

The Visitation of Hertfordshire 1669

transcribed and edited by Alan R Dickins

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This new volume marks the 350th anniversary of the last visitation of Hertfordshire and offers a valuable insight into the lives of its gentry during one of the most turbulent periods of English history. As a sequel to that conducted by Sir Richard St George in 1634 this visitation by Sir Edward Bysshe, Clarenceux King of Arms, captured and recorded a whole new generation who had witnessed the Civil War, the Commonwealth and the Restoration. This volume will therefore be of interest to students not only of Hertfordshire families of the period but also of mid-17th century England as a whole. Already a controversial figure, having been intruded by parliament into the office of Garter King of Arms during the Commonwealth period, Bysshe faced serious criticism of his conduct of earlier visitations from his brother Officers of Arms. Their complaints of inadequacies in his recording methods apply equally to his visitation of Hertfordshire, and one of the principal purposes of this edition of the official record held by the College of Arms is to supplement the information which it contains by filling many of the gaps left by Bysshe. The original manuscript contains over 90 pedigrees but gives arms for fewer than a third of those families. Each pedigree is here transcribed and each of those arms has been blazoned. Many of the remaining families are now identified in this volume by reference to the College records as having been entitled to arms which Bysshe neglected to record, and each is blazoned. The pedigrees are amply supplemented in a series of footnotes by material from those and other sources, both published and unpublished. The volume also includes indexes of personal names, place-names and descriptions, occupations and offices.

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