Before the English Civil War

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Essays on Early Stuart Politics
and Government

EDITED BY
HOWARD TOMLINSON

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*To All Wellingtonian
and Old Wellingtonian Historians*

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Note

The year is taken to begin on 1 January, but in other respects the 'Old Style' is used. Spelling and punctuation have been modernised throughout.

Preface

NEARLY twenty years ago my history master issued me with G. M. Trevelyan's *England Under the Stuarts* and J. R. Tanner's *Constitutional Conflicts of the Seventeenth Century* to begin my study of seventeenth-century English history. These were both excellent works in their way, and judging by the number of reprints they are still in demand, but they were outdated, even in the mid-1960s. Students now are better served than I was by way of introduction to the early Stuart period. But even to-day, the most recent and best of the textbooks to be published on the period, Robert Ashton's *The English Civil War, 1603–49* (1978) and Barry Coward's *The Stuart Age* (1980), are inadequate, such is the turnover in seventeenth-century historical scholarship. Indeed since I began teaching this period as an 'A' level special subject nearly six years ago, the booklist has had to be constantly revised by the Oxford and Cambridge Board, and the title (although not the content) of the paper changed, in the best revisionist manner, from 'The Causes of the English Civil War, 1603–42' to 'Politics, Religion and Society in England, 1603–42'. I have edited these essays, therefore, in the hope that newcomers to the period might be acquainted with the latest research on some of the major topics of early Stuart government. Having tasted these fruits it is not inconceivable that they might be tempted to look beyond them.

Schoolmasters these days do not have much leisure during term-time to devote to literary pursuits and this has put me under a greater obligation than usual to publisher and contributors alike, all of whom have had to take second place to my pupils. I am grateful for their patience in awaiting the publication of this volume. In particular, I would like to thank Sarah Mahaffy, of Macmillan, for her enthusiastic response to my initial proposal for this book and for her care in seeing it

through its final stages; and Conrad Russell and Kevin Sharpe for their suggestions as to contributors and their helpful criticism of the first draft of my chapter. Conrad Russell's letters from across the Atlantic, too, were a constant source of encouragement. Peter White of Wellington College also made some perceptive comments about my chapter, and has been and continues to be an inspiring colleague. Other Wellington historians have done more than they know in making this volume possible, and another Wellington connection, Jean Fox, my typist, coped magnificently with my badly mutilated manuscript. But my greatest debt is to my family: my four children, who have been a pleasant and necessary diversion from editorial duties; and, above all, to my wife, who during the time this book has been in preparation not only has continued to write and teach, but also has borne more than her fair share of parental responsibilities. That she has found time, as well, to read my contributions to this volume, thereby saving me from many textual errors, is a matter of some wonder. Although my writing has not whetted her appetite for seventeenth-century history, she has sustained all her burdens with characteristic cheerfulness.

Wellington College, Berkshire
September 1982

HOWARD TOMLINSON