

THE ELECTORAL INFLUENCE OF THE EARLS OF HUNTINGDON 1603-1640

by

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A very persuasive argument has been made by Professor Lawrence Stone that, in the years following the death of Queen Elizabeth, the electoral influence of the peerage declined. Their territorial holdings decreased and with it, the basis of their power that had made them influential patrons in the Tudor years. Indeed, as the fabric of early Stuart society began to break under the increasing pressure of political, economic and religious controversy, the influence of the peerage and especially of a peer with close ties to the court, was under even greater strain.¹

Unfortunately, the electoral patronage of the peerage has yet to be examined in any comprehensive way. Only three peers, the Earls of Nottingham, Pembroke and Salisbury, have had their electioneering subjected to close scrutiny and, save for specific election studies that include discussions of aristocratic patronage, nothing further is known about aristocratic electioneering.² The electoral influence of the Hastings family, Earls of Huntingdon between 1603 and 1640, however, can provide a further illustration of the success or failure of a locally powerful aristocratic family.

Leicestershire was Hastings's country. Their estates at Donnington Park and Ashby de la Zouch, their family home, and other holdings dominated the county. Leicester, too, could not hope to escape their influence. Ashby de la Zouch was less than twenty miles from the town and after Henry Hastings, the third Earl, purchased "a town house in the principal street, the Swinesmarket" which was, appropriately enough, called the "Lord's Place" in 1569, his authority and prestige was seldom challenged in the town. He was Leicester's High Steward and became deeply involved in borough affairs. The corporation, no doubt at the Earl's persuasion (he was a staunch puritan), passed an ordinance commanding that a member of every Leicester household hear sermons each Wednesday and Saturday morning for an hour. Nor did Leicester's school escape his puritan attention. He closely reviewed the statutes regulating the school and saw to it that "A puritan schoolmaster was appointed". The pupils, as could be expected, were to be strongly immersed in the "right" sort of teachings and sermons. The Earl also made many charitable bequests to the city as well.³ Given his power and prestige, it is hardly surprising that he was an active and successful county electoral

patron; what is surprising, however, is that in spite of his obvious claim to Leicester's loyalty and affection, his patronage can hardly be traced in the town's Elizabethan elections.

Although Leicestershire was blessed with many a prestigious family, the Hastings family dominated county elections. The first Earl's sons "sat for the county in five out of the seven parliaments" summoned during the reigns of Edward VI and Mary Tudor. The third Earl managed to do even better. Between 1571 and 1601, his brothers or relatives captured over half (nine of sixteen) of Leicestershire's places. Francis, the second youngest of the Earl's brothers, was chosen for Leicestershire four times (1571, 1584, 1586 and 1597); Sir George, the oldest brother of the Earl, sampled Westminster twice (1584 and 1586) while his son, also named Francis, was elected once (1593). Sir Edward Hastings had his taste of parliament in 1597 and Henry, the second son of the fourth Earl, who had succeeded to the title in 1595, represented the county in 1601. In three Elizabethan parliaments (1584, 1586, 1597), the family monopolized Leicestershire's representation. The Hastings' influence over Leicestershire elections might have been even greater had not Francis Hastings moved to Somersetshire before the election of 1588; he was the leading parliamentarian in the family and his departure probably saved the county from total surrender to a Hastings' election monopoly. His absence gave the local gentry at least a chance to see Westminster.⁴

The Hastings' influence at Leicester, however, was minimal. John Hastings served for the town in Elizabeth's first parliament; the next sure sign of the family's intervention in a Leicester election does not come again until the election of 1584 when Thomas Johnson, one of the Queen's serjeant's at arms, was elected at the request of the Earl's brother, Sir George Hastings. Johnson was re-elected in 1586 while the return of a civil lawyer of puritan views, John Chippendale, in 1588 can also probably be credited to the Huntingdon account.⁵

The fourth Earl of Huntingdon, Sir George Hastings, had his nominee refused at Leicester in 1597 and was outraged by the town's actions in its next election, that of 1601. The corporation, anxious to remain in the Earl's good graces, had informed him of their election plans. In his reply, Huntingdon suggested the town elect a "Mr. Bromley" but the Earl was most opposed to the corporation's apparent intention of returning George Belgrave, a local gentleman whom the Earl disliked intensely. Belgrave, however, was too smooth for the Earl and the corporation. On election day, he masqueraded in the Earl's livery and convinced an all too willing corporation that he was the Earl's man. Huntingdon was furious when he discovered Belgrave's successful *coup*. And, before the storm blew over, the Attorney General, the Star Chamber, the House of Commons and even the Privy Council had become involved. How it was all settled remains unknown but the corporation's action, in returning Belgrave, left a strong and bitter taste in the Earl's mouth and one he was unlikely to forget.⁶ Still, Leicester escaped the kind of electoral domination the county endured; only four of its Elizabethan members had any discernible connection with the Hastings family.

The town's determination to maintain some semblance of electoral independence was, of course, one reason why the Elizabethan Earls of Huntingdon fared so poorly in its elections. There was another complication as well: Leicester was a Duchy of Lancaster town and, under two of its chancellors, Sir Ralph Sadler and Sir Thomas Heneage, the Duchy tried to intervene in Leicester's elections. Sadler may have placed a nominee at Leicester in 1571; he certainly did in 1584. Heneage was less successful. He tried for both places in 1593 but was courteously refused.⁷ Perhaps Leicester's corporation realized the danger and decided that both potential patrons must be put off for, if the Earls of Huntingdon had their way, what would justify denying the Duchy of Lancaster? That may well explain Leicester's actions in the elections of 1593, 1597 and 1601.

Leicestershire and its lone parliamentary borough were not the third Earl's only hunting grounds. In 1571, he was probably behind the enfranchisement of Christchurch, Hampshire, for his electoral influence was openly admitted in that borough's election in 1584.⁸ He also used his influence, as Lord President of the Council of the North, a post he held from 1572 until his death, to influence elections at Hull, Boroughbridge, Beverley and Aldborough. Indeed, even proud and independent York felt compelled to inform Huntingdon of its election choices in 1584.⁹ Although Leicester escaped total Huntingdon domination, it is quite clear that the Earls of Huntingdon and, in particular, the third Earl, were great Elizabethan election patrons. It remains to be seen, however, if the fourth and fifth Earls of Huntingdon could maintain that patronage record or whether, as may have been the case with the peerage generally, their influence declined after 1603.

The fourth Earl of Huntingdon, Sir George Hastings, had little time to make his mark on early Stuart elections; he was dead by the 31st December, 1604. Leicestershire's return shows no positive signs of his intervention although the choice of Sir Basil Brooke, one of the farmers of the ironworks in the Forest of Dean in 1607 remains a mystery.¹⁰ There is, however, no mystery about Huntingdon's activities in Leicester's election.

The election of 1604 was a complicated affair. Sir John Fortescue, the chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and the Earl of Huntingdon were involved and, much to the corporation's discomfort, so was "Mr. Tamworth", a perennial thorn in Leicester's side who had tried twice before (1584, 1593) to win election for the town.¹¹ On this occasion, however, Tamworth was not seeking a burgess-ship; instead, he was involved in a bitter legal wrangle with the corporation and enjoyed the support of both the Duchy and the Earl. Leicester's interests were being stoutly defended by its recorder, Augustine Nicholls, who, perhaps as a reward for his services, had been offered one of the town's places. Nicholls, however, refused to stand and instead suggested that Leicester elect his friend, Sir William Skipworth, a well-known country gentleman. Meanwhile, Sir John Fortescue had nominated his son-in-law, Sir John Poulteney who, Fortescue promised, would serve in parliament without charge to the town. Huntingdon had also intervened and, possibly because of his bitter memory of Leicester's recent elections, urged the corporation to give Fortescue both its burgess-ships! Leicester's hard-

fought for electoral independence hung in the balance. The town's leadership prevaricated; they could reach no decision, they claimed, since the "greatest number" of their membership was absent and nothing could be done without their participation and consent. The corporation was, it seems, playing for time, hoping that another and more suitable candidate would turn up. One did in the person of another county gentleman, Sir Henry Beaumont, who informed Leicester of his interest in one of its places for the impending parliament. He fitted the town's requirements perfectly: he was a free burgess of the town and his previous services to the community clearly marked him for the borough's grateful reward, on this occasion, a burgess-ship. Leicester's corporation preserved the town's independence by electing Skipworth and Beaumont and gained an even greater satisfaction: Tamworth's powerful friends had, in the election at least, been rebuked. It was a moment to savour. But, alas, it was all too short. Skipworth died and, in the town's 1610 bye-election, the Huntingdon interest prevailed. The fifth Earl, Henry, nominated his "cousin, Mr. Henry Rich (son of the 1st Earl of Warwick)" who was obediently elected. And, with that bye-election, Leicester's losing battle against both the Hastings' influence and that of the Duchy of Lancaster had begun.¹²

Henry Hastings, grandson and heir of the fourth Earl, succeeded to the Earldom of Huntingdon on the last day of December 1604. Three years later, he was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire and, in 1614, became neighbouring Rutlandshire's Lord Lieutenant, a position he employed to good electoral advantage.¹³ His successful electioneering provides the dominant theme in the electoral history of Rutlandshire, Leicestershire and Leicestershire.

Huntingdon's kinsman captured, between 1614 and 1628, over half of Leicestershire's county places (seven of twelve) while Rutlandshire surrendered three-fourths of its knight-ships (nine of twelve) to candidates he supported. The fifth Earl's electioneering triumphs, in those two counties alone, stand as a remarkable example of the success an aristocratic electoral patron could enjoy in early seventeenth-century England. His influence, in Leicestershire elections, was severely challenged only once, in 1621. In 1614, the county had chosen, apparently without trouble, the Earl's brother, Sir George Hastings. In 1621 the Earl attempted to re-establish that monopoly of election power his predecessor had enjoyed in Elizabeth's reign. He nominated his kinsmen, Sir George and Sir Henry Hastings. Huntingdon's freeholders and tenants were rounded up, mustered on election day and obediently cast their 1,200 voices for the Earl's nominees. But then the incredible happened: the sheriff, Sir Alexander Cave, refused to make the return. Instead, he sought legal advice and announced that Sir George Hastings was a non-resident and, therefore, ineligible for election. Cave proclaimed that the Duke of Buckingham's cousin, Sir Thomas Beaumont, was properly elected. As can be imagined, the Hastings family was not about to take such a blow lying down. Buckingham, however, intervened; he tried to persuade Sir George Hastings to let the matter rest but Sir George was not to be stopped. He petitioned the House of Commons demanding that it overturn

Cave's remarkable action. The petition raised a fundamental issue: the whole question of residency and eligibility for election surfaced, much as it had in Leicester's disputed return of Belgrave in 1601. One member had noted then, in the debates over the Belgrave dispute, that if Belgrave was punished for "coming indirectly to this place", three quarters of the membership of the House of Commons would have to be punished since most were non-residents in the boroughs that elected them! Now, twenty years later, the Hastings family had done it again and the House had to face the same impossible issue once more.

The House consulted counsel on both sides; statutes defining eligibility were closely searched and analyzed; altogether, the lawyers and precedent-seekers had a glorious time in revealing the fruits of their learned investigations. In the end, of course, the House had to do what it had done in 1601. Sir Lawrence Hyde, one of Beaumont's legal advisors, went to the heart of the matter and of the House's eventual decision: "he never knew any put out of this House for non-residency" for, if it happened, "so the better part of the house should be put off." Political pragmatism prevailed: Beaumont's return was voided, Sir George Hastings declared well elected and the members of the House, once again, rested easily in their seats, fears of ineligibility and questions over their residency—or lack of it—happily having been laid to rest. Cave, though, was still in trouble; Beaumont threatened him with legal action but the House quickly granted Cave its protection and the affair was finally closed.¹⁴

Cave's courage, perhaps strengthened by the fears of Leicestershire's gentry of a new Huntingdon monopoly, may have forced the Earl to back down a bit. That may explain why only Sir Henry Hastings was returned in 1624. However, in the following election of 1625, Huntingdon tried again for both knight-ships. He recommended his brother Sir George and "at my coming home you shall know who I desire should be the other knight of the shire". But the gentry of Leicester would not take both; they rebelled and Sir Wolstan Dixie, a kinsman of the Beaumonts, was elected. Sir George Hastings missed his county bid altogether. The Earl put him in for Leicester, perhaps to avoid any further fuss over the residency issue raised in 1621. Instead, the Earl's son and heir, Ferdinando, Lord Hastings, was returned for Leicestershire. The Earl was apparently content with only one place in each of the following county elections. Sir Henry Hastings was chosen in 1626 and Ferdinando, Lord Hastings, served again in 1628 under the Huntingdon banner. And, although the Earl's ambitious scheme to monopolize Leicestershire's representation never matured, stopped, it seems, by Cave's boldness and the resistance of the county's gentry, his influence was clearly preponderant in Leicestershire's elections.¹⁵

Rutlandshire's elections over the same period (1614-1628) also reflected the Huntingdon imprint. It seems most likely that, following his appointment of Lord Lieutenant of the county, Huntingdon seized the opportunity his office gave him and became an active patron in Rutlandshire's elections. He nominated, in an undated letter, "Sir William Bulstrode and Sir Guy Palmer (Palmes) as knights of the shire". Palmes and Bulstrode

enjoyed near ownership of Rutland's representation. They were returned together in 1624, 1625 and 1628; Palmes also was elected in 1614 and 1621 while Bulstrode was chosen in 1626. Bulstrode, of Ridlington Parva and Exton, had been one of Rutland's knights in 1604, presumably because of his influence and gentry support. Like Bulstrode, Palmes probably had enough prestige to ensure his return although his principal residence until 1635 was in Northamptonshire. It is also noteworthy that Palmes had been, in 1621, a prospective nominee of the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, Lord Zouch, perhaps an indication that his electoral prospects for Rutland were less than assured. In that case, Huntingdon's backing might have been decisive. Huntingdon's influence in Rutlandshire was all pervasive; his nominees practically controlled its elections.¹⁶ He achieved in Rutlandshire what he had been unable to win in his home county. Altogether, in the elections of 1614-1628, Huntingdon's nominees and kinsman took sixteen county seats. If aristocratic patronage was declining, the fifth Earl of Huntingdon was clearly not aware of it; in fact, his electioneering made him, at the county level, the most successful patron in the family's Tudor and early Stuart history.

Leicester's independence, so jealously guarded in 1604, vanished in 1614. The power of the Earl of Huntingdon and of the new chancellor of the Duchy, Sir Thomas Parry, was simply too much for the town to deny. Leicester had five candidates: one Henry Felton was Parry's nominee, Huntingdon recommended his brother Sir George and Sir Henry Rich, his successful candidate in 1610, while Sir William Heyrick, the King's jeweller, an influential county gentleman and former M.P. for Leicester (1601, 1605) wanted a burgess-ship for himself and also recommended that the town elect its recorder, Francis Harvey. The town was in a delicate position; it wanted a new charter for its almshouse and was afraid that if it denied Huntingdon, he would "speak concerning the Hospital to the Chancellor (Parry), to the King, nay, if there be cause, my Lord will move the Parliament House" to frustrate the town's hopes for the charter. Harvey came to Leicester's rescue by suggesting a sensible compromise. He gave up his own candidacy and suggested that the town take one nominee from each patron, thereby keeping the favour of both and hopefully winning their support for the charter. Harvey's compromise was made all the more acceptable since Huntingdon's brother, Sir George, left Leicester's crowded election scene: he was returned for the county. The compromise worked, although Parry only accepted it with a reminder of his power; the corporation, he noted, must remember that if it hoped for "any favour at his hand any way" it dare not refuse his nominee. Leicester had no real choice; Sir Henry Rich and Parry's second candidate (taking Felton's place), Sir Francis Leigh, a master of requests, were returned. Leicester had traded its electoral independence for help from its patrons for the new charter.¹⁷

Five candidates sought Leicester's favours in 1621. The Earl of Huntingdon, apparently bent on controlling the borough's elections, nominated two men, Sir Richard Morison and Sir William Harrington. Morison, a veteran soldier, who had returned to England in 1615 after serving in Ireland for some fifteen years. He was appointed Lieutenant General of the Ordnance for life;

Harrington, his brother-in-law, apparently secured a reversion to the post, for he was holding it in 1625. Unlike Rich before him, Morison was not an outsider. He owned property in Leicester and resided at Tooley Park, Leicestershire. Harrington, too, had local connections though his main property holdings were in Hertfordshire. Sir William Heyrick was in the race again as was Stephen Harvey, nominated by his father, the town's recorder. And while there is nothing to suggest that the new chancellor of the Duchy, Sir Humphrey May (he won the office in 1618, two years after Parry died), nominated anyone, the Countess of Devonshire, another near neighbour of the town, intervened for the first time, recommending that Leicester choose her son. The town corporation acted with boldness and courage. It informed Huntingdon that only Morison was acceptable and only if he came to Leicester and took the freeman's oath. If Morison refused, the corporation bluntly informed the Earl that it hoped he would not be offended "if we choose another" instead! Morison must have complied since he and Sir William Heyrick were elected. The Countess of Devonshire's son was ignored. Heyrick can be described as a local man. His father had resided in Leicester and although Sir William became the principal jeweller to James I, he never forgot his birthplace. As he prospered in London and at the court, he purchased Beaumanor Park, Leicestershire, and, when he left this world, he was buried in St. Martin's Church, Leicester. Huntingdon's reaction to Leicester's refusal of both places is unknown; at least he had not come away empty-handed as his predecessor had done in 1597, 1601 and 1604.¹⁸

In Leicester's next election in 1624, Sir Humphrey May remedied his previous error. He nominated himself to Leicester and shrewdly sought and won the Earl of Huntingdon's backing. Huntingdon, though, paid a surprising, and for him a galling, price for his support of May. He had nominated Sir George Hastings. But, to the Earl's chagrin, Leicester turned Sir George down, electing instead May and a Leicester property owner, William Ive. Huntingdon received a full explanation of the town's actions. The Mayor assured the Earl that he had employed his "best endeavours" to win a place for Sir George but all for naught since the "greater part" of Leicester's corporation favoured May and Ive. After all, as the Mayor noted, May's return had been made at Huntingdon's "request". The town had acted with great shrewdness; it had avoided the clutches of both its powerful patrons and retained, through Ive's election, a shaky grip on its electoral independence. In addition, neither Huntingdon nor the chancellor of the Duchy had serious grounds for complaint. May had cleverly been the candidate of both.¹⁹ Unhappily for Leicester, however, the Earl and the Duchy would have their way in the future.

Huntingdon successfully nominated Sir George Hastings to Leicester in 1625; May was also returned and two local candidates, Ive and Arthur Hesilrige, who had been recommended by his father Sir Thomas, sought the town's favour in vain. Leicester's independence was over; Huntingdon and the Duchy were content. It was the first such election triumph since 1614.²⁰ Huntingdon and the Duchy shared the town's representation again in 1626 and 1628. The Earl placed his perennial candidate, his brother Sir George,

in 1626 while, in the following election of 1628, Sir John Stanhope of Elvaston, Derbyshire, was the Earl's successful nominee. Stanhope's brother had married into the Hastings' family; apparently one of the rewards of that relationship was a Leicester burgess-ship.²¹

At Leicester, as in the county elections previously described, Henry Hastings, the fifth Earl of Huntingdon, had outdone his predecessors as an election patron. Of the town's twelve places between 1614 and 1628, his nominees took five and, if the Earl's support for May in 1624 is included, his candidates captured half the town's seats, a markedly better record than his Elizabethan predecessors had achieved. But even the powerful Earl of Huntingdon could be checked, as the elections of 1640 were to show.

Parliament did not meet again following its bitter dissolution in March 1629 until April 1640. And, in that intervening period, the years of Charles I's "personal rule", royal policies seemed to increase, rather than reduce, the growing antagonism toward the Crown. By that fateful spring of 1640, the King faced a Scotland united in rebellion against royal religious policies while, in England, ship money collections had practically ceased. The King's finances were in chaos. Charles's ragged army showed more zeal against Laudian communion rails than against the King's northern enemy. The Short Parliament's sudden dissolution in early May 1640 made the situation worse; money for the King's government was not to be found, disturbances punctuated London's summer and, in August 1640, twelve peers, from the very class that ought to have been most loyal to the Crown, presented a petition demanding another parliament to solve the many grievances that were being openly discussed against Charles's rule. The King, powerless in the face of such growing and outspoken opposition, surrendered and in the autumn faced the famous Long Parliament which would, within the first months of its existence, launch a constitutional revolution against the Crown. It was in this heated atmosphere that the Earl of Huntingdon attempted to maintain his traditional electoral influence in Leicestershire.

Huntingdon, unlike his illustrious predecessor, the third Earl, was no puritan. Indeed, as the elections reflected, Huntingdon's sympathies or, perhaps, his lack of enthusiasm for reform, practically destroyed his election influence. In the spring, he nominated the later Leicestershire royalist, Sir Henry Skipworth and his son Henry Hastings for the county's places, directing Leicester's corporation to "send your constables in their several wards to the freeholders to signify my desire unto them that as for my son in the first place so for Sir Henry in the second". But times had changed in Leicestershire as Huntingdon discovered to his cost. The latent antagonism that seemingly existed in the county was given its lead by two staunch puritan noblemen, Henry Grey, Earl of Stamford (a traditional foe of Huntingdon) and Henry, Lord Grey of Ruthin. Thanks to their intervention, Huntingdon's nominees were refused. Leicestershire elected, instead, Lord Grey of Ruthin and another puritan and bitter foe of Laud, Sir Arthur Hesilrige, who later gained fame as a republican foe of Cromwell's commonwealth. It was the first time since the election of 1604 that the Huntingdon influence had failed to win the return of at least one candidate. The spring election proved to be

only the beginning of the Earl's misfortunes. In the autumn, a possibly bitter election was fought and Huntingdon's nominees were again refused. Hesilrige and Lord Grey of Ruthin were re-elected.²² The consecutive defeats the Earl suffered in 1640 must have come as a shock; it was unheard of in the electoral history of the Hastings family. Huntingdon's apparent loyalty to the Crown and the determined electioneering of the two puritan peers, Stamford and Grey of Ruthin, offer the most likely explanation for the surprising overthrow of the Huntingdon electoral interest in Leicestershire. However, more surprises for the Earl were in store.

In the spring, Huntingdon and the Duchy's chancellor, Lord Barrett of Newburgh, collaborated to win the return of "Simon Every, Esqr., Receiver General of His Majesty's Duchy of Lancaster" for Leicester but the fate of the Countess of Devonshire's nominee, Thomas Coke, son of the former secretary of state, Sir John Coke, should have given them warning. Coke was returned by the town but only through default. The town had preferred to return a probable puritan, Roger Smith of Edmonton and Gray's Inn, but Smith would not serve. He refused election—on grounds of religious principle?—because he would not take the freeman's oath. Smith's principles allowed Coke to step nimbly into Leicester's second seat. If Huntingdon made his own nomination in the autumn election, no evidence survives to identify his candidate. Simon Every was nominated again by the Duchy and it is possible that the Earl backed Every's candidacy. If he did so, he was disappointed for, in spite of the almost desperate efforts by the Mayor and other leading members of the corporation, "it so falls out that neither your Lordship's (Lord Barrett of Newburgh) expectations, nor our own that be the ancient of the company was any whit answered, being overswayed with the greater part of voices". Leicester elected the future regicide, Thomas, Lord Grey of Groby, the youthful (he was not yet twenty years old) son of the town's puritan neighbour, the Earl of Stamford. Coke, thanks again to the Countess of Devonshire's interference, took Leicester's other seat.²³ Huntingdon's influence had failed; it was the first time that no Huntingdon nominee had served for Leicester since he had placed Sir Henry Rich in a bye-election in 1610. But perhaps there was some solace for the Earl after all since Sir Guy Palmes was elected in both elections for Rutland. Huntingdon had supported Palmes in the past and, while there is nothing to link Palmes and Huntingdon directly in 1640, it is likely that the Earl, acting in his capacity as Rutlandshire's Lord Lieutenant, managed to salvage something from the wreck of his electoral influence by backing Palmes.²⁴ In the elections of 1640, Huntingdon managed to place only three candidates, counting Palmes and the support he gave Every in the spring at Leicester. For Huntingdon, the collapse of personal rule and the impending challenge to Charles's government brought an end to his customary electoral influence in his home county. It is a telling illustration of the impact of England's constitutional and religious crisis—personified in Leicestershire by the actions of the Earl of Stamford and Lord Grey of Ruthin and their zealous supporters—upon hitherto accepted influence and power.

The fifth Earl of Huntingdon's electoral career was, in spite of his defeats in 1640, a remarkably successful one and stands as a significant challenge to the suggestion that aristocratic electoral influence declined after Elizabeth's death. In fact, he was, of all the Earls of Huntingdon since 1559, the most proficient election patron. In the nine elections between 1604 and autumn 1640, his influence contributed to the return of twenty-six candidates. It was an enviable record of successful electioneering and stands as a tribute to the Earl's power, prestige and authority in his home county, Leicestershire and neighbouring Rutlandshire. Another factor that goes a long way toward explaining the Earl's success was his choice of nominees. Of the eleven men he nominated, four were his sons or relatives, four were residents in the counties for which they were recommended and only three candidates at Leicester, Sir Humphrey May, Simon Every and Sir Henry Rich, were outsiders. Rich was a Huntingdon nominee while May and Every were, primarily, candidates of the Duchy of Lancaster although the Earl gave them his support. Huntingdon's candidates were, almost always, locally "known" men; it was a lesson other patrons should have followed, Huntingdon's record is all the more exceptional since, unlike his great predecessor, Henry Hastings, the third Earl, he never held a great court appointment. The third Earl employed his office as Lord President of the Council of the North for electoral patronage; the fifth Earl never enjoyed such an opportunity. In addition, the fifth Earl had to compete for county places with Leicestershire's increasingly aggressive gentry, who clearly prevented any Huntingdon monopoly of the county's knight-ships and forced the Earl to settle for one seat, and with a series of place-hunting chancellors of the Duchy of Lancaster who consistently sought their own electoral aggrandizement in Leicester's elections. In spite of these obstacles, Huntingdon still managed to achieve a remarkable record as an electoral patron. His electioneering was entirely based on his local influence and his local offices as Steward of Leicester and Lord Lieutenant of two counties. In the highly competitive electoral atmosphere of early Stuart England, Henry Hastings, fifth Earl of Huntingdon, truly made his mark as an eminent electoral patron.

NOTES

1. Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (Oxford, 1964), 258-263. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Keeper of Archives for the Museum and Art Gallery at Leicester, Mr. G. A. Chinnery, M.A., for his assistance during my visit to Leicester
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5. Return of the names of every member returned to serve in each parliament, Accounts and Papers, Session of 1878, 2 vols., London, 1878, i, 400; Neale, *Elizabethan House of Commons*, 171-176; Brian Levack, *The Civil Lawyers in England, 1603-1641* (Oxford, 1973), 218
6. Neale, *Elizabethan House of Commons*, 174-176
7. Neale, *Elizabethan House of Commons*, 226-227; James Croston, ed., E. Baines, *The History of the County Palatine and Duchy of Lancaster*, 2d revised edition, 5 vols. (1888-1893), i, 134
8. Neale, *Elizabethan House of Commons*, 144
9. Clare Cross, *The Puritan Earl* (1966), 174-175; F. W. Brooks, *The Council of the North*, Historical Association Pamphlet (1953), 26
10. Cokayne, *Peerage*, iv, 289; W. B. Willcox, *Gloucestershire: a study in local government, 1590-1640* (New Haven, 1940), 191; "Sir Basil Brook", L. Stephen and S. Lee, eds., *Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter cited as DNB), 22 vols., London, 1908-1909, ii, 1321
11. Neale, *Elizabethan House of Commons*, 172-173
12. Cokayne, *Peerage*, iv, 240-241; J. Nichols, *History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester* (hereafter cited as Nichols, *Leicester*), 4 vols. in 8 pts. (1795-1815), ii, pt. i, 418; J. Thompson, *The History of Leicester from the time of the Romans to the end of the Seventeenth Century* (hereafter cited as Thompson, *Leicester, Leicester and London, 1849*), 326-327, 342; Augustine Nicholls to the Mayor of Leicester, 15 Jan. 1604, the Earl of Huntingdon to the same, Jan. 1604, Mayor and Corporation of Leicester to Huntingdon, 31 Jan. 1604, Sir Henry Beaumont to the Mayor and Corporation of Leicester, 14 Feb. 1604, Leicester Museum, Department of Archives, City of Leicester MSS, Hall Papers Bound, 1600-1606, BR/II/18/8: 421, 428, 431, 440; Meetings of the Corporation of Leicester, Hall Papers Bound, 1600-1606, BR/II/18/8: 432, 434; Earl of Huntingdon to the Mayor of Leicester, 3, 9 May 1610, Common Hall Meeting of 19 May 1610, Hall Papers Bound, 1608-1610, BR/II/18/9: 433, 437, 442; Hall Book 1587-1708, BR/II/1/3: 367
13. Cokayne, *Peerage*, iv, 290
14. Neale, *Elizabethan House of Commons*, 41, 176; W. Notestein, F. H. Relf and H. Simpson, eds., *Commons Debates*, 1621 (hereafter cited as Notestein, Relf and Simpson, eds., *Commons Debates*), 7 vols. (New Haven, 1935), i, 51; ii, 49-52, 63, 94; iv, 35-36, 40-41, 61, 68; v, 251-252, 445-446, 451, 474, 509-510; vi, 360-361, 429-430, 445-447, 449-450; T. Tyrwhitt, ed., *Proceedings and Debates*, 1621 (hereafter cited as Tyrwhitt, ed., *Proceedings and Debates*, 1621), 2 vols. (1766), i, 19-24, 33, 57; Buckingham to Sir George Hastings, 23 Jan. 1621, Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on the Manuscripts of the late Reginald Rawdon Hastings, esq., of the Manor House, Ashby-de-la-Zouche* (hereafter cited as HMC Hastings), 4 vols. (1928-1947), iv, 204; VHC *Leicestershire*, ii, 107; *Commons Journals*, i, 511-512, 513, 515-516, 516-517, 523, 525-526
15. VCH *Leicestershire*, ii, 107; Huntingdon to Thomas Wright, 9 April 1625, HMC Hastings, ii, 67. There was more trouble in the election of 1626 when Sir Henry petitioned the House of Commons against the sheriff's conduct. Hastings claimed that the sheriff was guilty of contempt but what happened to cause the petition remains unknown, *Commons Journals*, i, 841, 844, 849, 854, 855
16. Huntingdon to the Sheriff of Rutland, n.d. 1621?, HMC Hastings, ii, 64; Mary F. Keeler, *The Long Parliament, 1640-1641* (hereafter cited as Keeler, *Long Parliament*), Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society, vol. 36, Philadelphia, 1954, 294-295; J. C. Sainty, *Lieutenants of Counties 1585-1642*, supplement No. 8, *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* (1970), 26, 30; "A List of the names of those gent./lemen/my lord/Zouch/commanded for burgesses to the parliament," 13 Dec. ? 1620, P.R.O., St. P. Dom. 14/118: 26
17. "Sir Thomas Parry," DNB, xv, 385; Parry nominated Leigh when he discovered Felton would not be able to serve. Moir, *Addled Parliament*, 43-44; Nichols, *Leicester*, ii, pt. i, 341, 425; Leicester Museum, Dept. of Archives, City of Leicester MSS, Hall Book 1587-1708, BR/II/1/3: 398; Parry to the Mayor and Burgesses of Leicester, 21 Feb. 1614, Wm. Heyrick to the same, 26 Feb. 1614, Earl of Huntingdon to the same, 4 March 1614, Mayor and Burgesses of Leicester to Francis Harvey, 7 March 1614, Harvey to the Mayor of Leicester, 11

- March 1614, the Mayor and Burgesses of Leicester to the Earl of Huntingdon, 14 March 1614, the same to Sir Thomas Parry, 16 March 1614, Leicester Museum, Dept. of Archives, City of Leicester MSS, BR/II/13/3, 4, 4v, 5, 5v, 6, 6v, 7, 7v, 8, 8v, 9; Thompson, *Leicester*, 326-327, 344; "Henry Rich, first Earl of Holland", *DNB*, xvi, 997-1,000; "Francis Leigh, first Earl of Chichester", *DNB*, xi, 875-876, which contains information about his father Sir Francis Leigh, chosen at Leicester in 1614; "Sir William Hericke or Herrick", *DNB*, ix, 694-695
18. M. Prestwich, *Cranfield, Politics and Profits under the Early Stuarts* (Oxford, 1966), 256-257, 296; D. H. Willson, *The Privy Councillors and the House of Commons, 1604-1629* (Minneapolis, 1940), 66, 94-95, 98, 177, 195, 199-200; P. Zagorin, *The Court and the Country* (1969), 59; "Sir Humphrey May", *DNB*, xiii, 140-141; Mayor of Leicester to the Earl of Huntingdon, 17 Nov. 1620, Huntingdon to the Mayor and Brethren of Leicester, 31 Dec. 1620, Mayor and Corporation of Leicester to Huntingdon, 4 Jan. 1621, *HMC Hastings*, iv, 203, 204; Mayor and Corporation of Leicester to ?, n.d.; the copy of Morison's oath, n.d.; Mayor of Leicester to Huntingdon, n.d.; undated ms reporting Leicester's decision about the Countess of Devonshire's nominee; Mayor of Leicester to Huntingdon, 16 Dec. 1620, the same to Francis Harvey, 16 Dec. 1620, Leicester Museum, Dept. of Archives, City of Leicester MSS, Hall Papers Bound, 1620-1623, BR/II/18/14: 8, 10, 14, 20, 21; Thompson, *Leicester*, 346-347; "Sir Richard Moryson", *DNB*, xiii, 1071; VCH *Leicestershire*, iv, 353; Lawrence Stone, "The Electoral Influence of the second Earl of Salisbury, 1614-68", *English Historical Review*, 71, 1956, 392-393; Lady E. de Villiers, "Parliamentary Boroughs Restored by the House of Commons, 1625-41", *English Historical Review*, 67, 1952, 192; J. E. Cussans, *History of Hertfordshire*, 3 vols. (London and Hertford, 1870-1881), i, 54, 94, 104, 263; G. E. Aylmer, *The King's Servants* (1961), 286-287; Nichols, *Leicester*, ii, pt. i, 425; Leicester Museum, Dept. of Archives, City of Leicester MSS, Hall Book 1578-1708, BR/II/13: 448. After Sir William Heyrick lost in 1614, his brother Robert urged him, should he want to stand at Leicester again, to "speak to Mr. Chancellor to write but two lines to our town, that you may be one; it will be as sure as any act of parliament" but whether Heyrick took his brother's advice is unknown, Nichols, *Leicester*, ii, pt. i, 341
19. May to the Earl of Huntingdon, 4 Jan. 1624, Huntingdon to the Mayor and Burgesses of Leicester, 9, 15 Jan. 1624, May to Huntingdon, 21 Jan. 1624, *HMC Hastings*, iv, 63; VCH *Leicestershire*, iv, 60, 411; Nichols, *Leicester*, ii, pt. i, 426; Thompson, *Leicester*, 349; Mayor of Leicester to John Bale, Sheriff of Leicestershire, 10? Jan. 1624, Mayor of Leicester? to May, ? Jan. 1624, Mayor of Leicester to the Earl of Huntingdon, 12, 16 Jan. 1624, Election indenture of 16 Jan. 1624, Leicester Museum, Dept. of Archives, City of Leicester MSS, Hall Papers Bound, 1623-1625, BR/II/18/15: 274, 279, 281-284, 286; Hall Book 1578-1708, BR/II/13: 470; "Sir Humphrey May", *DNB*, xiii, 140-141
20. Leicester's surrender to its patrons was even more blatantly revealed during the summer when Sir Humphrey May decided he preferred to serve for Lancaster which had also returned him to parliament. To take his Leicester place, he nominated the Suffolk courtier, Sir Thomas Jermyn who was dutifully elected even though the corporation had to admit that Jermyn was "altogether unknown to any of us". So much for Leicester's electoral independence. May to the Mayor and Corporation of Leicester, 2 April 1625, Thomas Haselrige to the Mayor of Leicester, 19 April 1625, the Common Hall held 3 May 1625 for the election of burgesses, the election indenture for 3 May 1625, Mayor of Leicester to Sir George Hastings, 3 May 1625, the same to Sir Humphrey May, 3 May 1625, Leicester Museum, Dept. of Archives, City of Leicester MSS, Hall Papers Bound, 1623-1625, BR/II/18/15: 557, 559-561, 563, 564; Hall Book 1578-1708, BR/II/13: 484; "Sir Arthur Hesilrige or Haselrig", *DNB*, ix, 743-747; Keeler, *Long Parliament*, 213, 236; Thompson, *Leicester*, 350, 351; Nichols, *Leicester*, ii, pt. i, 426; May to the Mayor of Leicester, 10 July 1625, Common Hall meeting of 22 July 1625, election indenture of 22 July 1625, Leicester Museum, Dept. of Archives, City of Leicester MSS, Hall Papers Bound, 1623-1625, BR/II/18/15: 597, 598, 600, 601. Jermyn was a kinsman of May, accounting for his returns for Leicester in 1625, Lancaster in 1626 and Clitheroe in 1628. All three were Duchy of Lancaster boroughs
21. Earl of Huntingdon to the Mayor, Bailiff and Burgesses of Leicester, 12 Jan. 1626, *HMC Hastings*, ii, 68; Common Hall meeting of 13 Jan. 1626, Mayor of Leicester to Sir Humphrey May, 14 Jan. 1626, the same to Sir George Hastings,

- n.d. 1626, Common Hall meeting of Feb. 1628, Leicester Museum, Dept. of Archives, City of Leicester MSS, Hall Papers Bound, 1625-1628, BR/II/18/16: 7, 53, 54, 243; Hall Book 1587-1708, BR/II/1/3: 492; Nichols, *Leicester*, ii, pt. 1, 426; Thompson, *Leicester*, 352, 354; Cokayne, *Peerage*, ii, 232
22. Huntingdon to the Mayor and Corporation of Leicester, 20 Jan. 1640, 13 Feb. 1640, Leicester Museum, Dept. of Archives, Leicester City MSS, Hall Papers Bound, 1637-1640, BR/II/18/21: 550, 552; Withrings to Sir John Coke, 3 Nov. 1640, Sir John Coke the younger to Sir John Coke, 15 Nov. 1640, Historical Manuscripts Commission, *The manuscripts of the Earl Cowper, K.G., preserved at Melbourne Hall, Derbyshire* (hereafter cited as *HMC Cowper*), 3 vols., London, 1888-1889, ii, 262, 263; VCH *Leicestershire*, ii, 110; Keeler, *Long Parliament*, 54, 195, 213
23. "Thomas Grey, Baron Grey of Groby", *DNB*, viii, 649-650; Thompson, *Leicester*, 359; VCH *Leicestershire*, ii, 110; Nichols, *Leicester*, ii, pt. 1, 427; Huntingdon to the Mayor and Burgesses of Leicester, 8 Feb. 1640, *HMC Hastings*, iv, 218; Sir John Coke the younger to Sir John Coke, 30 March 1640, *HMC Cowper*, ii, 252; Lord Newburgh to the Mayor and Corporation of Leicester, 19 Dec. 1639, Countess of Devonshire to the same, 20 Jan. 1640, Earl of Huntingdon to the same, 20 Jan. 1640, the same to the same, 8 Feb. 1640, the same to the same, 13 Feb. 1640, Roger Smith to the same, 27 March 1640, the same to Sir John Coke, 27 March 1640, Countess of Devonshire to the same, 7 April 1640, Leicester Museum, Dept. of Archives, City of Leicester MSS, Hall Papers Bound, 1637-1640, BR/II/18/21: 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 578, 584, 592; Meetings of the Common Hall of Leicester, Hall Papers Bound, 1637-1640, BR/II/18/21: 579, 585, 591; Hall Book 1578-1708, BR/II/1/3: 570, 578; Lord Newburgh to the Mayor and Corporation of Leicester, 29 Sept. 1640, Earl of Stamford to the same, 9 Oct. 1640, Countess of Devonshire to the same, 17, 31 Oct. 1640, Mayor and Corporation of Leicester to Lord Newburgh, 28 Nov. 1640, Leicester Museum, Dept. of Archives, City of Leicester MSS, Hall Papers Bound, 1640-1645, BR/II/18/22: 3, 8, 9, 12, 16; Meeting of the Common Hall, Hall Papers Bound 1640-1645, BR/II/18/22: 10; Angel to Sir John Coke, 29 Sept. 1640, *HMC Cowper*, ii, 261. While Roger Smith's religious sympathies were similar to those of the Earl of Stamford, there is nothing in the abundant evidence for Leicester's 1640 elections to show that Smith was a nominee of the Earl
24. Keeler, *Long Parliament*, 60, 294-295