



## **SIGNED BY THE ABBOT & 16 MONKS**

George (Durie), by permission of the Archbishop of Saint Andrews; Principal and Commendator of the Monastery of Dunfermline and of the Convent of Saint Benedict in the Diocese of Saint Andrew; with the consent of the Congregation of The Chapter of the Monastery; with due consideration and in accordance with the law of the Royal Republic of Scotland and after proper study of the Parliamentary Statutes, necessitates tht the Honourable Archibald Preston of Valleyfield for due consideration and a certain sum of Scottish money has had granted and conveyed to him Archibald Preston and to Richard Preston of Whitehill and to Mastr John Preston, Burgess of Edinburgh – half the lands of Newtown. (Haddingtonshire).

Given to the Monastery of Dunfermline on 10th, September 1557. The witnesses names being given.

Signed by George Durie and 16 monks being the Chapter of the Monastery.

With a large part of the brown wax pendent Seal of The Chapter remaining.

### **NOTE:-**

GEORGE DURIE 1496-1561. Durie was a nephew of the famous Archbishop James Beaton; he was active in the political intrigues of the mid 16th century and tried to avenge the murder of his uncle in 1639. He sat in various Parliaments, became Keeper of The Privy Seal in 1554 and a member of the Regent Arran's Privy Council. He was forced to be present at the Battle of Pinkie Clough in September 1547 when the Scottish forces were slain in thousands and some 1500 prisoners taken by the English army under the leadership of Edward Seymour Duke of Somerset. In 1560 he was sent

THE PRESTON FAMILY  
The Prestons were an important family whose land holdings were concentrated in Haddingtonshire on the South East side of Edinburgh; the English forces were prone to land in the coastal region here to mount attacks on the City.

## **THE SEAL OF THE CHAPTER OF DUNFERMLINE MONASTERY**

This Seal is fully described in Descriptive Catalogue of Impressions from Ancient Scottish Seals by Henry Laing, Edinburgh 1860, Thus:-

This is a fine rounded seal of an extremely interesting and curious design, perhaps intended to represent the Monastery. A section of the lower part is given, divided into three arches, supported by spiral columns. Beneath the first arch, on the sinister side, is a priest attended by an acolyte, consecrating the chalice; in the next or centre arch, is a female figure, probably St. Margaret, holding an open book in her hand, standing before a lectern; in the dexter arch is a Monk standing before a lectern, holding a book. The design probably represents the celebration of the mass. Above the roof of the building is a crescent, an estoile, and two birds.

SIGILL, CAPITLI ECCLIE SCE TRINTATIS DE DUNFERMLIN –  
From the original brass matrix in the Library at Oxford.

## **COUNTER SEAL**

Equally beautiful and interesting. Four angels supporting an aureole, within which the Saviour, with cruciform nimbus, is sitting on a rainbow, his feet resting on a lesser one, his right hand raised as if calling to judgement, his left holding an open book. At the dexter side is an estoile of five points, and above the sinister hand is a crescent. Below the rainbow is a quatrefoil on the dexter, and a cinquefoil on the sinister side. A MORIS ET VITAE BREVIS EST VOX, ITE VENITE DICET, REPROBIS ITE, VENTITE, PROBIS.

Appended to a Precept of Seisine by George, Commendator of Dunfermline. C.A.D. 1590 – Morton Charters.

The design and execution of this seal proves it to be at least two centuries earlier than the date of the instrument to which this impression is appended.

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## CAPITULAR SEAL OF THE ABBEY



The age of this fine Seal has not been ascertained; probably it may date from the year 1226, when “the Abbey was enlarged by noble structures.” It would appear that a chapter-house was then erected, and it may be presumed therefore, that a special chapter-seal was then made for “chapter business.”

The Seal is a *matrix one* of brass, and is 2  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches in diameter (same size as in the preceding engraving, which is a correct representation of the obverse side of the Seal.)

It has been supposed that the design occupying the centre of the Seal is a reorientation of the Monastery; we rather suppose that it represents the coffer-box in which the relics of St. Margaret were kept, and which would stand on her shrine. There are many instances of coffer-boxes, or chests being “house-shaped.” If St. Margaret’s coffer-box was not so shaped, then it is probable that the representation on the Seal may have been carved on the front panel of the coffer-box. Mr. Henry Laing, in his “Descriptive Catalogue of Impressions from Ancient Scottish Seals, &c., Edinburgh 1850, “describes this part of the Seal as follows: - “This is a fine round Seal, of an extremely interesting and curious design—perhaps intended to represent the Monastery. A section of the lower part is given, divided into three arches, supported by spiral columns. Beneath the first arch, on the sinister side, is a priest at mass, attended by an acolyte. In the next, or centre arch, is a female figure, probably St Margaret, holding an open book in her hand, standing before a lectern. In the dexter arch is a monk standing before a lectern, holding (or reading) a book. Above the roof of the building are a crescent, an estoile, and two birds.” Round the circumference is the following legend in old characters: - “SIGILL’ CAPITAL’ IE’ SCE’

TRINITATIS' DE' DYNFERMELIN" – i.e., Seal of the Chapter of the Church of the Holy Trinity of Dunfermline.

## CAPITULAR SEAL OF THE ABBEY

The other half of this matrix Seal was long missing. About the year 1847, "it was accidentally discovered by the late Mr. Bell, of Gateshead, on the top of a barrow-load of earth which a labourer was wheeling there." Below is an accurate representation of the surface of this long lost half of the Seal (reverse side of it).

On the reverse of the Chapter Seal are the figures of four Angels supporting an Aureole, within which the Saviour, with Cruciform Nimbus, is sitting on a Rainbow, his feet resting on a lesser one, his right hand raised as if calling to judgment his left holding an open-book. At the dexter side is an Estoile of five points and above the sinister hand is a Crescent. Below the Rainbow is a Quatrefoil on the dexter, and a Cinquefoil on the sinister side, surrounded by the following inscription or legend: - "MORTISL' VITEBREVIS-VOXITEVENITE DICET REPROBISITE VENITE PROBIS" – which may be rendered: "*Mortis` Et` vite` Brevis` Est` vex; Ite` Venite` Dicet` Reprobis` Ite` Venite` Probis*" – i.e., "Brief is the Voice of Life and Death- Go, come, it will say to the Bad; go, come, to the good." (Vide Laing's Descriptive Catalogue of Scottish Seals; Chal. Hist. Dunf. Vol.ii.p.217. (Gordon's Monasticon, P.409) [Annals of Dunf p.71]



**THE GREAT ABBEY OF DUNFERMLINE – 1226-1650**

**THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY**



Picture from Annals of Dunfermline by E. Henderson.

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