Imprint project

...In the first project of its kind, Imprint will merge cutting-edge forensic techniques with traditional historical investigation to analyse the fingerprints and palm prints found on the back of wax seals, leading to new discoveries about social constructs and legal practices of the time, as well as provide data which will help current identity science experts.

http://www.lincoln.ac.uk/home/hh/history/historyresearch/medievalstudies/imprint/

Principal Investigator: Prof. Philippa Hoskin, University of Lincoln

Co-Investigator: Dr Elizabeth New, Aberystwyth University
Seals
Widespread use
In the libraries:

Foster and Freeman Crime Lite Imager (Ifor)
Purple light to bring out the impression

Prints under blue light with polarisation filter

Yellow light through a forensic light source ring light for inscriptions

Forensic light source through a gooseneck for tricky spots

Damage under UV light

Dark field illumination with the forensic light source to get the ridge detail

Co-axial light fitting to capture the top of the seal

Fluorescence mode at different wavelengths to capture differences in material
In the lab...
Great things about the project

• Interdisciplinary: historical, codicological, sigillographic, forensic
• Collaborative: researchers at Lincoln and Aberystwyth, database and website design at Sheffield, print analysis by Forensic Focus, libraries in Aberystwyth, Exeter, Hereford, Westminster and Lincoln
• Impactful: impact includes training archivists and curators, public workshops and contributing to Home Office training and identification methodology. Output includes an online database which could provide a springboard for further research
• Innovative: using cutting-edge techniques and equipment to take images of the seals
Challenges

• Interdisciplinary:
  - historical,
  - codicological,
  - sigillographic,
  - forensic

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• Impact:
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Watch this space for a website!

@Imprint_Project
www.facebook.com/ImprintProjectseals