

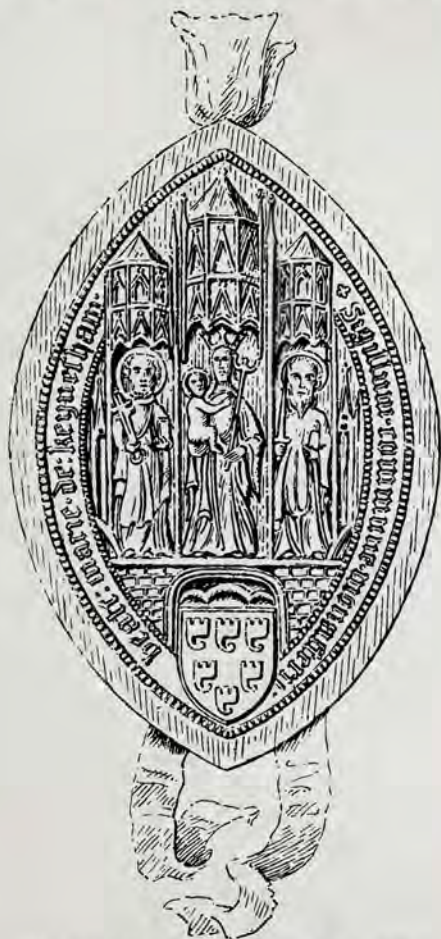
Seals of Bath and Keynsham Abbeys.

BY THOS. S. BUSH.

WITH the permission of the Committee of the Somersetshire Archæological Society, I have had two drawings of seals photographed; these prints are in the Pigott Collection in Taunton Castle Museum. One, the Bath Abbey seal (drawing No. 188) is described by Mr. W. De Gray Birch (Brit. Mus. Cat.) as being $4\frac{1}{2}$ by $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches, pointed oval, SS. Peter and Paul upon a terrace beneath a triple Gothic canopy richly carved and supporting between them a model of the Bath Abbey church. The field is diapered lozengy, each lozenge charged with a rose. In base is a triple niche, three monks worshipping the Apostles above. The superscription is **SIGILLVM : CAPITVLI : BATHONIENSIS : ECCLESIE**. The date is probably the latter part of the 13th century. The other, that of the Abbey of Keynsham, is $2\frac{3}{4}$ by $1\frac{5}{8}$ inches. (*See accompanying illustration.*) Probably late 14th century. Pointed oval; the Virgin standing in a canopied niche with crown, the Child in the right arm, in her left a fleur-de-lis. In two side niches, slightly smaller, on the left S. Peter, with nimbus and key, on the right S. Paul, with nimbus and sword. In base, under a four-centered trefoil arch, with masonry at the sides, a shield of arms. Six rests or clarions. Keynsham Abbey. The superscription is: **SIGILLVM : COMMVNE MONASTERII : BEATE : MARIE : DE : KEYNESHAM**.

On searching at the Record Office, I found the Bath seal attached to a Chapter House Document (*S. 4. 1. 8. No. 8. Bathon. Somt.*) The date of it is September 22nd, 26 Henry VIII.

This Document and the Charter (75 A 30, see later in these notes), with the attached seals, I have had photographed, by



SEAL OF KEYNSHAM PRIORY.

(Copied from the "Pigott Drawings.")

permission of the authorities of the Record Office, and of the British Museum. They are here reproduced. The Document put into English is as follows :—

“Whereas it is not only a reason of Christian religion and piety, but also the rule of our obedience, that we should render to the lord King Henry, the Eighth of his name (to whom only and alone, after Jesus Christ our Saviour, we owe all things), not only all honour, glory and reverence in Christ, and likewise sincere, entire and perpetual, devotion of mind, faith and regard, but that we should also (as often as it shall be required) express the reason of the same faith and regard, and openly testify most cheerfully to all men, if the matter requires it.

“Know all men to whom the present writing shall come, that we, the Prior of the house or priory of the blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, and the convent of the same place, with one mouth and voice, and with the unanimous consent and assent of all, by this our deed, given under our common seal, in our chapter house, for us and our successors, all and singular, for ever, declare, witness and faithfully promise, and vow, that we the said prior and convent, and our successors, all and singular, will always give entire, inviolate, sincere and perpetual, faith, observance, and obedience, towards our lord King Henry the Eighth, and towards Queen Anne, his wife, and towards his offspring by the same Anne, as will lawfully begotten as to be begotten, and that we will make known, preach and advocate the same things to the people, wheresoever place and opportunity shall be offered.

“Also, that we hold, and always and for ever will hold, confirmed and unalterable, that our aforesaid King Henry is the head of the Anglican Church.

“Also, that the Roman Bishop, who in his bulls usurps the name of ‘Pope,’ and arrogates to himself the dominion of ‘highest Pontiff,’ hath not any greater jurisdiction conferred on him by God, in holy scripture, in this realm of England, than any other foreign bishop.

“Also, that none of us in any sacred assembly to be held privately or publicly, will call the same Roman bishop by the name of ‘Pope’ or ‘highest Pontiff,’ but by the name of

‘bishop of Rome,’ or (bishop) of the Roman Church; and that none of us will pray for him as ‘Pope,’ but only as ‘bishop of Rome.’

“Also, that to the said King alone, and to his successors, will we adhere, and we will maintain his laws and decrees, for ever renouncing the laws, decrees and canons of the Roman bishop, which shall be found contrary to the divine law and holy scripture, or against the rights of this realm.

“Also, that none of us all, in any assembly, either private or public, will presume to distort anything selected from the holy scriptures into a different sense, but each, catholicly and orthodoxly, will preach Christ and his words and deeds, simply, openly, sincerely, and according to the precept or rule of the holy scriptures, and the truly catholic and orthodox doctrine catholicly and orthodoxly.

“Also, that every one of us, in his prayers and commendations to be made according to custom, will commend the King, first of all, as supreme head of the Anglican Church, to God, and to the prayers of the people; then Queen Anne, with her offspring, then lastly, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, with other orders of clergy, as it shall seem good.

“Also, that we, all and singular the aforesaid Prior and convent, and our successors firmly bind ourselves by an oath of conscience and swearing, that we will faithfully, and for ever observe, all and singular the aforesaid things.

“In witness whereof we append our common seal to this our writing and we each with our own hand have written our names. Given in our Chapter house.

“William, Prior of the Cathedral church of Bath. John Pytte, sub-prior of the same church. Thomas Bathe, monk there. Thomas Avery. Richard Lynkcomb. John Beckynton. Thomas Powell. Richard Givles. William Bewshyn. Thomas Roceter. William Clement. Edward Edwyn. Patrick Verte. John Humiliter. John Pacienc. John Benet. John Raphael.”

The deed of surrender of the Abbey of Bath is missing, but a copy of it will be found on a close roll 30 Henry VIII, part 5, No. 34. The following is a very brief summary:—

“To all the faithful of Christ to whom the present writing shall come, William Holway, Prior of the Monastery and cathedral church of St. Saviour and the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, of Bath in the co. of Somerset, of the order of St. Benedict, and the convent of the same place, greeting in the Lord everlasting. Know ye that we the aforesaid Prior and convent, grant to the most illustrious Prince and our Lord Henry the Eighth, all our said Monastery of Bath, and also all manors, lordships, messuages, gardens, curtilages, tofts, lands, &c., in the counties of Somerset, Wilts, Gloucester, Southampton and elsewhere within the realm of England, Wales, and the Marches, &c.”

In witness whereof we the Prior and Convent have caused our Common Seal to be set to these presents. Given in our chapter house, the 27th January, 30 Henry VIII [1538-9].

On the abovesaid day came the Prior and Convent in their chapter house at Bath before John Tregonwell and William Peter and acknowledged the aforesaid writing.

Searching at the British Museum I found the seal attached to a charter, in fact there are two charters together. [*Add. Ch. 5478, 5479*].

“To all the faithful of Christ, &c., we William Holway, Prior of the Monastery of the cathedral church of St. Saviour and the Apostles Peter and Paul of Bath and the convent of the same place, &c., the undoubted patrons of the rectory of the parish church of Priston, in the diocese of Bath and Wells, do grant to our beloved in Christ, John Tysson and William Barrett of London, gentlemen, the next presentation to the rectory of Priston, &c. In witness whereof we have set our common seal to this our present writing. Dated in our chapter house, the 27th December, A.D. 1530.”

The 2nd charter commences: "To the reverend father and lord in Christ, Gilbert by divine permission bishop of Bath and Wells, or his vicar general in spiritual things, or to any other judge in this behalf competent, your humble and devout William Barret, gentleman, all manner of obedience and reverence, due and worthy with honour to so reverend a father. Whereas William Holwaye, late Prior and the convent, the true patrons, whilst they were in their being, of the rectory of the parish church of Priston." After quoting fully the previous charter, it continues: "By the tenour of these presents I present my beloved in Christ Sir David Appowell, clerk to the said rectory, now by law vacant and to my presentation for this turn belonging, humbly and devoutly praying that you will think fit to admit the said David Appowell to the said rectory, etc.

"In witness whereof I have set my seal to these presents. Dated the 10th July, A.D. 1554."

On the reverse of the seal of the Abbey, are two small round seals, one is obliterated, the other has an eagle crowned, border engrailed.

Apparently the request of William Barret was not granted, as David Appowell's name does not appear in the list of incumbents of Priston, in fact the name is not on the list of incumbents of any parish in the county. On the 25th September, 1554, Rob. Wheateacre was instituted to Priston, his predecessor having been deprived of it. (See Weaver's *Somerset Incumbents*). The explanation may be that the first charter having been granted before the dissolution of the Monastery of Bath, the then Bishop (A.D. 1554) considered the grant void. The Patron at that time is given as Christopher Baylye de Cloforde.

Making a further search at the British Museum I found a charter (Add. Ch. 75, A. 30) with two seals attached. With the permission of the authorities, I have had this charter with the two seals photographed. On one seal is the Abbey, consisting of three towers without windows, pointed roofs, the

pinnacles surmounted by knobs. The other seal is that of a bishop, he is standing, lifting up the right hand in benediction, in the left hand is a pastoral staff. The charter is not dated, but the Museum authorities date it A.D. 1159-1166. Peter was Prior from about 1159 to 1166, the Bishop at that time being Robert of Lewes; he held the see from 1135 to 1165. During his episcopacy the Abbey that had been built by Bishop John de Villula was burnt down, and he, Robert, rebuilt it. The Abbey seal has the following superscription: **+ SIGILLVM : SC : I : PETRI : BADONIS : ECCLESIE.** There is very little lettering left on the Bishop's seal, but from another seal it would appear to read: **SIGILLVM DEI GRATIA BATHONIENSIS EPISCOPI.** It will be seen by the photograph that the writing is very clear. Translated it reads: " + Peter the Prior and the whole Convent of Bath to all the sons of the Holy Church, greeting. Know all as well present as those to come that we have granted to the Abbot and Monks of Margam the whole land of Kinwerdesham, to wit, 3 ferlings which we hold of the heirs of Robert de Vauceles for five shillings to be given yearly, to wit, three to the church of Dunester and two to the aforesaid heirs, unless the Abbot of Margam can have acquittance of two shillings of the aforesaid heirs. Those three ferlings we have given and granted to them for ever, to hold of us freely and quietly without all other service and exaction as we ever more freely held them, except the King's utibanne (given in Latin in Warner's *History of Bath*)."

Between A.D. 1090 and 1100, William de Mohun, by consent of his wife Adelina, granted the advowson of the Church of St. George at Dunster and other valuable property to the Monks of Bath. This charter was confirmed both by William Rufus and Archbishop Anselm (Maxwell Lyte's *Dunster and its Lords*). See also Bath Priory Chartularies, *Somerset Record Society*.

It is presumed that the two seals, viz.: the one that may be called Romanesque, and the other S. Peter or S. Paul

CHRISTIANE DNI

† Petrus pater et mater uenerabilis sancte
ecclesie filius salutem. Sciatis omnes tam presentes
quam futuri quod nos et ceteri Abbates et monachi
de MARGAN totam terram de Kinevedesbam
scilicet tres feulingos quos tenemus de here-
ditibus Roba de sauceles per quinq[ue] solidos annua-
ritiam dandis tribus scilicet ecclesie de Dorsset. et
duobus supradictis hereditibus nisi Abbas de
MARGAN de duobus solidis quietacionem habe-
re possit de predictis hereditibus. Istos tres feulingos
dedimus illis et concessimus in perpetuum tenere de
nobis libere et quiete sine omni alio seruitio
et exactione sicut eos tamquam liberos tenuimus
exceptis stabantibus Regis.



holding the model of the Abbey, were the only seals used by the Priory from about the middle of the 12th century until A.D. 1539.

The Keynsham Abbey seal is attached to the surrender of the Abbey (Augmentation Office, co. Somt., No. 112), dated January 23rd, 30 Henry VIII, 1538-9.

“To all the faithful of Christ to whom the present writing shall come, John, Abbot of the Monastery of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Apostles Peter and Paul, of Keynesham, in the county of Somerset, of the order of St. Augustine, and the convent of the same place, greeting in the Lord everlasting. Know ye, etc., all our said Monastery or Abbey of Keynsham aforesaid, and also all and singular manors, etc. And we the aforesaid Abbot and Convent abovesaid, and our successors will warrant the said Monastery or Priory, site, mansion, and church of Keynsham aforesaid, and all and singular manors, etc., to our aforesaid Lord the King, his heirs and assigns against all men for ever by these presents. In witness whereof we the aforesaid Abbot, and the convent above said have set our common seal to these presents.

“Taken and acknowledged before John Tregonwell, one of the clerks of the lord the King’s Chancery, the day and year above written.

Per me Jno. Tregonwell.

Per me Johannem. (See next deed).

Per me Willelmum Hern, priorem.

Per me Willelmum Tibbett, suppriorem.

Johannes Arnold.

Johannes Voles.

Johannes Gylford.

Thomas Bede, sacristæ.

Johannes Browne.

Per me Thomam Parkar.

Johannas Parteref.

Per me Wylelmum Brynt.”

The seal is also attached to the acknowledgment of Royal supremacy (Chapter House s. d. 2 No. 69). The deed being similar to that of Bath it will suffice to give the beginning, date and signatures.

“We John Sturton, Abbot of the Monastery of the Blessed Mary of Keynisham, of the order of St. Victor and rule of St. Augustine, in the Diocese of Bath and Wells, and the convent of the same place with one mouth and voice.

* * * * *

“Dated in our Chapter House the 18th day of the month of August, A.D. 1534, and in the 26th year of the reign of our king, Henry the eighth.

“Johannes Sturtun, abbas, Willelmus Hern, prior, Johannes Owen, supprior, Johannes Arnolde, Johannes Volles, Johannes Gylford, Thomas Beede, Thomas Deverell, Thomas Parker, Thomas Bedford, Wyllyam Tybbatt, Johannes Dollman, novice, Johannes Edwardes, novice, William Barrow, novice, Willelmum Brayne, novice, Johannes Browne.”