

**ANNALS OF THE LORDS OF
WARRINGTON AND BEWSEY, FROM
1587 TO 1833, WHEN WARRINGTON
BECAME A PARLIAMENTARY BOROUGH
IN TWO PARTS: PART I WARRINGTON,
PART II BEWSEY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649482337

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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FROM 1587 TO 1833, WHEN WARRINGTON BECAME
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PART I. WARRINGTON. PART II. BEWSEY.

WITH
NOTICES OF HISTORICAL AND LOCAL EVENTS.

BY
WILLIAM BEAMONT, Esq.



MANCHESTER: CHARLES SIMMS AND CO.
WARRINGTON: PERCIVAL PEARSE.
M.DCCC.LXXIII.



PRINTED BY CHARLES SIMMS,
MANCHESTER.

P R E F A C E.

"Now then, farewell! and still if you be wise
Revere our sires, the gentle and the bold,
Nor e'en on English soil neglect to prize
The genuine relics of our great of old!"

(ROWLAND WILLIAMS.)

THE annals contained in the following pages embrace the time between the years 1587 and 1833; in the former of which the nation in dignified preparation was awaiting the invasion of the Spanish armada; and in the latter the reform bill had just passed, after exciting an agitation which had disturbed the country almost as much as the dread of the armada had done. Between these two periods England passed through a series of events of the greatest importance in her history.

When the duke of Mayenne's officer, before the battle of Arques, jeeringly asked Henry of Navarre whether the small array he saw was the whole of the force with which he meant to engage the duke's great army, Henry calmly replied: "No sir, it is not all; for you have not reckoned God and a good cause, which are both on our side;" and such might have been queen Elizabeth's reply to Philip of Spain if, in the year when these annals begin,

she had been similarly questioned before the angry winds and waves, coming to the assistance of her seamen, had done their office and dispersed his "invincible fleet." If the admiral's fleet as he followed the enemy borrowed any of its wings from the sail-cloth made at Warrington, the place has an additional reason to take pride in the victory.

The sceptre next passed peacefully from the last Tudor to the first Stuart monarch, who shortly afterwards narrowly escaped the danger threatened by the gunpowder treason; but under his son that great civil war broke out which cost the monarch his life and in all but the name set Cromwell in his place. When the latter died and the sceptre had devolved to his son, *queen* Richard as he has been called, his hand proved too weak to grasp it, and for two troubled reigns the crown reverted to and remained with its old possessors until it was wrested from them by the revolution; it then passed to William of Orange, just a century after the overthrow of the armada. William by his skill and courage was enabled to guide the country through the dangers inseparable from so great an organic change, and from him the crown passed peaceably to queen Anne, whose reign was rendered illustrious by the victories of Marlborough. Scarcely however had her reign ended before the throne of her successor was threatened by the rebellion of 1715; and in thirty years after there occurred another rebellion, which, with the historian who wrote its history in Latin (the last that has appeared in that language), let us hope

will be the last rebellion the country will ever witness. Under George III. England gained her Indian empire, but she lost her American colonies, — a loss which India could not repair. If queen Mary could remember the loss of Calais to her dying day, the loss of the American colonies must have distressed him who lost them as much and as long. The protracted war with France into which England was drawn by the revolution ended in the great victories of Wellington and the fall of Napoleon. Under George IV. and William IV. the national contests, which were chiefly parliamentary, ended in the passing of that bill which is the terminal limit of these annals.

This brief review may suffice to show that the lords of Warrington and Bewsey in the period of these annals, if they desired it, would have abundant opportunities in the state of the times to serve their country and show their patriotism.

From the time when these annals begin Warrington passed successively through the Dudleys, the Irelands and the Booths to the Blackburnes its present owners; and Bewsey passed through two different branches of the Irelands, the Athertons and the Gwilyms to the present noble owners, the house of Powys; and it will appear in the subsequent pages that very few of these successive lords were deaf to the call of their country, or omitted to serve her either in the law, the camp, the senate or the court. If we canvass their various lives we shall find among the Dudleys that Leycester and his son, though clever and prominent, were rather notorious than famous

or to be esteemed; while Warwick was the only one of their house who was good as well as great. Of the Irelands, sir Thomas, an active and successful lawyer, was rather to be admired than loved; but his less aspiring son filled his place as a respected country gentleman, discharging the duties of his rank. Of the Booths, William, the first of them, died young, but all the others acted conspicuous parts, and won, not without much risk and many sufferings, honour and rank in troublesome and difficult times. Of the Blackburnes, John, the earliest of them, attained some eminence in literature and ranked high amongst horticulturists and naturalists; and though he sought no parliamentary honours was of the utmost use to his neighbourhood, especially in the time of the last rebellion, and after living in great respect to a patriarchal age he died universally lamented. His grandson of the same name succeeded him as lord of the manor of Warrington, and for nearly half a century represented the great county of Lancaster in parliament. Sir Gilbert Ireland of Bewsey was essentially a public man, and abundant notices of him and his services will be found in the histories of the time. The Athertons and the Gwilyms who succeeded him, though they sat occasionally in parliament, were unfortunately cut off by illness at an early age; and the noble family who succeeded them at Bewsey had before earned by their public services the coronets they deservedly wear.

Of all these men very few led an idle life. Of some of them, as Leycester and his son, their lives may be held

up to us as a warning; but most of the others may be placed before us as examples for our imitation. Happily if we will we may derive profit from warnings as well as from examples.

To the particulars of the lords of Warrington and Bewsey, which will be given in the following pages, it appears requisite here to add a few notices of some events which, though rather local than personal, seem necessary to render these annals more complete. Some entries in the Parish register, made while the Booths were lords of Warrington, invite our attention. The first of these informs us that in 1662 a collection was made for the royal fishing. In 1623 it had been thought a most desirable thing to encourage a home fishery, and in Frodsham church in that year a brief was read for "a decayed fishing haven." The troubles of the country since that time had thrown the fishery back, and the collection at Warrington, which was no doubt general, was intended to restore it; a similar collection at Frodsham at the same time is expressly stated to be for the purpose of "restoring the trade of fishing." Another collection at Warrington in the same year was made for the distressed protestants in Lithuania. The treaty of Oliva in 1660 had guaranteed these people an equality of rights and the free exercise of their religion, but they still suffered persecution and needed relief. (Campbell's *Frederic the Great*, pref. p. vii.) Cromwell, had he been alive, would have assisted these people more effectually than with money! After Louis XIV. in an evil hour had put his