

ABSTRACTS OF ARTICLES

Palatinate administration and local society in the palatinate
of Lancashire under the Lancastrian kings, 1399-1461

A. J. Martinez, Jr

Focussing upon the palatinate of Lancashire during the Lancastrian period, when under the direct control of the king in his capacity as duke of Lancaster, and drawing upon a range of primary sources, especially the palatinate's plea, patent and close rolls and *inquisitions post mortem*, this article assesses aspects of the administrative life of the palatinate. In particular, it explores both the impact of palatine administration on the people of Lancashire during the reigns of Henry IV, V and VI and how this compares with administrative affairs in other palatine and non-palatine counties in fifteenth-century England. The article shows that the county-based palatine administration provided limited career opportunities for local men, with most of the senior officials drawn from outside the county, while the few Lancashire men who did rise via palatine administration often had grounded their careers in experience of the royal courts in London or then moved on to flourish outside the county. Instead, it is argued that the main benefit of palatine status to the people of Lancashire during this period was the presence of an efficient, locally-based, royal administration, especially direct, speedy and cheap access to regal justice via the justices and chancellors who sat at Lancaster.

Ships and port management at Liverpool
before the opening of the first dock in 1715

M. K. Stammers

Adopting a seaward rather than a landward perspective, this article reassesses the early history of the port of Liverpool, down to the

opening of the first dock in 1715. Ranging over the medieval and early modern periods and drawing upon various archival, cartographic and pictorial sources, inevitably stronger and fuller for the sixteenth and seventeenth than for the medieval centuries, the article explores what we know about the physical setting of the pre-1715 port and its strengths and limitations, before reassessing evidence concerning not only the type, size and number of vessels using Liverpool, but also the physical and administrative development and regulation of the early port and quayside facilities. Although such facilities were simple and simply regulated for most of the period, and despite some earlier evidence of problems and poor administration, it is suggested that the facilities were perfectly adequate to handle the trade and shipping using Liverpool for most of the period, until the great expansion of both in the later seventeenth century and the resulting congestion necessitated the building of larger, more complex port facilities.

Liverpool under parliament: the anatomy
of a civil war garrison, May 1643 to June 1644

Malcolm Gratton

Adding to a small but growing body of work on civil war garrisons, this article explores the governors and garrisons which controlled Liverpool during the war. The town changed hands several times, from royalist to parliamentarian in spring 1643, from parliamentarian to royalist as a result of siege and storm in June 1644, and back again from royalist to parliamentarian in November 1644. Although all these phases are touched upon here, the focus is very much on the parliamentarian garrison and its governor, John Moore, which held the town in 1643-44. Drawing upon a variety of sources, but especially the surviving West Derby hundred sequestration papers of 1643-44, the article examines the objectives, role and impact – landward and seaward – together with the administration and financing of Moore’s parliamentarian garrison, through to its fall in the face of a major royalist assault in June 1644, itself reassessed here. As well as providing fresh and detailed insight into this phase of parliamentarian administration, the article suggests that

Liverpool's civil war experience as a whole had a major impact, for good as well – and perhaps as much – as for ill upon the town's development during the seventeenth century.

The Chester companies in the seventeenth century

Peter Bolton

Building on earlier published work, while relying upon extensive new research on the primary source material, this article examines the history of the manufacturing and trading guilds or companies of Chester during the seventeenth century. Drawing heavily upon the surviving books and papers of the individual companies, the article assesses the function, operation, organisation and membership of the Chester companies, as well as the commercial, community, social and welfare roles they played throughout the century, demonstrating their continuing and generally vibrant contribution in these areas; the causes and nature of the dwindling importance of the companies from the eighteenth century onwards are also briefly surveyed. At the heart of the article, however, is a detailed assessment of the impact of the civil war of the 1640s upon the operation and membership of the companies. It is shown that although Chester's involvement in the war inevitably disrupted company life and affairs, the impact was neither fatal nor long-lasting and most companies quickly recovered and, indeed, flourished in the immediate post-war and post-plague years, well before the Restoration.

'Honeygreave' and the Rock House ferry

Tony Dyson

Springing from the repeated but hitherto unexplained appearance of the place-name 'Honeygreave' in the Bebington parish registers in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this article uses local records firmly to identify this as an early name for Rock House or Farm, on the Mersey coast of the Wirral. It then moves on to explore the origins and early history of the ferry associated with the site and building, not only placing it within the context of

the rise and fall of other ferry services in the area, but also examining afresh the complex and tangled contemporary evidence regarding the various individuals and families who owned, leased or had interests in the ferry, as well as in Rock House and in the adjoining area, including neighbouring Derby House, during the early modern period. The latter investigation encompasses assessments of the interests of the Minshull family and of the Stanleys, earls of Derby, of the ambitions of a client of the Stanleys and of attempts both to promote the ferry services and to develop estates and land in Bebington parish during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Poverty, deservingness and popular politics:
the contested relief of Agnes Braithwaite, 1701-06

Jonathan Healey

Having established a national and regional context by assessing recent work on ‘popular politics’ and on the involvement of communities and the poor in the operation of early modern poor relief, this article tests and develops those interpretations via a detailed study of one particular case. Drawing heavily upon an unusually rich surviving body of papers, mainly petitions and counter-petitions written by or for the protagonists, it reconstructs the attempts by an elderly widow of Hawkshead – the northernmost parish in the historic county of Lancashire – to claim and receive poor relief during the opening years of the eighteenth century and the attempts by some members of the local community to show her to be unworthy and thus to have her relief reduced or revoked. Although uncertainties and ambiguities remain, it is suggested that the language, tactics and actions adopted by both sides in the dispute demonstrate both a degree of sophistication and an engagement as active, interested and informed participants in the public sphere and in the politics of their community and region.

John Handforth and Manchester's first stage-coaches
Dorian Gerhold

This study of John Handforth, the founder of Manchester's first regular, long-distance stage-coach service and an important figure in the development of national coaching services in England during the third quarter of the eighteenth century, is built upon surviving papers relating to Handforth's own life and business affairs and upon the evidence of coach services found in the burgeoning provincial newspapers and directories of the period. These confirm Handforth's innovative role, examined in the article, in setting up and running regular services to Manchester and other northern cities and, later, to several Midland and southern towns, acting, either alone or in conjunction with others, from his base as a London innholder. Although in the end his coaching businesses failed financially, the article shows that for twenty years Handforth had been an innovator in establishing regular, well-organised, well-equipped, long-distance services between London and a string of important provincial towns and cities, not least Manchester itself, which not only cut journey times, but also laid the foundations for the brief 'golden age' of long-distance coaching which followed.

Poor Law administration in the Chester
Local Act incorporation, 1831-71
Michael D. Handley

This article charts the operation of Chester's poor relief provision over the final decades before the old, locally-based operation, relying on powers enshrined in the Local Act of 1761, was abandoned and the greatly revised and nationally-organised system, established by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, was at length accepted and implemented in Chester. Accordingly, the years 1834-71 saw tensions and conflicts, assessed and charted here, between on the one hand Chester's own guardians, most of whom wanted to retain the existing Local Act operation and resisted adopting a national system which they feared would be

more intrusive, more expensive and less responsive to local needs, and on the other hand the representatives of the New Poor Law commission or board, who deployed a range of threats and inducements over this period in an attempt to persuade Chester to implement the new system. Drawing upon Parliamentary Papers, surviving correspondence between Chester and the central Poor Law commission and board and contemporary reports found in the Chester and Cheshire newspapers, the article explores the merits and demerits of the old system during its final decades, in the main stressing its shortcomings, and shows how increasing legislative pressure from above as well as growing evidence in Chester of the limitations of the old system eventually outweighed local resistance and led to the adoption of the New Poor Law in 1869, its provisions fully established and operational from 1871.

Landlord, agent and tenant
in later nineteenth-century Cheshire
Stephen Matthews

Drawing heavily upon the 1873 Land Return and the 1874 *Directory of Cheshire*, this article explores the nomenclature, role, character, attributes, functions and qualities of the assorted land agents, stewards and bailiffs who helped to oversee the operation and well-being of the (generally quite modest) landed estates of Cheshire in the later nineteenth century. A general assessment, resting upon a range of published and archival sources, is followed by three more detailed case studies, drawn from the memorandum book of one land agent and from surviving clutches of correspondence by or relating to two other agents. Together, they demonstrate the complicated and sometimes delicate nature of the role of the land agent and of his relationship not only with the owner of the estate, whether in residence or an absentee, but also with other estate employees, contractors and tenants. Thus, it is suggested, a good land agent was an essential intermediary, ensuring and overseeing a healthy and balanced working relationship between master and tenants.