

Bailiffs of Macclesfield

The manor, forest and hundred of Macclesfield belonged to the earls of Chester, and after the earldom fell to the Crown were either held directly by the kings or by their eldest sons as earls of Chester; or were granted out to the queens.

The term ‘bailiff of Macclesfield’ was sometimes used indiscriminately: but at times there were bailiffs of the forest, hundred and manor of Macclesfield, sometimes overlapping. The term ‘bailiff’ is also occasionally misapplied to the Davenports, serjeants of the hundred of Macclesfield. The bailiffs are often referred to in the plea rolls, but unnamed (5:49; 7:76a; 11:27, 132; 12:114; 13:98; 16:30¹⁴⁶; 17:13; 17:56; 17:559; 18:128, 253; 19:11; 19:12; 20:337; 21:323).

Just as the justice of Chester at this period had very extensive powers in Cheshire and north Wales, effectively serving as a viceroy, and receiving orders from the Crown which in other counties were dealt with by the sheriffs, so the bailiffs of Macclesfield wielded a power far superior to that of the bailiffs of the other hundreds and manors of Cheshire.

¹⁴⁶ relating to both the hundred and the forest