

Signet Matrix: Seal Matrix featuring Thistle, with inscription

A rectangular seal matrix of purple glass, bearing a thistle design. The inscription, which encircles the thistle, suggests that this matrix may have been intended as a love token. It was produced c 1775.

Seal matrices also known as signet matrices were used to impress their owner's mark into wax on documents during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Many were made of moulded translucent glass. Little is known of their manufacture. They seem to have been produced for personal rather than commercial use. Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery acquired a collection of twenty-seven seal matrices in 1934. This is one of the items.