

## BOOK NOTICES

*The Letters of Sir Francis Hastings, 1574-1609*, edited by Claire Cross, Somerset Record Society — Volume LXIX, 1969 — pp. xxxiii + 141, 50s. to non-members.

Sir Francis Hastings (c. 1546-1610) was a well connected and enthusiastic Protestant. A younger son of the 2nd Earl of Huntingdon, he strove throughout his life to protect the estates of his elder brothers and to further the Puritan cause, both in the House of Commons and beyond it. Much of his early life was spent in Leicestershire and Yorkshire, where he enjoyed lands and offices, but in 1583 he came to Dorset to settle a legal dispute of the 3rd Earl, and 3 years later accepted a grant of four Somerset manors from his brother. Subsequently he resided at West Camel and North Cadbury, but after the death of his first wife in 1596 and a brief sojourn in Leicestershire, he married a young widow from Holwell where he remained — until his death. In 1605 his promotion of a petition from Northamptonshire in favour of the ministers who had refused to subscribe, displeased James I. He was examined by the privy council and ordered to retire to his “owne house in the countrie, and desist from all dealinge in matters concerninge the Kinge’s service”. Of the present collection of letters, over a third are rough drafts made by Hastings himself and held at the Huntington Library in California. The remainder are drawn from a variety of sources, principally Hatfield House and the Public Record Office. The letters have been supplemented by some miscellaneous items written by Hastings or connected with him, the most interesting to Somerset historians being a short account of a journey made through Devon and Somerset in about 1538 to inspect the Huntingdon estates. Most of the letters are addressed to members of the nobility or persons holding high office, and much space is taken up with florid sentences of respect and praise. However, the impression remains of a sincere and dedicated man whose chief deficiency, common enough to most younger sons of the nobility, was a persistant lack of funds.

Miss Cross has supplied a detailed biography of Hastings in her introduction, and in an appendix gives a useful summary of Somerset manorial and estate documents in the Hastings collection at the Huntington Library.

R.J.E.B.

*The Earl of Hertford’s Lieutenancy Papers 1603-1612*, edited by W.P.D. Murphy, Devizes: Wiltshire Record Society, Volume XXIII, 1969, pp. viii + 236. 50s. to non-members.

In 1963 Mr. Murphy was awarded his Master’s degree by London University for a thesis on the Earl of Hertford’s Lieutenancy, a study centred on two manuscript entry books of incoming and outgoing letters and orders, dated 1603-1606 and 1608-1612. He has now made these more widely available by editing (generally transcribing in full) the texts of the two manuscripts, to which he has added a wide-ranging introduction on the Earl’s personal and political background, the office, duties and attitudes of the lieutenant and subordinate officers, and the performance of martial service. He has also made some interesting comments on the military importance of the area under the Earl’s control and estimates of the numbers of foot and horse mustered. The reader may, perhaps, regret that Mr. Murphy did not draw more widely on the knowledge he must

have gained while preparing his thesis to extend his introduction and that it is left unindexed by the decision to index by entry numbers rather than pages.

This is the first publication issued under the new imprint of the Wiltshire Record Society, the direct successor of the Records Branch of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, whose series of publications it continues without break in numeration and whose high standards of production and presentation it maintains. In making this choice, the Wiltshire Record Society has issued a volume of equal content and interest to Somerset readers as to its own members, for the Earl was appointed lieutenant for the joint area of Wiltshire, Somerset and Bristol in 1601, a position which he held until his death in 1621.

The office of Lord Lieutenant was essentially a military one: the Earl's patent (no. 1) empowered him to array, arm and muster the forces under his authority and to lead them against the King's enemies and against rebels and traitors. Inevitably, therefore, in a period of peace when defence needs were less urgent than in the previous reign and when both government policy and local reluctance reflected the same state of affairs, the lieutenant's duties were limited. His military activities, although comprising the bulk of the entries in the two volumes, were restricted to the routine organization of musters and associated matters, notably the protracted controversy about the muster-master's salary. The only non-military duties recorded were concerned with the imposition of a privy seal loan in 1611 and a fleeting attempt in 1608 to develop a native silk industry.

Somerset emerges as a less co-operative county than Wiltshire on both military and non-military matters. Whenever musters were ordered, the Somerset deputy lieutenants invariably reacted by seeking deferment, blaming the late harvest in 1608, plague in 1609 and, for good measure, pleading both excuses in 1610 and 1611. Their delaying tactics were as invariably successful, most strikingly so in 1611, when the muster was deferred from Michaelmas to the following Whitsun. By contrast, official policy was less complaisant when the 1611 loan was sought. Similar delaying tactics received short shrift, and barely ten winter weeks elapsed between the lieutenant's receipt of the King's letter on 7 November and his final return to the Privy Council on 19 January of Somerset's supplementary list of 60 additional contributors, their first list of approximately 150 names to contribute over £3,000 having been considered unsatisfactory by the Council. This would have been a remarkably speedy operation even if there had been direct communication between Council and County. It is the more remarkable when one considers that every move had to be duplicated by having to be transmitted through the agency of the lieutenant.

The two manuscript volumes transcribed by Mr. Murphy are not of equal standing. Whereas the second is an original register kept directly for the Earl, as lieutenant, the first, although clearly drawn from a similar original, is a later, somewhat unreliable copy. Mr. Murphy shows that this is not a complete copy and he notes some of the errors in the transcription of names and dates. In addition, no. 51 can only make sense as an answer to the ostensibly later no. 66, and there was no Somerset justice called Mayll (no. 28).

There are many pitfalls awaiting one who attempts to deal with another county's persons and places from a distance, but the Somerset reader may justly feel that, in the preparation of a work so largely concerning Somerset, Mr. Murphy might have made

more use of Somerset sources or, at least, enlisted help from within the county. Thus, the index would have avoided the confusion of Hinton Charterhouse with Charterhouse Hydon and the creation of dual personalities for Sir Edward and Sir Robert Phelips. More seriously, Mr. Murphy himself should not have overlooked the reference in the *Appendix* to the *Third Report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission*, (1872), p. 286 to the existence of an "abstract of letters and directions . . . beginning in 1585, sent to, the lieutenants for that time . . .", which, although a somewhat misleading entry, does specifically mention its delivery to Edward Earl of Hertford. This abstract, now in the Phelips MSS. in the Somerset Record Office, was made by Sir Francis Hastings, the senior deputy lieutenant of Somerset, from his own entry book and sent to the Earl immediately upon his appointment in 1601. It bears direct evidence of use by the Earl on one occasion during his term (when the question of mustering the clergy arose in 1608) and may also have stimulated the keeping of the records which Mr. Murphy has edited.

D.M.M.S.

Annette Sandison, *Trent in Dorset, the Biography of a Parish*, (Longmans, Dorchester, 1969), 152 pp., 11 illustrations and 1 map, 15s.

Although the title of Mrs. Sandison's excellent history of Trent stresses its present location, Trent was a Somerset village until 1896, when together with Goathill, Poyntonington and Sandford Orcas it was transferred to Dorset on the grounds that the inhabitants made use of the Sherborne Poor Law Union. The manorial descents are complicated: not only was the principal manor divided into three portions among the heiresses of William de Braose in the thirteenth century, but there were two small manors, Adber and Hummer, to the north of the main village, which belonged at one time to Montacute Priory. Mrs. Sandison has done her best in chapters II and III to disentangle the history of the medieval owners of Trent, but her story really begins in the sixteenth century and is brought down to the present day. Thomas Gerard, author of the *Description of Somerset*<sup>1</sup>, the first attempt at a county history, lived at the Manor House in the early seventeenth century. He was succeeded by his daughter Anne and her husband, Francis Wyndham, who concealed Charles II after the Battle of Worcester, in the secret hiding place which has survived all the alterations which have transformed the rest of the house. The later annals of the village centre round a series of long-lived and energetic rectors, appointed by Corpus Christi College and taking the place of the absentee landowners. Many interesting details are given of village life, of social customs and of the changes in agriculture, including the present era of the tractor and motor-car.

The book is well produced with excellent illustrations, a six inch to the mile map, five pedigrees showing the descent of the manor and an index. Publication has been made possible by generous assistance from the Ernest Cook Trust Fund.

Philip Rahtz and others, *Medieval Sites in the Mendip, Cotswold, Wye Valley and Bristol Region* (Bristol Arch. Res. Group: Field Guide No. 3), 32 pp., 3s. 6d.

"The word medieval is used in its widest sense, to include the whole period from the end of the Roman domination to the dissolution of the monasteries, i.e. from c. 410 until

<sup>1</sup> Som. Rec. Soc., 15 (1900).

c. 1540 . . .” The Mendip region is also liberally interpreted, to include the motte-and-bailey at Downend in Puriton, the Saxon *burghs* at Lyng and Langport, and the abbey sites at Glastonbury and Muchelney. These are evidently plums which the authors could not miss. Coverage within the area is otherwise uneven: there is no mention, for example, of Saxon sculpture at West Camel or Frome, the latter surely in the region if Witham is, and only two DMV's are noted, rather belying the “drastic decline in population” mentioned in the introduction.

K. Branigan, *The Romans in the Bristol Area* (Historical Assoc., Bristol Branch: Local History Pamphlet No. 22), 28pp., 4s.

This booklet covers a clearly defined area within a radius of seven miles from Bristol Cathedral. The first section deals with the political and military history of the district, the second with its social and economic history.

R. F. J. Chiplen, *The Rural Landscape of the Blackmore Vale, c. 1840*. University of Exeter M.A. thesis, April 1969.

This study of land use, settlement and land tenure is mainly concerned with Dorset, but it also covers the following parishes in Somerset: \*Blackford (near Wincanton), \*Bratton Seymour, Bruton, \*Charlton Horethorne, Charlton Musgrove, \*Compton Pauncefoot, \*Corton Denham, \*Cucklington, \*Hentsridge, Holton, Horsington, \*Maperton, Milborne Port, \*North Cheriton, Shepton Montague, \*South Cadbury, Stowell, Templecombe, Wincanton, Yarlinton. Detailed maps of the parishes marked (\*) are included in the thesis.