

Let's imagine: seal matrix

Each week the Museum is going to publish a 'Let's Imagine' activity sheet. This activity sheet will include a picture of an object in the Museum. It will tell you about the object and then it will be up to you to imagine a story, poem and/or picture inspired by this object. The sheet will include at least three questions or statements to help get you started and inspired.

This week's object is a **seal matrix**, which can be found in the permanent exhibition. Read the information in blue below to find out more about this seal matrix.



Imagine you have to describe this seal matrix to a friend. What would you say?

Design and draw your own seal matrix for you or your family.

Write a story or poem about being transported back in time to Medieval Britain. You meet the owner of the seal matrix. Describe what you he is like as well as what you see and do.

This is a seal matrix made of silver and dating to the late 13th century. It belonged to Geoffrey the Barber. The scissors, used in his trade, are thought to be an early depiction. The open loop design of the scissors, shown on the seal matrix, was very popular in the 13th and 14th centuries.

A barber would not only cut hair, they would also preform minor surgery too. This could be anything from bloodletting to pulling teeth.

At this time to close a letter (missive) or document and to authenticate an agreement or business contract, you would need to a seal. A seal has two parts: wax seal and seal matrix.

The matrix is an engraved metal stamp, which contains text and decoration to identify its owner. This seal matrix was probably made by a high stasis goldsmith as it is silver, rather than a cheaper metal, and well engraved.

A seal is created when the seal matrix is pressed into warm wax, which is usually made of beeswax and dye to make it appear red or another colour.