

# Seal Matrix of Alicie de Cerutone



This extremely fine silver seal matrix (measuring approx. 35x25mm) shows a young woman, fashionably dressed, holding a shield bearing a coat of arms (a Maunche) in her right hand. A hawk sits on her left hand. Inscribed around the outside is + SIGILI'•ALICIE•DECERUTONE. In this brief paper, we argue that Alice de Cerutone is most likely the younger daughter and unnamed de Valoignes co-heiress, mentioned in many of the documents cited in the

footnotes below, who inherited Cheriton and other manors in 1336. The style of dress on the seal supports this thesis, showing costume that is datable to between 1325 and 1340<sup>1</sup>. The arms shown on the shield are almost identical to the Valoignes arms, illustrated on Segar's Roll of 1282<sup>2</sup>. Additionally the location where the seal matrix was reputedly found, near Ash by Sandwich, Kent, is close to Cheriton, near Folkestone.

More research remains to be undertaken, but assuming this hypothesis is correct, Alice de Cerutone (Valoignes) was the daughter and co-heiress<sup>3</sup> of Waretius de Valoignes<sup>4</sup>. Her grandfather, also called Waretius de Valoignes, was married to Eleanor, daughter and heiress of Robert de Hougham. He was a Knight of the Shire for Kent 1300-09<sup>5</sup> (Member of Parliament) and the Sheriff of Kent in 1303-4<sup>6</sup>, probably dying sometime around 1311, at which time it is recorded that Thomas de Sandwico took over from him as leader of the Kentish levies<sup>7</sup>.

Alice's father, Waretius de Valoignes (son of Waretius<sup>8</sup>), held the manor at Cheriton, Kent, under Edward III (1327-57), "that prince having granted a charter of *free warren* for this manor"<sup>9</sup>. Like his father, he was an important figure in the county, being appointed conservator and Kentish representative at Peterborough Cathedral to see the King off on his way to wage war in Scotland in April 1314<sup>10</sup> and later, in 1327, being

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<sup>1</sup> Contemporary images include the stained glass window in Stanford Parish Church (Northants), cat. no.561 and a Psalter parchment, cat. no. 683, 1325-40; in *Age of Chivalry*, Royal Academy of Arts, 1987-88

<sup>2</sup> College of Arms, London, Ref. L14(1).28b, *Segar's Roll*, 1282, which shows the arms of Sir Johann de Valoignes as Sable a Maunch Argent.

<sup>3</sup> There are numerous references to Waretius de Valoignes dying without male issue and his estate being divided between his two daughters as co-heiresses.

<sup>4</sup> This was the end of the line of this particular branch of de Valoignes and Alice would have been the last person to use these Valoignes arms. Other branches did exist and are documented, such as Henry de Valoignes, who was recorded as Sheriff of Kent in 1340. He is recorded as being released from being incarcerated in Flete prison in 1341 by the order of the King (Calendar of Close Rolls).

<sup>5</sup> Rev. J. Cave-Brown, Knights of the Shire for Kent 1275-1831 in *Archeologia Cantiana*, Vol. XXI, pp200-203.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*

<sup>8</sup> Calendar of Close Rolls

<sup>9</sup> W. H. Ireland, *New and Complete History of the County of Kent*, Vol. II, 1829, p181

<sup>10</sup> Calendar of Patent Rolls

appointed Captain and Admiral of the fleet of the “Cinque Ports and all other ports and places from the mouth of the Thames westwards”<sup>11</sup>.

### *The Manor at Cheriton*

In the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, the manor at Cheriton was held by the de Ceriton family. The most well known member of this family is Odo de Ceriton (c.1180-1245), theologian and writer, who had homes both at Cheriton and Farningham. When Odo died, his brother Waleran, aged “40 years or more”, was declared his heir and his sisters, Isabel des Arches and Margaret de Mereworth, inherited patronage of Cheriton church.<sup>12</sup> Waleran de Ceritone was still holding Cheriton in 1261<sup>13</sup>, and after his death the manor went through some years of co-ownership between his two sisters and their descendants. “On the extinction of that name [de Ceriton], in the reign of Edward I [1272-1305] it [Cheriton] went to Roger de Mereworth”<sup>14</sup>, the son and heir of Margaret and Roger de Mereworth<sup>15</sup>, who was born in 1230. His son and heir, William, had a son and heir John<sup>16</sup>, born in 1280, whose son and heir, John, was born around 1305.

The other sister and co-patron of Cheriton Church, Isabel des Arches, married and left a son called Robert, who passed his share to John des Arches, who passed it on to William FitzWarine, who enfeoffed it to John de Calehull, who passed his share to William de Brokhull.<sup>17</sup>

In 1316 there was a lawsuit where Christina, widow of William de Brokhull, claimed the right to present a clerk to the benefice of Cheriton. This was disputed by Thomas de Brokhull (brother of William de Brokhull), but she seems to have won her case, which meant that in 1316, with John de Mereworth still being a minor, Cheriton passed to William de Brokhull. The co-ownership did continue, as Sir John de Mereworth still exercised the right of patronage in 1319.<sup>18</sup>

The de Valoignes are recorded as holding the manor at Repton in Ashford<sup>19</sup> and other nearby manors in 1300 with the manor of Cheriton passing into the family sometime between 1327 and 1336.

Waretius was murdered in 1336 and his younger daughter and co-heiress (Alice) inherited the Manor of Cheriton. There are several references to people being pardoned

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

<sup>12</sup> Hilary Harding, Odo de Ceriton of Charton Manor, Farningham, in *Farningham and Eynsford Local History Society Publication*, No. 29, 1999, pp9-13

<sup>13</sup> S. J. Mackie, *Folkestone and its Neighbourhood*, 1883, p165

<sup>14</sup> W. H. Ireland, *New and Complete History of the County of Kent*, Vol. II, 1829, p181

<sup>15</sup> b.1216, d.1272 according to the Mereworth Family website.

<sup>16</sup> Canon Scott Robertson in his paper on Cheriton Church states that he was actually called Roger while it is recorded on the Mereworth Family Website that his name was John. As Scott Robertson then talks about a John de Mereworth who acts as patron to Cheriton Church in 1319, while the son John was still a minor, it seems likely that he was in fact called John, rather than Roger.

<sup>17</sup> Taken from the *De Banco Roll*, edited by General Hon. George Wrottesley in *The Reliquary*, July 1888, p143.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*

<sup>19</sup> Rev. J. Cave-Brown, Knights of the Shire for Kent 1275-1831 in *Archeologia Cantiana*, Vol. XXI, p201

for his murder in the Calendars of Close Rolls and Patent Rolls. However the most notable protagonists are John<sup>20</sup> and Peter de Mereworth:

“Pardon to John de Merworth, knight, of what pertains to the king for the death of Waretius de Valoignes, knight, whereof he is appealed in the court of king’s bench by Margaret, late the wife of the latter, who as is said, has not prosecuted her appeal; granted on his having undertaken before the king and council in the present parliament at Westminster to find two men at arms for a quarter of a year in the first progress of the king or his army to Scotland, and on condition that he stand his trial if anyone will implead him for the death.

(March 20<sup>th</sup> 1336, Calendar of Patent Rolls)

“Pardon at the request of Queen Philippa to Peter de Mereworth for the death of Waretius de Valoignes, knight, and of any consequent outlawry.”

(May 1<sup>st</sup> 1338, Calendar of Patent Rolls)

When Waretius de Valoignes died, his estate passed to his two daughters. Matilda, the elder was already married to Thomas de Aldham<sup>21</sup>. In addition to the Manor of Cheriton, the younger daughter (Alice) also inherited the manors of Swerdling (in Petham), Repton (in Ashford) and Beachborough (in Newington). Upon her marriage to Sir Francis Fogge these all passed, *jure uxoris*, into the Fogge family.

The Fogge family continued to hold the manor at Cheriton until the late 16<sup>th</sup> century when it was sold to the Brockman family<sup>22</sup>. Alice and Sir Francis Fogge’s eldest son and heir was Sir Thomas Fogge, who was Knight of the Shire in 1376, 1378, 1380, 1384 and 1388 and taken prisoner in 1378 in the war with France but ransomed<sup>23</sup>. Sir Thomas’s son and heir, also called Thomas, married Joane, daughter and co-heiress of Stephen de Valoignes, a related but different branch of the de Valoignes family. They were both buried in Canterbury Cathedral, Thomas in 1407 and Joane in 1425. There is an entry in the Obit book of the priory of Canterbury, saying “Thomas Foge, knight, who gave to the building of the new Chapter House £20, and was buried in our church, a brother and benefactor. Also Joan Foge, wife of the same, our sister, daughter of Stephen Valouns, knight, ... who gave the monks for their present needs £20, and died in 1425”<sup>24</sup>

The son of Thomas and Joane was born in 1396 when on All Saints’ Day, “Thomas (once mis-called John) Fogge, junior ... brought to this [Cheriton] church, for baptism, his infant son and heir, William Fogge... The priest... declared to the assembled congregation ‘that God had, in that infant, multiplied his people after the late pestilence’”<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> John de Mereworth in 1332 obtained the royal licence to fortify (crenelate) his manor house at Mereworth, and his cameram, or small house, at Cheriton (in *Cheriton Church*, Canon Scott Robertson, 1889, p13)

<sup>21</sup> Family Chronicle of Richard Fogge, *Archeologia Cantiana*, Vol. V and Rev. J. Cave-Brown, Otham Rectors in *Archeologia Cantiana*, Vol. XXIII, p184

<sup>22</sup> W.H.Ireland, *New and Complete History of the County of Kent*, Vol. II, 1829, p181

<sup>23</sup> Rev. J. Cave-Brown, Knights of the Shire for Kent in *Archeologia Cantiana*, Vol. XXI p214-5

<sup>24</sup> In the Obit book of the Priory (now at Lambeth) in Arthur Hussey, Further Notes from Kentish Wills in *Archeologia Cantiana*, Vol. XXXI, pp39-40.

<sup>25</sup> Canon Scott Robertson, *Cheriton Church*, 1889, p9. Scott Robertson tells us that Peter... of Cheriton swore upon his oath that the pestilence occurred in the summer of 1396, though it is not clear what it was.

### *Some Conclusions*

This paper contains a brief overview of a limited amount of research. There are many contemporary records detailing the complex land transactions and other aspects of life of the de Valoignes, de Mereworth, de Aldham, de Brokhull and Fogge families in 14<sup>th</sup> century Kent. All these families were major land holders and connected by marriage, as well as being Knights of the Shire and Sheriffs of Kent at different times. The picture gained from the analysis of these records has to be set against the background of a particularly turbulent time in English history.

Many records talk of the two co-heiresses of Waretius de Valoignes. It is notable from the research we have undertaken that, while the name of the elder daughter, Matilda, is well known, the name of her younger sister is absent.

An explanation for the absence of the younger daughter's names in the records is perhaps that she died quite young and Sir Francis Fogge may have remarried.

The seal matrix shows Alice holding only one shield of arms, which strongly suggests that they are those of her paternal lineage. This would suggest that, at the time the matrix was made, she was unmarried, yet she must have been an asset-holder and a person of importance to hold such a fine seal. The records repeatedly refer to the younger daughter of Sir Waretius inheriting Cheriton in particular, along with the other manors mentioned above. This suggests that the reading of the inscription on the seal could be interpreted as saying 'Alice, holder of Cheriton'<sup>26</sup> and that the seal matrix could have been made around 1336 when she inherited the manor.

### *Notes*

In St. Martin's Church at Cheriton, there are three stone effigies, in the north wall, a man and women, and in the south wall, a single woman. There has been much speculation over the identity of these figures. It is possible that this single woman is Alice de Valoignes, particularly if she did die young (see above). The style of dress and facial features of Alice, as shown on the seal matrix, are remarkably similar to the effigy. It is said that her husband, Sir Francis Fogge, who died during the reign of Edward III (1327-57)<sup>27</sup>, was buried in the same church with an effigy of him "lying cross-legged and habited in armour, with his arms on his surcoat, impaling those of Valoyns, of which, though remaining in Philipott's time [1625],...there is nothing now to be seen."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See seal matrix of \_\_ in *Catalogue of Welsh Seals in the Welsh National Library*, p\_\_ for an illustration of a seal impression (circa 1300) where the original female owner uses her Christian name and mentions the name of her land holding in place of a surname.

<sup>27</sup> S. J. Mackie, *Folkestone and its Neighbourhood*, 1883, p165

<sup>28</sup> Hasted, *History of Kent*, viii, 1799, p192

