LANCASHIRE CHANCERY DEPOSITIONS.

THERE are in the Public Record Office a large number of volumes and bundles of documents belonging to the Chancery Court of the Palatinate of Lancaster. They relate to the County only, and are quite distinct from the Duchy Chancery records. There is a partial calendar to the bills, but none to the answers, rejoinders and depositions. These depositions contain a great deal of information about persons and estates, and a few examples are subjoined.

THE CALDERSTONES.
(P.L. Chan. Deps., bundle 130.).

Richard Percival, merchant, who purchased the manor of Allerton in 1670, had in 1700 a contest with Samuel Legay, esq., lord of the manors of Childwall and Woolton, and other persons, concerning the commons of Allerton and Much Woolton. Four boundary stones had been set, one at Hunt's pits, another near Henshaw's house, the third at Demmings, and the other near Blundell's pits; but complainant had had them broken and taken away.

Richard Henshaw of Much Wolton, yeoman, aged 69, deposed that he was born and brought up in Allerton and knew the boundaries. The usual meres between Allerton and Wavertree began at a place called Bowells Lane, thence ran eastward to a place called the Howe Green ditch, thence to a pond called the Little Mere, thence to a path thwarting it called the Crossgate, thence to another pond called the Great or Mickle Mere, and thence to three stones, set up upon a little ascent or rising ground, called the Dogger Stones or Caldway Stones; at which place the township of Little Woolton joined them, one of the said stones standing in Allerton, another in Wavertree, and the third in

Little Woolton. According to these boundaries the deponent in his youth and since had known the lord and inhabitants of Allerton walk and perambulate the boundaries of that township.

Richard Lathom of Allerton, gentleman, agreed.

WIGAN CHURCH SEATS.
(P.L. Chan. Deps., bundle 87.)

In a dispute concerning a seat in Wigan Church in 1671 some interesting details were given relative to the arrangements, stained glass, etc. The claimant was William Bankes of Winstanley, son of William Bankes, esq., who had died about five years previously. The defendant was Nicholas Pennington, son of Robert son of Nicholas son of the Robert Pennington who had been town clerk of Wigan. The church had been " made uniform " about 45 years ago, *i.e.*, about 1626. Anne Pennington, widow, aged 74, deposed that the seat or seats, which stood between the second and third pillar on the north side of the middle aisle, being the uppermost seats next the pillar by the pulpit, had belonged to the Bankes family for 60 years. Mr. Pennington's burial-place was in quite another position. Before the uniforming of the church she had been at rush-bearings in the church, and in the place where the disputed seats now stand there stood old long seats, whereof the ancestors of Mr. Bankes were anciently esteemed to be owners, though everyone sat in them that would. Plaintiff's father, at the uniformity of the church, caused Robert Winstanley's father to erect and make the three uppermost seats and to set doors with locks and keys to them. There were in all five seats between the two pillars.

Gerald Bankes of Wigan, mercer, aged 63, remembered that immediately after the uniformity of the church, when viewing the coats-of-arms set upon the seats, John Dobson (then the sexton, one well acquainted with the burial-places and seats of the parishioners) told him that the ground in dispute and the five seats were appurtenant to the manor house of Winstanley. Mr. Ormeshaw (churchwarden or collector) also told him that old Mr. Bankes had paid 11s. for setting the seats up. Twenty years ago the deponent had had a conversation with the defendant concerning the scissors or shears set in a window in the glass and the letters I P on a pillar over the said seat ; and he then viewed many of the church windows and the names and coats-of-arms therein set, but found among them very few names or coats of families that had either seats or burials under

the place where such names or coats were set, but on the contrary over one Mather's burial-place was Elizabeth Bankes's name with a squirrel for her coat over it, but no seat of Bankes was there. Again in a window in the north aisle over against the font are the Standish arms (viz., the three dishes) over the burial-place belonging to the Hall of Gidlow, above which is a seat not belonging to the Standishes. Also in a window in the south aisle are the arms of Sir Roger Bradshaw, and under it the seat and burial-place formerly belonging to the family of old Mr. Lance of the Hall of Abram.

Miles Mytton, the sexton, aged 78, had known three generations of the Penningtons before the defendant, and they had never claimed the seats. He had buried seven corpses of the Bankes family between the pillars mentioned.

James Bankes, the parish clerk, aged 49, gave further evidence about the windows. In the north aisle, he said, in a window is the name of Geoffrey Shevington, over the burial-place of a certain Markland. In another window are the Standish arms, over the burial-place of the Worthingtons of Pemberton.

Margaret Bates of Ince, gave evidence on the other side, saying that before her marriage 45 years ago she was a servant of the Penningtons, and the seats were reputed to belong to that family. She usually sat in them when she came to church. There was then a standard or one of the posts of the seats that had carved on it an arrow or dart head.

William Pilkington of Wigan, gentleman, aged 67, remembered the seats before the uniformity of the church —say 55 years ago. Robert and Eleanor Penington, parents of the defendant, used them. On the pillar next to the seat are the letters I. P., and in a piece of glass over the same pew are the same letters. He remembers also that James and Sarah Bankes, plaintiff's grandparents, after their purchase of Winstanley continued to sit in the old seat of the Bankeses and were buried there. Complainant's father, however, had asserted his right to the seats now in dispute. Nicholas, the defendant, was an infant at his father's death, and was brought up in Cheshire.

It appeared that the bishop of Chester had formerly heard the case in the house of Mr. Peter Earle, then curate of Wigan.

BOUNDARIES OF AINSDALE AND BIRKDALE.

(P.L. Chan. Dep., bundle 116.)

In a contest between Henry Blundell, esq., and Charles lord Brandon in 1688 the boundaries were thus defined: Beginning at the west end of the division ditch (near the house of Alice Rimmer of Formby), along this ditch to Headbolt ditch, thence to the south end of Gitterne ditch, thence north or north-east along the ditch to a mere or pool called Gitterne Mere; from the east end of this, beginning at the Walk-milne ditch, north or north-east to another division ditch called Kettles Greave ditch, which ditch divides Ainsdale from Ranikars and leads west to a pool called White Alter. On the north side of that pool there begins another division ditch leading north to a boundary called Birkdale Cop, the said ditch dividing Birkdale from Ranikars. The deponent knew because he had gone the boundaries forty years ago (and several times since) with the then old men of the said manors. He knew the rivulets called Ainsdale Brook and Birkdale Brook; all the lands that lie within the said manors on the east side of these rivulets were during the deponent's memory, till the earl of Macclesfield recovered the same, reputed to belong to complainant's ancestors and were constantly disposed of by them and their tenants. Several parts of the ditches had become much grown up, but were not so much defaced that they could not be distinguished quite well.

Richard Formby of Formby, gentleman, aged 57, said that part of Ainsdale lay in the parish of Walton and part in the parish of Halsall; these parts were divided by a brook.

Nicholas Reynolds, of Ince Blundell, gentleman, aged 60, stated that Robert Blundell, grandfather of complainant, kept a boat on Alter Mere for his pleasure and fishing there.

MARTIN MERE.

(P.L. Chan. Deps., bundle 144.)

The boundaries of North Meols were frequently in dispute, many of the depositions being printed in Dr. Farrer's *North Meols* (105–109). In 1714 there were further lengthy depositions taken owing to disputes between the lords of the manors adjoining Martin Mere. The mere had recently been drained, the work having been begun in 1693, and there were no ancient boundaries to go by. Peter Rimmer of North Meols, husbandman, aged 49,

deposed to the bounds of that manor. They went from Snutterstone to Hundred Lane, Crow Tree and Howard House. When Martin Mere was covered with water the persons who went or viewed the boundaries reckoned Halsall church and Howard's house, taken in a direct line, to be the boundary of the manor of North Meols. He had never heard of any bounds within the mere, in former times, between the manor of North Meols and the manors of Scarisbrick, Holmeswood and Holmes, and did not believe the respective lords knew their exact shares of the mere as long as it remained covered with water. Most part of the mere had been common to any one to fish in.

EGGERGARTH.

(P.L. Chan. Deps., bundle 97.)

This hamlet came into question about 1678 in disputes over the Lydiate estates, Sir Charles Anderton being complainant. John Farrer of Downholland, yeoman, aged 52, deposed that till about ten years previously there were only ten messuages or cottages in Eggergarth, which was reputed to be in Lydiate. The constable of Lydiate was sometimes chosen from the inhabitants of Eggergarth. The constable of Downholland was quite distinct.