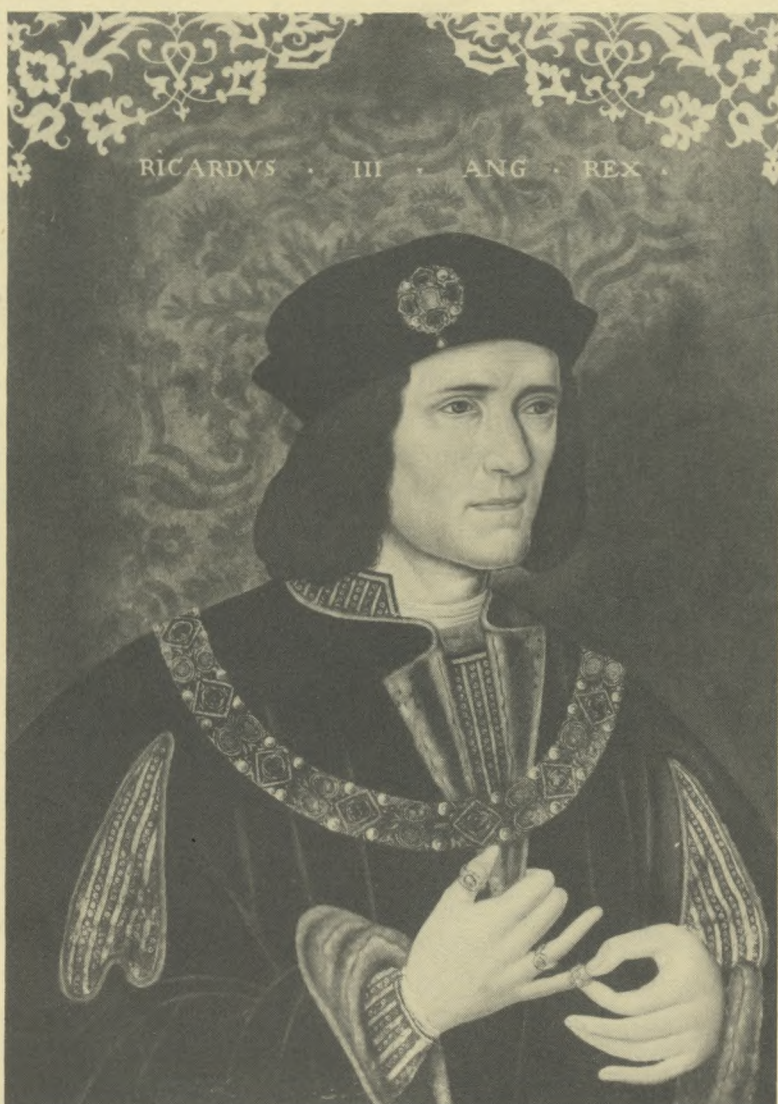


KING RICHARD III
AND
HOLY CROSS CHURCH
COWBRIDGE

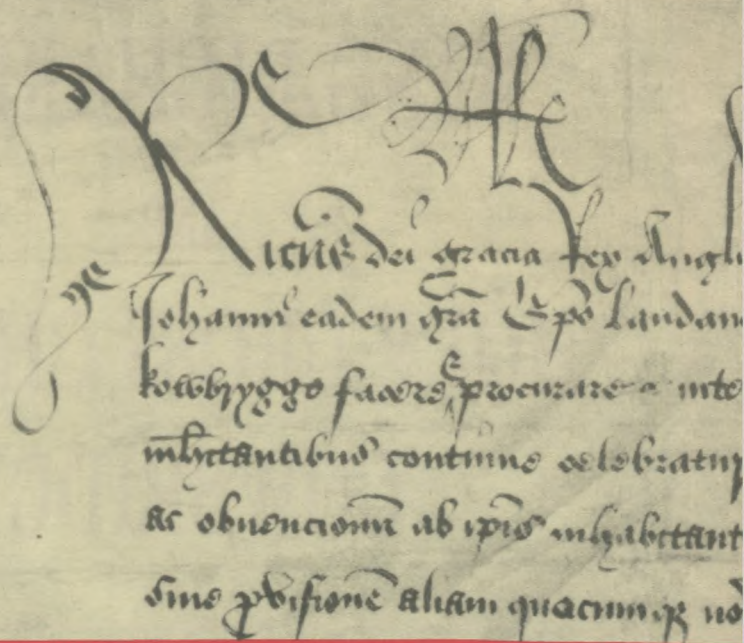


National Portrait Gallery

(born 2 October 1452—died 22 August 1485)

A DOCUMENT FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF
A CHAPLAIN TO THE CHURCH OF THE
HOLY CROSS, COWBRIDGE, GLAMORGAN

27 FEBRUARY 1484



Re
In nomine dei gratia Rex Angli
Johanni eadem gra Ep'o Llandan
Cowbridge favore procurare a mte
inhabitatoribus continue celebrat
ac obnuencioni ab ipis inhabitant
sine p'visione aliam quacumq' no

THE DOCUMENT

A rare document dated 27 February 1484 records a connection between Richard III and the Church of the Holy Cross, or Holy Rood, as it was probably called in medieval times, in Cowbridge. By this parchment the King, as Lord of Glamorgan and Morgan, addressed Letters under his Sign Manual and the Seal of his Chancery in Cardiff to the Bishop of Llandaff, John Marshall, requiring him to make provision for a Chaplain in the Church of the Holy Cross. The King acted in response to the petition of the townspeople of the borough of Cowbridge who sought the appointment of a full-time priest within their town church, a daughter church of nearby Llanblethian.

Richard III had become Lord of the Marcher Lordship of Glamorgan and Morgan through his marriage with Anne, younger daughter and co-heiress of Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, 'the Kingmaker'. Her name, as Lady of Glamorgan, is traditionally associated with the south aisle extension of Holy Cross, as well as with the building of the tower of Llanblethian Church and of the more elaborate tower at St. John's, Cardiff.

The King's benefaction to Cowbridge has been described as one of a number of known examples of Richard III's 'true piety', suggesting a picture of the King far removed from the villainous character of Shakespeare's play. The latter portrayal embodied the image fostered by propaganda, aimed at strengthening the Tudors' hold on the throne by blackening the reputation of the ruler they had deposed. The truth of Richard III's short reign will never be fully uncovered, but evidence from surviving documents may enable present-day researchers to arrive at a more balanced assessment.

The parchment came into the hands of a local land-owning family, the Carnes of Nash Manor, who in the fifteenth century held Nash on lease from the Bishop of Llandaff and acquired it by purchase in 1521. The Holy Rood document undoubtedly owes its survival to its preservation among the Carne family archives, which have now come into the care of the Glamorgan Record Office.

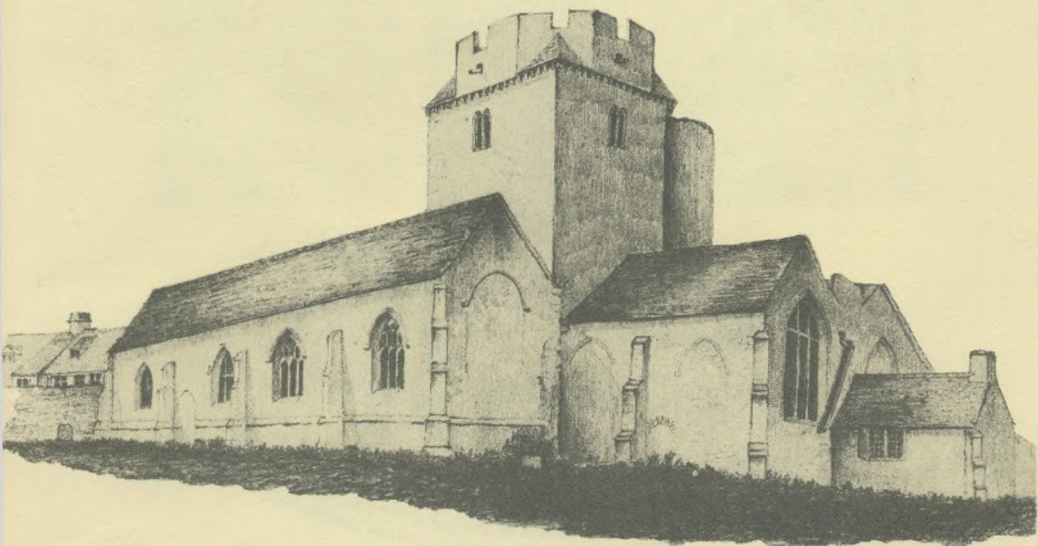
& ffrauncz Dñe hinc necnon Dñe Glamorgan & woyce
 n. Salntem. Cui dilecti burgenses & tenentes in residentes
 dant. qd omni capellani donum dñia in Ecclia sine
 atqz sacramenta & sacramentalia quocunqz opus sit admi
 nis promoueri exhiberi & inuentum habere valeant. &
 d. confecti in eorum inhabitantes & residentes. ^{moderna} Dicay

The first lines of the document showing the King's Sign Manual

The document is written in Latin on parchment measuring 17½ by 8 inches. It is sealed with Richard III's seal from his Chancery at Cardiff, and also bears the King's Sign Manual, 'RR' for *Ricardus Rex*, written with his own hand.

The Bishop addressed by the King in these Letters was John Marshall, who had been consecrated Bishop of Llandaff in 1478. A Fellow of Merton College, Oxford, he had been a Canon of Windsor. He held the See until his death in 1496. During the period of his episcopate the north-west tower was added to Llandaff Cathedral. His effigy, robed, with mitre and crozier, lying on a chest tomb, can still be seen in the Cathedral.

On the wall of the south aisle of Holy Cross there is a coloured seventeenth-century memorial to members of the Carne family of Nash Manor, a house situated two miles south-west of Cowbridge. The memorial was erected by Sir Edward Carne, Receiver-General of South Wales and a Teller of the Exchequer, in memory of his parents William and Elizabeth Carne. Their figures are carved, facing each other, kneeling in prayer.



South view of Cowbridge Church. Drawing by J. Garsed, c.1840
National Library of Wales.

In partibus Wallie. Reuerendū in xpo Patri. Dno
inhabitantes villam nram sine decuriam nram de
capella S^{ti} Huiari de Kowbrygge p^{re}dict^{is} eisdem
stratum ex fructibus & redditibus decimare
ad id pro p^{er}petuo stabilitione quādam ordinacone
de Llanblethelan & Successores suos quostumq^{ue}

TRANSLATION

Richard, by the grace of God King of England and France and Lord of Ireland as well as Lord of Glamorgan and Morgan in the region of Wales, to the Reverend Father in Christ the Lord John, by the same grace Bishop of Llandaff, Greeting

Whereas our beloved burgesses and tenants residing and living in our town or our borough of Kowbrygge desire to effect and procure that they may be able to have a suitable chaplain to celebrate continually divine service for the same inhabitants in the church or chapel of the Holy Cross at Kowbrygge aforesaid and to administer the sacraments as often as may be necessary, to be maintained and provided for from the fruits and proceeds of the tithes and revenues paid by the same inhabitants,

And whereas for the perpetual establishment of this, they seek and beseech that some ordinance or other provision, by whatever name it may be called, be enforced forever by your decision or episcopal decree between the same inhabitants and residents and the present Vicar of Llanblethean and his successors, whatever future vicars shall be in that place, humbly entreating us that we should deign to give our consent and help for it to be done as aforesaid,

We, therefore, piously considering that the zealous intent of our said burgesses, residents and tenants living in our town or our borough of Kowbrygge aforesaid makes for the increase of divine worship and the salvation of their souls, have thought fit that their just desires should be granted, and in these letters graciously give our consent for such an ordinance to be made by you,

And we require you by these presents that you should be seen to spare no effort in bringing to bear your pastoral office and paternal favour with all possible speed towards the perpetual establishment of the said ordinance, as you mean to please us.

Given both under our Sign Manual and under the Seal of our Chancery of Kaerdiff on the twenty-seventh day of February in the first year of our Reign.

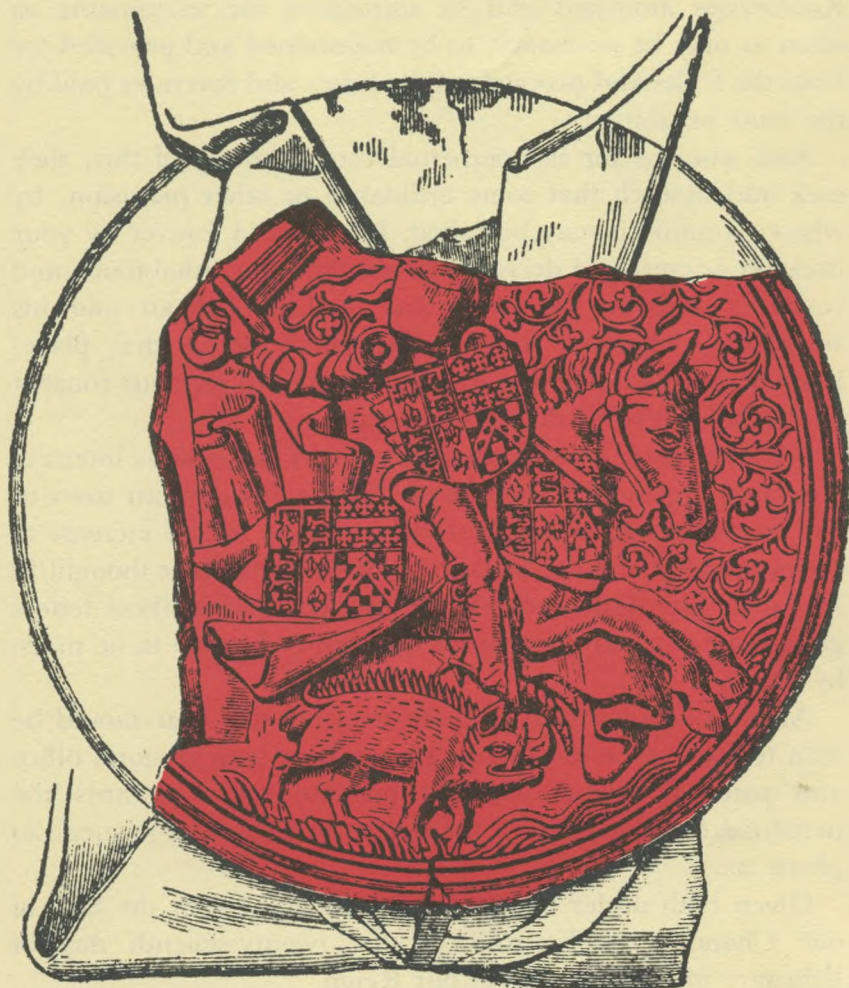
THE RED WAX SEAL

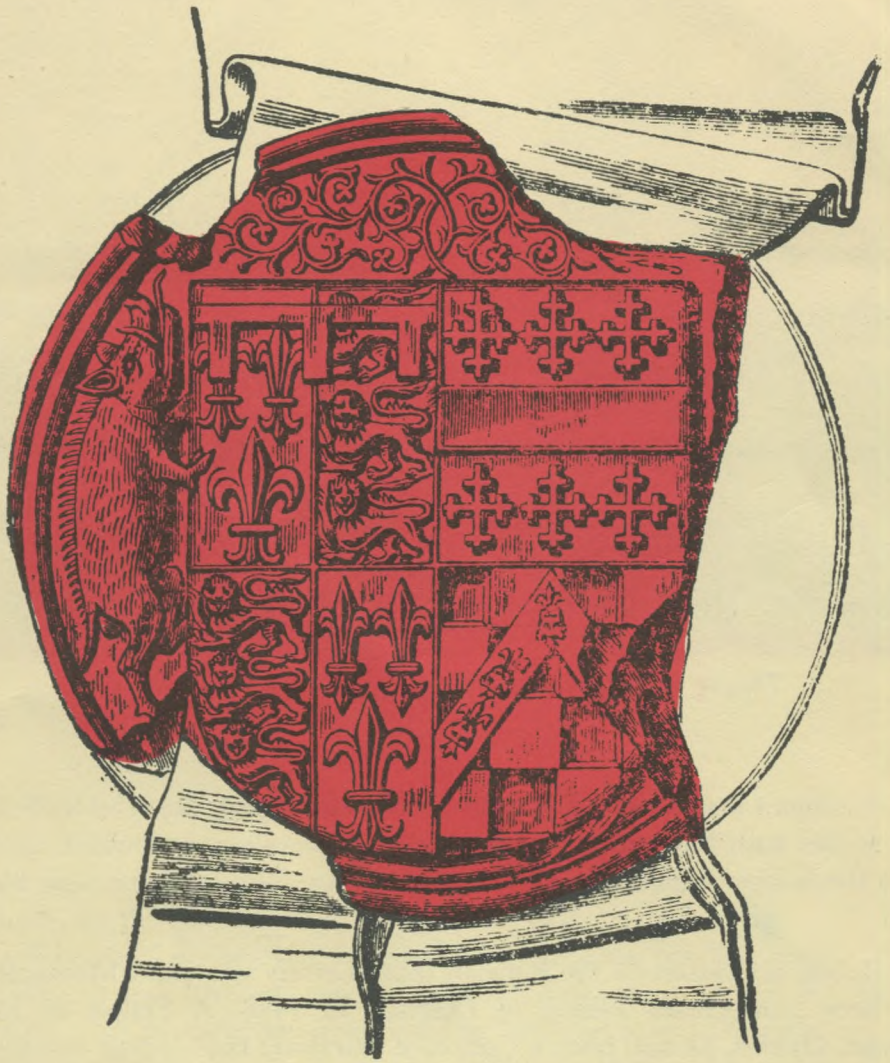
The only known example of Richard III's Seal from his Chancery at Cardiff

The seal which survives today is incomplete. Its original design can be reconstructed from drawings made at the end of the nineteenth century for publication in G.T. Clark's *Cartae et Alia Munimenta* (documents relating to Glamorgan). At that time, although already damaged, more of the wax was in existence than remained in the early 1950s when the document came into the Glamorgan Record Office. The wax which had crumbled away during the intervening years was the part which had shown Richard III's boar as a supporter. A boar, Richard's personal device, is also depicted on the equestrian reverse of the seal between the horse's legs.

The shield displays the royal arms of King Richard (with a label for cadency which he would have borne as Duke of Gloucester, before his accession), and the arms of the Beauchamp/Newburgh family, through whom the Lordship had passed to the Nevilles and so to Richard's wife.

Drawing of the seal reverse, enlarged





Drawing of the seal obverse, enlarged

Per pale: DEXTER. Quarterly: *France*—azure, 3 fleur de lys, or; *England*—gules, 3 leopards passant, or. Over all a label of three points. SINISTER. Per fess: *Beauchamp*—gules, a fess between 6 cross crosslets, or; *Newburgh*—chequy or and azure, a chevron bearing 5 leopards' heads, jessant-de-lys, for *Cantelupe*.

The dexter supporter, still visible in the nineteenth century, was a boar. A matching boar would originally have supported the other side of the shield. Any inscription there may have been has been lost from both faces but the seal is clearly that of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, Lord of Glamorgan and Morgan, still in use in his Cardiff Chancery after he had assumed the Crown.

