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D. R. Hainsworth

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The landed estates were one of the fundamental structures of early modern England. They were omnipresent, for they were not confined to the countryside but penetrated into every borough and city. English society was composed largely of landlords and tenants. It follows that to understand the nature of this society the relationship between the two must be studied, and in particular the role of the man who linked them: the estate steward.

*Stewards, Lords and People* analyses the role of the estate stewards in the social mechanisms of later Stuart England. It is based on many years of research among more than 10,000 letters exchanged by stewards and their masters about estates as widely distributed as Northumberland and Cornwall, Cumberland and Sussex. Professor Hainsworth shows that the stewards' labours tended to promote social harmony as they mediated between lord and tenant, between town and country, and between 'national' and provincial culture. No mere rent collectors, the stewards were entrepreneurs exploiting mines and forests, mills and quarries. They were election agents, almoners for their lords' charity, builders and developers of their mansions and gardens, ambassadors among their lords' neighbours, and conduits of their lords' patronage. Their regular reports, and their masters' responses, provide a vivid and detailed picture of the social and political life of England in the late Stuart era.

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# STEWARDS, LORDS AND PEOPLE

*The estate steward and his world  
in later Stuart England*

D. R. HAINSWORTH

*Associate Professor of History,  
University of Adelaide*



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*For Margaret Laura*

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## PREFACE

This book is the end product of a long and complicated project which owes much to a great number of people. At a chance meeting at Manchester University in 1977 Professor T. S. Willan helpfully suggested that I should approach the British Academy with a proposal to edit some of Sir John Lowther of Whitehaven's correspondence with his stewards. I considered these letters were potentially an invaluable source for social and economic historians and so gratefully embraced his suggestion and that project began the following year. In 1979 my colleague Wilfrid Prest, knowing that the letters I was editing were largely stewards' correspondence, courteously invited me to contribute an essay on estate stewards to a symposium he was organising on the professions in early modern England. Here I was in a quandary. I knew quite a lot about Lowther's stewards. I knew nothing about the stewards of any other landowner. My wistful suggestion that my colleague might welcome a 'case study' based on the Lowther stewards was firmly declined. What was wanted was a synthesis. I soon discovered that on the subject of stewards in seventeenth-century England there was virtually nothing to synthesise. Two or three articles had been published on eighteenth-century stewards but they were rather too late for my purposes. If the essay was to be written I would have first to do the fundamental research and then try to synthesise what I had discovered. Collecting materials occupied me for the next seven years (indeed I have never really ceased from doing so), although well within that span I had to write my synthesising essay. I fear that in many ways the essay was rather like a tour of an English garden in winter during which your hosts describe all the lovely blooms that would have been there if only you had arrived in summer. Nevertheless it helped to organise my ideas as the collecting went on and to reveal to me what I lacked and what I must redouble my efforts to find.

In the search I had the help of many generous people. Colin Phillips of Manchester University, a good friend for more than twenty years, led me to the Cheshire Record Office where I found the Cholmondeley Papers which

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proved to contain a cache of more than 3,000 steward 'in-letters'. Mrs Irene Cassidy, my department's London-based research officer, tracked down numerous collections of letters and accounts, and especially some 1,100 items of estate correspondence in the Fitzwilliam Papers at Northampton. Prior to the project's inception I had already arranged for the Barr Smith Library of the University of Adelaide to purchase the Thynne (Marquess of Bath) Papers on microfilm, together with the Seymour, Devereux and Whitelock Papers, and since then it has acquired the Hastings (Earl of Huntingdon) Papers on microfilm from the Huntington Library. Before the project was so much as thought of I had already collected the several hundred Lowther letters I was still editing for the British Academy, and in addition had the 1,800 or more letters of the Lowther–Tickell correspondence, together with account books and legal papers. Before long I realised that I was amassing sources on a formidable scale and that the labour of reading several thousand letters drawn from estates scattered across the length and breadth of England (together with other documents) deserved more than an essay as the end product, particularly since the essay had been drafted well before much of the material came to hand. In the end the project became three-pronged, two volumes of edited documents and this monograph. In 1983 appeared *The Correspondence of Sir John Lowther of Whitehaven 1693–8* (British Academy/Oxford University Press, 1983). This was followed by *The Correspondence of Lord Fitzwilliam of Milton and Francis Guybon His Steward 1697–1709* (Northamptonshire Record Society, 1990) which was jointly edited with Cherry Walker who, as my research assistant, had earlier made a major contribution to the Lowther volume. This project reaches completion with this monograph, *Stewards, Lords and People*.

Among those many people who have helped me over the past dozen years I should like to thank in addition to T. S. Willan and Wilfrid Prest (for the contributions and encouragements already referred to), Irene Cassidy for much devoted travelling around the counties of England successfully ferreting among archives and arranging vast photocopying projects on my behalf; Cherry Walker for ten years of equally devoted service as my assistant, during which, among many other helpful activities, and with the invaluable advice of Bob Jones, she helped me crack the problem of how to organise such a mass of data by introducing the use of a main-frame computer to someone who was about as naturally fitted for the world of computers as Captain Ludd; similarly I must thank Dr Adrian Graves, a former student and at the time a visiting Research Fellow in my department, for giving up his valuable research time to introduce me to personal computers; also the Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, who made me the beneficiary of their enlightened and generous

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Senior Research Scholars scheme in 1983, and who have hospitably welcomed me back to their college on several occasions; the Council of the University of Adelaide and its History Department for granting me leaves of absence in 1979, 1983, 1987 and 1990 so that I could hunt down stewards' records in various regions of England; all those who hospitably welcomed me under their roofs during such expeditions and especially Edgar and Christine Bailey (Bristol), Tony and Jane Wood (Liskeard), Bill Hall (Ludlow), Colin and Jan Phillips (Little Leigh, Cheshire), Jim and Nan Thomson (Banks, Cumbria), Bill and Mary Scott (Carlisle), David and Dorothy Widdess (Lancaster); Colin Phillips who has always shared with me his unrivalled knowledge of the north west in the seventeenth century and particularly of the Lowthers and their estates, and who, with his colleague Ann Hughes, has several times invited me to give seminars at Manchester University; Michael Graves of Auckland University for three times inviting me to conferences in New Zealand to present papers which became two related articles and a chapter of this book; my departmental colleagues, especially Austin Gough, Frank McGregor, Lynn Martin and Vivien Brodsky, and successive heads of department, for much encouragement and support; Professor John Beckett for courteously sending me copies of most useful articles when he discovered the theme of my project; my long-suffering general editors, Donald Coleman and Edmund King, for invaluable help and advice in the production of the two complementary volumes of records, and John Morrill, with his fellow editors Anthony Fletcher and John Guy, for much advice and encouragement; Brian C. Redwood, the now retired Chief Archivist of the Cheshire Record Office for drawing my attention to the Marquis of Cholmondeley's papers there and labouring to have them copied on my behalf; Bruce Jones, the former Chief Archivist of Cumbria and his successor Sheila MacPherson and their staffs for great help and co-operation in photocopying a range of records but especially of the Lowthers of Lowther and of Whitehaven and of Sir Daniel Fleming of Rydal; and for similar assistance the Chief Archivists of the record offices of Cambridgeshire, Clwyd, Essex, Gloucester, Kent, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Northumberland, Nottingham, Rutland, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Wiltshire, together with the staffs of the British Library Manuscripts Room, the John Rylands Library of Manchester University, the Nottingham University Library and the Librarian of St John's College, Cambridge. I am also indebted to the Duke of Devonshire, the Marquess of Cholmondeley, the Marquess of Northampton, the Earl of Lonsdale, the Countess Fitzwilliam, Sir William Lowther of Erbistock Hall, the late Lord Howard of Castle Howard, Sir Charles Graham of Netherby and the Master and Fellows of St John's College, Cambridge, for the opportunity to copy archives in their possession

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or on deposit. I am also much in the debt of my postgraduate students, Dr Christine Churches and Tania Jefferies, together with Dr Sara Warneke, and Dr Miriam Collins, for research assistance at vital times, and to the secretarial staff of the History Department over several years.

Finally I must acknowledge the contribution of a self-sacrificing wife who cheerfully accepted and indeed encouraged my long absences in pursuit of the data for this book, which, most suitably and gratefully is dedicated to her.

ABBREVIATIONS

AHR	<i>Agricultural History Review</i>
Barrett-Lennard	Barrett-Lennard Papers (including Earl of Westmorland), Essex CRO (Chelmsford)
Bath 4	Historical Mss Commission Reports, Marquess of Bath, 58, <i>Mss of the Marquess of Bath</i> , vol. 4, <i>Seymour Papers 1532–1680</i>
Beckett, <i>Aristocracy in England</i>	J. V. Beckett, <i>The Aristocracy in England 1660–1914</i> (Oxford, 1986)
BL	British Library
CWAAS	Cumberland and Westmorland Archaeological and Antiquarian Society
CWAAST	<i>Cumberland and Westmorland Archaeological and Antiquarian Society Transactions</i>
Cholmondeley DCH	Archives of the Marquess of Cholmondeley, Cheshire CRO (Chester)
Churches, ‘Lowther and Whitehaven’	Christine Churches, ‘Sir John Lowther and Whitehaven 1642–1706’, unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Adelaide 1991 (copy held Cumbria CRO (Carlisle))
<i>Commons 1715–1754</i>	Romney Sedgwick, ed., <i>History of Parliament: the Commons 1715–1754</i> , 2 vols. (London, 1970)
<i>Commons 1660–1690</i>	B. D. Hemming, ed., <i>History of Parliament: the Commons 1660–1690</i> , 3 vols. (London, 1983)
CRO	County Record Office
Davies, ‘Country Gentry’	M. G. Davies, ‘Country Gentry and Falling Rents in the 1660s and 1720s’, <i>Midland History</i> , vol. 4 (1977)

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Davies, ‘Gentry Payments’	M. G. Davies, ‘Country Gentry and Payments to London, 1650–1714’, <i>Econ. HR</i> , 2nd ser. vol. 24 (1971)
Devonshire	Archives of the Duke of Devonshire, Chatsworth
DNB	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
Eaton Letters	J. Wake and D. C. Webster, eds., <i>The Letters of Daniel Eaton to the third Earl of Cardigan, 1725–1732</i> , NRST., vol. 24 (1971)
Econ. HR	<i>Economic History Review</i>
Fitzwilliam	Archives of the Earl Fitzwilliam, Northamptonshire CRO (Northampton)
Fitzwilliam Correspondence	D. R. Hainsworth and Cherry Walker, eds., <i>The Correspondence of Lord Fitzwilliam of Milton and Francis Guybon his Steward 1697–1709</i> , NRST, vol. 36 (1990)
Fleming	Fleming of Rydal Papers, Cumbria CRO (Kendal)
Galway (Arundel)	Lady Arundel of Trerice Papers, Galway Papers, Nottingham University Library
Hainsworth, ‘Essential Governor’	D. R. Hainsworth, ‘The Essential Governor: the Estate Steward and English Society 1660–1714’, <i>Historical Studies</i> , 21, no. 84, (April, 1985)
Hainsworth, ‘Estate Steward’	D. R. Hainsworth, ‘The Estate Steward’ in W. R. Prest, ed., <i>The Professions in Early Modern England</i> (London, 1987)
Hainsworth, ‘The Mediator’	D. R. Hainsworth, ‘The Mediator: a Link Between National and Provincial Society in Seventeenth Century England’, <i>Parergon</i> , n.s., vol. 6, 1988 (Festschrift for Sir Geoffrey Elton)
Hastings	The Hastings (Earls of Huntingdon) Collection of Manuscripts, the Huntington Library, California
Hirst	Derek Hirst, <i>The Representative of the People? Voters and Voting in England Under the Early Stuarts</i> (Cambridge, 1975)

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Holford	Sir Richard Holford of Westonbyrt Papers, Gloucestershire CRO
Holmes, <i>Augustan England</i>	Geoffrey Holmes, <i>Augustan England: Professions, State and Society 1680–1730</i> (London, 1983)
Hopkinson	Robert Hopkinson, ‘Elections in Cumberland and Westmorland 1695–1723’, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Newcastle Upon Tyne University, 1973
Howard	Fielding Correspondence, Howard Papers, Norfolk CRO
Isham Papers	Archives of the Ishams of Lamport Hall, Northamptonshire CRO
Kerridge, <i>Trade and Banking</i>	Eric Kerridge, <i>Trade and Banking in Early Modern England</i> (Manchester, 1988)
Kishlansky	Mark A. Kishlansky, <i>Parliamentary Selection: Social and Political Choice in Early Modern England</i> (Cambridge, 1986)
Leconfield	Archives of Lord Leconfield, Cockermouth Castle muniments (obtainable through Cumbria CRO (Carlisle))
Leveson-Gower	Archives of the Duke of Sutherland (Leveson-Gower), Staffordshire CRO (Stafford), (for Lord Gower)
Lonsdale D/Lons	Archives of the Earl of Lonsdale, Cumbria CRO (Carlisle)
Lonsdale D/Lons/W	Lonsdale Archives, Lowther of Whitehaven branch
Lonsdale D/Lons/L	Lonsdale Archives, Lowther of Lowther branch
<i>Lowther Correspondence</i>	D. R. Hainsworth, ed., <i>The Correspondence of Sir John Lowther of Whitehaven 1693–1698: a Provincial Community in Wartime</i> , Documents in Social and Economic History, n.s. vol. 7 (British Academy, 1983)
Musgrave	Musgrave of Edenhall Archives, Cumbria CRO (Carlisle)

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Nicholas	Nicholas Family Papers, John Rylands Library, Manchester
North	North Family Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford
Northampton (Warwickshire)	Marquis of Northampton Archives, Warwickshire Estate Correspondence, Castle Ashby (microfilm copy held at Warwickshire CRO)
NRST	<i>Northamptonshire Record Society Transactions</i>
Paget	Papers of Lord Paget of Beaudesert, Marquess of Anglesea Archives, Staffordshire CRO
Portland (Newcastle)	Duke of Newcastle Papers in the Archives of the Duke of Portland, Nottingham University Library
Radnor	Ashe Family Papers, Radnor Archives, Wiltshire CRO
RHST	<i>Royal Historical Society Transactions</i>
Richards, ‘The Land Agent’	Eric Richards, ‘The Land Agent’ in G. E. Mingay, ed., <i>The Victorian Countryside</i> (London, 1981)
Sackville	Sackville of Knole Papers (including Earls of Middlesex and Dorset and Countess of Bath), Kent CRO (Maidstone)
Savile	Papers of the first Marquess of Halifax and of Sir George Savile, bart., Nottinghamshire CRO
Stone, <i>Crisis</i>	Lawrence Stone, <i>The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558–1641</i> (Oxford, 1965)
Thirsk, <i>Agrarian History 4</i>	Joan Thirsk, ed., <i>The Agrarian History of England and Wales</i> , vol. 4, 1500–1640
Thirsk, <i>Agrarian History 5</i>	Joan Thirsk, ed., <i>The Agrarian History of England and Wales</i> , vol. 5, <i>Agrarian Change 1640–1750</i> (Cambridge, 1985)
Thynne, Longleat	Archives of the Marquess of Bath, Longleat
Trevor	Trevor of Glynde Papers, Clwyd CRO (Hawarden)
TSAS	<i>Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society</i>

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Turner, ‘Northampton Estates’	H. D. Turner, ‘George, fourth Earl of Northampton: Estates and Stewards 1686–1714’, <i>Northamptonshire Past and Present</i> , vol. 4, (1966–7)
Wordie, <i>Estate Management</i>	J. R. Wordie, <i>Estate Management in Eighteenth Century England: the Building of the Leveson-Gower Fortune</i> (London, 1982)
Wynn <i>Papers</i>	<i>Calendar of the Wynn (of Gwydir) Papers</i> (Aberystwyth, 1926)