

Preface

This book is a tribute to John Morrill by a number of his former students, published to coincide with John's sixty-fifth birthday, an appropriate moment to celebrate his extraordinary achievements as a teacher and scholar.

It is very difficult to capture the career and influence of such an eminent and influential figure, but a crucial feature of John's contribution is that it has been made not simply through his own writing but across a much broader front, particularly through his teaching and wider advocacy for both his field and his profession. This volume is edited by two of his former students, and all the contributions are written by his students engaging with central themes in his work; that is, we hope, a fitting way to mark this distinctive contribution.

John's teaching has always moved in step with his research interests. His advanced courses engaged successively with the study of English government, the British problem, the life and reputation of Oliver Cromwell and latterly with the Irish rebellion of 1641, while his outline courses followed a similar trajectory, also taking in his thesis about the religious roots of seventeenth-century political conflict. Always the concern with personalities came through, sometimes explicitly, as in a 1995 course on 'Stuart politics and personalities: eight case studies'. The overview of John's published work offered in the introduction therefore summarizes an oeuvre that has unfolded in symbiosis with the teaching that means so much to him.

Just as John has always sought to communicate the subject as widely as possible, not least in his tireless work for the Royal Historical Society, the Historical Association and the Cromwell Association, so much of his writing seeks to make the fruits of his research available to the general reader and the student. This is most apparent in his works of synthesis, such as his chapter for the *Oxford Illustrated History of Britain* (1984) – reprinted in 2000 as *Stuart Britain: A Very Short Introduction* – or *The Oxford Illustrated History of Tudor and Stuart Britain* (1996). John has often consciously written for a student readership, as in the book on Charles I

which he co-authored with Christopher Daniels in 1988. Indeed, he was first attracted to the idea of writing *The Revolt of the Provinces*, a book which has exercised a huge influence on research in this field, because he 'wanted to write a book that would be read first and foremost by students, while being research-rooted'.

Just as importantly for our current purposes, John has exercised a significant influence on the field through his postgraduate teaching: he has in fact supervised well over one hundred graduate students. Those taught by him have all responded to his own passion for history, as well as his exacting and rigorous scholarly standards. In this case, however, his teaching has not directly mirrored his research agenda; indeed, the diversity of his graduate students, in terms of personality, interests or methodology, is possibly the greatest tribute to his success. John has never sought to impose his own interests on his students, much less form any kind of 'school', but rather to guide each student to develop their own understanding of the past, to make sense of it in their own particular way, and to find their own scholarly voice. It is in that sense that his postgraduate teaching has marched in close step with his approach to the past.

We could not, of course, include contributions from all of John's students. To narrow it down, we identified those who fulfilled each of the following criteria: that John had been the sole supervisor of their Cambridge Ph.D.; that after the Ph.D. they had published at least one monograph; and that they hold, or have held, a permanent position in a university history department. All those who met these requirements were invited to contribute, and this volume is the result. The resulting essays, like John's own work, range widely across the period, from Smith's examination of Sir Benjamin Rudyerd to Scott's reinterpretation of Harrington; across the political spectrum from Milton's sensitive reading of Royalist counsel to Orr's insights into the political thinking of John Lilburne; and across the three kingdoms, with Kim's analysis of the Scottish Prayer Book, McCafferty's study of the memorialization of dead Irish bishops and Braddick's analysis of the relationship between mobilization and political argument at the outbreak of war in England. But they all engage with a central theme – the way in which individuals experienced the momentous events of mid-seventeenth-century Britain – a theme which engages with John's own work and in particular with his preoccupation with reconstructing the lived experience of individual people.

John's concern for the people of the past is mirrored by his concern for those of the present. We have all benefited from John's friendship and loyalty as well as from his selfless devotion to the pursuit of history and the immense generosity with which he shares his learning and ideas.

We are therefore delighted to include a personal tribute from one of John's closest friends within the historical profession, Mark Kishlansky of Harvard University, which brings to life the manifold contributions to the profession of this deeply humane man. This book is dedicated to John, with gratitude, affection and admiration.

MICHAEL J. BRADDICK
DAVID L. SMITH