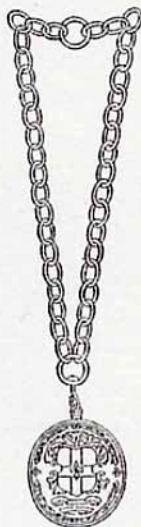


Cite of Lincolne }
 and County of } to wyt. {
 ye same Cite. } Crying Crystemes in ye
 15th Century. ❀ ❀ ❀



THE WAITS'
 CHAIN AND BADGE.
 1710.

AMONG the many quaint customs which prevailed in the municipal life of the City in Mediæval times, was that of "Crying Christmas" by the City Waits.

The earliest mention in the Civic Records of these Musicians, who were the Mayor's Officers, appears in an Ordinance dated 21st April, 1422, wherein it is stated that the Mayor was to have "livery for three Minstrels at eight Shillings each."

In the year 1512, Thomas Vessey being then Mayor, it was ordered that he should have "for the kepyn of his hows £10, "and to gyff to ye Mynstrells as other Maiors had done before "tyme of old ancient custom 3s. 4d."

These Minstrels were later known as Waits, and each wore a silver chain and badge of office, one of which still forms part of the Civic Insignia, and is now worn on State occasions by the Deputy-Mayor.

The chain is made up of 42 links and the badge is a fine specimen of repoussé handiwork, bearing the City Arms on one side, and on the obverse the Arms of Queen Anne.

The custom above alluded to, of proclaiming or crying Christmas, is described in an entry under date 1480, thus:—

"Homo recedens non atachetur in solempnitate natalis Domini."

"Off sent Thomas day the apostylle befor Crystemes. "When the Mayr of the Cite be his officers hathe proclamyd "the prewalege, gyrthe, and the solempnite of the fest of the "byrthe of oure Lord, that then after the sayd proclamacion "made evere franchest man and denyssen inhabite within "this Cite schalle have free liberte and sayffegarde in "honeste mirthe and gam sportis to goo or doe what hym "pleys. And nogth to be attachyd or arrestyd be any officere of "this Cite for any accion personelx withoutt the kyng be parte "or servyd be the Kyngis wryt.

"And this to be observyd and kept to twelff day callyd the "fest of the Epyphany be past, and then evere man take "thayr awantage in the law."

The poem, spoken or sung by the Waits, who by their title of *Senators*, were supposed to represent the *Wise Men*, is written in the caligraphy of the period (which is most difficult to decipher), on the front flyleaf of Vol. IV. of the Civic Records, extending from 6 Elizabeth 1564 to 41 Elizabeth 1599.—Foliated by a contemporary hand at the foot of the leaves.

The leaf is headed "anno xxv. Officii Willelmi Hynde Communis Clerici Civitatis Lincoln" i.e., 1565.

The following is the poem, comprising 15 stanzas, but the leaf being mutilated at the edges, and part torn away, the last two or three are only partly legible.