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The Highlanders at Macclesfield in 1745

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## The Highlanders at Macclesfield in 1745

THE following letter,<sup>1</sup> one of a number of letters and other papers about the marches of Prince Charles's army through Lancashire, is the production of a typical English bourgeois. That the army took so many women and children with them is rather surprising. The Highlanders behaved better in the advance than in the retreat, as we know from all sources. The young officer who intended to take service with the Czarina cannot be identified. The date of the march to Macclesfield is December 1, 1745. Lord George Murray made his feint by way of Congleton towards Litchfield, causing the Hanoverians to retreat to Stowe, and then marching through Leek to Ashbourne, and joining the Prince at Derby. The other papers, or extracts from them, will be given later.

A. L.

D<sup>r</sup>. S<sup>r</sup>.

I thank you for yr. kind advice, but it came too late, for within a few hours after I recvd. yr. Letter we were alarmed with ye approach of ye Rebels. It was then too hazardous to remove my family so I determined to stand my Ground, especially as my wife seemed to be in good spirits and noways affraid. And indeed I must own she had more Courage than all ye whole family besides. My brother Tatton and his Lady were with me y' morning but they went to Ashenhurst. And Fanny (who when ye Rebels were at Carlisle was as valiant as an Amazon and of all things would like to have a peep at ye Pretenders Son) durst not stay to see 'em march by ye Door, but rode off in great haste with her Bro- abt a Quarter of an hour, before they reached ye town.

We had heard of their coming into Manchester and of

<sup>1</sup> The Editor is indebted to Mr. Walter Jerrold, Hampton-on-Thames, for this letter, which was written by Mr. John Stafford, Attorney, Macclesfield.—Ed. S.H.R.

ye great rejoicings there, and that they raised Recruits very fast from whence we concluded they would have made some stay at that town. But a party of about 20 Dragoons of ye King's forces coming into this town on Saturday evening pretty late the Rebels had immediate Notice of it and I believe they hastened their march hither in expectation of surprizing 'em.

Before the dragoons came in a party of ye Rebels that morning crost a ford above Stockport Bridge (wh. with others was very swiftly broke down some time before) and coming into ye town Rode round the Cross and Dispersed papers to Encourage men to Inlist in ye P's Service But not meeting with ye least Countenance they soon retired. However it was expected a larger body of 'em wo<sup>d</sup> have marcht in there that evening.

We acquainted ye Officer who comanded ye Dragoons wth. wt. we heard, upon wh. he sent one of our townsmen to Stockport as a Spy to bring him intelligence of their motions. He not returning we Concluded that ye rebels stayd at Manchester. But ye next morning being Sunday ye 1<sup>st</sup> instant, about 10 o'clock we had Notice from ye country people that ye Rebels were within Quarter of a mile of ye town. The young officer who comanded ye party of Dragoons was at breakfast w<sup>th</sup> Mrs Mayoress when ye alarm was given And he was just saying Never fear Madam we Sl protect you Down went ye dish and he and his party of dragoons made full as much hast out of town as Madam Frances did. The good folks at Church ran out before half ye Service was over in ye utmost Confusion and ye whole town was in great consternation.

When ye first emotion of my own fright was a little abated I ventured to peep out of a Garrett window, but seeing my wife and her two sisters below at ye Gates, shame raised my courage and I ventured to stand by 'em and saw ye whole army pass by my own Door, except a regimenot of Horse comanded by Lord Elko and some forces wh. came in late But those I saw ye next day.

The Quarter Masters first came into town who with their Guard were 20 in Number; they Rode to the Cross and inquired for ye Constables. By this time I was grown so Manfull, that verily I followed this party to ye Cross (But by ye by my wife went along with me) they Inquired for

Sr P: Davenports' house whether he was in town or not and being answered not they gave him a Curst and askt when he left it and soon after rode to his house and after viewing it inside and out markt ye Door with ye word Prince. I had now so much valour that I adventured to Speak to one of ye best of 'em and inquired wt. Number of forces wo<sup>d</sup> be in town that day. He answ<sup>d</sup>. 10,000, upon which I returned home much Dismayed.

Immediately afterwds came in a Regiment of horse by way of advance Guard said to be comanded by the Duke of Perth and the 2<sup>d</sup> or 3<sup>d</sup> Rank was the poor fellow (our Clyent Sampson Salt by name) who had been sent out as a Spy Guarded by 4 terrible fellows with their Drawn Swordes. They soon found he was a townsman and that ye Eyes of ye Inhabitants were on him. But fear had so metamorphosed our friend that his neighbours scarce knew him: He was shorter by half a yard at least than ye day before. If he cast an Eye to ye right—D—m you (says a ruffin) you must not look yt way. If he lookt to ye left—D—m you Don't look that way so yt he was forst to Conduct his Eyes directly betwixt ye two ears of his Palfry—and all ye while the Guards kept laughing and pointing at him and to ye people who beheld his Distress.

This Regiment seemed to be very poorly mounted I believe for ye most part on such horses as they picked up in ye Country as they came along. But many of ye men were lusty? fellows.

Not long after them came ye Foot in very regular ord with Bagpipes playing instead of Drums marching at ye head of the Colloms of each of their respective Regiments And all ye Forces as well Horse as foot were in Highland Dress except ye body Guards wh. wore Blue bound w<sup>th</sup> Red.

After abt. 4 or 5 Regiments had passed by us it was said the P: was coming up. You may easily imagin we were all very attentive to see him, and it happened a halt was made just opposite to my Door for a minute or two which gave us an opportunity of having a full View of him: He was in highland dress with a blue wastcote bound with Silver and a blue Highland cap on, and was surrounded by about 40 who appeared as his Guard. He is a very handsome person of a man rather tall, exactly proportioned and walks well, He is *in my thinking not much unlike Mr. N: Wetenhall but his face is not markt with ye smallpox.*

He walkt on foot from Manchester as he had done 'tis said all the way from Carlisle And I believe they made their best appearance into the town expecting to be recvd. as they were at Manchester But there was a profound silence and nothing to be seen in ye Countenances of ye Inhabitants but horror and amazement. Endeavours were made to have given 'em a peal of ye Bells for fear of Insults But 4 Ringers were all that co<sup>d</sup> be got and they rung ye bells backward not with design but thro' Confusion.

Soon after the P's Son came into town and got to his Quarters at S<sup>r</sup> P's (wh. we now call Holly Rood House) an Order Came to the Mayor to proclaim the Pretender and he and the Aldermen were directed to attend in their formalities. I had 2 or 3 messages to have gone with my Gown but I sent word it was out of the way but that I wo<sup>d</sup> come for by this time I had got some of the Rebel Officers in the house and many more at the Gates watching the Procession amongst whom I stood out of Curiosity and therefore durst not say I wo<sup>d</sup> not go for fear abused By which means I Escaped being present at so Shocking a Scene. Poor Mr. Mayor was obliged to be at it and I hear 2 or 3 of the Aldermen were. They tell me they made the Town Clerk repeat the Proclamation after 'em and when it was over they themselves gave a huzza or 2. There was not one townsman Joined 'em, *but I believe there was not one Englishman Joined in the huzza except what they had picked up at Manchester.*

Soon after the Advanced Guard Came into Town there was a young Lowlander (but in a Highland Dress) quartered himself and horse upon us for sake of my Stable. His dress was very unpromising but his manner and behaviour showed he had had a Genteel Education and was a person of sense and acc<sup>t</sup> amongst 'em. As he was Exceeding Civil the women took courage and soon fell into Discourse with him. He stood with 'em at the Gates ye greatest part of the Procession By wh means we had an Opportunity of learning the Names of the Chiefs as they passed by wh added greatly to the Curiosity Many of the Officers appeared very well. Some few indeed were very old In particular Glenbuckett who seemed to be 80 at least and bended almost Dble on horseback. Some of those who stood by us said he had been bed rid 3 years before the P<sup>r</sup> Son arrived in Scotland but he no sooner heard of his coming than he had a kind

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of new life and joined him with his whole Clan and Family there being no less than his 2 sons 2 Grandsons a Great Grandson and a nephew along with him.

Many of the Comon men tho' they were Dirty and Shabby appeared to be lusty active fellows. Indeed there were some old men amongst the Comon Soldiers and a great N<sup>o</sup> of Boys but I observed they appeared to be near all of a size and of an age viz<sup>t</sup> abt 12 and I afterwds was informed that the use they intended to make of those boys, which were to be armed with Pistolls and knives only, was upon an Engagement to Disorder the King's Cavalry by going amongst the ranks and Cutting the legs of the horses.

It was dark before the Artillery came in and as it grew duskish orders were given that the Inhabitants sho<sup>d</sup> Illuminate their houses upon pain of Military Execution, Upon wh. most of the houses were Illuminated but with great Ill will.

The young Lowlander I before mentioned whilst at Dinner talked pretty freely and said Manchester was a very glorious Town, that they had been very well recvd there. Asked whether they shod be Joined by any Charlie's Gent and where Lord B was I told him in London, and that they had nothing to expect from anybody in this County for most of the Young Gentlemen of fortune in the Co. had accepted of Co<sup>m</sup>ons in L. Ch<sup>r</sup> Regiment and that all the rest of the Gent of any account had left their habitations to get out of their way To wh. he said it was Strange the English co<sup>d</sup> not see their own Interest. Says he they will not let us have the honour of restoring \_\_\_\_\_ . We have not been joined by 5 Englishmen of any Acc<sup>t</sup> since we came from Scotland, but added he thought if they co<sup>d</sup> get into Wales they sho<sup>d</sup> be joined by a Great Many there.

He pulled out some printed papers and delivered 'em to the Women the like having been distributed in the Streets—I had the curiosity to read 'em all. They seem to be drawn up with a Great deal of Art and to be applyed to the passions But the whole is founded upon false principles and begging the Question and I think most of the reasons and Arguments are picked out from our own Debates in Parliament.

Upon reading one of these papers wh is called ye pretenders Sons Declaration wherein he talks of preserving our Religious libertys my sister Molly observed that he said nothing on his own

Religion at which ye youngster Seemed to be a little startled but after some pause he said, why Madam If he had s<sup>d</sup> he had been a protestant who wo<sup>d</sup> have believed him? It might have Discredited the whole of the Declaration but I can assure you he's no more a Bigot in Matters of Religion than myself who am a Protestant My Wife amongst other discourse mentioned the Confusion the people were in at Church in the morning when they Came in Upon wh he asked her Well Madam and who did you pray for Says she for his Majty King George upon wh he said you did very Right but says she Supposing you had Come here last night sho<sup>d</sup> we have been interrupted in our publick prayers by any particular Directions No, the minister wo<sup>d</sup> have been ord<sup>d</sup> to pray for the King with<sup>t</sup> naming Names as had been done at Kendal Church ye last Sunday. He puffed much of his Master's regard for ye Clergy and gave an instance of a Clergyman's horse being on ye rode in their march hither, that as Soon as he knew it belonged to a Clergyman he ord<sup>d</sup> it to be restored—But by ye by this appr<sup>d</sup> afterwds to be a lye for I saw the Clergyman's serv<sup>t</sup> in this town ye next morning inquiring after his Master's horse.

As to No of the Rebels there was no judging of their number from their March into the Town as they seem to be very artfull in Concealment their numbers.—They bespoke Billetts for 10,000 and said 5000 wo<sup>d</sup> Come in the next Day but for my own part I Don't think they Exceed 6000 in the whole. All along as they marched they had partys Reconnoitring the Country for 8 or 10 miles round abt. These partys wh are Inconsiderable in N<sup>o</sup> and a Regiment of Horse commanded by L<sup>d</sup> Elcho were quarter'd ye day before at Prestbury were all that came into This Town the next day, wh Instead of being 5000 were far short of 500, and their was no Forming any Notion of their Number by the Billetts, because in many places where 40 or 50 were billeted on a house not half the Number Came and others had dble the Number that were billeted on 'em—The 1<sup>st</sup> Billet I recv<sup>d</sup> was for 10 Men and 5 horses but with this no body Came only the officer I before mentioned his servants and 5 horses, but abt 9 o'Clock at night there Came a very ordinary Fellow with a billett in these words and figures—Mr. Stafford 408—I read it four hundred and Eight and was (you may Easily imagine) in no little hurry, but he soon told me it was only 40 Men and 8 Officers. And after he had sat with me a very little time he s<sup>d</sup> he

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believed no more of that N<sup>o</sup> than himself wo<sup>d</sup> Come in that night—He gave us to Understand he was a Doctor but we all thought him a highwayman and I verily believe he was one. We misst sev<sup>l</sup> odd things ye next day and place 'em chiefly to his acc<sup>ott</sup> for it was very visible he had tryed all the Locks in my Beaurow and in my Wifes Closet, which were in the room where he lay. You may easily imagine we cod have no heart to go to bed with such Company in the house so that we passed a very miserable night, but I had taken Care to get some Townemen in my house for a guard or else I durst not have staid.

The next morning I was very Early abroad and had the Curiosity to step over the way to a poor neighbours house who had above 50 common men quartered on him to see how they lay. The house floor was Covered with straw and men women and Children lay promiscuously together like a Kennel of hounds, and some of 'em stark naked. As soon as it was day light the Streets appeared in the Edinburgh fashion being Beshit all along on both sides from one end to the other; even Holyrood House was in this kind of furniture of any part of ye Town as one of ye Pretender's serv<sup>ts</sup> told me. I went to sev<sup>l</sup> of my neighbours who had Some of the Chief Officers quartered on 'em to enquire what they heard abt. their motions, when finding they did not intend to stir that day I was greatly alarmed and my wife and Sisters being no less terrifyed and it being apprehended that some skirmish wo<sup>d</sup> be that Day in or near the Town I applyed to the person who I have before mentioned to know how I co<sup>d</sup> get my family safely out of Town, when he told me there was no other way but by a Pass all the Avenues being Stopt, and that if I wo<sup>d</sup> go with him to the Secretary he wo<sup>d</sup> get me one, wh accordingly I did do leaving the care of my house to my Clk and Serv<sup>ts</sup> and in a very short time afterwds I marched away on foot thro' by Roads with my wife and Sisters and a Great train of other females of our acquaintance to Shrigley where we were no sooner got but a party of Highlanders came to search the house for Arms. Another party had been there that morning before we Came and had taken all away with 'em. Mr. Downes told these fellows of it but they s<sup>d</sup> they were Informed we had a great many more Arms and in particular we had 3 Cases of Pistols whereas he had only delivered 2 and that he might thank his Neighbours for the Information. There was something very



particular in this for in fact he had three Case but had sometime before leant one to me These villians co<sup>d</sup> not come to the knowledge of these things but through greater Villians than themselves. We gave them very good words, and I showed them my pass upon which they went away without further trouble.

They searched most of the neighbouring Gentlemens houses for arms as they did every house in the Town and took all they found as well bad as good wh I don't think was through the want of arms (for most of the men seemed to have more than their Compliment) but in order to disarm the Country that they might not be disturbed in their Marches. When they searched at Adlington they brought an acc<sup>ott</sup> in writing of the Arms wh were in the house and cod tell in what Rooms they were. They enquired for a Couple of French horns, mentioned the place where they usually were and enquired for the silver mouth pieces. Mr. Legh thinks they got their Intelligence Either from a Roman Catholick, who had been a workman at the house or from some of the Manchester

The French horns were out of the way wh made 'em storm but being soon afterwds produced, they were appeased and went away w<sup>th</sup> the arms with<sup>t</sup> doing much Damage but took the Butler and Steward to Macclesfield to swear there was no more Arms Concealed that they knew of.

Soon after I had left my house I had twenty Comon men three officers & 6 horses (more or were) quartered on me. These officers were very scrubby fellows and behaved rudely. One of 'em broke me a good looking Glass and the Comon men wo<sup>d</sup> have plundered me If they had not been restrained by the men I had in the house.

You may easily imagine I recvd the News of their leaving the Town on Tuesday morning with Great Joy upon wh I took a walk homewards but was met by many persons within a mile of my house who said that a party of the Rebels were returned back and threatened to burn the Town down because one of their men had been wounded by a Townsman, but I hastened forw<sup>d</sup> and found the Case was this. One of their men was cheapening a pair of Stockings at a Hosier's Shop when a young Fellow Came in (who had deserted twice from the King's Army) and Standing behind the Rebel drew out the Rebels Sword Cut him on the head and Stabb'd him in the thigh and then ran away upon wch there was a great Outcry, wch alarmed a party of abt 30 or 40 that still rem<sup>d</sup> in the Town who Came to the place with the greatest fury

threatening to burn the Town. They offered a Reward of 50<sup>lb</sup> to any one would wo<sup>d</sup> apprehend the man who had given the Wounds but he being fled they took a Mercer and an Innkeeper, being the masters of the two next adjoining houses to the Shop where the affair happened, as hostages till the offender was delivered up, and after Exercising some fury on the Goods in the Shop they went off taking the wounded man along with 'em, who upon their return home said they were let out upon their Parole of Honour that they wo<sup>d</sup> collect all the Arms and things the Rebels had left behind 'em at and use their endeavours to apprehend the offender. The hostages say that they were treated with civility whilst they stayd amongst 'em but under these directions I lost a broad Sword a Target and sev<sup>l</sup> other amunitions (?) which I picked up out of Curiosity. On my return home after I had enquired a little into my own affairs I went amongst my neighbours familys The Story of each family was like a Short History or rather a Dream every one having something new.

The main body marched from hence on Tuesday morning to Leek but they concealed their design very artfully for I believe none of the Inhabitants imagined they intended to march thither, but that their design was for Congleton and Newcastle and I believe their Rout was known to but few of their own officers.

I returned back the same day to Shrigley and brought my wife and sisters home the next. We thought ourselves very happy the Rebels had left us but we had not been above two days at home when we were alarmed with their retreat from Derby and that they wo<sup>d</sup> make to this place in their Road back

This Second Alarm was a much greater Shock than the first we being apprehensive they might come upon us in the night time and treat us with Severity on acc<sup>r</sup> of ye abuse their man had recvd Upon this a messenger was despatched to Leek on the Fryday Evening to bring us Intelligence of their Motions and all my family sat up all that night ready prepared for a march as Soon as we co<sup>d</sup> be at Certainty of their coming back to this place. This night (If possible) was a more disagreeable one than the former as we were afriad of ye Messengers falling into their hands and in the Expectation of their Surprising us every moment. About 9 in the morning we had certain Intelligence of their approach and so went back

to Shrigley—And for my own part I expected to be tuckt up if ye Messr was taken he having a Letter of mine upon him wherein I had not used any Ceremony w<sup>th</sup> 'em.

Upon this second Alarm M<sup>r</sup> Mayor and many of the inhabitants fled Some of them lockt up their Doors and those that were left were under the utmost Consternation. About 5 or 6 on Saturday Evening came in 1500 at least and were quite outrageous that the Mayor had left the Town, but they soon quartered themselves and I heard their orders to the High Constable threatening military execution agt all who had locked their doors or refused to provide for 'em what they wanted.

My Clerk sent me an acc<sup>t</sup> of this upon wch I walked home from Shrigley the next Morning to give Directions. The Town was very thin of Inhabitants and very dismal were the Countenances of those who were left in it. The only comfort I had was to find the Rebels lookd full as Dismal themselves. The main body came in soon after I got to town and the P—s Son was amongst 'em on horseback with a Guard of Abt. 40 and seemed to be in a good deal of hurry. I accidentally stood at the End of the Street when he passed by to his old Quarters.

I had the Curiosity to go into the Artillery Park and counted the N<sup>o</sup> of their pieces wch are 13 Cannon, some English some French but all small ones and 2 Mortars.

The Officer I before mentioned tho he was not quartered on me this time Came to my house. He s<sup>d</sup> they were going back to Join the Recruits raised in Scotland and the French who were landed there and puffed much abt. 15,000 French that were to land in ye South, but upon the whole I thought him greatly Disjointed; he said If they had come forward Immediately after the battle of Preston Pans he thought they sho<sup>d</sup> have carryed their point, and that they had ruined their Cause by not doing it but for his own part, If they miscarried he did not doubt but to get into the Czarina's or some other Foreign service. The Quarter Master asked what was the reason why the Town was so thin adding that he supposed the Inhabitants lookt upon 'em as a retreating Army But those who had lockt up their Doors would repent of it. I got back to my wife in Shrigley that Evening as soon as I co<sup>d</sup>, leaving a good guard of Townsmen in my house and was hearty Glad to hear the next morning the Rebels were all gone, but upon my Return the account of the sufferings of the Inhabitants

shocked me beyond Expression. Those who had lockt their doors and the houses of others who were not able to guard their effects were plundered and many others were robb'd of what money bedding and Cloaths they had and nothing Escapd that was portable and co<sup>d</sup> be of any use to 'em. This Calamity fell Chiefly upon the poorer sort But the better End of people suffered a very particular hardship of an<sup>r</sup> kind. The Rebels had heard from their Manchester friends or from some other private villians that this Town as well as other Loyal ones had associated and subscribed to raise money for the support of the present Governm<sup>t</sup>. They took no notice of this till about 11 o'Clock on Sunday night the 8th Instant and then issued out an Order that If all the Subscribers did not pay their Subscription money by 6 o'Clock the next morning their houses sho<sup>d</sup> burned abt. their Ears. They demanded the subscription paper from Mrs. Mayoress It having been some time before lodged with Mr. Mayor but had been sent out of the way some time before they ever came hither. She s<sup>d</sup> she knew nothing of it Upon wch Sev<sup>l</sup> of 'em drew their Swords upon her and threatened to murder her instantly and to set the house on fire that moment. Mr. Mayor's Clk being in the house at this time and fearing they wo<sup>d</sup> put their threats into Execution said he believed he co<sup>d</sup> find a copy and soon after delivered one to 'em.

My Clk Immediately sent me this Order to Shrigley upon which I directed him to pay my money rather than to stand the fury of a Refusal, and they were so Civil as to Give me a Receipt for it, a Copy of wch and of my protection you will find among the Orders. Most of the other Subscribers paid, but some Escaped thro' ye hurry ye Rebels were in.

It appeared that the Officers had little Comand over the Comon men and that the Highlanders wo<sup>d</sup> be restrained by none but their own Clans. As they went from hence to Stockp<sup>t</sup> in stragling partys of 'em pilfered and plundered all the way. Mr. Legh of Adlington and his Ten<sup>ts</sup> suffered prodigiously—They robb'd sev<sup>l</sup> of his serv<sup>ts</sup> of all their money and were going up stairs to rob the Ladies when by Great Chance some of their officers hearing of it turnd back and drove 'em away—He was with me yesterday morning and says he has lost 6 horses and 2 of his Serv<sup>ts</sup> wch they have taken along with 'em and Great Quantitys of Hay and Corn besides other Valuable things—They have taken only 2 horses of

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Mr. Legh's of Lyme What other Damage they have done him I can't tell but I fear some of his Ten<sup>ts</sup> are almost ruined.

Pretty early in my letter I mentioned our Clyent (Salt) who had been sent out as a spy and taken by ye Rebels He made his Escape from 'em the next day and went directly to the King's Army where he was taken up as a spy by them—The Rebels had frightend him out of what little senses he had, so that when he was taken up at Stone he co<sup>d</sup> give no rational acc<sup>ott</sup> of himself and was therefore Confined 2 or 3 days They then turn'd him out and he Came home again He was no sooner got back to Macclesfield but the alarm was given that the Rebels were coming hither again upon wch he sunk'd down and died instantly.

I hear they were very rough as they went thro' Stockport and took Mr. Elcock and 2 or 3 more w<sup>th</sup> 'em with Halters abt their Necks, but have since Discharged them.

I doubt not but by this time you are sufficiently tired and therefore shall shift this Horrid Scene to an<sup>r</sup> ye most agreeable one I ever saw, for the day after the Rebels left us the Duke of Cumberland w<sup>th</sup> the Kings Forces came hither and it was a particular (? favour) to me that my house happened to be ye most Convenient in ye town for his Quarters—Never was greater Joy seen in ye Countenances of any people than in those of the good folks of Maccd And every man seemed to have forgott his former Calamities.

I cannot conclude without a kind of short prayer that Good may arise out of ye Evills we have suffered as I verily believe it will. For surely these proceedings must open the eyes of those who were before either luke warm or wavering in their principles and entirely ruin the Pretenders Cause: the people in these parts say they are sure the Rebels are no Christians, nay they are Devills.

May the just vengeance of heaven overturn 'em and all other Disturbers of ye peace of Mankind And so ends ye prayer of

2 Decr. 1745.

J. STAFFORD.