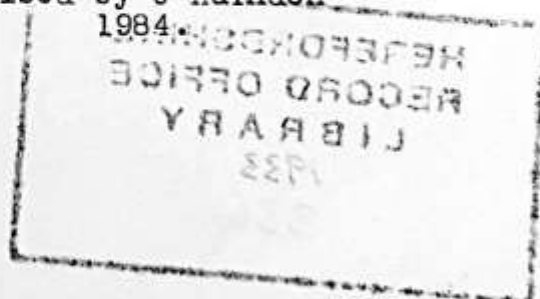


THE HEARTH TAX ASSESSMENT
FOR
MICHAELMAS 1665
FOR HEREFORDSHIRE
AND
COMPARISON WITH THE
HEREFORDSHIRE MILITIA
ASSESSMENTS
OF 1663



Transcribed by J. Harnden



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54 city of Hereford

The Hearth Tax Assessment for Herefordshire
Michaelmas 1665

Although the Hearth Tax was in force from 1662 to 1689 and there were 54 collections of tax in all, owing to the various (eight) different administrations and their methods only the returns for 1662 to 1666 and 1669 to 1674 were made to the Exchequer and so survive in the national archives. For Herefordshire, of these 22 returns only 9 have survived. These are Michaelmas 1662, 1664, 1665, 1670, 1671 and 1673, and Lady Day 1664, 1665 and 1666.

The microfilm held at Hereford Record Office is of Michaelmas 1665 which shows the names of each person liable to pay hearth tax together with the number of hearths in each such chargeable house parish by parish for each of the Hundreds, and the City of Hereford. It is unfortunate that the assessment for Lady Day 1664 is not available as this lists both chargeable and not chargeable houses and is therefore a more complete list of persons living in Herefordshire. Chargeable houses over the whole county accounted for about 60% of the total number of houses.

Comparison with the Herefordshire Militia Assessments

When transcribing and typing the Hearth Tax return the opportunity was taken to compare the names listed, parish by parish, with those listed in the Herefordshire Militia Assessments of 1663, published in book form by the Royal Historical Society and edited by Mr M.A. Faraday.

The Militia Assessment was levied on the owners of property worth over £50 per annum, whereas the Hearth Tax was levied on the occupier of the house.

A high proportion of names was found to occur in both these assessments; this is to be expected with only 2½ years between the two and probably very little movement of population.

There are many names in the Hearth Tax return which do not occur in the Militia Assessments and this is to be expected as they are mainly those with only one hearth and therefore presumably a low annual income.

It is perhaps more puzzling why many of the wealthier persons in the Militia Assessments are not to be found in the Hearth Tax. The principle reason is probably that they owned property in other counties as well and were assessed for Hearth Tax elsewhere. According to Mr Faraday, in 1663 42% of the land was owned by persons living outside the county.

The main coincidence of names is therefore between the owners and occupiers of houses in the lower range in 1663, and the occupiers of houses with the larger number of hearths in 1665. However, this is not always the case, and occupiers of houses with only one hearth can often be found in the Militia Assessments.

Spelling of names

This comparison has been of great help in the deciphering of some of the more unreadable, faded or strangely spelled names.

The Hearth Tax returns were compiled by Constables, probably of a fairly low standard of education, whereas the compilers, or raters, for the Militia Assessments were chosen from local farmers or landowners of some standing who were probably better educated and

had a better idea of what the correct spelling of the name should be, although the correctness and rigidity of spelling as we know it today had probably not yet arrived.

Indecipherable headings

In a few isolated cases where it has been found impossible to read the heading of the parish it has been possible to identify this by a process of elimination and by comparison with the names in the Militia Assessments.

Listing of parishes

The alpha-numerical listing of the parishes used in the Militia Assessments has been followed to identify the parishes in the Hearth Tax return so as to allow easy cross reference. Apart from this, and the listing of the parishes in the same order as is found in the Militia Assessments, the Hearth Tax return has been copied exactly as it is shown in the original.

Layout of the main text

The left hand side of each page is a direct copy of the return apart from 'stopped up hearths' which is shown in the return to the left of the name but is shown in this copy after the number of charged hearths. The right hand side of the page shows the comparison with any similar names found in the Militia Assessments. When a name is found, is obviously the same person and is spelt in exactly the same way, the notation 'HMA' has been inserted. If the spelling is in any way different the name has been entered in that manner of spelling.

Mr Faraday also includes, as footnotes, the highest hearth tax charge for each parish at Lady Day 1664. These details have also been inserted in the text; opposite the appropriate name if it is also in the 1665 return, and at the end of the parish listing if it is not.

For 9 parishes in Wigmore Hundred Mr Faraday lists, as footnotes, the names of persons with both chargeable and not chargeable hearths in the Lady Day 1664 return, and these have also been inserted.

Herefordshire parishes in 1665

As many parish boundaries and names have appeared, altered or disappeared over the past 320 years a map is included showing the location of most if not all of the headings to be found in the return.

The Index and the identification of names

Wherever possible, obviously similar names have been put together in the index of names and cross references have also been inserted. Some imagination, however, would probably be useful when searching for a name. For example, it is suspected that the names HEARNALL, YEARNALL and VERNALL are probably one and the same, as is SLATER and SLAUGHTER. As what is hoped is an isolated example, it is very probable that Jasper WEAVER in Kington should in fact be Jasper BEAZER, a name that appears in the Kington register over a period of at least 100 years, whereas there are no WEAVERS, and no Jaspers with any other surname.

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 for the xxxxxx ordering & collecting
 revenue arising by hearthmoney
 Signed by Richard Rees Esq & William
 Gregory Esq two of the Kings Ma ties
 Justices of the Peace of the said County &
 Nicholas Phillipott gent Clerke of the peace
 there

R. Rees (Signature)

W. Gregory (Signature)

Nich:Phillpott Clerke (Signature)