

# WHY MILITIA BALLOT LISTS?

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Ballot Lists are lists of men between, initially, 18 and 50 years, later 18 to 45 years, who could be called up to join the Hertfordshire Militia by ballot. The years range from 1758 to 1786 and, exceptionally, to 1801. They were drawn up by the Constables of each parish or wards within a town. These lists are valuable because they show not only those who lived in a parish but also their occupation, the number of children each had and the disabilities suffered from. Most of those listed are within the range of yeoman farmers and tradesmen to labourers and servants. These lists are close to being a census.

## WHY TRANSCRIBE THEM?

Hertfordshire has an almost complete set, probably the best set for any other county. The Society decided to transcribe and publish them not only because of this but also for their value to family historians. Originally published in booklet form, they are now presented in searchable portable document format (pdf) together with other items of interest.

We found when transcribing each list that they varied in the amount of detail provided. Those lists to be presented to the presiding magistrate that ran the ballot would have more detail. Others appear to be scratch lists and not the final copy. Being drawn up by the Constable, it is obvious that, for some parishes, those known to him as not eligible to be drawn were not named on the list. Other constables were more conscientious.

When these lists were produced spelling standards were variable. To be of value to those searching for a name, the surname variants were edited to a standard. The most common variant of the surname for each set of lists for a parish or ward became the standard together with a note of the variants found.

Forenames were edited to modern spelling and those abbreviated were extended. Similarly, occupations were edited to modern spelling; laborer became labourer, for instance. This was a way to provide usable copy.

## POINTS TO NOTE

1. The Constables were often not concerned with the technicalities of trade descriptions. Apparent changes of occupation (farmer to labourer to yeoman) probably indicate changes in relative social standing of that person and the Constable for the year.
2. Generally speaking, any names deleted from the list and still legible are noted included.
3. The occupation of servant is not necessarily a domestic servant, usually noted in greater detail. More likely he is a farm servant, unmarried and living in, having been contracted for a year at a hiring fair.

4. Labourers were normally married and had their own living quarters.
5. It is not always possible to ensure that all entries under one name do actually relate to the same person. After several years of exemption a man might again become liable as his children grew up or died, or the name reappearing may be that of his son or other relative with the same forename.
6. Given the varying standards of compilation of the original lists, it cannot be assumed that the absence of a name in any particular year necessarily meant that the person concerned had left the parish.

## HISTORICAL AND LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

### THE DUTY OF DEFENCE

The duty of defence of the country goes back at least to the Anglo-Saxon fyrd, if not before, and the various shires were responsible for the provision of men and arms. Until 1757, militia forces were raised as and when thought necessary in response to internal and external threats.

In 1757, however, with increasing overseas commitments and following the outbreak of the Seven Years War, an Act (30 Geo2 c.25) was passed "for the better ordering of the Militia Forces... in England".

The strengths of the various county militia regiments were regulated; Hertfordshires strength was 560 men. For many years the regiment was called the Hertfordshire Militia but this was never given official sanction.

Men were chosen by ballot to serve for three years but those drawn could either provide a substitute or pay £10 towards the provision of one. After three years, both the drawn man and any substitute would again be liable for service by way of the ballot. The cost of getting a volunteer substitute later increased considerably. In 1803, John Carrington, the diarist of Bramfield, had to pay £20 for a substitute when his son was drawn.

The Act provided for regular training locally, with an annual camp, and, in the event of actual or threatened invasion or rebellion, for their embodiment on a full-time basis for service in England only.

The number each parish had to provide was set by the number of taxable houses in it.

The ballot list drawn up by the Constable was posted on, say, the church door. Anyone aggrieved could appeal at a meeting of the justices when reviewing the lists.

### EXEMPTIONS FROM THE BALLOT

1. These were exempt from service: apprentices, articled clerks, members of the Regular Forces, militia officers, seamen, member of Universities, clergymen and ministers of religion, and parish officers.
2. Lords, Knights and landed gentry were exempt.

3. Disabilities that granted exemption were generally those where a man would be unfit to serve. Being too young or too old would be obvious. Lameness, or fits or idiocy, being blind in one or both eyes, etc. would be good reasons for exemption.

### CHANGES TO ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICE

In subsequent years after 1757, various changes were made. In 1758 (31 Geo2 c.26) parish officers, other than Constables and other peace officers, were no longer exempt. Parishes could "offer" volunteers, not necessarily local men, towards their quotas, and the Privy Council was empowered to fix actual future quotas per county.

In 1762 (2 Geo3 c.20), the maximum age was reduced to 45 rather than 50 and poor men with three legitimate children were exempted. Parish help for poor militiamen's families was precisely set out. Restrictions were imposed on the enlistment of militiamen into the Regular Forces.

With the increasing burden on poor rates, a further Act in 1786 (26 Geo3 c.107) exempted men with two or more legitimate children but the period of service was increased to five years from three years.

In 1798 (38 Geo3 c.27), following the outbreak of war with France in 1793, Volunteer Infantry and Yeomanry units were formed and their members were given exemption from the ballot.

### IN AND AFTER 1801

In 1801, following the Peace of Amiens, Hertfordshire's quota was reduced to 360 (42 Geo3 c.12) but, in the following year, it was increased to 480 (42 Geo3 c.90).

By 1805, the Militia had come to be regarded as a reservoir of trained men, and militia private men were encouraged to enlist in the Regular Forces (45 Geo3 c.31).

Volunteers (up to 25% of the strength was permitted) were entitled to a bounty of ten guineas but full replacement of the militia ranks through the ballot was no longer automatic and militia strengths were progressively reduced so that by a further Act (47 Geo3 Sess.2 c.57) the proportion was increased to 40%.

In 1809, militia corporals and sergeants were allowed to volunteer (49 Geo3 c.4).

So run down did the militia become that, later in the same year, worried by Napoleon's continental successes and the abortive British Walcheren adventure, which drained the country of trained troops, a further Act (49 Geo3 c.53) was hastily passed by which militiamen equal to half the usual quotas could be raised by "beat of drum", with Volunteers receiving a bounty of 12 guineas.

The ballot system was considered to be too slow and unwieldy for the emergency and such were the strains on it that after June 1810, although further militia recruits were to continue to be raised through the ballot, churchwardens

and overseers of the poor could raise volunteers instead, who would be entitled to, initially, a 10 guinea bounty but this increased the next year to 12 guineas and the numbers could include up to a quarter of boys over 14 (51 Geo3 c.20).

Militia regiments were restricted to serving in their own country. From 1811, they could serve in any part of the United Kingdom but for no longer than two years outside their own country and only if they agreed. A 2 guinea bounty was paid for such service. The United Kingdom consisted of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales.

### ADVANTAGES FOR MILITIA MEN

1. Militia men were exempt from statute work, from serving any parish office and from being pressed into the King's service.
2. On called into actual service they received 1 guinea; when their families could not support themselves, the parish had to provide relief.
3. Married men who had served for 3 years were given rights to set up in trades.

### SERVICE RECORD

The Hertfordshire militia were embodied for full time service:

from October 1759 to January 1763

from May 1778 to March 1783

from February 1793 to April 1802

from May 1803 to July 1814.

### SOURCES:

1. Herts. C.C. "Guide to the Hertfordshire Record Office Part I", (1961), esp. pp. 213-4
2. Sainsbury J.D. "Hertfordshire Soldiers from 1757", Hertfordshire Publications (1969)
3. Bruce Fellows Col. R. "Historical Records of the Hertfordshire Militia to 1892", Gibbs & Bamforth (1893)

# BALLOT LISTS HELD

## YEARS WHEN A BALLOT WAS HELD

1758 to 1761, 1762 (Feb & Jun), 1763 to 1765, 1768 to 1769, 1772 to 1773, 1775, 1778 (Apr & Dec), 1779 or 1780 to 1785, 1786 (Jan & Nov), 1787, 1792 to 1794, 1796 to 1798, 1801

## BALLOT AREAS AND YEARS THAT STILL EXIST FOR EACH AREA

Albury	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Aldbury	1758-65, 1768, 1772, 1775, 1778, 1882-86
Aldenham	1758-59, 1761-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Aldenham	1758-59, 1761-65, 1768-69, 1772, 1775, 1777-78, 1781-86
Amwell, Great	1758-5, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-97, 1801
Amwell, Little	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Anstey	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-86
Ardeley	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-86
Ashwell	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771-73, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-86
Aspenden	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-79, 1780-86
Aston	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-82, 1784-85
Ayot St. Lawrence	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-82, 1784-85
Ayot St. Peter	1758-63, 1765, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-82, 1784-85
Baldock	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-82, 1784-85
Barkway	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-82, 1784-86
Barley	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Barnet, Chipping	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Barnet, East	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Bayford	1758-65, 1768-69, 1773, 1775, 1778, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Bengeo	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Benington	1758-64, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-82, 1784-85
Berkhamsted	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772, 1775, 1778, 1781-86
Berkhamsted, Little	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Bishops Stortford	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Bovingdon	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772, 1775, 1778, 1781-82, 1784-86
Bramfield	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778-80, 1782-85
Braughing	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Brickendon	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Broadfield	1760-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-85
Broxbourne	1758-65, 1768, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-97, 1801
Buckland	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-86
Bushey	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772, 1775, 1778, 1781-86
Bygrave	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Caldecote	1758-61, 1763-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1775-79, 1781-86
Cheshunt: 3 wards	
Cheshunt Street	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-87, 1792, 1801
Waltham Cross	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-87, 1793-94, 1796, 1801
Woodside	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796, 1801
Chipperfield	1775
Clothall	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Codicote	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-86
Coleshill	1758 (Part of Amersham, County Buckingham)
Cottered	1758-65, 1768, 1770, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Datchworth	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778, 1780-82, 1784-85
Digswell	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771-72, 1775, 1778, 1780-82, 1784-85
Eastwick	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Elstree	1758-59, 1761-5, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86

Essendon	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Flamstead	1759-65, 1768-69, 1775, 1778, 1781-82, 1784-86
Flauden	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1775, 1778, 1781-82, 1784-86
Gaddesden, Great	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772, 1775, 1778, 1781-82, 1784-86
Gaddesden, Little	1759-65, 1768-69, 1772, 1778, 1781-82, 1784-86
Gilston	1759-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Graveley	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778, 1780-82, 1784-85
Hadham, Much	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Hadham, Little	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-86
Harpenden	1757-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778, 1781, 1783-85
Hatfield	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771-73, 1775, 1778-82, 1784-85
Hemel Hempstead	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772, 1778, 1781-82, 1784-86
Hertford	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-75, 1778, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Hertingfordbury	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Hexton	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Hinxworth	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-86
Hitchin	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-85
Hoddesdon	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Horstead, Great	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Horstead, Little	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-86
Hunsdon	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-87, 1792-94
Ickleford	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1780-85
Ippollitts	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-85
Kelshall	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Kensworth	1759-65, 1768-69, 1772, 1775, 1778, 1781-82, 1784-86
Kimpton	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-85
Knebworth	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775-76, 1778, 1780-85
Langley, Abbots	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Langley, Kings	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772, 1775, 1777-78, 1781-86
Layston	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-86
Letchworth	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-85
Lilley	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1778-79, 1781-82, 1784-85
Long Marston	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772, 1775, 1778, 1781-86
Meesden	1758-65, 1768, 1772-73, 1775, 1777-79, 1781-86
Munden, Great	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-79, 1781, 1784-85
Munden, Little	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-82, 1784-85
Mymms, North	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772, 1775, 1778, 1781-86
Newnham	1758-66, 1769, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Northaw	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Northchurch	1759-65, 1768-69, 1772, 1775, 1777-78, 1781-86
Norton	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Nuthampstead	1759-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Offley	1758-59, 1761-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-82, 1784-85
Pelham, Brent	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-82, 1784-86
Pelham, Furneux	1759-65, 1768-69, 1771-73, 1775, 1778-86
Pelham, Stocking	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Pirton	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-82, 1784-86
Puttenham	1758-65, 1768, 1772, 1775, 1778, 1781-87
Radwell	1758-61, 1763-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1777-86
Redbourne	1758-65, 1768, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Reed	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Rickmansworth	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Ridge	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-86

Ridge (Tyttenhanger)	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-86
Royston	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1777-78, 1780-86
Rushden	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Sacombe	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-80, 1782, 1784-85
St. Albans: 3 Wards	
Fishpool Ward	1758-65, 1768-70, 1773, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Holywell Ward	1758-65, 1769, 1772-73, 1778-79, 1781-86
Middle Ward	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
St. Michael	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-86
St. Peter	1758-65, 1769, 1772-73, 1775, 1777-78, 1780-86
St. Stephen: 2 Wards	
Park Ward	1758-65, 1769, 1772, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-86
Windridge Ward	1758-59, 1761-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-86
Sandridge	1758-65, 1767, 1769, 1773, 1775-76, 1778-86
Sandon	1758-65, 1768, 1772-74, 1778-79, 1781-86
Sarratt	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Sawbridgeworth	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-87, 1790, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Shenley	1759-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-86
Shephall	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Sleap & Smallford	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1778, 1780-86
Standon	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1797-98, 1801
Stanstead Abbots	1758-61, 1762-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Stanstead St. Margaret	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Stapleford	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Stevenage	1758-65, 1768, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-82, 1784-85
Tewin	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772, 1773, 1775, 1778, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Therfield	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Thorley	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Throcking	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-86
Thundridge	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Totteridge	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-86
Tring	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772, 1775, 1778, 1781-86
Tring Wilstone	1758-65, 1768, 1772, 1775, 1778, 1781-86
Walden, Kings	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-85
Walden, St. Pauls	1758-66, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1777-79, 1781-86
Wakeley Hamlet	1761-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-86
Walkern	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-82, 1784-85
Wallington	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-86
Ware	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Watford	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-87
Watton at Stone	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778, 1780-85
Welwyn	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1780-82, 1784-85
Westmill	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Weston	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-82, 1784-85
Wheathampstead	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778, 1781-86
Widford	1758-65, 1768-69, 1772, 1778, 1781-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Wiggington	1758-59, 1761-65, 1768, 1772, 1775, 1778, 1781-86
Willian	1758-63, 1765, 1768-69, 1772-73, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-82, 1784-85
Wormley	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778, 1780-87, 1792-94, 1796-98, 1801
Wyddial	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-86
Wymondley, Great	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-82, 1784-85
Wymondley, Little	1758-65, 1768-69, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1778-79, 1781-82, 1784-85