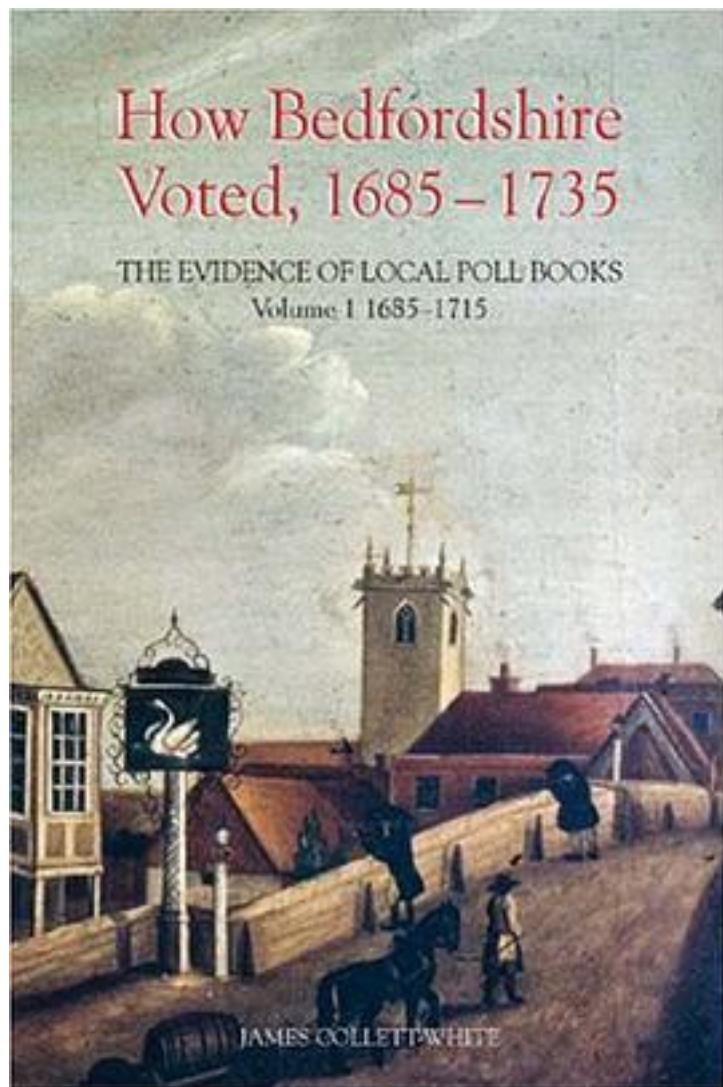


How Bedfordshire Voted, 1685-1735



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Poll books tell the story of local people and their link with national history. This book contains transcripts of the poll books for the County and Borough seats of Bedford and some election accounts showing candidates' expenditure. The introductory commentary gives an insight to political influences in Bedfordshire during the seminal period of English history from the Glorious Revolution to the accession of George I. It enables comparisons and political trends to be detected, including allegiances of regions of the county and parishes, the survival of the Tory party, the political allegiance of Anglican clergy and the role of Protestant Nonconformists. Major landowners were important in Bedfordshire politics but not dominant and local gentry played a crucial role. The transcriptions list all those who voted in four county and one borough election. County voters were 40 shilling freeholders; Borough voters were freemen, burgesses and those qualified by 'scot and lot'; and for both seats numerous voters came from London and surrounding counties. The 8,500 names (fully indexed) will help family historians find ancestors between the 1671 Hearth Tax and the 1841 Census and will give unparalleled information on local landholding. A further volume, 1716-1734, will be published in 2008. James Collett-White is Archivist at Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service, and Archivist to S. C. Whitbread, Southill Park.

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