

THE BEACON SYSTEM IN HAMPSHIRE.

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A PAPER under the above title was published in Vol. X (1931) of the Society's *Proceedings*, and in its last paragraph it was stated that we had no record of how the beacon system worked when it was put to the supreme test by the arrival of the Spanish Armada in the Channel in July 1588. Further research has shown that this statement is not strictly true, for among the Domestic State Papers is a letter giving the names of the captains and the number of men who assembled at Portsmouth on July 29th, 1588, in response to the firing of the beacons.

The letter was addressed to Sir Francis Walsingham, Private Secretary to the Queen. From the expression "all that did repayre" the writer is evidently surprised at the small response. As will be seen from the second paper printed below, the total number of troops allotted to Portsmouth amounted to 16,000, whereas only 2,582, all told, were reviewed by the Earl of Sussex, from which may be gathered that no warning was sent to the whole country, and that, as the Spaniards made no attempt to land, only the beacons on the coast were fired.

The types of troops mentioned are interesting, and perhaps need some explanation. The men described as "corsletts" were a kind of cuirass made chiefly of leather as body covering, and were armed with pikes. The "Almain Rivets" wore a kind of light armour, first used in Germany, which was made flexible by means of overlapping plates sliding on rivets. The two kinds of "bills" are not clear. If the word contracted "fur" is furbished, it may mean that these were bright bills, and the others were "black" or "brown" bills, which are referred to in history. The word "Holb" is for halberd. It is remarkable that at so late a date as 1588 so many archers were employed.

The second paper gives the number of men appointed for the defence of the southern and eastern ports and seaboard. They are drawn from the southern and eastern counties, from Cornwall to Lincoln, and number 144,692.

It is interesting to note that the Lords of the Council and other Lords and gentlemen, and the Clergy, provided troops at their own charges.

The army for the Queen's person, sent to Tilbury, is, no doubt, the one which Queen Elizabeth addressed in such stirring words.

The names of the Captaines and the number of men under euerie one of their Leadinge viewed by the Right Honorable the Earle of-Sussex upo Portismouth walls the 29 of July wch were all that did repaire for the aide and reliefe of the towne upon the firing of the beacons.

Captaine White	Corsletts	-	41		
	Shott	-	96		
	Archers	-	63		
	Billmen	-	27.—237.		
Capt. William Wedell	Cor.	-	85		
	shot.	-	117		
	arch.	-	111		
	bills	-	156.—469.		
Capt. Bearing	Corsl.	-	20		
	bare pikes	-	33		
	shott	-	63		
	arch.	-	25		
	holb.	-	20		
	bills	-	90.—252.		
Capt. Cotton	Corsl.	-	13		
	shott	-	48		
	arch.	-	62		
	holb.	-	20		
	bills	-	150.—293.	pioners	68
Capt. Sands	Shott	-	16		
	arch.	-	20		
	bills	-	42.—78.		
Capt. Gifford	Cor.	-	25		
	shott	-	52		
	archers	-	14.—91.		
Capt. Tichborne	Corsl. and Al.	}	27		
	Riuetts				
	shot.	-	51		
	arch.	-	114		
	bills	-	71.—263.	pioners	20
Capt. Sir Rich. Norton	Cor	-	24		
	shott	-	36		
	arch.	-	8		
	holb.	-	12		
	billsfur.	-	59		
	unfur	-	24.—163.		
Capt. Bachouse	Cor	-	57		
	bare pikes	-	4		
	Al. Riuetts	-	6		
	shott	-	13		
	holb	-	4		
	bills	-	141.—225.		
Capt. Kingswell	Cor and Al	-			
	Riuetts	-	13		
	bare piks	-	35		
	shott	-	46		
	arch	-	28		
	holb.	-	15		
Capt. Henslowe	bills	-	28.—165.	pioners	15
	Shott	-	21		
	arch	-	20		
	bills fur.	-	38		
	unfur.	-	44.—123.	pioners	28

Capt. Wright	Cor	-	11	
	shott	-	17	
	arch	-	62	
	bills	-	55	145.
Soma totalis of men besides pioners		-		2451.
Whereof—	Cor and al riucts	-	264	
	barepiks	-	72	
	shot	-	586	
	arch	-	527	
	holb	-	71	
	bills fur	-	863	
	unfur	-	68	
	Soma totall of Pioners	-	131	
Whereof there was sent of shott to sea		-		135
and there remaineth of shott for this towne		-		445
Armed men and shott		-		709

This information was given in a letter dated July 31st, 1588, addressed to Sir Francis Walsingham.

On the outside of the folded letter is written :—

“Hast Hast post Hast, for Lyfe.”

Ref. State Papers Domestic, S.P.12, vol. 213, Eliz. paper No. 60.

A BREFF OF FORCES MADE REDY FOR DEFENCE OF REALM AN 1588.

Nombrs of men appointed to repayre to Sundry portes being landing places for the ennemy.

For Falmouth	-	-	Cornewall	-	4000	
			Deuon	-	4000	
			Somerset	-	3000	11'000.
For Plimouth	-	-	Deuon	-	6000	
			Cornewall	-	2000	
			Dorset	-	3000	
			Wiltshyre	-	2000	
			Somerset	-	4000	17'000.
For Poole	-	-	Dorset	-	4000	
			Deuon	-	4000	
			Somerset	-	4000	
			Wiltshyre	-	2000	14'000.
For Portsmouth in Hampshyre	-	-	Southton	-	4000	
			Wiltshyre	-	2000	
			Barkshyre	-	3000	
			Sussex	-	4000	
			Surry	-	3000	16'000.
For parts of Sussex	-	-	Sussex	-	5000	
			Hampshyre	-	3000	
			Kent	-	4000	
			Surry	-	3000	15'000.
For the Isle of Shepey	-	-	Kent	-	6000	
			Sussex	-	4000	
			Surry	-	3000	
			London	-	3000	
			Essex	-	4000	20'000.
For Harwich in Essex	-	-	Essex	-	6000	
			Kent	-	4000	
			London	-	3000	
			Hartford	-	1000	
			Cambridgshyre and Ely	-	500	
			Suffolk	-	3000	17'500.

For any part of Suffolk -	Suffolk	-	5000
	Norfolk	-	3000
	Essex	-	4000
	Cambridg	-	500
	Huntingdon	-	300
	Hartford	-	500.—13'300.
For Yarmouth in Norfolk -	Norfolk	-	6000
	Suffolk	-	4000
	Lincoln	-	3000
	Cambridg	-	500
	Huntingdon	-	300.—13'800.
For an Army -	Cornwall	-	2000
	Deuon	-	3000
	Somerset	-	3000
	Dorset	-	2000
	Wilton	-	2000
	Hampshyre	-	4000
	Barkshyre	-	2000
	Sussex	-	4000
	Kent	-	4000
	Surry	-	1000.—27'000.

Launces, 407 ; Light horses, 2000 :

Pioners out of several countyes, 4692.

Great Ordonnaunce Pieces, 18, wth horses for carriage.

Numbers appointed for an Army for ye Q. p'rson.

London	-	-	10'000
Out of other Counties	-	-	13'900.—23'900.
Horsemen.—Launces	-	-	389
Lighthorse	-	-	1032
Pioners	-	-	2000
Ordonnaunce	-	-	36 pieces.

Officers named for ye Q Army

A Lieutennant general, Mashall, General of ye Horse,
Lieutenant of ye Launces, Lieutenant of ye Lighthorse,
Mr of ye Ordonnaunce, Colonell of ye Infanterie,
Colonells of particular Regiments, besides inferior officers,
a Seriant maior, Mustr Mr, Provost Marshalls, Corporalls and such like.

THE ARMY SENT TO TILBERY UNDER THE E. OF LEYCESTER.

Number appointed to him	-	-	11'000
And out of Kent to be leuyed	-	-	6000, to lye about Sandwich.
Horses appointed.—Launces	-	-	253
Lighthorses	-	-	796
Noblemen to attend upon ye Q. p'rson	-	-	E of Northumberland
with certain numbers of horse	-	-	E of Worcester
	-	-	E of Lincoln
	-	-	E of Hartford.
Barons	L Audéley	L Shirton	
	L Morley	L Windsor	
	L Lumley	L Mordaunt	
	L Dudley	L Rich	
	L Sandes	L Compton	
Lords of ye Counsell and other		Footmen	- 1448
Lords and principall Gentlemen,			
wch did present of their owne		Horsemen	- 1610
charge			
Besides the Bands of ye Pentioners			
and all officers of ye Household.			
Charge of ye Clergy	-	Footmen	- 3885
	-	Horsemen	- 559