Gloverstone), and have power to commit prisoners to the Northgate Tower prison.

The Portmote and Crownmote courts to be held as aforetime.

The Citizens to be exempt from serving on juries outside the city (except in pleas concerning the king); to be free from all royal customs (except wine and iron); and to have the Dee fishery from Heron's Bridge to Arnold's Eye, near Hoylake, under special regulations; also to hold a fish and flesh market in the city.

The fee-farm rent was to remain at £20 *per annum*; and after reciting the ancient privileges granted by Edward I. in 1300, the charter closes with these words:—"In witness whereof we have caused these our letters to be made patent; witness ourself at

²⁵ In the charter of 1688 the same dual arrangement of officers applies to the treasurers and leavelookers. (See *postea*).

Chester, 6th April in the 21st year of our reign." [1506]. There is still appended in brown wax, four inches in diameter, the stamp of the Palatine Seal of Chester in fairly good condition, but with broken edge, attached by a red and green plaited silk cord.

Obverse. King in plate armour; helmet with statant lion for crest; riding a galloping horse with flowing caparisons: In right hand drawn sword; on left arm shield of royal arms, France and England, Quarterly: Background diapered lozengy; in the spaces an ostrich feather: at the knots a fleur-de-lis.

Reverse. Shield of Royal Palatine Arms ensigned by arched crown, the circlet of which heightened by alternate crosses patées and fleurs-de-lis.

Arms:—France and England, Quarterly; impaling the three *garbs* of Chester.

Supporters:—On each side a single ostrich feather stuck through a scroll-label inscribed (now nearly illegible) *Ich Dien*; and held upright by the raised paw of a dragon crouched below the shield.²⁶

This very long charter, closely but not specially well written, is contained on a single membrane 31 inches by 20½ inches. The surface of the parchment has been so frayed by frequent thumbing as to render the Latin text nearly illegible. That defacement is of old date; probably within the first 70 years of its issue, according to the Hardware chartulary of 1576.

In the year 1546, William Holcroft, mayor, dying during his term of office, it was found that no provision had been made in the charter for electing a successor

²⁶ This is the last instance of the use of the Palatine Seal. Succeeding charters are attested by the Great Seal of England.



(REVERSE)



(OBYERSE)

Palatine Seal of Henry VII. 1506

until the annual election-day on Friday after St. Denis day [October 9th]. Appeal being made to the King in this dilemma, HENRY VIII. D.G. King of England, France, and Ireland (our monarchs are no longer styled *Lord* of Ireland after 1541) Defender of the Faith and on earth supreme head of the Church of England and Ireland, decreed by his council in the Star-chamber at Westminster, that the citizens of Chester may have power to elect an interim mayor in the Common Hall of the city on 11th June next ensuing.²⁷ This document, as an appendix to the great charter, was issued by letters patent at Westminster on 4th June, in the 38th regnal year, [1546]. The great seal, $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches, appended by label in brown wax, now broken, shows on the

Obverse. The King in royal robes, with crown, sceptre, and orb, seated under a baldachin or dome-shaped canopy. On each side the Arms of France and England quarterly, encircled with inscribed garter, and ensigned with royal crown.

Reverse. The King in plate armour with drawn sword, shield, mantling streaming from helmet, riding galloping horse caparisoned with fleur-de-lis and rose on border; a greyhound running in the flowered foreground.

Neither Edward VI., who was never created Earl of Chester, nor Queen Mary, granted a charter to Chester; but shortly after the accession of Queen Elizabeth, the Lord Treasurer in 1560 claimed to levy subsidy of ton-

²⁷ In accord with this decree *John Walley* was chosen to succeed *William Holcroft*, as mayor. Singular to say, in the next year, 1546-7 *Hugh Aldersey*, mayor, died; and was succeeded by *John Smyth*; and four years after, the mayor *Edmund Gee* dying during his year of office, *William Goodman* was chosen as interim mayor.

nage on the citizens of Chester,²⁸ who sent a deputation with the city charters to Westminster to prove their right of exemption from jurisdiction of the Exchequer; which was allowed. An enquiry was, however, instituted relative to a clause in the 1506 charter, that no officer of the King's household should intermeddle in the city, resulting in the issue of a Confirmation Charter, dated 8th April, 5 Eliz. [1563], with a warning to the mayor and citizens not to attempt a repetition of their contempt. That charter is not among the city muniments, because by royal command it was surrendered and cancelled during the first mayoralty of Richard Dutton, esq. in 1567-8.

QUEEN ELIZABETH in the 16th year of her reign, on 14th June 1574, granted by letters patent and by authority of Parliament at Westminster an *Inspeximus*, which fully recites and ratifies the great charter of 1506, and concedes four additional provisions, namely:—

1. "Of our abundant grace" that an interim Mayor or Sheriff shall be elected by the citizens in the Common Hall on the Friday next after the decease of the Mayor or Sheriff late in office.

2. "Of our especial grace" that the Corporation—evidently still seeking relief from the feudal farm rent—may have licence to purchase land, not *in capite* and notwithstanding the Mortmain Act of 1279, to the value of £100 *per annum*, so that the city may the better bear its burdens.²⁹

²⁸ Here is an instance of the Court of Chancery being dangerous to civil liberty before Bacon told King James that the Chancery was the court of his absolute power.

²⁹ By non-user the Corporation never availed themselves of this provision for acquiring landed estate in order to increase the revenue of the city.

3. "Of our especial grace" that the Corporation have the custody and government of the estates of orphans in the city until they come of age; according to the custom then prevailing in the London Corporation.

4. "Of our especial grace" the city to be exonerated from suits of *quo warranto*;⁸⁰ and these letters patent under the great seal to be made and sealed without *fine* paid into our hanaper.⁸¹

This charter is a fine specimen of penmanship and ornamental decoration in a border illuminated in gold and colours, consisting of flowers, scrolls, a golden lion, a red dragon, the Tudor rose and Royal arms ensigned with a crown. The initial script E in gilt encloses an outline portrait in colour of the Queen holding sceptre and orb seated on a canopied throne inscribed 'VIVAT REGINA.' The charter, which consists of three membranes, 33 inches by 24 inches, has suffered considerable damage from damp; but the impress of the great seal on brown wax, $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter, attached by a cord of twisted silver wire and silk, is in good preservation.

Obverse: Queen enthroned in robes, fur cloak, ruff collar, and crown, holds sceptre and orb. Below her feet is a carved entablature inscribed *Pulchrum pro patria pati*. On each side the arms of France and England quarterly

⁸⁰ A writ of *quo warranto* might be issued and brought before a tribunal to inquire by what warrant a Corporation exercised certain powers. See an infringement of this privilege in 1684 on p. 63.

⁸¹ To meet the cost of this charter, although the Chancery *fine* was *nil*, the Corporation under the second mayoralty of Richard Dutton, esq., in 1574, imposed fines and renewed leases on the city lands; and made many persons free of the city on payment of small sums of money, "even such as were never 'prentices."

within the garter, ensigned by royal crown. Background of arabesque pattern with fleurs-de-lis, roses, and pierced cinque-foils, somewhat indistinct.

Reverse: Queen on horse pacing to the left, attired in embroidered and bordered skirt. Sceptre in right hand: left hand, resting on high pommel of saddle, holds the reins. Foreground covered with tufts of grass and plants.

With the change of dynasty it was necessary that Chester should secure confirmation of its civic rights from the new King. So the next charter is that of JAMES I. dated at Westminster on 7th February in the second year of his reign, 1605; who, by letters patent granted an *Inspeximus* reciting and ratifying the three previous charters of 1506, 1546, and 1574, without any additional benefaction or concession. A bulky document, like Queen Elizabeth's, it comprises three large skins, ornamented with an arabesque border in ink, but not illuminated with colour or gold. Among the decorations are included the lion of England bearing the jack, or flag of St. George; the unicorn of Scotland bearing the flag of St. Andrew's cross; the fleur-de-lis of France; the harp of Ireland; the Tudor rose; the shield of Scotland; each ensigned by a royal crown; while the initial J contains the royal arms (France and England) encircled within the garter, and supported by lion and unicorn. These emblems occur on the great seal in brown wax attached by a cord of twisted red silk and silver wire. Later seals, like later charters, grew not only in size—this seal measures six inches in diameter—but in assumed importance; for heraldry is here carried to absurdity by the addition of the supposed arms of Edward the

Confessor and of Cadwallader, the last King of the Britons!³²

To this charter the Lord High Chancellor, Thomas Egerton the celebrated Cheshire lawyer, has put his signature, "T. Ellesmere," which is witnessed by "John Tyndull" and "Thomas Legge," clerks; all attesting the receipt of the *fine* of £10 paid for sealing and enrolling the deed.

Within a twelvemonth, despite this royal confirmation, King James, by letter sealed at Westminster 22nd Novr., 1605, but not delivered until 10th Jan., 1606, wished to nominate Hugh Mainwaring, utter-barrister of Gray's Inn, as Recorder of Chester, in succession to Thomas Lawton, deceased 6th Jan., 1606. That proposal, however, was resented by a petition claiming the city's sole right of choice and election of Recorder.

The earldom of Chester, which for more than a century had been vested in the Crown, was again renewed on 3rd Novr., 1616, when James I. created his son Charles, Earl of Chester; but no succeeding Stuart held the title; and the earldom again merged in the Crown until after the accession of George I. in 1714.

King Charles I. granted no charter to this city; but after the troubles of the great Civil War, Chester finally became relieved of the annual fee-farm rent of £20 by a deed of purchase between certain trustees nominated by Act of Parliament and the Government

³² W. de G. Birch in his *Catalogue of Seals in British Museum*, vol. 1, p. 57, points out that this first seal of James I. is rare; and that the latest example is appended to the Charter of the borough of Evesham, co. Worcester, dated 3rd April 1605.

when the Crown was in abeyance during the Commonwealth period. The document, which is dated 20th Jan., 1651, includes also the rescinding of tonnage customs on wine, coal, iron, and other articles imported into the city.⁸⁸ There is also a grant to the Mayor and Corporation giving them power to appoint the warden or mastership of the Hospital of St. John Baptist in Chester, dated 23rd June, 1658 (the only document written in English) in the name of Oliver Cromwell, lord Protector, who, though *de facto* King, was not so regarded by the *de jure* theory; and on that account the deed cannot be classed among Royal charters or grants.

When the restoration of monarchy had been assured, the next charter, obtained from CHARLES II., was granted at Westminster by letters patent on 6th June in the 16th year of his reign—but really his 4th regnal year, disregarding the twelve years of the Commonwealth period—corresponding to 1664. This was a renewal and confirmation of the charters of 1506 and 1574 without any important enlargements. It is written in Latin on three membranes, 35 inches by 30 inches, in 186 lines and about 6000 words! The borders are decorated with scrolls, cherubic-looking children, heraldic animals, and the royal arms. Within the initial C is a fine mezzo-tint portrait of the King. The *fine* charged was £10; but there is no impress of the great seal although a cord of red and white silk is still pendent to the parchment.

Towards the end of the same reign in Chester as elsewhere instead of security and peace there was bitter

⁸⁸ The original parchment is preserved in Case 14 No. 48a; and has been hitherto un-noticed by historians of the city.

political and religious strife. The Corporation, unfortunately, was more concerned about party politics than about the improvement of the city and welfare of the inhabitants. Consequently a *quo warranto* writ was served on the city requiring the town-council to show why the former charter of 1664 should not be forfeited on the ground of abuse of privileges; and so that charter, being recalled, was rendered invalid by the removal of the seal.³⁴

CHARLES II., accordingly, by letters patent dated at Westminster, 4th Feb., 1685, issued another charter for the re-construction and re-constitution of the Corporation; thus annulling, if not in word yet in deed, the *Magna Carta* of 1506, by nominating and appointing as new mayor Sir Thomas Grosvenor (who might appoint at his pleasure a deputy-mayor), together with certain other officers all named; and removing from the then elected council the following ultra-loyalist members—Roger Whitley, Thomas Whitley, John Mainwaring, George Booth, William Street, George Mainwaring, Michael Johnson, and William Williams the Recorder—and reserving to the Crown power to remove all such-like persons at the King's free-will and pleasure; and also giving power to the select body to elect mayor, sheriffs, aldermen, common-council men, and officers, to the entire exclusion of the vote of the community.

This Latin charter is written on seven membranes 33 inches by 37 inches, in 373 lines and in more than 8,200 words! The initial C contains a coloured portrait of the king; and the borders of the parchment are

³⁴ At Carlisle, at Worcester, at Lincoln, and elsewhere, civic liberties were threatened and imperilled by similar writs.

elaborately ornamented with floral devices and shields of arms in gilt and colours. The charter now bears no impress of the great seal, although it has two pendent cords of brown and green silk. It however bears the signature "*Guilford C.S.*," that is, Lord Guilford [Francis North] *custos sigilli*, keeper of the great seal, for the *fine* of £6 13s. 4d. paid into the royal hanaper.

Two days after the issue of this charter, that is, on 6th Feb., 1685 King Charles II. was dead. Exactly one month after, on 6th March, the charter was brought to Chester with great *éclat* and under semblance of law by Sir Thomas Grosvenor the mayor, Sir Philip Egerton the high-sheriff and many other county gentlemen.

"At Boughton," says a MS. account,⁸⁵ "they were met by the justices, aldermen, and common-council in their formalities [that is. robes]; the militia in arms, and the twenty-four gild companies making a guard from the Bars-gate to the East-gate; and the battalion in garrison here making a guard from the East-gate to the Milk-stoops [at the juncture of Eastgate street and Northgate street].

Being come to Gild-hall, amidst the loud and repeated acclamations of the people, the Charter was read [probably the heads of it in English] and the Mayor having made a very loyal speech, which met with general applause, satisfaction, and thanks of the assembly, he and the rest of the officers were sworn.

⁸⁵ The Egerton MSS. at Oulton, quoted by Thomas Helsby in Ormerod's *Cheshire*, 2nd Edit. vol. I. p. 203*n*. This account first appeared as an addendum to a translation of this charter in pamphlet form printed by J. Fletcher, Chester, in 1788. It was again reprinted by W. C. Jones, Chester, on 21st Feb., 1814 in a pamphlet entitled "*The Political History of Chester*"; and was appropriated by Hemingway in his *History of Chester*, 1831, vol. II. p. 388.

Then the Mayor came to the Cross; drank the [new] King's health; and ordered the conduit [there] to run with wine; and afterwards treated the whole company very splendidly; great guns firing from the Castle; music playing and bells ringing; with other demonstrations of universal joy."

The joy however proved transient; and the satisfaction short-lived. When it was realized that the Council had been reduced to a small, select oligarchy, the nominees of the Crown; and that future corporations would no longer be elected by the citizens; the ringing of bells changed to the wringing of hands. Chester and her freemen refused to accept the charter; and ultimately it became void by the action of the House of Lords.

It had been customary to levy a rate to pay the cost of former charters; but, in order to meet the legal expenses connected with this gilded document which amounted altogether to £251 4s. 6d., (See Appendix I., p. 69), the Corporation decided to sell a portion of the City plate; and to raise money on mortgage of the revenue of the City; while Colonel Werden privately subscribed £20 to the fund.

And now we come to the last Royal charter addressed to the citizens of Chester in the name of JAMES II. and promulgated by letters patent at Westminster, on 15th September, in the fourth and last year of his reign, 1688.⁸⁶ It consists of seven large membranes

⁸⁶ The King in 1687 had visited Chester on 27th Aug., and left on 1st Sept., "not much satisfied with the disposition of the people"; and in the following year Mr. Trinder was sent down from London to obtain instructions for the proposed new charter.

of vellum of the poorest quality, rigid and weighty as cardboard, and unlike the superior parchments of early times. It contains 415 lines and about 11,000 Latin words in the handwriting of a skilful penman. It has an engraved arabesque border, and an excellent portrait of the King within the initial J. Thus had charters grown in size, showiness, and verbosity, in 500 years! It bears the signature "*Jeffreys C.*" the notorious judge, then Lord High Chancellor, as acknowledging the receipt of £6 17s. 4d. paid into hanaper; but there remains only a fraction of the green seal attached by a brown and white silk cord.

This charter proposed the re-incorporating of the city; plausibly providing that the mayor and other officials should not be required to take the oaths of Supremacy (1558) and Allegiance (1605); or the religious oaths under the Uniformity Act (1662) and Test Act (1673). While establishing the number of council members to be the same as in the great charter of 1506, it nominated and appointed, regardless of the elective rights of the citizens, the first mayor to be *Sir Thomas Stanley, Bart.*; the first recorder *Richard Leving*; the first sheriffs *Timothy Deane* and *John Kynaston*; and so individually naming the 24 aldermen, 40 common councilmen; the town-clerk *Thomas Simpson*; two coroners, two murengers, two treasurers, two leave-lookers; the sword-bearer, mace-bearer, yeoman of the Pentice, and even the crier or hall-keeper who is styled "*John Warmingham, gent.*"; in all more than eighty names. But when these officers were called upon to be sworn in, they unanimously refused to act. Chester renounced the charter; and for three months the city was without a Corporation.

Meanwhile an Order of Council was issued for the restitution of the great charter and recognition of the rights of the citizens; and a *Pardon* to the Mayor and commonalty remitting all penalties consequent on indictments against them was granted in the King's name by letters patent at Westminster, dated 26th October, 1688. This document, still in the city archives, is a good specimen of calligraphy and decorative border-work. It has also, within the initial J, an engraved portrait of James II. with flowing wig, lace-collar, tie, chain and depending jewel; but only two fragments of the seal in green wax remain.

On 11th December, 1688, the King abdicated the throne. The citizens of Chester elected their own representatives on the council; and instead of Sir Thomas Stanley the King's nominee, *William Street*³⁷ was chosen Mayor. In the following year came the Revolution, and the Bill of Rights, which has been called "the commandments that the King was not to break." The days of Royal Charters were over. Municipalities were no longer at the mercy of permanent court lawyers. Henceforth the safety of a city was the supreme law as defined and limited by Act of Parliament.

It may be asked, What value do these documents possess for us now? They are for Chester the evidences of an important part of her history; and the title-deeds of her privileges and liberties for over 500 years. They illustrate how law has accommodated itself to changing times; from far-off days in the

³⁷ This was the third time William Street was elected Mayor of Chester; and to him in 1688 Randle Holme dedicated his volume "*The Academy of Armory.*"

12th century, when merchant-gild claimed protection in trade and commerce under Norman King, and burghesses claimed rights of justice under Norman Earl; down to the times of gradual, yet inevitable, decay of oppressive feudalism in the 17th century. They are the witness of the growth of municipal life from its early simple framework as a small corporate gild to the strength of city management and prosperity, which reached a climax through the maintenance of law and order under Tudor monarchs; and when Monarchy became a tyranny under the arbitrary Stuart Kings, they unmistakably show how civic freedom had again to be strenuously fought for, and how it was finally won.

With regard to the completeness of the chain of charters mentioned in my opening sentence, I hope it has been clearly proved that not one of the original documents is missing; and now by a wise forethought of the Corporation in finding proper and safe storage for them, the charters will probably be in as good state of preservation a hundred years hence as at the present time; and so will remind future generations of Cestrians that they are members of a community of no mean city—a Royal city whose motto for the last 400 years has been ANTIQVI COLANT ANTIQVUM DIERVM.



APPENDIX I.

List of expenses from the Corporation Records relating to the cost of King Charles II.'s Charter of 1685.

*Disbursements in obtaining and passing the new
Charter for Sir Thomas Grosvenor, Bart.*

1684-5

	£	s.	d.
For charges of prosecuting the <i>quo warranto</i> against the charter of Chester, as per bill	22	0	0
1684 Nov. 27. To the Clerk of the Crown ..	4	15	0
Paid to Dr. Wynne for the use of Sir Leoline Jenkins for the commission of the nine justices, as per receipt.....	17	11	0
To Mr. Attorney General for his report on the heads.....	2	0	0
To his Clerk.....	0	10	0
For several searches at the Patent Office for the [1658] grant of the Hospital of St. John Baptist, Chester	0	6	8
For searching in the Auditor's Office	0	2	6
For searching in the Rolls' Office of 4 records	0	2	4
For copy of the grant and examining it	0	7	6
For drawing Petition to the King and ingrossing it	0	2	6
For the Order of Reference thereupon for the Lords of Treasury	2	0	0
For the Order of Reference from the Lords of Treasury to the Surveyor General....	0	15	0
For the entering Clerk	0	2	6
For the Surveyor's Report	1	10	0
For entering.....	0	5	0
Expences at several times on the Clerks	0	4	6
For waterage [journeys by boat on Thames] at several times	0	2	0

	£	s.	d.
For the Report of the Lords of Treasury to his Majesty concerning the said Hospital of St. John Baptist	1	10	0
For entering	0	2	6
For the King's reference to Mr. Attorney General thereon.....	2	0	0
For searching at the Auditor's for Col. Whitley's lease of Iviley.....	0	2	6
For the copy.....	0	10	0
For a copy for ——	1	4	0
For drawing a Petition to the King and engrossing it for a lease of Iviley	0	2	6
For an Order of Reference thereon to the Lords of the Treasury	2	0	0
For the Order of Reference to the Surveyor General	0	15	0
For the Surveyor General's report to the Lords of the Treasury	1	7	6
For another Order of Reference from the Lords of the Treasury to Mr. Surveyor General	0	15	0
For the Surveyor's second report	1	7	6
For waterage	0	1	6
For penny-post letters	0	0	6
Paid for searches and other charges twice to Hampton Court to petition the King for the city revenues during the vacancy	3	0	0
Paid for coach-hire to Windsor and back, and the charges there for obtaining the King's warrant for the charter,.....for obtaining Iviley	2	0	0
1684 Nov. 27. Paid at the Secretary's Office, for passing the Warrant for Mr. Attorney to draw the charter.....	6	5	0
More paid there for writing and entering	1	10	0
To the Office Keeper	0	10	0
1684-5 Jan. 28. To Mr. Attorney General for him and his clerks' fees	27	5	0
The two warrants	2	0	0

	£	s.	d.
The clerk for ingrossing	1	10	0
The clerk's fee	2	0	0
Paid for a draft of the Charter, by post, from Sir Edward Lutwych	1	0	0
1684-5 Jan. 29. Paid Mr. Secretary's fee	18	0	0
Paid for sealing in the Secretary's Office and the Clerk's fees	1	10	0
1684-5 Feb. 4. Paid to the Privy Seal Office for their fees and three perpetuities	18	0	0
Paid to the Signet Office for their fees and three perpetuities	18	0	0
Paid to the Office Keeper in Mr. Secretary's Office for attendance	0	10	0
Paid to the Clerks of each Office for their en- grossing fees	2	0	0
Paid for charges of the Officers for examining the Privy Seal and Bills at the Swan Tavern in King Street, Westminster	0	10	6
To the Keeper of the Privy Seal and Signet Office	0	10	0
1684-5 Feb. 4. Paid for coach-hire to get the Lord Keeper's precipe..[amount illegible]	*	*	*
Paid to the bearer of the great seal five guineas [<i>sic</i>]	5	7	0
Paid to his Clerk	0	10	0
1684-5 Feb. 11th. For ingrossing the charter in the Patent	30	0	0
Paid to the Clerks	0	10	0

In the Hanaper Office 1684-5 Feb. 17th

Paid for the Great Seal	8	9	0
Paid for the King's fine	6	13	4
Inrolling and estreating	9	6	8
Lord Keeper, Master of the Rolls, and hanaper chaff wax	10	4	8
Lord Keeper's servant	3	5	0
1684-5 Feb. 20th. Paid the Stationer as per receipt.....[amount illegible]	*	*	*

	£	s.	d.
Paid waterage at several times [amount illegible].....		*	* * *
Paid for penny-post letters	0	1	0
Paid for a copy of the heads of the charter to carry down [? to Chester to be publicly read]		1	0 0
	£251		4 6
	£	s.	d.
Received of Col. Werden	20	0	0
Received of Sir Thomas Grosvenor	222	0	8
	£242		0 8
	£	s.	d.
Disbursed ..	251	4	6
Received	242	0	8
Remains due	£9	3	10

Received this 21st	}	£9	s. d.	3 10
Feb. 1684-5 the sum				
of £9 3s. 10d. in				
full of this account				
<i>per</i> John Kegge				

This charter was passed at half-fees, and cheaper than any yet hath been past, by the interest of *Sir Thomas Grosvenor*; which otherwise could not have been: he attending with me personally at all the offices. For my own pains in prosecuting the *quo warranto*, and gaining this charter, I have not charged anything; but humbly submit the same to the grave consideration of this honourable city.

JOHN KEGGE.

1684[-5] Feb: 24th.

At an Assembly held the 12th March following, it was ordered:—

“That a gratuity of 20 guineas be given to Mr. John Kegge, for his extraordinary care and pains in solicitation about the business of the late Charter.”

APPENDIX II.

Randle Holme, in his curious "*Academy of Armory*," (Book iii., chap. 3, p. 60) privately printed at Chester in the year when the last charter was granted, 1688, thus defines the office and duties of the members of a Corporation, and particularly that of Chester.

"The *Mayor* of a City is the King's Lieutenant. He with the Recorder, Aldermen and Common Council (as it were King, Lords and Commons in Parliament) can make Laws, called By-Laws for the Weal and good Government of the City. The mayor is for his time (which is but for one year) Justice of the *Coram*, Judge of the Court, a Determiner of Matters, and doth mitigate the Rigor of the Law A Mayor is a person elected for the chief Governor of the Body corporate, who is usually known by those Emblems of Magistracy carried before him; as Sword and Mace &c., or by what he beareth himself, as a Virge, or white Rod, or Staff; and hath distinction of Gowns; as a Morning or Walking Gown, which is a light loose Gown, made according to his own Fancie: a black Gown, a Murrey or Purple Gown, and a Scarlet Gown, all which are of one fashion, either Garded with Velvet, or lined with Furr, called *foines*.

Sheriffs. They are the Posse Comitatis, the Conservers of the Peace, the Executioners of all Writs, and punishers of all offenders. They are in some places called *Bailiffs*. But in Cities and grand Corporations they wear Gowns, and white Rods in their hands, like the Mayor.

A *Recorder* is the mouth of the Mayor, and Citizens; and Minister of the Law for the distribution of Justice and Judgment. These are generally Men Learned in the

Law, whose habit or fashion of Gown is after the manner of the figure set down [in Plate] number 11.

An *Alderman* and Justice of the Peace, is such an one, as hath borne the Office of a Mayor of a City or Corporation, whose gown is like to that of the Chief Magistrate, or Mayor.

An *Alderman*, or *Single Alderman*, is one that is called to that place, but as yet hath not been Mayor; yet is capable of it, and in Election for it: His Gown is black, guarded and faced with Velvet. But when the Mayor is in Scarlet, his Gown is Purple, faced with foines.

A *Council* in some places is called a *Livery Man*; is such a Person, as is of the House, in time of their Meeting or Assemblies, for the Weal and behoof of the Corporation: With us they are called a *Forty Men*, because the common council consists just of Forty; out of which all Superior officers are chosen. Their Gowns have no Shoulders but open at that place, having sleeves hanging on the back, garnished with tufted buttons and loops, and faced with stuff or silk, or Satinesco.

A *Treasurer* is an office for the receiving of the Rents, and disbursing Money for the concerns of the Corporation; which with us is generally chosen out of such as are *Single Aldermen*, or such as have been *Sheriffs*.

A *Leave-looker* is an office in *Chester*; but rare in any other City. They are chosen out of the *forty*, to gather and receive all customs due to the City, for goods brought there for sale, either by Sea or Land; which receipts are disbursed for the City Affairs, but chiefly for the Repairs of the City Walls.

A *Murenger* is one chosen out of the *Aldermen and Justice of the Peace*; whose office and care is to look after the City Walls, to keep them in good repair, &c., for which end

there is a *City Mason* to do the work: who besides his Wages daily hath a yearly *Sallery*; and a *City Paver* to keep the City Streets, Lanes, and Highways in good Repair, who hath also a City Sallery.

A *Crowner* or *Coroner*, whose office is out of such as have been Sheriffs. They examine all Murtherers, Felo de Se's, accidental deaths &c., and accordingly bring in their Presentments.

A *Constable*: Two or three in each division or Ward: To preserve the King's Peace; make hue and cry after Malefactors; search and fetch offenders; Imprison and bring to punishment.

A *Gaoler* [at the Northgate gaol].

A *Keeper of House of Correction*, to Keep the Poor on work, and punish stubborn and rebellious apprentices, idle rogues, and vagabonds, where they are bridled, stockt, and whipped.

A *Sword-bearer*: and a *Mace-bearer*.

Town Clerk, who is the City Secretary and Keeper of the Courts within the Corporation: Enters all Actions, and prepares Causes to the pleadings &c. We call such the *Clerk of the Pentice*."



APPENDIX III.

Table of Royal Charters and Grants to Chester

	DOCUMENT.	DATE.	GRANTED BY	PROMULGATED AT	SEAL.
1	Writ - -	Undated - -	Henry II. - -	Winchester -	Great (part gone)
2	Writ - -	Undated - -	Prince John -	Lutgareshall -	— (in fragments)
3	Writ - -	Undated - -	Prince John -	Lutgareshall -	Great
4	Charter -	3 May 1201	King John -	Marlborough -	Great
5	Charter -	Undated - -	Randle III. -	Chester - -	Earl's (two pieces)
6	Charter -	Undated - -	Randle III. -	Chester - -	Earl's
7	Charter -	Undated - -	Randle III. -	Chester - -	— (gone)
8	Charter -	Undated - -	Earl John -	Chester - -	— (gone)
9	Inspeximus -	8 Decr. 1237	Henry III. -	Westminster -	Great (damaged)
10	Inspeximus -	8 Decr. 1237	Henry III. -	Westminster -	Great (damaged)
11	Inspeximus -	23 Octr. 1239	Henry III. -	Westminster -	Great (damaged)
12	Charter -	12 June 1300	Edward I. -	York - -	Great
13	Inspeximus -	25 Decr. 1328	Edward III. -	Worcester -	Great
	Duplicate (a)	do.	do.	do.	Great (fragmentary)
	Duplicate (b)	do.	do.	do.	Palatine (Royal Chester Seal)
14	Writ - -	11 Novr. 1351	Edward Blk. Prince	London - -	Edward B. P's.
15	Inspeximus -	9 March 1354	Edward Blk. Prince	Chester - -	Edward B. P's.
16	Inspeximus -	10 Decr. 1379	Richard II. -	Westminster -	Great
17	Inspeximus -	19 July 1398	Richard II. -	Chester - -	Principality
18	Inspeximus -	23 Feb. 1401	Prince Henry -	Kenington -	— (gone)
19	Pardon - -	3 Novr. 1403	Henry IV. -	Cirencester -	Great
20	Grant - -	5 March 1407	Prince Henry -	Chester - -	Palatine
21	Inspeximus -	20 Novr. 1425	Henry VI. -	Westminster -	Great
22	Grant - -	24 Aug: 1445	Henry VI. -	Chester - -	Palatine
23	Grant - -	10 April 1484	Richard III. -	Chester - -	Palatine
24	Grant - -	21 March 1486	Henry VII. -	Chester - -	Palatine
25	Charter -	6 April 1506	Henry VII. -	Chester - -	Palatine
26	Writ - -	4 June 1546	Henry VIII. -	Westminster -	Great
27	Inspeximus -	14 June 1574	Elizabeth - -	Westminster -	Great
28	Inspeximus -	7 Feb: 1605	James I. - -	Westminster -	Great
29	Writ - -	20 Jany. 1651	Cromwell - -	Westminster -	—
30	Grant - -	23 June 1658	Cromwell - -	Westminster -	Commonwealth
31	Inspeximus -	6 June 1664	Charles II. -	Westminster -	— (gone)
32	Charter -	4 Feb: 1685	Charles II. -	Westminster -	— (gone)
33	Charter -	15 Sept. 1688	James II. - -	Westminster -	— (gone)
34	Pardon - -	26 Octr. 1688	James II. - -	Westminster -	— (gone)