AGRICULTURAL PRICES, PRODUCTION AND MARKETING, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE HOP INDUSTRY: NORTH-EAST KENT 1680-1760

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

This thesis is the first comprehensive historical investigation of a farming region in Kent. The work relates to the north-eastern sector, the premier agricultural district of the county. The period examined is 1680-1760.

The inter-play between changes in agricultural prices and production patterns is investigated, while the significance of commercial agriculture in this region provides ample scope for pioneering a study of marketing methods and organization. An examination of the origins and early developments of the hop industry in Kent is long-overdue and the uncovering of new evidence makes it possible to unravel the complexities of this specialized branch of farming during the formative years.

The period reviewed is, for the most part, one of prolonged deflation. Grains, especially wheat, experienced the greatest falls in price; the "trough" years were undoubtedly the 1730's and '40's. This view, which is generally accepted, is reinforced and exemplified by the new Kentish evidence. This study is primarily concerned with analysing the variety of responses of farmers and middlemen during the long deflationary period. The farmers of north-east Kent were unusually adept at adjusting their production schedules and maximising returns in a hostile price situation.

For some farmers a partial solution lay in enlarging the size of their farms. The long-term tendency towards larger farm units in Kent is clearly evidenced, especially during the years 1730-50. Another response was to increase the output of the chief cash crops while maintaining their unit costs constant, or even reducing them. This meant, over most of the region, growing more wheat; in Thanet, larger acreages of barley. The productivity of the arable sector was increased by keeping more livestock within carefully integrated farming systems, which also involved greater emphasis on the cultivation of new fodder crops.

One of the most significant responses was the diversification of the farming economy. Resource endowments were especially favourable. A unique diversity of soil-types gave maximum scope for manoeuvrability and adaptability. Diversification was accompanied by high levels of experimentation, innovation and investment. Many new crops were adopted on a widespread scale. New rotations often incorporated special techniques of production and newly-devised implements, for example in the cultivation of beans as a row crop in Thanet and in the Faversham district.

While hop cultivation prospered, fruit production seems to have languished, especially from the 1730's when fruit prices were low and recession set in. From the 1680's small acreages of hops appeared on numerous mixed farms throughout the region, while at Canterbury there sprang up a unique concentration of hop grounds within and around the City providing an unparalleled example of successful suburban cultivation.

Livestock production comprised an important sector of the rural economy. However, importations of store animals from other parts of the country remained an essential element of the regional structure: cattle from Wales, sheep from the West Country, and horses from the Midlands and northern shires. The droving trade from Wales merits special attention.

Critical adjustments on the farms combined with growing efficiency and sophistication in the marketing sector ensured that north-east Kent emerged as one of the most advanced agricultural regions in early Georgian England.

CHAPTER 1

THE FACE OF THE REGION

The wealth of Kentish farmers was proverbial. Cultivators of "an inclos'd and fruitful county"[1] they were, it was claimed:

> All blessed with health, and as for wealth
> By fortune's kind embraces
> A Yeoman gray shall oft outweigh
> A Knight in other Places.[2]

According to a popular ballad it was reckoned that, if a yeoman suitor could boast "I have house and land in Kent", his chances of successfully wooing a bride were thereby enhanced.[3] Who were these prosperous Kent farmers? Where were they to be found?

A Defining the Region

Individual examples of commercial farmers who enjoyed high standards of well-being can be found in most parts of the county. But their distribution is uneven. There were, and still are, at least half a dozen Kents.[4] In Romney Marsh lived some of the wealthiest graziers in England, and many a prosperous yeoman farmed on the Chartlands south of Maidstone. Men of more modest means characterized the "dens" of the Low Weald, the "hurst" villages of the High Weald and the thin soils along the Downland summit. The greatest galaxy of "improving" farmers, however, stretched across the north-eastern rim of the county illuminat-

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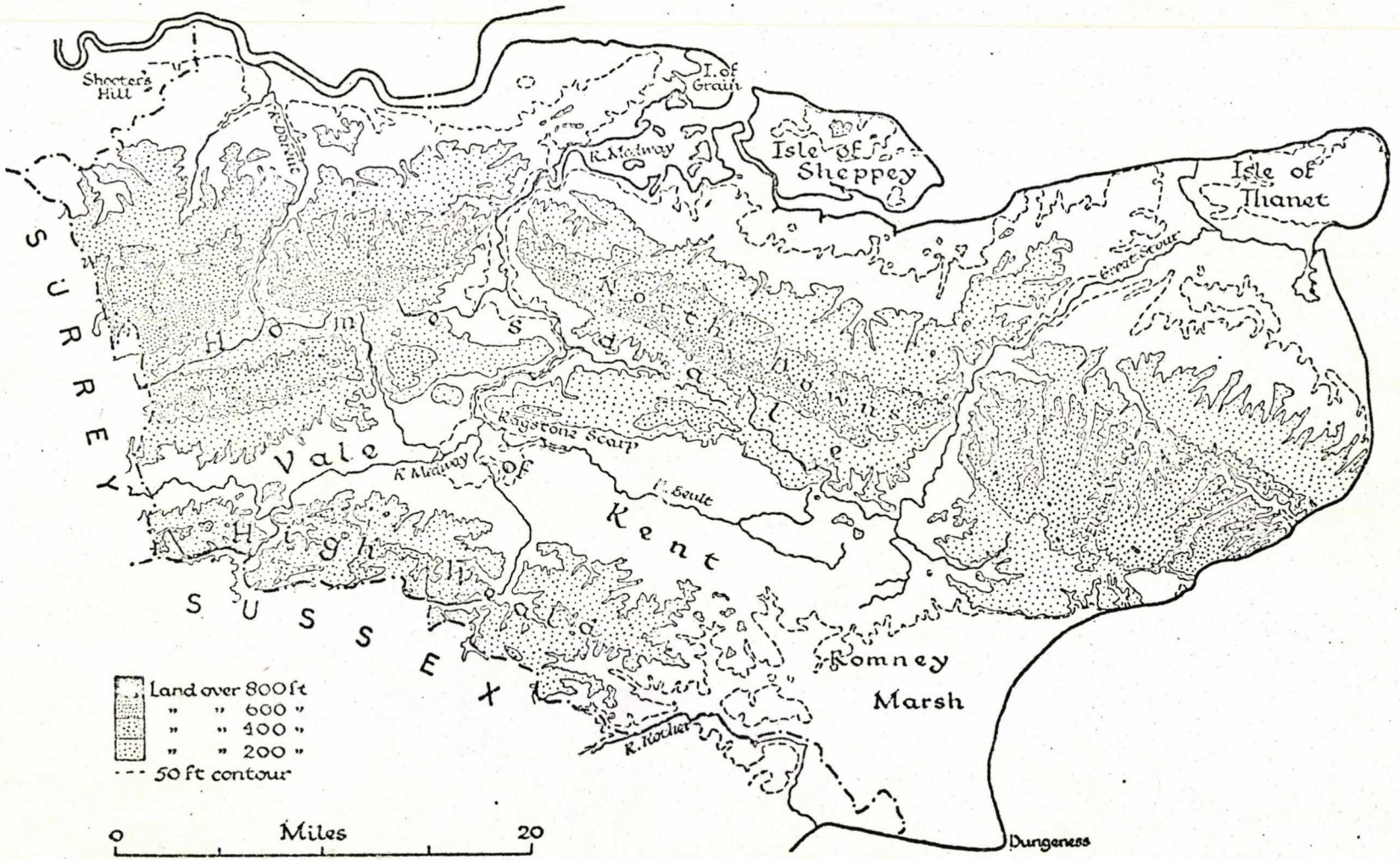
[1] R. Morden, The New Description and State of England containing the Maps of the Counties of England and Wales (1704), 78.

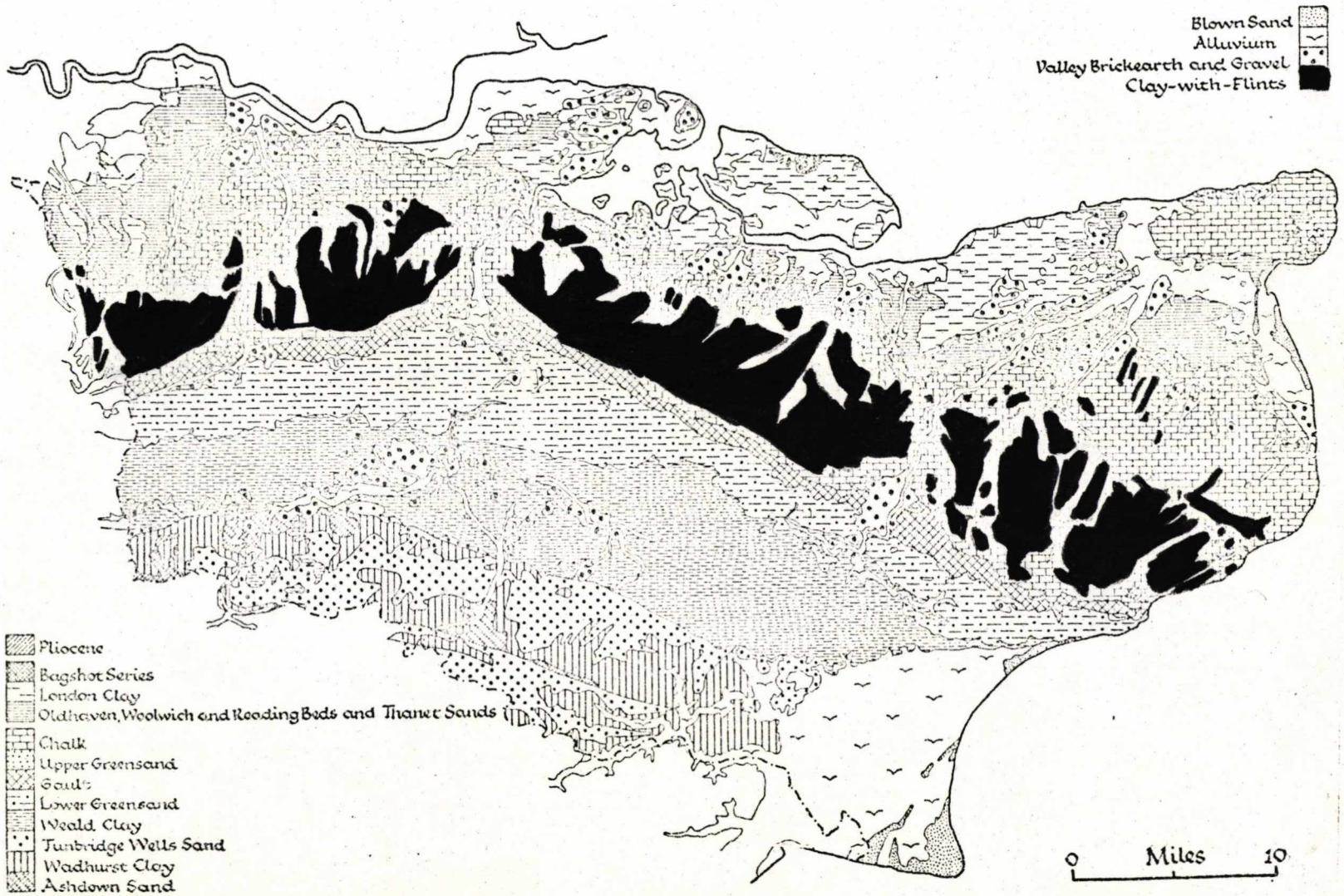
[2] M. Campbell, The English Yeoman (1942), 146.

[3] Julia H.L. De Vaynes, ed., The Kentish Garland (2 Vols. Hertford 1881), 143.

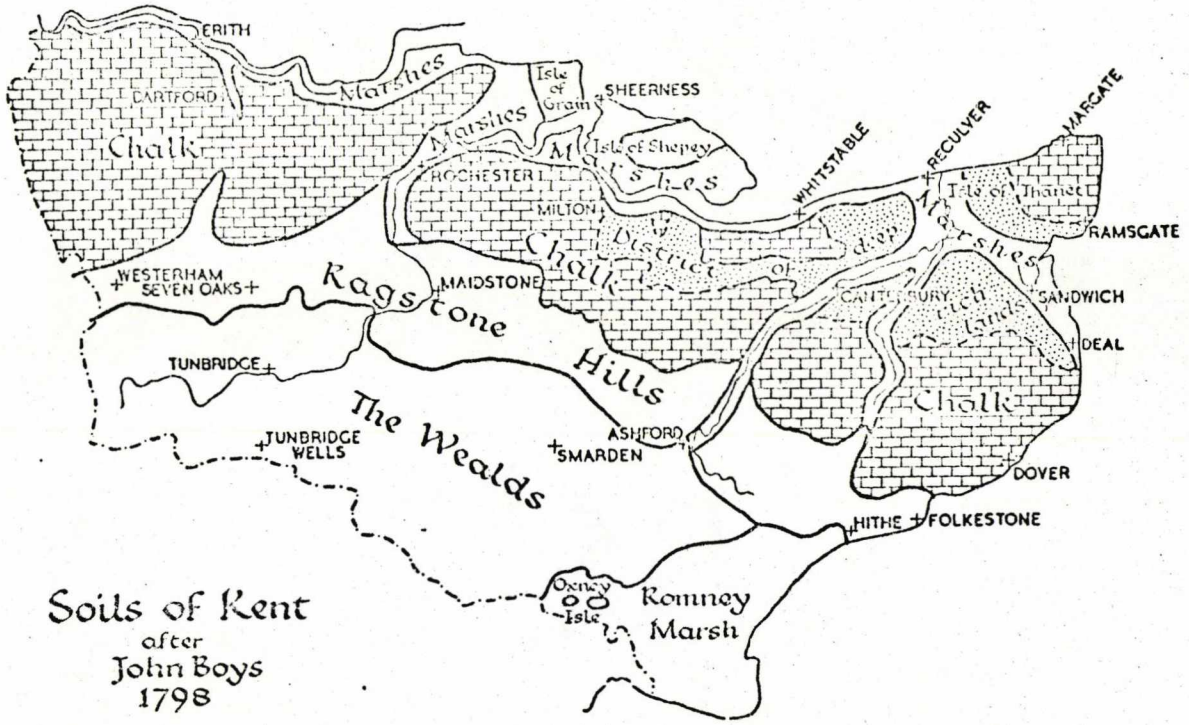
[4] A. Everitt, The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion 1640-60 (Leicester 1966), 20.



MAP 1 Kent—Physical Features.

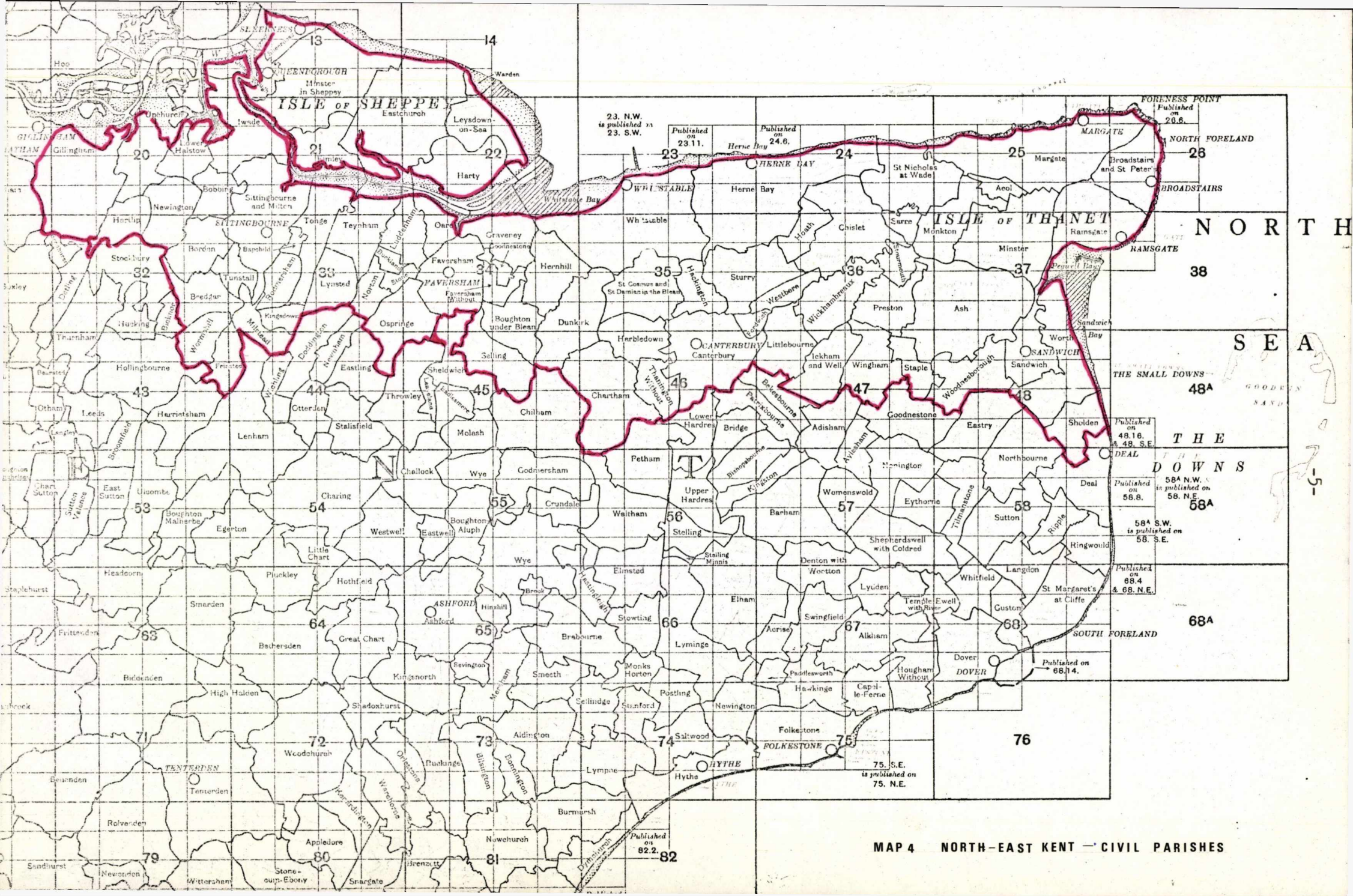


MAP 2 Kent—Geology.



MAP 3 The Soils of Kent according to John Boys, 1798.

His outlines are crude and generalised, but these are still the fundamental divisions of Kent.


ISLE OF SHEPPEY
ISLE OF THANET
NORTH SEA
THE DOWNS
SITTINGBOURNE
FAVERSHAM
CANTERBURY
SANDWICH
WHITSTABLE
HERNE BAY
BROADSTAIRS
RAMSGATE
MARGATE
DEAL
DOVER
FOLKESTONE
HYTHE
ASHFORD
TENTERDEN
QUEENBOROUGH
FORENESS POINT
NORTH FORELAND
SOUTH FORELAND
THE SMALL DOWNS
GOODWIN SANDS
Whitstable Bay
Pegwell Bay
Sandwich Bay
Published on 23.11.
Published on 24.6.
Published on 20.6.
23. N.W. is published on 23. S.W.
Published on 48.16. & 48. S.E.
Published on 58.8.
58A N.W. is published on 58. N.E.
58A S.W. is published on 58. S.E.
Published on 68.4 & 68. N.E.
Published on 68.14.
75. S.E. is published on 75. N.E.
Published on 82.2.
MAP 4 NORTH-EAST KENT — CIVIL PARISHES
-5-

KENT PARISHES

WITH DATE OF COMMENCEMENT OF REGISTERS

North – East Region

M	SITTINGBOURNE	1541
N	BUCKLAND	(1583)
O	DAVINGTON	1540
P	GODNESTONE	1564
R	LEAVELAND	1553
S	CANTERBURY	
	ALL SAINTS	1559
	CATHEDRAL	1564
	HOLY CROSS	1563
	ST ALPHEGE	1558
	ST ANDREW	1564
	ST GEORGE	1538
	ST MARGARET	1653
	ST MARY BREDMAN	1558
	ST MARY MAGDALEN	1634
	ST MILDRED	1558
	ST PETER	1560
T	ST DUNSTAN	1550
U	ST MARY, NORTHGATE	1640
W	ST MARTIN	1662
X	ST PAUL	1562
Y	ST MARY BREDIN	1633
Z	MILTON	1688

AA	ELMSTONE	
AB	CHILLENDEN	1558
AC	KNOWLTON	1741
AD	HAM	1653
AE	BETTESHANGER	1562

River Medway

The Swale

MAP 5

ing the landscape of a hundred parishes.[1]

Arthur Young, "the great apostle of improvement",[2] knew Kent well. After he had travelled the county's varied regions he firmly opined that "when the excellent husbandry of Kent is mentioned, it must always be understood in a very limited sense. From London to Canterbury, and from Canterbury to Sandwich, spreading a little towards Deal and Dover, is a line of very excellent management, which extends to the river Thames, and to the sea, and includes the whole Isle of Thanet; but it spreads very little to the south of that road". In unison with Young it is contended that "the true Kentish management is only in the district thus traced".[3]

Our region is a fertile belt of country which stretches from Rainham in the west to the eastern extremities of Thanet, a distance of about 35 miles; it averages 9 miles or more in width. The region incorporates nearly half the county's coastline. Possessed of a rich variety of highly productive cornlands, hop gardens, woodlands, orchards, market gardens and pastures, the region was the source of an equally rich and varied supply of farm products to the local and metropolitan markets. The sales of wheat, barley - with its derivative malt - hops and fruit undoubtedly accounted for the largest proportion of the agricultural sector's income, but the markets for vegetables, seeds, flowers and fruit trees, livestock products and timber, each made some unknown, but in all probability quite substantial contribution to the wealth of the region. Even oats and hay played a small but essential role in the market economy, at least locally.

Ostensibly straightforward, the accurate determination of an agri-

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[1] 101 parishes are encompassed within the north-east region; included in this number are the sixteen parishes of Canterbury and three in Sandwich.

[2] J.D. Chambers and G.E. Mingay, The Agricultural Revolution 1750-1880 (1966), 46.

[3] A. Young, Annals of Agriculture (46 Vols. 1784-1815), II, 95.

cultural region is one of the more difficult tasks facing the agrarian historian. The summation of our search for a viable region must, in the last resort, find expression as lines on maps. Such lines are foredoomed to inaccuracy since even the fields within an individual farm can show marked variations. However, we must do what we can within these limitations. In one respect defining the north-east region of Kent is made easy: the coastline formed by the Thames and North Sea provides a natural boundary. Determining the western and southern extremities of the region presents more of a problem due to complex geology. Professor Hoskins defined a farming region as:

> a territory, large or small, in which the conditions of soil, topography, and climate (and perhaps certain natural resources also) combine to produce sufficiently distinctive characteristics of farming practice and of rural economy in the widest sense to mark it off clearly from its neighbouring territories.[1]

Defined in this way a region may be larger than the county (e.g. the Fens) or (as in the present case) smaller. Hoskins admitted that what he offered was "an imprecise definition" which might be clarified as more regional studies became available. The marketing factor was also very important so that, perhaps, it should be made explicit. This might be done by adding a note in parenthesis after "... rural economy (especially in the prevailing pattern of marketing) ...". Where the rural economy of a "marginal" parish is oriented, market-wise, to a particular region this is an ultimate justification for including it in that region.

It is interesting to observe that in the only map of "farming regions of England" so far produced for the early modern period, north-east Kent is defined as "Corn and stock-fattening (in marshland)" and the southern boundary appears to follow a similar line to the one adopted

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[1] W.G. Hoskins, 'Regional Farming in England', Agricultural History Review, II (1954), 5.

here; the main difference lies in the fact that Dr Thirsk extends the area to include north-west Kent but, for reasons explained below, this was not deemed expedient for the present study.[1]

The complex geology of north Kent was summarized in a work of high repute published early this century:

> Along the gently sloping northern flank of the North Downs, through East Kent from near Deal to Sittingbourne, Rochester, and Gravesend, comes a belt of irregular diversified country where the Thanet Sands with their accompanying pebble beds rest in strata of varying thickness upon the Chalk. In places the hills they form are capped with London Clay beds; these Tertiary deposits are also covered in many places by thick beds of Brick Earth, high-level deposits from a period when the Thames and its tributaries were more important streams than they are now. In this area the surface is very irregular and the outcrops of the various strata are never extensive, because they have been cut up transversely by the old drainage system from off the chalk; the result is that one may pass rapidly even within the boundaries of a single farm from bare Chalk to Clay-with-Flints and Brick Earth, from the deep loamy Thanet Sands to the light pebbly soil derived from the higher Oldhaven beds, and from that up to the heavy London Clay. But in the main this is extremely fertile country; the Thanet Sands and the Brick Earth form almost ideal soils for all purposes and are mainly occupied by hops and fruit, while the lighter Oldhaven sands do well for small fruit and vegetables.[2]

It would be difficult to improve on this lucid description. However, the area can be logically and conveniently modified by excluding the "pebble beds" (Oldhaven beds) and the near-pure chalk formations. All that this means in practice is that the western extremity of the

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[1] Joan Thirsk, 'The Farming Regions of England', The Agrarian History of England and Wales, 1500-1640, IV (Cambridge 1967), 4. There is a map showing "farming countries" in E. Kerridge, The Agricultural Revolution (1967), opposite title-page. So far as Kent is concerned this map is so unrealistic and inaccurate as to be absurd: all territory north of the Weald is designated "Northdown" apart from "Saltings" which appear to include the fertile brickearths of the present-day North Kent Fruit Belt! A writer who includes in one supposedly viable region the Sandstone Ridge, Vale of Holmesdale, North Downs, Isle of Thanet, and the Recent and Pleistocene deposits can hardly expect to be taken seriously.

[2] A.D. Hall and E.J. Russell, A Report on the Agriculture and Soils of Kent, Surrey and Sussex (1911), 13.

region is taken as Rainham instead of some indistinct point beyond Gravesend. In the Medway towns the chalk reaches almost as far as the coast. West of Gravesend the land is almost entirely chalk and flint formation, with only small occasional cappings of the Thanet beds. When Peter Kalm visited this district in 1748 he observed particularly the abundance of "bare chalk" and "flint stones" in the locality. Chalk pits were numerous and at Gravesend Kalm found the streets paved entirely with flints. Between Gravesend and Northfleet the hills "consist of bare chalk only that a thin soil lies upon it". Kalm described in some detail the extensive chalk-quarrying and lime-burning activities of the area.[1] In the region between Bromley and Woolwich the land becomes hilly: the commons of Chislehurst, Hayes, Wickham, Bromley, Blackheath and Dartford - survivals of the larger and more numerous heaths of 250 years ago - are all on the Oldhaven pebble beds.[2] It is a district wholly distinct from north-east Kent, although on a larger "canvas" there is some justification for its inclusion in a region covering the whole of north Kent.

From the point of view of geology, soil conditions and topography the area west of the Medway which bears closest resemblance to north-east Kent is the Hoo Peninsula. However, this has been excluded from the region under review for three reasons: as a "detached" portion of territory it would lie uneasily with the region east of Rainham; from the marketing point of view Hoo was oriented to Rochester which had no commercial affinity with north-east Kent; finally, there is a dearth of source material of the kind available for the north-eastern parishes. A separate study of the Hoo Peninsula over a longer period might be a

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[1] G.H. Garrad, A Survey of the Agriculture of Kent (1954), 48; Peter Kalm, Visit to England (on his way to America in 1748) trans. Joseph Lucas (1892), 349, 417, 429.

[2] Garrad, op. cit., 48-9.

worthwhile undertaking for an agrarian historian of the future.

This leaves the final and most difficult question of delimitation along the southern boundary of the region. Since the source material is almost entirely based on the parish unit I have followed parish boundaries, using the "chalk rule" as the basis for exclusion. This entailed an individual examination of each parish on the northern dip slope. I excluded from the region those parishes which contained a clear preponderance of chalk overlaid by clay-with-flints. Nevertheless this still retained within the region a number of parishes with some chalk/clay-with-flints in their southern extremities. This was not only unavoidable but desirable, since a striking characteristic of our region is the large number of individual farms with a diversified soil structure across the spectrum from bare chalk to brick earths and marsh alluvium.[1] Indeed on the lower inclines of the dip slope there are many areas where the formations become so intermixed as to be indistinguishable from each other. It is worth noting that the precise delimitation of the region on its southern flank was not attempted by earlier writers. Young, appreciating the difficulties, was content to describe the region as lying "very little to the south" of Watling Street with its extension from Canterbury to Sandwich. (Hall and Russell were no more precise). I have borne this precept in mind when drawing the boundary by the method described. It transpires that there is a close correspondence between the result and Arthur Young's feeling on the matter: the southern boundary of the region is never more than about five miles distant from the main road. We remain firmly placed on "fine loams derived from Thanet sand, hillwash from the chalk, and brick earth".[2]

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[1] See supra p. 9, for the comments of Hall and Russell.

[2] L. Dudley Stamp, The Land of Britain: its Use and Misuse (3rd edn. 1962), 118.

From a geological point of view we are considering a region of Eocene Strata, and Pleistocene and Recent Deposits. The Thanet sands and London clay belong to the Eocene period. The Thanet sands rest in strata of varying thicknesses upon the chalk, and these tertiary deposits are themselves covered in many places by thick beds of the Pleistocene and Recent periods. The clay-with-flints (on the higher reaches of the Downland dip slope) and the brick earths (on the lower ground) are superficial deposits belonging to the Pleistocene period. The chief developments of alluvium - along the Thames fringe, and in the Stour marshes around Ash and Sandwich - have been accumulated during very recent (geological) times. The Thanet sands and superficial deposits (brick earths and alluvium) together give rise to soils which are "mainly medium loams, deep, well-drained, friable and easy working", in short "a large expanse of first class land". The London clay (Eocene) crops out in two places in north-east Kent - between Boughton under Blean and Canterbury, and in the Isle of Sheppey. The first area is bounded by the towns of Whitstable and Herne Bay on the north and the villages of Dunkirk and Chislet on the south - 40 square miles altogether. The wettest and most intractable part of this area is known as the Blean, a large tract of forest which still covers 3,000 acres today, and in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was even more extensive. The Blean Woods "show the pure London clay at its worst - undrained, sour, cold, saturated with water all the winter, and cracking badly in a hot dry summer". The northern half of the Isle of Sheppey is on the London clay formation and, although the soil is "stiff, heavy, and expensive to work" it will grow excellent crops of wheat and beans which were the chief arable crops grown in Sheppey during our period; their cultivation was no doubt helped by the fact that drainage is better than one might expect since "the land lies on a gentle southern slope and the annual

rainfall is very low, between 20 and 22 inches".[1]

B The Rural Landscape

Perhaps the finest prospect of the region can be seen from the summit of Boughton Hill, six miles west of Canterbury along Watling Street. Many a traveller paused to view the Kentish landscape from this admirable vantage point. Thomas Baskerville was possibly the earliest traveller to record his impressions:

> On the top of Boughton Hill is displayed to you one of the fairest prospects in England. Westward you shall discover a spacious plain and the meanders of the famous rivers Thames and Medway, fertilizing it. North-East the river's mouth and azure ocean. South-East, 4 miles forward in a bottom, the tower of Canterbury's cathedral, and the hills beyond it. Southward, an enclosed country fruitful in cornfields and orchards. From the top of this hill is a fine gravelly way leisurely descending through the midst of pleasant woods, made sociable by several booths where the good-wives stand ready to invite you taste a cup of their good liquor.[2]

A few years later Celia Fiennes rested at the same spot which presented to her "a pleasing prospect ... it being a very high hill commands the view of the country a vast way and with such a variety of woods, rivers and inclosures and buildings that was very delicate and diverting".[3] On a summer's day in 1723 Lord Harley passed through the village of "Boughton under Blee ... about a mile west of a large hill or forest called the Bleen ... covered with wood, but a very small shrubby kind. From the western ascent of this hill, there is a prospect of part of the

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[1] Garrad, op. cit., 19, 27-8, 49, 52, 64.

[2] 'Thomas Baskerville's Journeys in England', Hist. MSS. Com. 13th Rep. App. II, Portland, II, 278.

[3] Celia Fiennes, Through England on a Side-Saddle, in the time of William and Mary (1888), 106.

sea towards the north east ...".[1] Later in the century an early guide book for the use of visitors to Kent urged the Canterbury-bound traveller to "look back" on reaching Boughton Hill "from whence if the weather be clear, the prospect will amply repay the loss of a few minutes employed in viewing its various beauties and extent".[2]

On the western extremity of the region, from the summit of Chatham Hill, an equally variegated pattern of countryside is apparent:

> The prospect is extensive and variegated, interspersed with a view of hills, dales, orchards, cherry-gardens, hop-grounds, woods, churches, farm houses, and the windings of the Medway.[3]

The prospect of north-east Kent from Boughton Hill, Chatham Hill, and many another eminence in the region presented "a landscape truly picturesque and beautiful". How familiar it all sounds, a changeless countryside. Hardly surprising, for the rural landscape of Kent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had essentially the same appearance as it has today. The natural scenery of the north-east region comprised a multitude of enclosed fields divided by hedgerows and interspersed with small orchards, hop gardens and shaws. It was a land of hamlets, isolated farmsteads and timber-framed buildings. Larger features impinged on the fields and farms: the whaleback of the North Downs, the thread-like persistence of Watling Street, the flat expanse of Thanet. Along the northern rim a flush of fresh marshes and saltings suggested a

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[1] 'Journeys in England by Lord Harley', Hist. MSS. Com. 16th Rep. Portland, VI, 80.

[2] T. Fisher, The Kentish Traveller's Companion (Rochester and Canterbury 1776), 88. This work has been described by Professor Everitt as "an admirable little volume that went through several editions during the last quarter of the eighteenth century". (Introduction to the 1972 Reprint by EP Publishing Ltd. of Edward Hasted, The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent, 2nd ed., Canterbury, 1797-1801, ix.)

[3] Ibid., 72.

pastoral economy of no mean proportions, the riparian grazings of the Stour equally so. Change in the rural scene since the eighteenth century has been very much a matter of detail only, the addition of "modern" developments, at once unsightly and superficial: a railway line, motorway, factory site, housing estate, or electricity pylon. The agrarian historian quickly learns to obliterate these elements from his raw canvas of the rural landscape and concentrate on essential continuities.

The Fields

The antiquity of the enclosed Kentish landscape has been stressed by countless agricultural writers. As early as 1549 Kent was described ~~by John Hales~~ as one of the counties "wheare most inclosures be". More recently Dr A.R.H. Baker has examined in detail the field and settlement patterns of Kent in the seventeenth century. He concluded that the Kentish landscape, "almost entirely enclosed" by 1600, was "basically one of small fields dotted with isolated farms and hamlets and stamped with nucleated villages" which "differed only in details" from the present-day scene.[1]

The size of field varied, of course, from farm to farm. In many parts of Kent the fields were small: in the Weald and on the sandstone ridge, for example, the average size of a field in the seventeenth century was between three and seven acres. It has been suggested that north of the downland ridge fields were much larger and thereby arable farmers were less encumbered by the close proximity of shaws and hedgerows. A map of the demesnes of the manors of Bayford and Godmanston in Sittingbourne dated 1590 shows 147 acres of arable, comprising fields which averaged 18.4 acres; parcels as large as 49 acres feature in this

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[1] A.R.H. Baker, 'Field Patterns in Seventeenth-Century Kent', Geography, L, pt. 1 (1965), 18, 29.

survey.[1] However, Mr Chalklin's belief that "the downland ridge was the dividing line between the areas of small and large fields" is misleading. Many of the farms in north-east Kent included small fields, the majority of which were less than 10 acres. Hogshaw Farm at Milstead, north of the downland ridge, comprised thirty-two arable fields in 1750; half of these were under 5 acres; the three largest fields were exactly 10 acres apiece; the average size of the fields on this farm was 5.2 acres.[2]

The Hartlip estate of Thomas Osborne lay a little to the south of Watling Street; a map of 1700 shows ninety-six fields covering more than 600 acres. Over half of the fields were less than 5 acres each; only fifteen fields were more than 10 acres apiece, the largest of these being 20 acres; the average size of field on this estate was 6.9 acres.[3] The fields are classified according to size in Table 1.

TABLE 1

OSBORNE ESTATE, HARTLIP : FIELD SIZES 1700

Size (acres)	Number of Fields	Per cent
1 - 3	33	34.4
3 - 5	20	20.8
5 - 10	28	29.2
over 10	15	15.6
Total	96	100.0

[1] C.W. Chalklin, Seventeenth-Century Kent: a Social and Economic History (1965), 11.

[2] KAO U593 A3 ff. 232v-233.

[3] KAO U771 Z1/1700.

In 1719 the estate at Hartlip Place was partitioned. At the end of the century half of the estate was in the hands of William Bland. A map in 1796 shows that the small Bland estate covered an area of 302 acres. Almost 11 acres are shown as woods, shaws and roughs; Queendown warren covered 47.5 acres. An area of almost 244 acres was divided into twenty fields which averaged 12.2 acres: fields as large as 26 acres and 29 acres are included in the survey.[1] Table 2 analyses the distribution of fields according to size.

TABLE 2

BLAND ESTATE, HARTLIP : FIELD SIZES 1796

Size (acres)	Number of Fields	Per cent
under 5	6	30.0
5 - 10	4	20.0
10 - 20	7	35.0
over 20	3	15.0
Total	20	100.0

A study of the Hartlip maps and an analysis of field-sizes shows a clear tendency towards amalgamation of small fields during the eighteenth century: the average size of field almost doubled. Nevertheless it is also clear that hedgerows, shaws and roughs were still abundant on the estate in the 1790's and, despite the increase in field size, half the fields were still less than 10 acres apiece. Chalklin draws a sharp distinction between (on the one hand) the pasture farms south of the Downs for whom "small closes were useful for dividing the livestock, and the hedges and shaws gave them shelter", and (on the other hand) the farms north of the downland ridge managed by "largely arable farmers" who considered that "shaws wasted land, harboured vermin, and kept the sun

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[1] Ibid., Z1/1796.

from the corn round the edge of the close".[1] This is simply untrue. It seems more likely that Wealden fields owed their small size to slow, piecemeal clearance and enclosure in the Middle Ages; their origins must be sought beyond 1600. The field patterns at Milstead and Hartlip, and on many another farm in north-east Kent are typical of a prevailing mixed farming economy. The farmers of the region were not "largely arable farmers" despite the fact they grew large acreages of grain and other crops. They were mixed farmers with an abundance of livestock, pasture and woodland in addition to their extensive acreages (though not necessarily large fields) of arable crops, and smaller areas of fruit and hops. Moreover north-east Kent was "already differentiated as a marsh-land region of mixed farming in the sixteenth century".[2]

It is easy enough to find large fields in the Isle of Thanet in the eighteenth century. But farms containing large fields also included many small ones. A survey in 1774 of the Quex, Dandelion, and Kingsgate estate (1,340) acres, Thanet property of the Honourable Charles Fox, demonstrates the truth of this observation.[3] The estate comprised three large farms of more than 250 acres apiece, two medium size farms each covering more than 100 acres, and a number of lesser holdings; these properties, covering several parishes, were leased to tenant farmers. In the parish of Birchington the "Quex Mansion House Farm", leased to William Neame, and another farm at Quex Park tenanted by Mr Tomlin (designated in the survey "Mr Tomlin's farm at Quex") covered between them almost 600 acres. Of the thirteen fields comprising Neame's farm

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[1] Chalklin, loc. cit.

[2] Thirsk, op. cit., 61.

[3] I am indebted to Mr Christopher Powell-Cotton, present owner of Quex Park (Birchington), who kindly allowed me to borrow the excellent survey of 1774 (by I.Hodskinson) and to photocopy the maps and schedules. Other documents relating to this property are in the Kent Archives Office, U1063 Powell-Cotton MSS.

only one measured less than 9 acres; the largest field - Nether Mill Field - extended over 79 acres, the second largest 39 acres. This was a truly large farm consisting of extensive fields. Some of the field-names suggest earlier enclosure from the open fields: Quex Close, Lower Woodchurch Close, Upper Woodchurch Close, and New Close (this feature is common to all the holdings on the estate); there was also a "green" of more than 9 acres on Neame's farm. Tomlin's farm similarly contained some very large fields; the largest measured 63 acres but, altogether, four of the fourteen fields were more than 50 acres each. However, on this farm exactly half of the fields, each designated a "close" or "green", contained less than 10 acres; from the point of view of field-size Tomlin's farm at Quex shows a marked disparity. Readen Street Farm in St. Peter's also shows a striking contrast: half the farm's acreage comprised one field - "Hackendown" - measuring 72 acres; the remainder of the farm was divided into nine fields, each less than 10 acres. Flete Farm in the parish of St. John the Baptist (Margate), St. Lawrence, and St. Peter contained ten fields, four of them between 10 and 20 acres apiece, the others smaller. Dandelion Farm (396 acres) spread over the parishes of St. John and Acol, was the largest single holding on this Thanet estate. It also contained the largest field - "The Close" - which covered 187 acres, almost half the farm's extent. Another field, bearing the cryptic title "The Land of Nod", measured 77 acres. A further two fields were more than 30 acres apiece; nevertheless four fields, including two greens and a close, did not exceed 10 acres each.

There is no doubt that the largest fields in north-east Kent were to be found, as today, in the Isle of Thanet. Yet Thanet farms also contained numerous small fields, many of them under grass. The disparity of field-sizes within individual farms was so great that it is of little value to calculate averages. Undoubtedly it was the extensive fields together with an absence of woodland (none is shown in the 1774

survey) which gave Thanet its dominant characteristic. Lewis described the landscape in 1723 as "very bleak and open ... there are very few hedges or trees".[1] At the end of the century Marshall commented on the open aspect of the Thanet countryside, interspersed with nucleated villages:

> The whole country lies open; excepting the immediate environs of villages. Those of Birchington, Minster, and St. Lawrence have, perhaps, the greatest quantity of enclosed lands ... many of the farmeries are gathered together in villages, or hamlets, in the manner of other open arable districts.[2]

This leads us to consider the interesting question of the precise nature of Thanet's open fields. The frequency of the term "close" in the survey of 1774 indicates that land described in this way had previously lain in the open fields. Many of these enclosures were small but the 187-acre field belonging to Dandelion Farm was known simply as "The Close"; the field known as "Rolley's Close" (Quex) covered 53 acres. Fields of this size, although technically "enclosed" retained an open character which they imparted to the landscape. As late as the 1840's it was observed that the parish of St. John consisted "chiefly of unenclosed corn lands".[3] In the survey of 1774 it is not always clear (where the field-name is unhelpful) whether the larger fields were truly enclosed or whether they still lay open, as sections of larger fields. For example, in the case of "Nether Mill Field" (80 a.) the possibility exists that the land was still unenclosed in the 1770's. Other evidence strengthens this possibility.

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[1] J. Lewis, The History and Antiquities, as well Ecclesiastical as Civil, of the Isle of Tenet in Kent (1723), 11.

[2] W. Marshall, The Rural Economy of the Southern Counties (2 Vols. 1798), II, 6-8.

[3] S. Bagshaw, History, Gazeteer, and Directory of the County of Kent (2 Vols. 1847), II, 150.

Surviving leases for Quex Farm relate to the years 1658, 1698, 1709, 1723, and 1769.[1] In the earliest leasehold indenture John Bax of Ash secured the tenancy of Quex Farm. At this time 154 acres were scheduled as "lyinge and beinge in the open fields"; the rest of the farm consisted of enclosed fields mostly 10-20 acres each, in some cases smaller. In 1698, when Thomas Troward acquired the lease of the farm, "land and downes lying in open field containing one hundred /and/ forty eight acres" were included in the agreement; as late as 1769 Quex Farm (330 a.) included 148 acres "lying in the open fields".

Although the survival of open fields in eighteenth-century Kent is of considerable interest from the point of view of landscape appreciation (Thanet is the only area in the north-east region where they are in evidence) they were of little consequence for ownership and tenure. They were not, and never had been, common fields: there is no evidence of communal working. Miss Melling has referred to such areas as "so called common arable fields".[2] Dr A.R.H. Baker has suggested that the term "subdivided fields" is more appropriate for these open areas in Kent. He has pointed out that "most had enclosed outer boundaries" and, furthermore, there is the danger that "open field" might be taken to signify "common arable field", that is "arable land contained in fields cultivated in common which became commonable after harvest". Dr Baker concluded that "by the seventeenth century most Kentish fields were enclosed" and "the relatively few subdivided arable fields were largest and most numerous in East Kent ...".[3]

Dr Thirsk has investigated the differences between open field

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[1] KAO U1063 E4.

[2] E. Melling, 'Aspects of Agriculture and Industry', Kentish Sources, III (1961), 5.

[3] A.R.H. Baker, op. cit., 18, 19, 22.

systems and common fields and has hypothesised that the distinction was temporal as well as spacial: the open field system (subdivided fields) was an immature common field system and maturity was not reached in England before the mid-thirteenth century. The emergence of a fully-fledged common field system represented a response to the changing needs of the community: when the land became excessively subdivided as population increased, acute problems arose of providing access to the many small pieces of land, of ensuring water for stock and of enabling stubble to be eaten by livestock without damage to the crops of neighbours; the need for agreement and co-operation became inescapable.[1] But in some areas "the stubble did not have to be economically grazed owing to the abundance of other pasture" and therefore "no attempt was ever made to order the strip fields on a village basis".[2] Kent was one such area where "there were no common rights of pasture and none were felt to be necessary".[3] Dr Thirsk has related the immature form (open fields) particularly to forest and pastoral areas as opposed to arable districts.[4] Yet in Thanet, a district of extensive arable farms and nucleated villages, the open field system clearly never matured into a common field system.[5] How then does Thanet fit into Dr Thirsk's hypothesis? Thanet is something of an enigma; the availability of abundant pasture is the key to understanding the rural economy of this ostensibly arable district. Extensive tracts of Thanet marshland were reclaimed in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries when

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[1] Joan Thirsk, 'The Common Fields', Past and Present 29 (1964), 3-25.

[2] Ibid., 23.

[3] Ibid., 5.

[4] Thirsk, Agrarian History of England and Wales, op. cit., 1-15.

[5] Another typical feature of forest-pastoral regions is also found in Thanet - the prevalence of by-employments or dual-economies.

Henry of Eastry adopted an enlightened policy in the coastal manors of Canterbury Cathedral Priory. In the manor of Monkton newly-reclaimed and embanked land was frequently enclosed and peopled with leasehold tenants who were encouraged to undertake further reclamation. There was already "a remarkable increase in the marsh area of the manor of Monkton" by the end of the thirteenth century.[1] This process continued into the eighteenth century by which time vast stretches of salts and fresh marshes supplemented the "greens" found near the homestead on many a Thanet farm. Quex Farm, for instance, possessed in 1774 "marshland in Waterdale Level" in the parish of St. Nicholas at Wade, besides a number of pasture closes nearer the farmstead. Readen Street Farm in St. Peter's included 72 acres of land referred to as "Hackendown from the Sea", clearly a large expanse of coastal grazings.[2] It was about this time that Seymour observed that "the south and west parts of the island /of Thanet/ are, for the most part, marsh or pasture lands".[3] Early in the century a foreign traveller observed that "Thanet is plentiful both of corn and pasture" while a similar comment was recorded in a journal of 1749 when the island was said to be "abounding in corn and grass".[4] It was estimated that altogether there were "above twenty thousand acres of arable and pasture land" in Thanet.[5] The richest pastures were in Monkton, Minster, and St. Nicholas at Wade. Monkton Level has been

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[1] R.A.L. Smith, Canterbury Cathedral Priory (Cambridge 1969), 185-7.

[2] Survey of the Quex, Dandelion, and Kingsgate estate by I. Hodskinson (1774).

[3] C. Seymour, A New Topographical, Historical and Commercial Survey of the Cities, Towns, and Villages of the County of Kent (Canterbury 1776), 772.

[4] Guy Miege, The Present State of Great Britain and Ireland (1711), 54; London Magazine, XVIII (1749), 492.

[5] Thomas Pennant, A Journey from London to the Isle of Wight (2 Vols. 1801), I (' From London to Dover, January 1787'), 105.

described as "an extensive marsh on the bank of the Stour". North of the village of Minster "the land rises to high ground being a fine open champaign country" but the Stour forms the southern boundary of the parish where there was "an extensive tract of marsh land called Minster Level". The land in the parish of St. Nicholas, "mostly arable, is a fertile soil chiefly on high ground, excepting on the west where it consists of a level marsh bounded by the water called the Nethergong".[1] The rich pastures of Thanet which, from early days, preserved its immature system of large, subdivided arable fields, imparted a special dichotomy to the island's eighteenth-century landscape. Massive fields of ripening corn were matched by equally extensive belts of salts and fresh marshes, coastal and riparian, as well as considerable upland leys. To envisage Thanet, or indeed any part of the north-east region of Kent, as "largely arable" is too simple and misleading.

The story of marsh reclamation was repeated throughout the length of the region's coastline. Henry of Eastry "wrote a letter in 1325 to the archbishop of Canterbury in which he enclosed the petition of a principal tenant of the marshes of Seasalter and himself suggested that a rate should be levied on the landlords and tenants of the marshes to enable embanking operations to take place".[2] In this way saltings were established which would eventually evolve into rich grazing land. In the early seventeenth century marshlands belonging to the manor of Seasalter were leased to Paul Claybrooke, a Thanet gentleman; a terrier of 1621 shows that the contiguous parcels of marsh grazing ranged in size from 17 to 27 acres.[3]

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[1] Bagshaw, op. cit., 174, 179, 181.

[2] Smith, op. cit., 187.

[3] C.E. Lugard, Seasalter: Borough, Manor, and Parish (Whitstable n.d.), 13.

Landowners of neighbouring uplands or fresh marshes frequently invested on a considerable scale in the reclamation and embanking of salts which could then be profitably leased to tenants. Sometimes, where capital requirements were more modest, tenants were themselves encouraged to undertake reclamation. In the early seventeenth century, Christopher Toldervy of London, gentleman, leased the manor of Barksore in Lower Halstow from the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury. Toldervy's tenant Ralph Elmestone, a Rainham yeoman, agreed to inn and embank saltmarsh belonging to the estate. In 1606 they reached an agreement "concerninge the Wallinge, Inninge, securinge, Repayringe and preservinge of the salt Marshe belonginge to the Mannour of Barksore". The reclamation was to be completed within three years. The cost was estimated at £300, half to be paid by Toldervy and half by Elmestone, the latter to pay this sum as an increased rent over a period of time. The work appears to have been completed satisfactorily by 1609 when 180 acres of "marshes lately inned" is recorded. Further reclamation was carried out before 1664 when "marshlands lately inned" were included in a lease of that year. The counterpart of a lease dated 1739 shows that extensive reclamation must have been carried out during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries when the Darrell family of Calehill leased the manor of Barksore from the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury. By the 1740's Barksore Farm contained over 500 acres of arable, pasture and salt marsh.[1] It is interesting to note that the pattern of reclamation which began at Barksore in the early 1600's continues today. Bill and Harry Mouland, father and son, of Great Barksore Farm are wildfowl conservation enthusiasts. When Bill Mouland recently decided to reclaim a large area of his marshland bordering the Medway estuary, he was faced with a prodigious task that involved the building of an eight-foot sea wall.

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[1]KAO U386 E14/3, T66; Kentish Post 15 May 1745.

The work of reclamation is now complete. It has given the Moulands additional fertile land at a cost well below current land values and, because they have taken special measures to ensure a favourable habitat, numbers of wildfowl have greatly increased.

The saltings of Graveney supplied, in the early sixteenth century, valuable summer sheep pasturage for Nicholas Wigmore who farmed at Goodnestone Court near Faversham until his death in 1560.[1] Inventories for the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries for Goodnestone and Graveney show the continued importance of local marsh grazings for sheep and cattle.[2]

However, much land remained in need of reclamation at the beginning of our period. When Peter Mundy visited Queenborough in the spring of 1640 he observed that the area was "all watrish, marshy, a great way round aboutt unserviceable ground". Moreover, many a Kent topographer was to repeat the time-honoured warning of Kilburne that "the marshes /are/ for the most part unhealthy".[3] Hasted, who viewed with disdain every low-lying parish along the north coast, saw the malarial "Kentish ague" lurking behind every dripping blade of grass. His poignant description of Murston is typical:

> Its situation is most unpleasant as well as unhealthy ... the greatest part lying so exceeding low and watry, enveloped by creeks, marshes and salts. The air is very gross, and much subject to fogs, which smell very offensive, and in winter it is scarce ever free from them ... they yet remain hovering over the lands for three or four feet or more in height, which, with the badness of the water, occasions severe agues, which the inhabitants are very rarely without, whose complexions

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[1] D. Baker, 'A Sixteenth-Century Farmer of Goodnestone-next-Faversham', Faversham Magazine, II, no. 1 (1970), 11.

[2] KAO PRC 27/43/80, 11/58/63, 11/71/52, 11/83/182.

[3] 'The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667', The Hakluyt Society, Series II, LV (1925), 56; R. Kilburne, A Topographie or Survey of the County of Kent (1659), 3.

> from those distempers become of a dingy yellow colour, and if they survive, are generally afflicted with them till summer, and often for several years, so that it is not unusual to see a poor man, his wife, and whole family of five or six children, hovering over their fire in their hovel, shaking with an ague all at the same time.[1]

Notwithstanding these dire afflictions, the farmers of Kent's coastal cantons appear to have summoned sufficient strength to salvage new acres from the sea. Reclamation proceeded apace and by the end of the second decade of the eighteenth century it could be claimed that there had been an "abundance of land gained from the sea since Kilburn's time".[2]

An outstanding feature of farming advertisements in the Kentish Post from the 1720's is the large number of individual parcels of marshland offered on lease or for sale: 52 acres of "fresh marsh land at Ash level"; 21 acres of "fresh marsh land in West Marsh, Ash"; 30 acres of "salt marsh land in the Isle of Harty"; 80 acres of "fresh marsh land in Murston level"; four pieces of fresh marsh land called Middle Marsh and Kniving being all fattening land ... containing 114 acres in Harty, Isle of Sheppey" - and many more.[3] The fertility of these pastures, reclaimed from river and sea, complemented fruitful upland fields where rich grazings were hard to find.

The Farms

The "irregular diversified country" of north-east Kent gave rise to an equally variegated rural economy. It has already been remarked how the land surface changed rapidly even within the confines of a single

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[1] Hasted, op. cit., VI, 144.

[2] J. Harris, A History of Kent (1719), 348.

[3] Kentish Post 16 January 1731, 5 September 1747, 20 September 1749, 8 March 1760, 28 March 1763.

farm.[1] The strength of the farming economy lay in diversity, a neat balance between arable and grassland, crops and livestock, with a range of woodlands and specialist crops supporting the main edifice.

Choice of land use varies with soil and climate in obvious ways: we do not expect to find sugar plantations in the Fens, nor do we find orange groves in Kent. Furthermore, within the limits imposed by soil and climate, certain other factors influence choice and intensiveness of production: communications, transport facilities, and the level of entrepreneurial skills play an important part in determining the location of agricultural production. It has been noted that "even within quite small distances land contours and microclimate make changes in land use advisable; hence the variety of the English rural scene". What is true for the country at large is equally pertinent to the region, or at any rate selected regions. The same writer observed: /"Favoured areas have the widest range of choice, and farmers there, having an absolute advantage in most forms of agriculture, will concentrate on those products for which their comparative advantage is greatest".[2]/ This description fits north-east Kent particularly well for this was undoubtedly the most versatile farming area within the county, showing a sensitive response to inherent conditions of soil and topography as well as to operative market forces.

Grain crops played a prominent part in the region's economy, a feature that owed not a little to the early development of the London food market. As early as the sixteenth century specialization within the cereal area itself was apparent: north-east Kent supplied most of the London-bound malt through Sandwich, most of its wheat and oats

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[1] See supra, 9-11.

[2] M. Capstick, The Economics of Agriculture (1970), 23.

through Faversham and Milton.[1] By the early eighteenth century wheat, beans and barley were the region's leading crops.[2] But the bulk of the barley was concentrated in an area east of Canterbury and especially in the Isle of Thanet, on the chalky and sandy loams. Fields of wheat and beans dominated the landscape between Rainham and Boughton. Literary evidence is abundant, a closer analysis follows in later chapters. The cartographer, Robert Morden, observed the richness and variety of Kentish agriculture and selected "Thanet barley" and "Shepy and Reculver wheat" for special mention. Benjamin Martin saw "grain of several sorts" growing in Thanet but it was "principally barley" which caught his eye. Seymour, too, perceived that "great plenty of grain grows in the north and east parts of Kent" and that Thanet grew "the best of barley".[3]

As early as the sixteenth century the Faversham district was recognised as "one of the most fruitfull partes of this shyre".[4] Arthur Young described the "common husbandry about Feversham" noting that local farmers followed "the round tilth ... barley ... beans ... wheat ... which is the famous rotation of East Kent". He reserved his greatest praise for "the cultivation and management of beans as a preparation for wheat" which he considered was "the great feature of their husbandry ... the most meritorious of anything in the country". John Banister, the Horton Kirby farmer, was likewise full of approbation for the Kentish method of bean cultivation on the rich loams around Faversham. The

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[1] F.J. Fisher, 'The Development of the London Food Market, 1540-1640', Essays in Economic History, ed. E.M. Carus-Wilson, I (1954), 144-5.

[2] D. Baker, 'The Marketing of Corn in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century: North-East Kent', Agricultural History Review, 18, pt. 2 (1970), 128.

[3] Morden, op. cit., 77; B. Martin, The Natural History of England (2 Vols. 1759-63), I, 198; Seymour, op. cit., xii, 772.

[4] W. Lambarde, A Perambulation of Kent (1576), 231.

skills of Sheppey farmers were equally apparent for "the upper grounds of this island /Sheppey/ produce excellent corn". Some years later Buckland was more explicit when he observed how Sheppey farmers worked "the London clay ... exceedingly heavy and tenacious, difficult and expensive to work" but which "when well managed, in good seasons produces heavy crops of wheat, beans, and clover".[1] At Sittingbourne, just across the Swale on the mainland, Colsall Farm (190 a.) included "34 acres of good bean season fit to sow wheat on at Michaelmas" when the leasehold was advertised in 1730.[2]

A singular quality of the farmers in our region was their ability to produce maximum returns under often adverse conditions. Much of Thanet is "chalky light land" and when Lewis described the island as "fruitful" he was quick to point out that this was as much, or more, due to good management as to any inherent qualities of the soil:

> This fruitfulness of the generality of the island, where the land is naturally poor and barren, is in a great measure owing to the industry and good husbandry of the occupiers of these lands, who spare neither cost nor labour to help and improve them.[3]

The high level of husbandry techniques in Thanet was manifest before 1680. John Evelyn in 1672 thought Thanet farmers produced "a country the best cultivated of any that in my life I had anywhere seen". But in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the versatility and expertise of these farmers led them to experiment with new methods of cultivation which brought significant changes in the local landscape. The extensive cultivation of beans as a row crop on the light calcareous

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[1] Young, op. cit., 70-2; J. Banister, Synopsis of Husbandry (1799), 27-8; G. Buckland, 'On the Farming of Kent', Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society, VI (1845), 253.

[2] Kentish Post 18 April 1730.

[3] Lewis, op. cit., 12.

soils of Thanet after 1680 was something new and revolutionary - "a very late and modern improvement" according to Lewis. Another "improvement" was the cultivation of "a French Grass called Sante-Foine" which able Thanet farmers raised on "their thinnest and most barren ground". Around mid-century Benjamin Martin observed the Thanet landscape, detailing particularly the dominance of barley on the "very good arable land" in the north of the island, the pastures of the south and west, and the thinner soils which were "sown with saintfoin" and produced "near two loads of hay on an acre" which he deemed "a considerable advantage".[1] The variety and intensity which characterized Thanet farming was thought by Thomas Pennant to be "owing to the industry of the Dutch and Flemings" and, indeed, their settlement in this area during the sixteenth century no doubt inculcated a certain spirit of diligence and ingenuity among the local populace. The same writer ably summarized the multiformity of Thanet agriculture:

> The Isle of Thanet to this day preserves the character ... of its great fertility. The produce is wheat, barley, beans, pease, red and white clover, saintfoin, tares, turnips, radishes for seed, trefoil, and kidney-beans, and variety of seeds for the use of the gardeners about London.[2]

Other visitors to Thanet, although acutely aware of the agricultural wealth of the district, found little to commend in the way of natural beauty. The Reverend William Gilpin visited Thanet in 1774, and, although no agriculturist, he quickly appreciated that the area was "rich and well cultivated". But here was a traveller who sought other qualities in the landscape and, for him, Thanet was "without any

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[1] J. Evelyn, The Diary of John Evelyn, with an Introduction and Notes by Austin Dobson (1908), 285; Lewis, op. cit., 13, 17; Martin, op. cit., 198.

[2] Pennant, op. cit., 104.

picturesque beauty".[1] Many another traveller would share Gilpin's balanced judgement for Thanet - bleak and open, lacking hills, orchards, hedgerows, and woodland - endeared itself chiefly to the agricultural purist. Beauty is truly in the eyes of the beholder.

Not surprisingly, Gilpin found greater scope for expression as he travelled along the road from Canterbury to Rainham through "a rich and picturesque country" where "the ground lies so beautifully, the woods are so frequent, and so varied; and the lanes winding among them, give so advantageous view of the whole".[2] It has been well said of Watling Street that "this road through Kent pleased everybody".[3] Samuel De Sorbière, in 1662, extolled the landscape in almost extravagant terms. It appeared to him:

> ... a very fine and fruitful country, especially in apples and cherries; and the trees, which are planted in rows everywhere, make as it were a continued train of gardens. The country mounts up into little hills, and the valleys are beautiful with an eternal verdure; and the grass here seemed to me to be of a better colour than in other places.[4]

A century later William Toldervy travelled the Old Dover Road during harvest time and recorded his impressions as he left the Medway towns:

> I now turned my course towards Sittingbourn, and soon came through a fine country to the village of Rainham ... Nothing can be more pleasing than travelling on this coast where, on one side, is a charming cultivated country and, on the other, continued views of the sea, with ships sailing to or from London. From the village the country continues fine, with the sea very near, and

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[1] William Gilpin, Observations on the Coasts of Hampshire, Sussex, and Kent, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Summer of the Year 1774 (1804), 99.

[2] Ibid., 106.

[3] E. Smith, Foreign Visitors in England (1889), 59.

[4] Samuel De Sorbière, A Voyage to England in 1662 (1709), 9.

> the approaching harvest seems to enliven the hearts of the yeomen and farmers of Kent.[1]

Charles Moritz has been described as "a good-hearted man who saw everything with a poet's eye".[2] He delighted in his journey along Kent's north-east coast:

> I see everywhere nothing but fertile and cultivated lands; and these living hedges, which in England more than in any other country, form the boundaries of the green cornfields, and give to the whole of the distant country, the appearance of a large and majestic garden.[3]

If neatly-hedged fields of barley, wheat and beans dominated the arable scene of north-east Kent, it is equally true that some crops, common enough on meaner English soils, were minor features of the region's landscape. Oats were the least important of the cereal crops (apart from rye) and were found only on the poor or less tractable soils. On the poorest chalklands the hardy Devonshire Black Oats were commonly sown. In Thanet "oats is grain of which we have very little, our farmers generally thinking their land too good for them".[4] Tares, also, were "seldom sown on the best land, on account of its running too much to straw".[5] A field of rye was a rare sight indeed, but not unknown. Rather oddly its cultivation was virtually restricted to one parish. Upchurch, marshy along its northern flank, possessed southern slopes where the soil was "very thin and poor having much gravel mixed with it".

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[1] W. Toldervy, England and Wales Described in a Series of Letters (1762) I, 178.

[2] E. Smith, op. cit., 63.

[3] C.P. Moritz, Travels Chiefly on Foot through several parts of England in 1782 (1795), 14-15.

[4] Lewis, op. cit., 15.

[5] J. Boys, A General View of the Agriculture of Kent (1796), 94.

These poverty-stricken soils occasioned "the growth of much broom and fern".[1] And, as the inventories show, rye was grown. The main uses to which rye was applied were "either to feed off the green blade with sheep, or if reserved for a crop, to sell to the tanners, who make use of this grain in the way of their trade". It was also observed that "rye straw is used by the collar makers, and fetches a price superior to any other".[2]

But if the kaleidoscope of the Kentish landscape featured few of the poor man's crops it displayed a spectrum of specialities of which fruit and hops were by far the most important. The two symbols of the "Garden of England", the orchard and the hop-garden, were a familiar sight throughout the region, Thanet excepted. As early as 1576 Lambarde pointed out that "Tenham, with thirty other parishes (lying on each side this porte way, and extending from Raynham to Blean Wood) bee the Cherrie gardein and Apple orcharde of Kent".[3] Morden spoke of Kentish "apples, pears, excellent plums, apricocks and cherries" and selected "Tenham orchards" for special mention.[4] Pennant remarked that "numerous cherry orchards, planted in regular order, and often with fine crops of wheat growing between them or sheep grazing are frequent beauties on the sides of the road" from Rainham to Canterbury.[5] Orchards laid down to grass were a frequent sight. In 1730 the leasehold of ten acres of "pasture land planted with fruit" was advertised. Interested clients were told that this Rainham holding comprised trees which were "in perfection,

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[1]Hasted, op. cit., VI, 25.

[2]Banister, op. cit., 129.

[3]Lambarde, op. cit., 222.

[4]Morden, op. cit., 77.

[5]Pennant, op. cit., 51.

having been planted 30 years". The same year a tenant was sought for 3 acres of "pasture ground planted with fruit trees" together with 1½ acres of "garden ground", both situated in the Canterbury parish of Northgate.[1]

References to hops are legion, despite the fact that individual hop gardens rarely exceeded 5 acres, and were almost always small adjuncts of larger mixed farming enterprises. Nevertheless there were many of them, and they were becoming more numerous, imparting a unique quality to the regional pattern. At the end of the seventeenth century Celia Fiennes saw "great hop yards on both sides of the road" between Sittingbourne and Canterbury. When Dr Richard Pococke reached the City in 1754 he averred: "It is a great hop country all round this place". A few years later Toldervy, after "passing through a rich country", reached Boughton where he noticed "many hop gardens" and "as I nearer approached Canterbury these plantations became more abundant and are in a most promising condition ... this part and within the distance of about twenty miles, is the most famous in England for hops ...". For Thomas Pennant the hop gardens of the district were "no small ornaments" but Gilpin, who stands alone in his opinion, found them unpleasant: "The only thing which injures the beauty of this country is the frequency of hop-grounds, which are formal and disagreeable in every state of cultivation".[2]

Were there no more crops to be noticed we should have variety indeed. But the kaleidoscope gained further brilliance from fields of flax and carrots around Sandwich - "well furnished with gardens and

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[1] Kentish Post 17, 27 June 1730.

[2] Fiennes, op. cit., 100; 'The Travels through England of Dr Richard Pococke', Camden Society Publications, New Series, XLIV (1889), 86; Toldervy, op. cit., 182; Pennant, op. cit., 50; Gilpin, op. cit., 106.

water"[1] - madder on Faversham moulds, and many a field of weld on chalky upland farms.

Although we must perforce agree with Professor Hoskins that "the clearance of the natural woodlands had been the greatest single change in the landscape" before Domesday,[2] north-east Kent, nevertheless, retained sufficient of its wooded character to add another dimension to its landscape in the Georgian Age. An abundance of oak, beech, ash and chestnut, mature trees as well as coppice, cloaked the Blean and the downland dip-slope. Pierre Grosley, in terms of near-extravaganza, described the sylvan scene along the Old Dover Road. "We skirted some lofty woods", he wrote, "as well-furnished as the best stocked forests of France", adding that "they belong to the Archbishop and the Chapter of Canterbury."[3]

Underwood and timber were frequently advertised for sale or lease. In the winter of 1760 nearly an acre of "well thriving ashes about 4 years growth" were sold at Harbledown. Early the following year 14 acres of coppice in Fridd Wood at Borden were ready "to be felled immediately". The same year, at Wingham, mature trees of "walnut, poplar, gasken, ... horse-chestnut and ... elms" as well as "alder wood fit for chair-making" were offered for sale. When fifty tons of elm, growing in the Blean, was put on the market in 1762, prospective buyers were informed that "the timber is handy for water-carriage, being not above three or four miles from Whitstable or Herne Bay". Two years later, some four acres of underwood, growing in the same district, was said to stand "not far from the turnpike road leading from Canterbury to

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[1] John Lyon, A Description of the Isle of Thanet and particularly of the Town of Margate (1763), 38.

[2] W.G. Hoskins, The Making of the English Landscape (Pelican 1970), 77.

[3] P.J. Grosley, A Tour to London or New Observations on England (2 Vols. 1772), I, 14.

Whitstable".[1]

The manor houses which dotted the landscape were rarely the elegant seats of gentlemen "set in the countryside but not truly of it". Milstead Manor, Hartlip Place, Goodnestone Court, Newgardens in Teynham, Linsted Lodge, and several score of similar residences formed an integral part of the rural landscape: "Each was a genuine farmhouse as well as a manorial hall, the centre of its parish or community, a microcosm of rural society. Their fields came up to the garden quickfriths and the barns adjoined their courtyards".[2] Many new farmhouses were built during the period. When a leasehold farm near Thanet became vacant in 1762, the prospective tenant was told that, in addition to 195 acres of arable and meadow, he would enjoy the comforts of "a handsome, modern-built sash'd house".[3] Some of these fine dwellings were remarked upon by Grosley as he travelled eastwards to Canterbury:

> The farmhouses which are situated on the side of the high roads, or near them, being built of brick, and covered with tiles, have glass windows that are kept in the most exact order. The barns are likewise built of brick; there are only a few miserable ones thatched. The appearance is as comfortable within as without.[4]

Perhaps the most striking feature of advertisements relating to farms in north-east Kent is the remarkable range and balance of land-use apparent on individual farms.[5] A traveller traversing the region from south to north discovers the "manifest diversities of soil and the vary-

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[1] Kentish Post 24 December 1760, 17 January, 1 April 1761, 30 January 1762, 15 December 1764.

[2] Everitt, Community of Kent, op. cit., 29.

[3] Kentish Post 9 October 1762.

[4] Grosley, op. cit., 17.

[5] Kentish Post 1728-60, passim.

ing physical features of the surface" and "an almost ceaseless variety of agricultural produce" reflected on individual holdings.[1] A harmony of soil-types gave maximum scope for manoeuvrability and adaptability which could, and usually did, result in a balanced farm economy.

Barksore Farm at Halstow and Iwade consisted of 500 acres of "marsh and uplands besides salts" when the lease was advertised in 1745. Halstow was "a very obscure and unfrequented parish" the northern part of which was "open to the adjoining marshes". Much of Barksore Farm was reclaimed pasture "so fertile as to be good fatting land for beasts". But if much of the district was characterized by "creeks, marshes and salts" the higher reaches had "a woody appearance the shaves and hedgerows being very broad round the fields". The "stiff and wet clay" in this part of the parish had been "much improved by spreading over with lime" during the century, and was thereby enabled to produce " a good crop of wheat". Halstow also contained a number of "fertile meadows and orchards". At least as early as 1811 Iwade contained 282 acres of arable land and 378 acres of "inned" freshwater marshes, although much of the parish comprised saltings of a "soft boggy nature" which had "great quantities of sheep constantly feeding on them" during the summer months. Another Iwade farm of more than 200 acres was described, in 1748, as "improveable"; it comprised 28 acres of "upland" and 48 acres of "fresh marsh" together with a large tract of "salt marsh" which extended over 132 acres. The low annual rent of £32 made this an attractive proposition for an "improving" farmer willing to invest in further reclamation.[2]

In 1746 John Carpenter occupied a large farm at Rainham consisting of 280 acres described as "sowing land", and 208 acres of "fresh and salt

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[1] Buckland, op. cit., 251.

[2] Kentish Post 15 May 1745, 18 June 1748; Hasted, op. cit., VI, 35-6; Bagshaw, op. cit., II, 521.

marsh land". Rainham, a large parish on the western fringe of the region, showed marked contrasts from north to south. Along its coastal rim, Rainham was deemed by Hasted as "very unhealthy" due to "its nearness and exposure to the marshes ... the fresh marshes, and beyond the wall which incloses them a quantity of salts, the northern boundary of which ... is Otterham creek". In the middle section of the parish "about the street /Watling Street/ and northward of it" the soil becomes "a fertile and kindly land both for corn and fruit ... the best wheat this kingdom has produced and ... many plantations of cherries and apples". South of the mellow brickearths lay "a hilly district with a chalky soil much covered with flints" and well-wooded.[1]

Agriculturally, Sheppey can be divided into two equal halves by a line drawn from west to east. North of this imaginary line is the upland (London clay with patches of lighter Bagshot sands) which is anything from 50 to 250 feet above sea level, good heavy arable land. South of this line the land is almost all less than 50 feet above sea level, marshland capable of supporting large numbers of sheep and cattle. Minster is by far the largest Sheppey parish; the village stands on high ground surrounded by ploughed fields; the farms were, in the main, mixed farms manifesting a nice balance of soil types. South Lees Farm contained 200 acres of uplands, 100 acres of fresh marsh, and 40 acres of saltings when the lease expired in 1729. Adjoining South Lees on its southern flank, Ferry Marsh Farm comprised 300 acres of fresh marshland and 140 acres of salts, an ideal holding for the specialist grazier. But the owner envisaged that some well-breeched tenant might wish to rent both farms as a joint-enterprise, some 800 acres altogether; the option was explicit. Indeed, this view was common policy during the period, injecting a valuable element of flexibility into the region's farming

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[1] Kentish Post 5 July 1746; Hasted, op. cit., VI, 4-5; Bagshaw, op. cit., II, 531.

economy: two, or even three, farms frequently formed the effective unit of production.[1]

The Swale forms the northern boundaries of the mainland parishes of Tonge and Murston. The notorious unhealthiness of Murston marshes (in Hasted's view) has already been remarked upon; the low-lying ground of Tonge "towards the Swale marshes" was of similar character. But in the southern parts of these parishes there were many rich acres "exceedingly fertile for corn, being the same kind of round tilt land which extends along this plain". Tonge possessed the added advantage of a huge pond which offered "so plentiful a supply of water thereas to afford sufficient to turn a corn mill". Tonge Mill, one of the few large water mills in a region where windmills proliferated, had processed the corn of local farmers from at least the sixteenth century. The area today is a noted local beauty spot, a venue for boating and picnic parties. Two of the largest farms in the area - Murston Court Lodge and Blackets Farm - exemplified an equilibrium of land-use typical of the region as a whole. In the 1740's the Murston farm contained 115 acres of ploughed land, 100 acres of fresh marsh, and some 50 acres of salts. At Blackets there were 200 acres described as "arable, pasture and marsh land"; the incoming tenant in 1748 had an option on a further 110 acres of marshland. At this time 8 acres of Blackets Farm was set aside for hops, a typical feature of many a holding in the region. Bapchild Court Farm, in an adjoining parish, included 4½ acres of land "planted with good growing hops" in 1745. Also, characteristically, a third of this 144 acre holding was "in a good season for wheat". Hasted observed that Murston, Tonge and Bapchild each possessed "good hop ground" and that the fertility of these parishes offered "a prospect of gain and high wages" which out-

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[1] Kentish Post 5 March 1729.

weighed the apparent health hazard.[1]

A few miles to the east lay Ham Farm in the parishes of Luddenham and Preston near Faversham. When this farm was put up for sale in the 1760's it was said to contain 117 acres of "arable, hop ground, orchard and fresh marshland"; a further 208 acres of adjoining fresh marsh was also available, offering a splendid opportunity for expansion.[2] Hasted's topographical descriptions of these adjoining parishes are near-perfect examples of the variegated terrain that could be found within the confines of a small land-area. Of Luddenham (990 acres) he said:

> It lies very low and flat; the arable lands in it, which consist of about three hundred and ninety six acres, and the upland, meadow, and pasture, of about two hundred acres, are very rich and fertile; near one half of it is marsh land, which reaches to the waters of the Swale, which are its northern boundary.[3]

Preston (1,547 a.) including some fine farmhouses at Macknade, Copton and Perry Court, lies on Faversham's southern flank:

> This parish, which lies on a descent to the northward, from its nearness and exposure to the marshes, though in a fine pleasant country, is far from being healthy, especially in the lower parts of it, where the land is very fertile, a fine loamy soil, the fields large and unincumbered with trees, a round tilt land, but as it rises higher to the southward, though healthier, yet the soil becomes gradually thinner, more inclined to chalk, and mixed with flints, and consequently much less productive.[4]

East of Canterbury farms were, on the whole, somewhat smaller though no less diversified in structure. Grove Farm at Woodnesborough comprised

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[1]Hasted, op. cit., VI, 134, 144-5; T. Fisher, op. cit., 78; Kentish Post 2 November 1745, 17 September 1748, 2 September 1749.

[2]Kentish Post 12 May 1764.

[3]Hasted, op. cit., VI, 386.

[4]Ibid., 531-2.

184 acres of arable and pasture together with a small 2 acre garden of "very good hop ground".[1] The Stour forms the northern boundary of Ash parish giving rise to extensive, rich grazings. The upland part of the parish has been described as "very dry, pleasant and healthy, and in general fertile". Goldstone Farm at Ash, extending over 200 acres, comprised four pieces of "exceeding good upland arable, and meadow, sufficient for the employment of 2 teams"; there were ten pieces of complementary marsh land "well watered", as well as an area of woodland. This extremely attractive farm was "in a very good country" and possessed the additional benefit that it was "so near Sandwich as to be convenient for water carriage to London". Thomas Hollingberry, the tenant in 1761, lived in a well-apportioned farmhouse standing in a farmstead which included four barns, several stables and lodges, and a dove-cote.[2]

The dichotomy of the Thanet landscape has already been discussed. Minster Court Farm and Brook Farm, both in the parish of Minster, contained between them 380 acres of arable and pasture. The landlord in 1761 was seeking, if possible, a well-to-do tenant who would take a joint leasehold. His comment that "the two farms join and will be lett to one or two persons and each may be accommodated with the proportion of arable and marsh land that he requires" is an excellent example of the flexibility (and the possibilities for economies of scale) which obtained in the regional economy, and which allowed local farmers to combine the factors of production in optimum proportions.[3] Although "landlords naturally had a general preference for large farms" it was not always easy to lease such farms since "large tenants were always fairly scarce". It may well be true that "the deliberate creation of large farm units was

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[1] Kentish Post 29 August 1761.

[2] Bagshaw, op. cit., II, 336; Kentish Post 19 December 1761.

[3] Kentish Post 7 October 1761.

probably uncommon" but one possibility of creating a larger unit of production (while leaving the landlord free to keep his options open until he had scrutinized the list of applicants) lay in the amalgamation of two adjacent farms. That this practice prevailed in north-east Kent illustrates the "considerable flexibility" in farm occupation.[1]

The features of the larger farms were reflected on the smaller holdings. A 17-acre farm in Ash was described in 1729 as consisting of "part arable and part marsh land"; a "parcel of alder land ... at West Marsh" was a small but important accoutrement of this viable smallholding. A 62-acre farm at Upchurch included "arable, pasture and salt-marsh" and the farmstead in 1762 contained "a new-built brick messuage" as well as a slaughter-house and hop oast. A farm lying at Tonge and Murston was described as "small but well conditioned" in 1764: its 64 acres displayed a neat balance of "arable, meadow and marsh land".[2]

The farmers of north-east Kent, large and small, cultivated a bewildering range of crops on a variety of soil-types. This incredible diversity gave farmers unusual scope for manoeuvrability and maximization of returns. They possessed "a number of competitive advantages but none more valuable than proximity to the markets both local and in London".[3] This leads us to consider the market towns and communications of the region.

C Towns

The pattern of urban life in north-east Kent probably differed little, in general terms, from that which obtained in some seven hundred market

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[1]G.E. Mingay, 'The Size of Farms in the Eighteenth Century', Economic History Review, XIV, no. 3 (1962), 475-7.

[2]Kentish Post 4 January 1729, 25 September 1762, 15 September 1764.

[3]D. Baker, 'The Marketing of Corn ... North-East Kent', op. cit., 126.

towns and seaports scattered across the country at large where "every week many thousands of people flocked into their markets and shops from the surrounding countryside, as well as from the backstreets of the towns themselves".[1] Professor Everitt offers the only sustained analysis of the role of the market town in early modern provincial England.[2] The predominant characteristics of Hanoverian England were certainly reflected in microcosm in north-east Kent. The diversity in scenery and agriculture has already been emphasised. Secondly, the economy was truly agrarian: it is widely accepted that "before the onset of modern industrial growth agriculture provided everywhere the major source of subsistence and employment".[3] Finally, despite its agrarian base, early modern society was far from static: "its economy was already undergoing a gradual but far-reaching transformation from subsistence farming to commercial farming" which "if gradual, was revolutionary".[4] A number of critical economic and social developments affected the pattern of food-marketing after 1660: an increase of population in London and the provinces; the rise of a leisured society and a sophistication of tastes; the extension of agricultural specialization; and the improvement of all form of transport and communication. The result was that much inland transport shifted from the smaller to the larger market towns, an increase in the scale of commercial dealings was evidenced, and there was a "migration of trade from the traditional 'open market', or public market

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[1] A. Everitt, 'The Food Market of the English Town, 1660-1760', Troisième Conférence Internationale d'Histoire Economique (Munich 1965), 57.

[2] See also A. Everitt, 'The Marketing of Agricultural Produce', The Agrarian History of England and Wales, 1500-1640, IV (Cambridge 1967), 466-592.

[3] G.E. Mingay, 'A Harvest Festival' (Review), The Times Higher Education Supplement (14 March 1975), 22.

[4] Everitt, 'Food Market', op. cit., 60-1.

place, to the 'private market', or the corn chambers, the warehouses, and above all the inns of provincial towns".[1]

Early eighteenth-century commentaries show that there were thirty-one market towns in Kent. This estimate clearly omits numerous settlements hardly accounted towns but which boasted markets of sorts. The striking fact, however, is the implication that agricultural marketing in north-east Kent was concentrated in four urban centres: Canterbury, Faversham, Milton and Sandwich.[2] A common trait among eighteenth-century writers was to pay little heed to Maidstone (the present county town) and concentrate on Canterbury, termed variously "the capital of Kent", "the chief city", and "the Metropolis of the county".[3]

Canterbury, Kent's largest town, was the regional "capital", with a population which grew from 7,000 in 1670 to 9,000 in 1770. Besides the usual trade groups concerned with the provision of food, clothing and household necessities, its population included foreign textile (silk) weavers, military personnel, clergy and hop-planters. Among the wealthier citizens were many "gentlemen of fortune" and "genteel families". Prosperity rested primarily on the city's dual role as a centre of conspicuous consumption and the chief commercial and marketing centre for the eastern half of Kent.[4] Lying 56 miles along the old Roman road from London, only six miles from the coastal highway at Whitstable, two miles from Fordwich where vessels laden from Sandwich berthed, and already possessing strong commercial associations with ports

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[1] Ibid., 68-9.

[2] Miege, op. cit., 51; R. Rawlinson, A New Description of all the Counties in England and Wales (1741), 87-8.

[3] Morden, op. cit., 79; De Sorbière, op. cit., 10; John Macky, A Journey Through England (1714), 48; T. Fisher, op. cit., 97; Pennant, op. cit., 144.

[4] Chalklin, op. cit., 31; Hasted, op. cit., XI, 101.

like Faversham and Herne, the city of Canterbury was the natural centre of an unusually fertile farming country. Furthermore "there was no effective competition to Canterbury as a market and trading centre for most of the countryside between the Medway valley and the Thanet coast".[1] The Canterbury food market was the most important of a number of local markets in the region: Sittingbourne, Milton, Faversham, Whitstable, Herne, Margate, Ramsgate and Sandwich put together, consumed perhaps twice as much as Canterbury. Each of these smaller towns competed with each other and with Canterbury for the local farm products.

The pre-eminence of Canterbury, medieval royal borough and mint, undoubtedly owed something to its geographical position:

> The city grew up at the junction of three important highways to the continent, and possessed a navigable waterway to the sea. It stood at the centre of the eastward arm of Kent, surrounded by an inner ring of agricultural land with an outer semi-circle of seaside towns. Almost inevitably a town so placed became a distributive market for produce of all kinds ...[2]

A galaxy of specialized markets had sprung up in Canterbury during the Middle Ages. They were, for the most part, crowded within a small central area: a Fish Market (the oldest) in Burgate; a Corn Market in St. Andrew's; "Le Mercerie" (in Mercery Lane); a Wheat Market in St. Paul's; in Wincheap a Wine Market; a Rush Market by the Red Well in St. Alphege's; the Oat Market at Oaten-hill (which had earlier been a Salt Market); "Le Poultry" which extended from the "Bolstake" (where bulls were baited before being killed) to Angel Lane (now Butchery Lane); a Cloth Market in St. George's Street; Shambles in the High Street; and a Cattle or Drove Market in Rethercheap. Almost all of these early

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[1] E.F. Lincoln, The Story of Canterbury (1955), 133.

[2] D. Gardiner, 'Merchants of Canterbury in the Middle Ages', The Parents' Review, XXXVI (1925), 3.

markets had fallen into disuse before 1680; at the end of the century it was reported that, with few exceptions, "there is nothing now remaining of them". A twice-weekly retail market continued to be held in Burgate "serving the City and neighbouring parts with all sorts of provisions especially poultry".[1] As late as the 1770's the City butchers manned "a large market for meat", not only in their own shops but "with shambles for the conveniency of country butchers" in St. George's Street; it was said that "no places in England are better supplied with this essential commodity than Canterbury". A retail Fish Market near the church of St. Mary Bredman was stocked by Thanet and Folkestone fishermen.[2] The Cattle Market in St. George's ceased to function only a few years ago.

Wholesale dealing in the "open market" had virtually disappeared from Canterbury by the beginning of our period. Even the annual fairs "held in the several parishes of this city and its suburbs" dealt in little more than "toys and pedlary".[3] Trade had developed apace beyond the market place, on the farms, in warehouses, but above all, in the hundred or so inns which burgeoned in Canterbury and its suburbs. Professor Everitt has suggested that one reason for the great expansion of private marketing activity in inns "was simply the physical incapacity of market places to accommodate the growing trade". Canterbury's narrow streets were frequently jammed with flocks of sheep, herds of cattle, and strings of carriers' waggons and corn wains:

> Traffic problems are not by any means so novel a phenomenon in provincial cities as most people think: they were very acute in busy towns like Ipswich, Canterbury, Northampton and Shaftesbury long before

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[1] Ibid., 6-7; T. Cox, 'A Topographical, Ecclesiastical, and Natural History of Kent', Magna Britannia et Hibernia Antique et Nova (1700), 1147.

[2] Seymour, op. cit., 218.

[3] Hasted, op. cit., XI, 104.

> 1700. As a consequence people coming to market tended increasingly to leave their horses and waggons at an inn in one of the streets leading into the centre of the town. Not unnaturally they soon began to find the inn a more comfortable place to bargain in, over a pint, or even a few pints, than a wet and windy market place.[1]

Another reason for the growth of the "private market" was that "innkeepers themselves quickly saw the advantage of their position". Canterbury inns were frequently advertised as "commodious" for men and horses alike; their cellars and warehouses offered safe storage for corn, hops and other perishable products of local farms. From this stage it was a natural progression for innkeepers to offer further services: to furnish their patrons with information about prospective buyers or sellers; to put them in touch with a local attorney or scrivener to draw up bonds or bills by which large contracts on credit were ratified; to arrange contacts with hoymen and factors for the transport and sale of crops; and to provide rudimentary banking facilities, sleeping accommodation, and chambers for business discussion. Many a Canterbury inn was absorbed in commercial functions and the provision of "exchange" facilities as well as in the entertainment of a constant stream of travellers. In fact "it is very difficult to see how life in seventeenth and eighteenth century England could have been carried on at all apart from the activities of the innkeepers of country towns".[2]

For more than a century before 1680 successive waves of French and Walloon refugees had settled in Canterbury where they practised the art of silk weaving giving rise to an important local industry. During the last quarter of the seventeenth century the Canterbury silk weavers had

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[1] A. Everitt, 'Urban Growth, 1570-1770', The Local Historian, VIII, no. 4 (1968), 121-2.

[2] Ibid., 122.

been hard-hit by the importation of silks and "painted callicoes" from Persia and India. Protectionist legislation culminating in the Calico Act of 1720 probably helped the silk weavers although it is clear that their fortunes alternated between prosperity and decay during the period 1680-1760. At one stage in the late seventeenth century, according to Defoe "there were not twenty broad looms left in the city of near three hundred that had formerly been there". A short-lived revival was followed by another period of decay but, by the early 1720's, "the use and wear of printed callicoes and chints being by Act of Parliament severely prohibited" an improvement in the trade was anticipated.[1] A second revival undoubtedly occurred for, in the 1750's, Dr Richard Pococke showed a special interest in the silk-weaving industry when he visited Canterbury; he noted that "the Walloon Protestants ... now make it /silk/ a great perfection to a guinea a yard both plain and flowered" adding that "there are near 3,000 of these people in the city". A few years later Toldervy observed the "good silk manufactory" which, although "not so great as formerly" nevertheless employed "about four hundred looms, all in the rich way".[2]

But while silk weaving suffered its vicissitudes, another industry was making rapid progress in and around Canterbury. In the 1690's Celia Fiennes observed "great hop yards" at Canterbury, and Defoe, in the 1720's, thought "there is at Canterbury the greatest plantation of hops in the whole island". From this time onwards no traveller could pass through Canterbury without noticing the hundreds of acres of hop grounds concentrated in and around the city and which "within these few years has greatly advanced the number of its inhabitants". A number of contemp-

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[1] D. Defoe, A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain (2 Vols. 1962), I, 118.

[2] 'Travels through England of Dr Richard Pococke', op. cit., 86; Toldervy, op. cit., 189.

orary writers accounted hop growing the basis of Canterbury's prosperity. Seymour thought "the chief support of this City is ... its great thoroughfare and the hop trade". He went on to discuss the economics of an activity which extended over "several thousand acres of ground".[1] Other writers were more intent on describing the idyllic setting:

> If the traveller's taste be husbandry and agriculture, the extensive hop gardens and their management cannot fail to attract his notice ... The city is seated in a pleasant valley, about one mile wide, between hills of moderate height and easy ascent, with fine springs rising from them; beside which the river Stour runs through it, whose streams, often dividing and meeting again, water it the more plentifully, and forming islands of various sizes, in one of which the western part of the city stands, make the air good and the soil rich.[2]

If one theme of Canterbury's development was a general expansion of commercial activity, another was a trend towards more highly specialized trade. But although Canterbury became noted as one of the principal hop markets of England the City nevertheless retained its role as a general market centre, the largest in Kent.

Much of Canterbury's increasing wealth was invested in bricks and mortar, during "the second rebuilding that flourished in the late seventeenth century and the early eighteenth".[3] In the 1690's Celia Fiennes observed that Canterbury was "a noble Citty - ye gates are high tho' but narrow, the streetes are most of them large and long, and ye buildings handsome, very neate but not very lofty, most are of brick-work, its a flourishing town ...".[4] Early in the following century De Sorbière

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[1] Fiennes, op. cit., 100; Defoe, loc. cit.; Anon., A New Present State of England (2 Vols. 1750), 130; Seymour, op. cit., 219.

[2] T. Fisher, op. cit., 97.

[3] Hoskins, op. cit., 159.

[4] Fiennes, op. cit., 101.

provides a graphic description of one of Canterbury's unimproved narrow streets:

> The houses are low, and the stories scarce high enough for a man of a middle size, who can touch the ceiling with his hand. They glaze their windows on the outside, and fix the same to the wall, only they leave a casement to open in the middle; and this they do only in the upper rooms, for below, their windows have iron bars on the inside, and a curtain to draw before them in the night, without any shutters, which is a sign that they are neither afraid of insults nor robbing ... The stories of their houses jet out one above another, so that the highest rooms are larger than the lowest, and you can pass along the streets without being so much as wet with rain.[1]

During the first half of the eighteenth century many trim "new-built" and "sashed" Georgian houses completely replaced half-timbered sixteenth-century dwellings in all the principal and some of the lesser streets, or else Georgian façades were put up over Elizabethan fronts. In the suburbs there were many houses built on altogether new sites. Canterbury was fast becoming "a prosperous Georgian-built town, with the rectangular windows and regular façades and classical ornament which distinguish a style of building current with minor modifications through the reigns of the first three Georges". The building process in Canterbury during the early eighteenth century was paralleled by similar developments in other English walled towns of medieval origin, notably Bath, Chichester and Exeter. By 1762 Canterbury was described as "very large and pretty well built", housing many "people of fashion".[2] During the following decade Charles Seymour walked along the High Street, a quarter of a mile from the east to the west gate. The buildings he passed were occupied by "the mercantile class of people". There were "elegant and

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[1] De Sorbière, op. cit., 10-11.

[2] Lincoln, op. cit., 134; C.W. Chalklin, The Provincial Towns of Georgian England: A Study of the Building Process 1740-1820 (1974), 74; Toldervy, op. cit., 188.

shewy shops", a number of "principal inns", and "two printing offices". With a note of regret Seymour recorded that the City was "badly paved and indifferently lighted", although these shortcomings scarcely affected "the gaiety of the place which has concerts and assemblies under the direction of Mrs Whitfield, a lady of the most genteel address and true good breeding".[1]

The Georgian Age saw the flowering of a garden city in Kent. Archiepiscopal Canterbury, with a fine blend of medieval and modern architecture, shops dressed in the "London style", the ruins of half a dozen monasteries, a circuit of ancient walls, and a dominating cathedral, burgeoned and flourished among the orchards and hop gardens of the county's north-east region.

Faversham, second-largest town of the region, and the chief coastal port, showed a steady increase in population and prosperity throughout the period. In the early years of Elizabeth's reign Faversham was already "well peopled and flourisheth in wealth".[2] The population rose from about 1,500 at the end of the seventeenth century to more than 2,500 some sixty or seventy years later.[3] Designated a port since the reign of Edward I and governed, from the thirteenth century, by a mayor and twelve jurats, this neat and prosperous corporate town excelled all others in civic pride. Celia Fiennes found "a very large town and good buildings of brick" when she visited Faversham in 1697.[4]

In 1574 a Market House was built in the Market Place and, in the early seventeenth century, the Hall was adapted by the Corporation for its meetings and became the Guildhall or Town Hall. The free grammar

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[1] Seymour, op. cit., 219-20.

[2] Lambarde, op. cit., 231.

[3] Chalklin, op. cit., 30; E. Jacob, The History of Faversham (1774), 91.

[4] Fiennes, op. cit., 100.

school was founded in 1585. In 1635 a leaden pump was installed in the Market Place at the north end of the Town Hall where, throughout our period, a Fish Market was located (also a pillory and stocks); the fish sellers were thereby afforded shelter and there was "plenty of water near at hand, so necessary to such a market". In the following year the north side of East Street was cobbled but it was more than a hundred years later, in 1753, when "the footpaths of the town first began to be paved with flat stones" - a task which took more than ten years to complete. In 1751 the Corporation installed street-lighting. In 1773 the Mall promenade was laid out, an avenue of trees planted, and the road widened from Preston Street to the London Road at a cost of £300; in this undertaking the town was indebted "to the kind assistance of several of the neighbouring principal farmers". In the same year the stream flowing across the road near the bottom of West Street (from the rear of Tanner's Street) was bridged, and the road towards Davington improved; waggons and carriages which had previously forded the stream were now able to pass on dry land.[1]

Twice-weekly markets (Wednesday and Saturday) and fairs in February and August gradually declined in importance, giving way to private marketing activity; by Jacob's time the public markets of Faversham were "skeletons of what they formerly were".[2]

The ancient oyster fishers - "the only staple commodity of this town" - was controlled by the Company of Dredgers and provided employment for more than a hundred families. It was said that "a prodigious number of men and boats are employed in winter" dredging "the largest and best oysters for stewing". By the beginning of the eighteenth century the Dutch purchased Faversham oysters each year valued at between £2,000 and

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[1] Jacob, op. cit., 16, 17, 60-3, 107, 110-11.

[2] Ibid., 62.

£2,500. A quarter of a century later when Lord Harley visited Faversham, lodging at The Ship, he estimated an annual turnover in the oyster trade of more than £7,000.[1]

Faversham Creek was "well frequented by hoyes and such like vessels which here drive a good trade". In the eighteenth century half a dozen hoys or coastal sailing barges freighted vast quantities of grain, hops, fruit, wool, and oysters, from the local quays to London. Colliers and vessels laden with Eastland timber products and iron were unloaded each week along the quayside; these cargoes supplied a wide hinterland in north-east Kent.[2] At the end of our period Faversham was deemed "a flourishing place ... situated in the pleasantest part of the county". The Reverend Thomas Austen, vicar of Allhallows (Hoo), deplored the "nastiness" and "insalubrity" of the Medway towns in the 1760's and urged that "we should remove from our streets ... all filth and nastiness and thereby render the detestable streets of Deptford, Strood, Rochester, and Chatham ... as neat, pure and elegant as Greenwich, Maidstone and Feversham".[3]

Milton supplied London with cereals, hops, fruit and wool, although its small harbour on a creek of the East Swale handled a much smaller commerce than Faversham's and served a district more rural in character. Milton's population probably remained at little more than 1,000 before 1760, reaching some 1,200 by the end of the century. However, compared with the multitude of small settlements in the region, Milton was considered by Defoe to be "a large town" with "a considerable market, and especially for corn, and fruit and provisions, which they send to London

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[1] Ibid., 75-88; S. Simpson, The Agreeable Historian or English Traveller (3 Vols. 1746), II, 427; Cox, op. cit., 1112; 'Journeys in England by Lord Harley', op. cit., 79.

[2] Herman Moll, A New Description of England and Wales (1724), 82; Jacob, op. cit., 66-7; T. Fisher, op. cit., 85.

[3] Anon., England Displayed ... A New, Complete, and Accurate Survey and Description (2 Vols. 1769), 136; BM Add. MS. 24, 270 f.114.

by water".[1] Milton possessed several water corn mills, tanneries, and an old-established oyster fishery which produced the famous "Milton Natives" considered by some to be "the finest and richest flavoured of any in Europe". A Saturday market was renowned locally for meat and poultry.[2] Aesthetically, corporate Milton did not aspire to the same rank as Faversham, its maritime neighbour. It had

> a very different character for health, owing both to the badness of the water, and the gross unwholesome air to which it is subject from its watry situation; nor is it in any degree pleasant, the narrow streets, or rather lanes in it, being badly paved, and for the most part inhabited by seafaring persons, fishermen, and oyster dredgers.[3]

About a mile south of Milton, bestriding Watling Street and set among the orchards and hop gardens, lay Sittingbourne, a usual overnight halt for travellers bound from London for Canterbury and Dover. James Brome, writing in 1700, said: "Sedingbourn ... a great thoroughfare, is well furnished with inns". His words were echoed by many another wayfarer. John Macky thought the inns of Sittingbourne were "very good" while Benjamin Martin described them as "commodious". Later in the century William Gilpin stayed overnight at The Red Lion in the High Street which cost him nine shillings.[4] Sittingbourne's wharf at Crown Key handled a brisk coastal trade with London. By the end of the century the town, wearing a prosperous air, possessed many modern houses "well built of brick". But it was always the inns which, for travellers, gave the town "a cheerful aspect"; they provided "the principal support" of the

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[1] Chalklin, op. cit., 30, 171; Hasted, op. cit., VI, 165; Defoe, op. cit., I, 111.

[2] Hasted, op. cit., VI, 164-9.

[3] Ibid., 164.

[4] J. Brome, Travels over England, Scotland and Wales (1700), 282; Macky, op. cit., 48; Martin, op. cit., 191; Gilpin, op. cit., 107.

urban economy. Rather extravagantly, Hasted opined that The Rose inn was "perhaps the most superb of any throughout the kingdom".[1]

At the eastern extremity of the region, Sandwich and the Thanet ports were the largest urban centres. Sandwich was one of the early settlements of "workers in sayes, baize and flannel", refugees who fled the Continent during Elizabeth's reign. Among the Dutch and Walloon settlers was "a body of gardeners [who] at once discovered the nature of the soil about Sandwich to be extremely favourable to the growth of all esculent plants, and fixed themselves there ...". It was not long before vegetables grown by the Lowlanders were "conveyed at an easy expence by the hoys to London, and from thence disseminated over the kingdom".[2] Just outside the town wall of this old market town can be seen a narrow footpath leading to the quayside. Along this track it is believed market gardeners trundled their loads of cabbages, celery and carrots to put aboard the small sailing vessels which took their vegetables to the metropolis. A wide range of commodities was exported from Sandwich including cereals, malt, flour, seeds, hops, wool, fruit, leather, oak bark and ashes.[3]

But Sandwich was a decaying town which, even in the sixteenth century, retained only a shadow of its former glory. The small-scale textile industry and intensive market gardening activity continued to prosper in and around Sandwich during the period, and the coastal trade - employing small vessels - was scarcely affected by the silting of Sandwich haven. However, the choking of the harbour had destroyed the importance of Sandwich as a shipping centre and the town itself took on a somewhat shabby appearance. Thomas Baskerville visited Sandwich in 1681

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[1] Hasted, op. cit., 151-2.

[2] W. Boys, Collections for an History of Sandwich (Canterbury 1792), 742-3.

[3] Ibid., 788.

and observed that the port "was formerly more frequented by seamen when the haven and river were not so choked by sand" although "hoys and some small ships do come up to the town, in the river that comes from Canterbury, which with the trade of malting, constantly employing some vessels towards London, keeps this place from decay". In contrast to the fine brick houses which Miss Fiennes saw at Canterbury and Faversham, she found Sandwich "a sad old town all timber building". Defoe, too, saw little to commend Sandwich which he described as "an old, decay'd, poor, miserable town".[1]

The appearance of Sandwich and the profile of its trade changed little during the eighteenth century. Dr Pococke observed, in 1754, that although Sandwich was "pleasantly situated on the river /Stour/" the town contained "a great number of old houses ... mostly built with wooden frames" and that the harbour remained "choaked up with sands". The haven was still silted up each summer with mud brought down the Stour and only hoys and other small craft could enter it. The basis of the town's economy remained rather narrow. However, inventories show the continued importance of local maltsters. "The chief support of the town", said Pococke "is an export of malt and an import of wine and other foreign commodities for the use of Canterbury and other neighbouring towns". In common with other eighteenth-century observers he noticed that Sandwich gardeners continued to send "a great quantity of garden seeds and carrots to London".[2]

By 1701 Ramsgate and Margate between them possessed six times the tonnage of Sandwich harbour. The rise of the Thanet ports as shipping centres probably derives from their position at the lower end of the Thames estuary, "the most convenient place for ships to gather while

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[1] 'Thomas Baskerville's Journeys in England', op. cit., 279; Fiennes, op. cit., 106; Defoe, op. cit., I, 120.

[2] 'Travels through England of Dr Richard Pococke', op. cit., 89.

awaiting dispatch on what were mainly seasonal trades". Regarding the outward coastwise trade of Thanet, this "consisted almost entirely of corn all of which was exported from Margate".[1]

Before the 1730's Margate was indeed famous only for its corn trade with London. Defoe pondered that "the town of Margate is eminent for nothing I know of" but qualified this affirmation by mentioning the "shipping /of/ a vast quantity of corn for London Market, most, if not all of it, the product of the Isle of Thanet, in which it stands". Defoe's failure to mention the local fishing industry was perhaps to ignore the mundane and palpable. John Macky visited Margate in 1713 but later said he was "very sorry" he had taken the trouble to visit such "a poor pittiful place".[2]

Such comments were unthinkable a quarter of a century later when Margate was beginning to establish its reputation as a bathing resort. Probably the earliest known reference to sea bathing at Margate appeared in the local newspaper in 1736:

> ... bathing in sea water has for several years, and by great numbers of people, been found to be of great service in many chronical cases, but for want of a convenient and private bathing place, many of both sexes have not cared to expose themselves to the open air. This is to inform all persons that Thomas Barber, carpenter, at Margate in the Isle of Thanett, hath lately made a very convenient bath, into which the sea water runs through a canal about 15 foot long. You descend into the bath from a private room adjoining to it. N.B. There are in the same house convenient lodgings to be lett.[3]

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[1] J.H. Andrews, 'The Thanet Seaports, 1650-1750', Archaeologia Cantiana, LXVI (1954), 40-1.

[2] Defoe, op. cit., I, 119; Macky, op. cit., 50.

[3] Kentish Post 17 July 1736.

The genesis of Margate's reputation as a bathing resort must indubitably be sought in the early 1730's. By the time Richard Pococke visited Margate the local holiday industry was growing rapidly as the middle classes went to the sea in increasing numbers:

> On the 10th /September 1754/ I left Canterbury, crossed into the Isle of Thanet, and in seventeen miles from this city came to Margate ... This is a fishing town, and is of late much resorted to by company to drink the sea water, as well as to bathe; for the latter they have the conveniency of cover'd carriages at the end of which there is a covering that lets down with hoops, so that people can go down a ladder into the water and are not seen, and those who please may jump in and swim.[1]

By the 1760's it was widely acknowledged that sea-bathing in Margate's sandy bay was the reason why the town's prosperity had "greatly increased within these ten years' past". A number of "handsome public rooms" had been erected, although most of the dwelling houses in the town's irregular, winding streets were "meanly built". At least one local inhabitant still saw Margate as "a large village" at this time rather than a town, despite a growing number of well-stocked shops, "many very reputable tradesmen", a "ready and quick communication with London by the hoys", and "vast numbers of people who resort to it".[2] Margate was fast becoming a valuable food market, seasonal in character, for the products of local farms.

Ramsgate had almost no coastal trade of its own yet, from the early 1680's, its shipping was playing an important part in the coal trade from the north-east, and in the import of deals and other timber products from the Baltic to Chatham. Shipping and the fishing industry were undoubtedly the main elements of the urban economy and the chief sources of employment in Ramsgate. The hoys, ketches, yawls, pinks and "north sea

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[1] 'Travels through England of Dr Richard Pococke', op. cit., 86.

[2] England Displayed, op. cit., 136; J. Lyon, A Description of the Isle of Thanet and particularly of the Town of Margate (1763), 14-15.

boats" belonging to the port were numerous but of small burden. Many men were engaged in their repair and construction in the small private yards. Throughout these years there are many references to Thanet fishing fleets and "the chief foreign trade of the Thanet ports was almost certainly the export of fish".[1]

Nearly a third of the surviving inventories for Ramsgate relate to mariners, fishermen, and farmers with maritime interests. This huge proportion illustrates the overwhelming importance of Ramsgate's connection with the sea; the inventories are full of vessels of various descriptions, herring houses, net lofts, and sprat, herring and mackerel nets.[2] Partly on account of its profitability, and partly to spread the risks, the ownership of vessels was dispersed among a wide circle of the local populace. Naturally those who depended on the sea, either wholly or in part, for their livelihoods were among the chief owners, in particular mariners, fishermen and shipwrights, and local farmers, maltsters and brewers. Yet there were many others who had no obvious maritime connections - shopkeepers, craftsmen and widows - who possessed shares in vessels. Even the smallest boats were seldom owned individually; ownership was divided into shares, usually eighths, sixteenths, and thirty-seconds. Many a Ramsgate inventory shows investments in "sea-ventures". Henry Curling, senior, a mariner, possessed shares in fifteen vessels when he died in 1700; his individual investments (eighths and sixteenths) ranged from £10 to £70, and altogether represented nearly half of Curling's personal wealth of more than £900.[3]

Kentish shipping employed about 650 seamen (apart from fishermen) in 1629, and 985 in 1701; the number of seamen belonging to vessels of

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[1]Andrews, op. cit., 42.

[2]KAO PRC 11, 27, passim, Probate Inventories of St. Lawrence (Ramsgate).

[3]KAO PRC 27/35/81.

Ramsgate and Margate increased from 110 to 526 in this period; the dominating role of the Thanet ports in Kent's maritime trade is beyond all doubt.[1]

By 1760 Ramsgate was "a much larger and more populous town than Margate". A few years later it was said that Ramsgate, originally "an obscure village built for the convenience of the fishery" had become "much improved and enlarged owing to a successful trade, which its inhabitants have carried on, since the year 1688, to Russia and the East Country". The assets of the port included "many elegant and commodious houses ... good inns ... spacious shops" as well as facilities for sea-bathing which, like their counterparts at Margate, provided "a fashionable amusement".[2]

D Communications

North-east Kent was exceptionally well-endowed with good roads and waterways. Possessing an extensive coastline along the Thames' south shore, a river navigable from Sandwich to Fordwich, and a first-class thoroughfare (by contemporary standards) from Rainham to Canterbury and thence to Thanet, with a contributory intersection of minor roads, the region possessed a communication network superior to any in the country.

Fortuitously, "the water transport was available where it was most needed".[3] Contemporaries were aware of this favourable circumstance, and noted particularly "the benefits of water carriage to and from the Metropolitical City, or Chief Mart".[4] For the country as a whole, the cost of transporting goods by water was a mere fifth of land-carriage

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[1]Chalklin, op. cit., 172.

[2]Martin, op. cit., 199; T. Fisher, op. cit., 138.

[3]Thirsk, 'The Farming Regions of England', op. cit., 55.

[4]Harris, op. cit., 357.

costs, in north-east Kent somewhat lower, due possibly to a greater than usual mechanical/operating efficiency.[1] Kentish corn, hops and fruit bound for the capital, to supply the London market or the fast-growing export trade were carried up the Thames in the coastal craft of Faversham, Milton, Whitstable, Herne and the Thanet ports. The trade-route along Kent's north coast was part of a wider pattern of commerce "chiefly carried on in those market towns which are at a small distance from London, or at least from the River Thames" and which also included the coastal ports of Essex and Suffolk.[2]

The estuary ports of north-east Kent offered a full range of facilities for farmers and hoymen: sheltered creeks and harbours, easily-accessible quaysides, ample warehousing, and waterside inns. Even the tiny port of Milton possessed four wharfs: the Town Key, Floodmill Key, Page's Key, and Huggins' Key. In a neighbouring creek at Sittingbourne, Crown Key was "of great use to this part of the country for the exporting of corn and wood, and re-landing the several commodities from London and elsewhere".[3]

At Faversham, the port spawned five wharfs along its serpentine creek: the original wharf was known as the Great Key or Town Key and near it stood "the King's Warehouse" or Customs House "where the common beam was kept"; Ordnance Wharf, at the foot of Davington Hill, shipped the manufactures of the local gunpowder industry; Wool Key traditionally freighted the staple product of local sheep farms; the Standard Key was built by Sir George Sondes shortly after he purchased the Faversham Abbey estates in 1677, and at a time when the port-trade was rapidly expanding -

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[1] H.J. Dyos and D.H. Aldcroft, British Transport (Leicester 1969), 40; D. Baker, 'The Marketing of Corn ... North-East Kent', op. cit., 137.

[2] D. Defoe, The Complete English Tradesman (2nd ed., 2 Vols. 1727), 44-5.

[3] Hasted, op. cit., VI, 151-2, 164.

and, at the same time, additional warehousing was built from stones taken out of the Abbey ruins; finally, King's Head Key took its name from an old inn already on the site. Faversham abounded in ancient inns, some of them conveniently placed along the waterfront: The Prince of Orange, and The Swan and Harlequin near the Town Key; The Anchor at Standard Key near which stood a large shipwright's yard owned by a Mr Tripp until 1720, and by Mr John Payne thereafter.[1] Throughout the year coastal hoys operating a weekly schedule, together with larger sea-going vessels, crowded into Faversham's creek to unload their wares and re-freight. Edward Jacob described Faversham's maritime activity in 1774:

> The principal trade now carried on from this port is by six hoys, who go alternately every week to London, with corn of all sorts, amounting, in very plentiful years, to forty thousand quarters per annum. Colliers also, (which supply the town, and the country round it with coals) of upwards of a hundred tons burthen, and larger vessels, which import fir timber of all kinds, and iron, from Polish Prussia, Norway, and Sweden, frequently resort hither; the principal proprietors or merchants being chiefly inhabitants of this town. Here are also some other vessels employed in carrying wool, apples, pears, and cherries, to London and other parts, in the season.[2]

Whitstable, the nearest harbour to Canterbury, was the main outlet for the City's trade with London. Although Whitstable was described in 1673 as "the best port town (next to Faversham) for Canterbury", it was not until the eighteenth century that it became really important and, from Canterbury's point of view, of greater consequence than Faversham.[3] Goods for London were frequently stored at Whitstable inns before shipment; the chief waterside depot for farm crops was The Ship which was an

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[1] Bodleian Library, MSS. Top. Kent e.3 ff. 148-9, e.4 ff. 68-9.

[2] Jacob, op. cit., 66-7.

[3] R. Blome, Britannia or a Geographical Description of the Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland (1673), 131; J.H. Andrews, 'The Trade of the Port of Faversham, 1650-1750', Archaeologia Cantiana, LXIX (1956), 130.

"old accustomed alehouse" possessing ample warehouse facilities for the storage of farm produce bound "for the hoys".[1]

From his London house Philip Papillon wrote regularly to his steward, Anthony Gilpin, at Acrise Place near Folkestone. A Whitstable hoyman handled the carriage of Papillon's goods between that port and London. Shortly before Christmas 1713 Papillon replied to an earlier note from Gilpin:

> ... you intend to send per Mr Brown's hoy, eight quarters of wheat, and four quarters of malt, but as for tares you have none and therefore /I/ shall endeavour to buy them here, and in your letter you advise that Mr Browne hopes to be at Battlebridge on Saturday next if the weather prove good.[2]

The following summer Papillon sent his steward a list of sixteen parcels, baskets, hampers, boxes and cheeses which:

> I have put things on board Brown's hoy of Whitstable who tells me he shall be at Canterbury about Monday at noon, and therefore I think it may not be amisse for you to be there with the waggon at the same time, that soe you may take them from one and put them into the other. The things are markt and numbred as underneath.[3] /list follows/

Vessels sailing further along the coast, intending to make harbour in Thanet, "depended on St. Nicholas Church or Monkton Mill" as landmarks to guide them clear of shallow sandbanks and mud-flats.[4] The harbours of Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate were all of the same type: a single curved pier to exclude the waves and winds from the north-east, which thereby afforded protection from storms. However, in the later seven-

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[1] Kentish Post 22 May 1736.

[2] KAO U1015 C45, Letter Book of Philip Papillon: Letter to Anthony Gilpin 18 December 1713.

[3] Ibid., Letter to Anthony Gilpin 19 June 1714.

[4] J. Duncombe, 'The History and Antiquities of ... Reculver and Herne', Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica, I (1790), 66.

teenth century, erosion and destruction by storm waves caused a great deal of damage to Margate pier, the road connecting it to the town, and the sea wall and, by 1690, the estimated cost of repair reached £2,500. But "like many other harbours protected by piers, Margate lacked sufficient financial resources of its own to maintain its harbour facilities in good repair". Nevertheless at the end of the century the harbour was restored, partially with money granted by the Exchequer. Further repairs were apparently necessary after 1724 and by 1750 "the harbour was regularly used by vessels of a hundred tons burden".[1] Referring to the hoys, John Lyon reckoned that "was it not for the assistance of these vessels, it would be almost impossible for Margate, and the country round it, to furnish entertainment for the vast numbers of people who resort to it". The sea-journey from London sometimes took as little as eight hours, more often two or three days. Sometimes as many as seventy passengers embarked on a Margate hoy paying 2s. 6d. each for the single voyage. Although Lyon described the hoy captains as "very careful decent men" who "allowed of no impropriety of behaviour" on their vessels, he nevertheless "would not recommend /the voyage/ too strongly to ladies of great delicacy".[2]

A protracted struggle between Ramsgate and the Corporation of Sandwich eventually resulted (in 1749) in the selection of the Thanet port for the building of a new harbour. Ramsgate lay on a cleaner shore, possessed a firmer foundation for the piers, and had more easily-accessible building material. The winds and the tidal currents, too, favoured Ramsgate as the site for a new harbour.[3] The work was completed beyond our period. In 1769 it was recorded that, at the "small

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[1] Andrews, 'Thanet Ports', op. cit., 37-8.

[2] Lyon, op. cit., 15.

[3] Andrews, 'Thanet Ports', op. cit., 43-4.

seaport town" of Ramsgate:

> They are now building a very fine pier ... which, when finished, will be of the utmost service to navigation, as it will afford a safe retreat for ships in the Downs, when overtaken by a storm of wind at south-east.[1]

Extensive changes took place in the coastline between Thanet and Deal during Roman times: the sea receded leaving Canterbury dry with the exception of the River Stour. Thereafter Canterbury used Fordwich, two miles downstream, as its port. The trade of Fordwich reached its peak in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Incoming cargoes "were brought up from Sandwich in lighters which were pulled or haled by men, and which had a capacity of 30 tons". Extant records of the Corporation of Fordwich (Treasurer's Accounts 1718-1828) show that the most important cargo landed at Fordwich was coal (from the north-east field) and that Canterbury was the chief market. Timber imports were also significant, and stone, tiles and bricks were landed in most years. Unfortunately these records have a serious limitation: they provide no details of exports from Fordwich, making it impossible to assess the value of this riverside port as an outlet for Canterbury. However, it seems certain that no more than a trickle of agricultural produce was freighted at Fordwich. The coastal ports of Whitstable and Faversham remained the chief outlets for the produce of the Canterbury district and "the main value of the Stour to the agricultural economy of its valley was as a drain".[2]

Apart from Watling Street, Kent's roads were notoriously bad in the seventeenth century, and many villages became isolated during a severe winter. The road from Sittingbourne to Maidstone was described by Peter

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[1] England Displayed, op. cit., 136.

[2] G.E. Meirion-Jones, The History of the River Stour 1760-1860, University of Kent M.A. Thesis (1975), 54-5, 58, 64-7, 70, 77.

Mundy as "a wild, woddy stony way". A Kentishman wrote in 1759 that "the roads in Kent may be said to consist one half of them only of flint & loose stones, & the other half, the weald of Kent for instance, of none at all".[1] However, by the end of the period many roads in north-east Kent had been improved, even some of the lesser ones. Hasted praised Sheppey roads which "throughout the island are very good all the year owing to the great plenty of the fine gravel of the beach pits". Peter Kalm noticed that "almost everywhere on both sides of the high roads, were hawthorn hedges planted, so that one walked or travelled here as in ... a garden" and that "there is commonly on one side of the road, if not on both sides, on the wall or the high sides, a footpath, on which those who travel on foot go, so that they are not in danger from those who drive or ride".[2]

Watling Street carried a heavy traffic of vehicles and livestock and, not surprisingly, was turnpiked early on. The first turnpike Act on the London - Dover road was passed in 1718 for the section from Southwark to Blackheath. In 1730 the road from Rochester to Canterbury was turnpiked. In 1738 the Dartford - Rochester road was placed under the control of the Chalk Trust and, in the same year, the road from Blackheath to Dartford was added to the New Cross Trust. Eventually, the road from Canterbury to Dover was turnpiked in 1753.[3] Meanwhile, the important six-mile stretch of road between Canterbury and Whitstable had been turnpiked under a separate trust in 1736.[4] In the early turnpiking of the main route from London to Dover a coherent pattern of trust development

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[1]Everitt, Community of Kent, op. cit., 22; 'The Travels of Peter Mundy ...', op. cit., 40; BM Add. MS. 24, 269 f.6.

[2]Hasted, op. cit., VI, 209; Kalm, op. cit., 381.

[3]W. Albert, The Turnpike Road System in England, 1663-1840 (Cambridge 1972), 40-1.

[4]9 Geo.II c.10.

in north Kent was manifest. The Canterbury - Whitstable turnpike provided an important extension from this road to the north-east coast. Altogether, road improvements in the region illustrate "the markedly interrelated nature of trust expansion" for which a recent writer has argued, contrary to the Webbs' claim that turnpike development was "scattered" and "unconnected".[1]

As early as 1681 there was a regular postal service between London and Canterbury: post-boys left The Dark House in Billingsgate every Monday and Thursday, each returning the following Saturday and Wednesday respectively; two coach firms operated between Canterbury and The George in Southwark, providing between them, services on three days of every week.[2] Subsequently, The Spread Eagle and The Cross Keys (both in Gracechurch Street) became the London termini for Canterbury stage coaches. By the 1740's three carriers left London each Thursday bound for north-east Kent: two from The Dark House at Billingsgate to Faversham and Canterbury respectively; the third from The King's Head at Southwark to Canterbury.[3] It would seem that the carrier who used the Southwark inn went as far as Dover, taking three days for the whole journey. In the late 1730's Isaac Minet, a merchant whose business lay at Dover, used the services of this carrier, by name Stringer, to forward goods to London.[4]

High charges were inevitable for overland carriage because of the slow pace of the cumbersome, canvas-covered waggons drawn by four, six, or even eight horses which did the bulk of the land haulage of goods.

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[1] Albert, op. cit., 56.

[2] Thomas De Laune, The Present State of London (1681), 395.

[3] Rawlinson, op. cit., 90-1.

[4] W. Minet, 'Extracts from the Letter Book of a Dover Merchant, 1737-41', Archaeologia Cantiana, XXXII (1917), 272.

In these circumstances, proximity to the market was an important consideration for farmers. When Gushmore (now Gushmere) Farm, at Selling and Boughton, fell vacant in 1746, prospective tenants were informed that the property was "well situated for market being 3 miles from Feversham and 6 miles from Canterbury".[1]

Heavily-laden carts and waggons were a familiar sight on the Old Dover Road. Lord Harley and his party were travelling between Sittingbourne and Faversham in 1723 when they saw "a fellow who was attending horses loaded with pears for some market or other".[2] Some years later, along the same road, Pierre Grosley "met a considerable number of carriages loaded with corn and hay, which were going to the ports".[3]

Thus, "the rise of the turnpikes, the advent of the stage coach, the development of the carrying trade, and the establishment of a regular postal system ... revolutionized the life of inland towns at important road junctions ... and led to the expansion of innumerable 'thoroughfare towns' of a smaller order".[4] The increasing prosperity of a large urban centre like Canterbury, or a smaller thoroughfare such as Sittingbourne was due, in no small measure, to the expansion of overland trade and transport.

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[1] Kentish Post 31 May 1746.

[2] 'Journeys in England by Lord Harley', op. cit., 78-9.

[3] Grosley, op. cit., I, 17.

[4] Everitt, 'Food Market', op. cit., 67.

CHAPTER 2

AGRICULTURAL PRICES

A Price Statistics

Printed works which tabulate, analyse or utilize prices current during the period under review can be divided into three categories. There is firstly basic source material published from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, in particular the classic writings of Houghton, Tooke and Thorold Rogers. John Houghton's weekly newsletter, published regularly during the 1690's, included lists of grain prices collected from correspondents in different parts of the country. This is the first comprehensive attempt to gather and assemble such statistical information which can be found in A Collection for Improvement of Husbandry and Trade (9 Vols. 1692-1703), an extremely rare work. Houghton's Collection has, however, recently (1969) been reprinted in four volumes by Gregg International Publishers Limited. Nineteenth-century works of outstanding importance are: Thomas Tooke, A History of Prices (4 Vols. 1838-48), and J.E. Thorold Rogers, A History of Agriculture and Prices in England (7 Vols. Oxford 1866-1902). There is also much information in the growing number of provincial newspapers during the eighteenth century. For example, the Kentish Post (founded 1717) published the prices contained in a weekly "Letter from London": from 1725 there is an almost unbroken series of grain prices (Bear Key) and hop prices (Southwark).

The second type of printed work is the modern source book of processed and tabulated price material. There are two well-known examples: Lord Beveridge, Prices and Wages in England (1939), I (Price Tables: Mercantile Era); B.R. Mitchell and Phyllis Deane, An Abstract of British Historical Statistics (Cambridge 1962). These works have enabled a wide range of price (and other) statistics to become readily available to historians; agriculture forms only one of a number of thematic treat-

ments, and the chronological scope is quite extensive.

The third category of writing possesses a rather different character. A number of recent works have employed the price material available, collated it with other sources, and developed themes of fundamental importance for the agricultural history of the period. A precondition for this type of price-study is the availability of reliable price series which can enable trends to be established fairly easily. Outstanding examples of such publications are: G.E. Mingay, 'The Agricultural Depression 1730-50', Economic History Review, 2nd. series, VIII, 3 (1956), reprinted in E.M. Carus-Wilson (ed.), Essays in Economic History, II (1962), 309-26; T.S. Ashton, Economic Fluctuations in England 1700-1800 (1959), Ch. 1; A.H. John, 'The Course of Agricultural Change 1660-1760', Studies in the Industrial Revolution, ed. L.S. Pressnell (1960), 125-55; A.H. John, 'Agricultural Productivity and Economic Growth in England 1700-1760', Journal of Economic History, XXV (1965), reprinted in Agriculture and Economic Growth in England 1650-1815, ed. E.L. Jones (1967), 172-93; E.L. Jones, 'Agriculture and Economic Growth in England 1660-1750: Agricultural Change', Journal of Economic History, XXV (1965), reprinted in Agriculture and Economic Growth in England 1650-1815, ed. E.L. Jones (1967), 152-71; W.G. Hoskins, 'Harvest Fluctuations and English Economic History 1620-1759', Agricultural History Review 16, pt. 1 (1968), 15-31.

These important studies analyse the English agricultural scene at the national level and the conclusions elicited relate, either to levels of prosperity in agriculture, or to standards of well-being in the community-at-large, or to both. None of the discussions relates to a regional economy per se although vital local evidence is used to substantiate broader arguments. Professor Mingay, for instance, uses the extensive evidence of the Duke of Kingston's estates. The earlier work of Professor Jones on the Hampshire chalklands is evident in his more

TABLE 3

PRICE-STATISTICS

DOVER (KENT) SERIES: WHEAT 1660-1760

(Prices are given in shillings per quarter)

Year	Price	17-year moving average	Year	Price	17-year moving average
1660	56.50		1691	34.67	48.81
1661	70.00		1692	46.67	48.81
1662	74.00		1693	67.67	48.44
1663	57.00		1694	64.00	48.02
1664	40.50		1695	53.00	48.17
1665	49.33		1696	71.00	50.01
1666	26.00		1697	60.00	49.07
1667	36.00		1698	68.33	48.79
1668	40.00	49.20	1699	64.00	48.91
1669	44.33	48.34	1700	40.00	50.95
1670	41.67	47.70	1701	37.67	52.29
1671	42.00	46.87	1702	39.50	51.14
1672	41.00	46.17	1703	36.50	49.79
1673	46.67	46.53	1704	56.50	49.34
1674	68.67	46.22	1705	30.00	47.80
1675	64.67	47.04	1706	25.17	46.51
1676	38.00	47.51	1707	36.73	45.01
1677	42.00	47.90	1708	69.33	43.62
1678	59.00	47.30	1709	69.58	43.30
1679	60.00	46.32	1710	48.00	42.91
1680	45.00	46.56	1711	41.17	42.00
1681	46.67	45.91	1712	45.33	41.81
1682	44.00	45.20	1713	44.73	40.37
1683	40.00	43.21	1714	38.21	40.41
1684	44.00	42.15	1715	42.67	40.86
1685	46.67	43.89	1716	40.42	41.24
1686	34.00	45.19	1717	34.67	39.57
1687	25.17	44.83	1718	31.04	37.67
1688	46.00	45.48	1719	23.88	37.69
1689	30.00	46.36	1720	33.33	37.75
1690	34.67	47.64	1721	32.00	36.99

TABLE 3 (continued)

Year	Price	17-year moving average	Year	Price	17-year moving average
1722	30.77	36.08	1749	32.00	33.92
1723	32.83	35.23	1750	28.83	34.08
1724	43.10	34.20	1751	34.17	34.48
1725	40.90	33.79	1752	40.67	35.09
1726	37.33	34.00	1753	39.67	
1727	48.29	34.17	1754	30.75	
1728	42.21	34.76	1755	29.92	
1729	32.44	34.89	1756	40.17	
1730	29.33	34.86	1757	53.47	
1731	23.71	35.00	1758	44.50	
1732	25.21	35.95	1759	35.25	
1733	33.42	35.87	1760	32.50	
1734	38.21	35.14			
1735	33.85	34.25			
1736	34.00	32.82			
1737	33.54	32.38			
1738	31.50	32.29			
1739	33.19	32.45			
1740	48.88	32.99			
1741	41.75	33.39			
1742	28.50	33.12			
1743	22.15	32.88			
1744	24.08	33.28			
1745	34.67	33.61			
1746	31.00	33.33			
1747	32.00	33.24			
1748	32.83	33.65			

Decadal Averages

1661-70	47.88
1671-80	50.70
1681-90	39.12
1691-1700	56.93
1701-10	44.90
1711-20	37.55
1721-30	36.92
1731-40	33.75
1741-50	30.78
1751-60	38.11

Source: John Mockett, Mockett's Journal: A Collection of Interesting Matters, Relating to Remarkable Personages, Ancient Buildings, Manners and Customs etc. (Canterbury 1836), 11-12.

FIGURE 1 Dover (Kent) wheat prices 1660-1760 (in shillings per quarter) ------ 17-year moving average

recent global studies. But there is clearly no special urgency for any of these writers to seek prices beyond those series already available. For the present study the case is somewhat different and an attempt to produce new regional price series appears at least desirable, possibly obligatory. Although Professor John describes the volume of available statistics as "very considerable" he nevertheless suggests that "historians working in this period could do with more price material".[1] Perhaps we have relied for too long on the well-worn Eton, Winchester and Exeter series. Certainly there is a dearth of non-institutional prices, and an absence of "farm-gate" prices for the period.

It must be said at once that none of the new Kent material necessitates a revolutionary change in our conception of late seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century price movements, but rather serves to reinforce the already familiar picture. Nevertheless it has proved possible to construct reliable market and farm-gate price series relating to Kent which, apart from substantiating some already accepted views, contribute in other ways to a better understanding of the market economy.

In order to examine critically the long-term price trend from the Restoration to the accession of George III an unbroken series of wheat prices relating to Dover has been employed (Table 3 and Figure 1). These prices were published in the early nineteenth century by John Mockett, a Thanet yeoman who farmed in St. Peter's parish.[2] The record was compiled by Richard Mockett, John's forbear, who is described as

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[1] A.H. John, 'Agricultural Productivity and Economic Growth in England 1700-1760', E.L. Jones ed., Agriculture and Economic Growth in England 1650-1815 (1967), 189.

[2] The Mocketts were an old-established Thanet family and probate inventories relating to them have survived: for example, the Richard Mockett who farmed at St. Peter's parish until 1692 was described as a "yeoman" and was said to be worth £185 11s. 8d. at the time of his death (KAO PRC 11/56/48); in 1768 William Mockett rented Dentelion Farm at St. John's from Lord Holland for £151 annually, and Jonathan Mockett a cottage at Reading Street (MS. Rental of Lord Holland's estate in Thanet, private loan).

TABLE 4

W H E A T

DECENNIAL AVERAGE PRICES

(shillings per quarter)

	1660-9	1670-9	1680-9	1690-9	1700-9	1710-19	1720-9	1730-9	1740-9
Dover	49.37	50.37	40.15	56.40	44.10	39.01	37.32	31.80	32.79
Eton	45.08	43.83	34.83	48.67	34.75	43.50	37.17	31.58	31.92
Exeter	40.83	38.42	31.75	40.83	35.00	34.83	35.58	30.08	29.92

"Deputy of Dover" and who apparently had access to records long since disappeared. It can be postulated that the record compiled by Richard Mockett, Deputy Warden of Dover Castle, represents the prices paid for wheat intended for the victualling of the garrison, over a period of a hundred years. There is nothing to suggest these are contractual prices and, indeed, they bear a striking resemblance to true market prices, very sensitive to change both in the long and short term. We are looking at prices per quarter (8 bushels) paid for wheat grown in east Kent, recorded twice-yearly - Lady Day (25 March) and Michaelmas (29 September) - and averaged for the year.

When Professor John compared the decennial average prices of wheat for Eton and Exeter he observed "the relative stability of Exeter prices" which indicated "sluggishness" in western England where cereal prices were "determined by predominantly local influences". This stood in contrast to "the buoyant conditions then existing in the metropolitan wheat market" as reflected by the more volatile Eton prices. Dover prices might also be cited to illustrate "an agriculturally active south-eastern region" where "the determining factor in wheat and barley prices ... was the export trade ... assisted by the growth of London". Dover participated in the overseas grain trade, and local wheat also supplied the London food market, so it is hardly surprising that prices recorded at Dover should exhibit a sensitive pattern resembling Eton's but diverging from Exeter's (Table 4). Furthermore, the introduction of Dover prices to the comparative table reinforces Professor John's observation that "it is only in the 'thirties and 'forties that prices converge, and the regional differences become less marked.[1]

It is unusual, perhaps unique, to find detailed accounts kept by one farmer for over fifty years. Richard Tylden farmed Milstead Manor Farm

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[1] A.H. John, 'The Course of Agricultural Change 1660-1760', L.S. Pressnell ed., Studies in the Industrial Revolution (1960), 137, 141.

TABLE 5

PRICE-STATISTICS

MILSTEAD (KENT) SERIES: WHEAT 1709-61

(Prices are given in shillings per quarter to the nearest 0.5 shilling)

Harvest Year	Price ("Farm-gate") average	Harvest Year	Price ("Farm-gate") average
1709	45.5	1739	37.0
1710	40.0	1740	31.0
1711	40.5	1741	25.0
1712	32.0	1742	20.0
1713	38.0	1743	18.0
1714	27.0	1744	18.5
1715	30.0	1745	27.0
1716	33.0	1746	27.0
1717	26.0	1747	26.0
1718	21.0	1748	27.0
1719	25.0	1749	27.5
1720	26.5	1750	28.0
1721	20.0	1751	32.5
1722	28.0	1752	34.0
1723	27.0	1753	27.0
1724	35.0	1754	22.5
1725	27.0	1755	26.0
1726	43.5	1756	49.0
1727	44.0	1757	39.0
1728	41.0	1758	25.0
1729	21.5	1759	25.5
1730	23.0	1760	22.0
1731	20.0	1761	23.0
1732	23.5		
1733	27.0	Decadal Averages	
1734	30.5	1711-20	30.0
1735	26.0	1721-30	31.0
1736	30.0	1731-40	27.0
1737	24.5	1741-50	24.5
1738	24.0	1751-60	30.5

Source: KAO U593 A2.

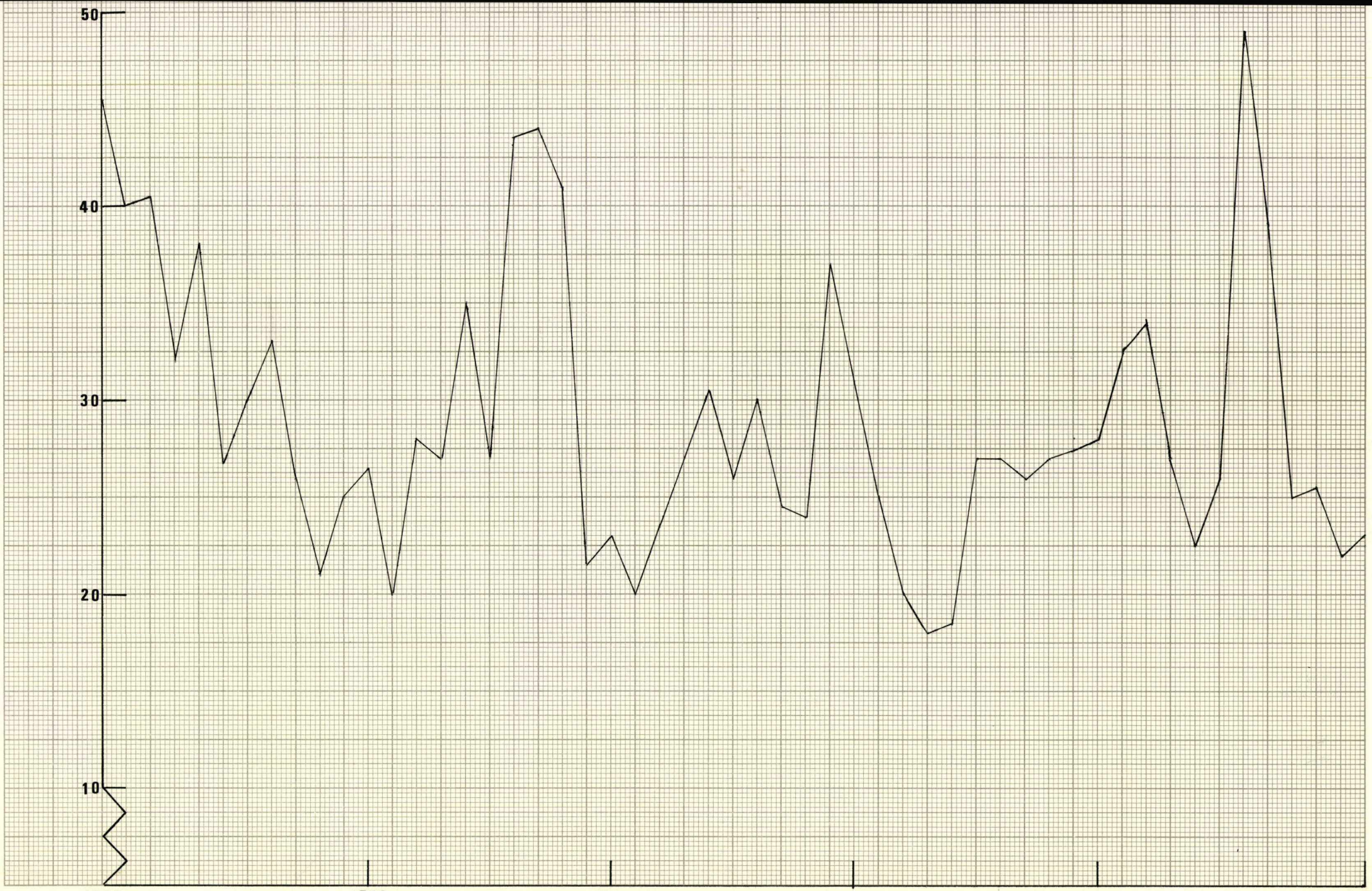

FIGURE 2 Hogshaw Farm, Milstead: Wheat Prices (annual average farm-gate) 1709 - 61 (in shillings per quarter)

TABLE 6

P R I C E - S T A T I S T I C S

MILSTEAD (KENT) SERIES: OATS 1709-61

(Prices are given in shillings per quarter to the nearest 0.5 shilling)

Harvest Year	Price ("Farm-gate") average	Harvest Year	Price ("Farm-gate") average
1709	13.0	1736	9.5
1710	13.0	1737	10.0
1711	12.5	1738	-
1712	13.0	1739	13.0
1713	13.0	1740	-
1714	10.5	1741	14.0
1715	10.0	1742	13.0
1716	-	1743	12.0
1717	10.5	1744	-
1718	11.0	1745	11.0
1719	12.0	1746	9.0
1720	8.5	1747	8.5
1721	9.5	1748	14.0
1722	10.0	1749	12.5
1723	14.0	1750	12.5
1724	10.5	1751	12.0
1725	9.5	1752	12.0
1726	10.0	1753	-
1727	14.0	1754	11.0
1728	15.0	1755	-
1729	11.5	1756	-
1730	9.5	1757	18.0
1731	-	1758	9.0
1732	9.5	1759	8.0
1733	9.5	1760	-
1734	10.0	1761	11.0
1735	11.0		

Source: KAO U593 A2.

(alias Hogshaw Farm) near Sittingbourne from 1708 until his death in 1763. Market prices and net prices received "at home" are recorded for the period 1709-61.[1] The series is unbroken for wheat, the chief cash crop, the bulk of which was shipped to London each year at intervals throughout the year; the cost of freightage and factorage for wheat remained constant throughout the period at 1s. 6d. per quarter. In the case of oats there are a few years for which no prices have been found; the combined cost of freightage and factorage remained at 1s. per quarter for oats. The Milstead series for wheat and oats (farm-gate prices) are shown in Tables 5 and 6 respectively.[2]

Market price series for Canterbury and Maidstone have been constructed from prices recorded at the Courts of Quarter Sessions held at those towns.[3] An Act of 1670 for the improvement of tillage required "presentments of prices signed by jury" to be made in Quarter Sessions.[4] Even a cursory glance at these prices confirms their potential value; closer scrutiny reveals some of the most comprehensive and useful price material yet discovered for this period. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that these returns should not be confused with Quarter Sessions wage assessments which were required by the Statute of Artificers (1563) and which are quite useless as a guide to actual wages.[5] The hard-worked justices of the peace were personally responsible for assessing

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[1] KAO U593 A2.

[2] The term "Harvest Year" conforms to the method of dating established by Beveridge, and refers to the twelve months beginning about Michaelmas: "Thus '1700' means the time from about Michaelmas 1700 to about Michaelmas 1701". See Lord Beveridge, Prices and Wages in England (1939), I, xliii.

[3] KAO Q/SBc.

[4] 22 Chas.II c13; F. Hull, Guide to the Kent Archives Office (Maidstone 1958), 10.

[5] 5 Eliz. c4. The Kent Assessments of Wages are to be found in KAO Q/AW.

wages and appear to have eased their task by repeating the same rates year after year for decades. Not so with prices. The difference is explained by their origin. The quarterly prices were compiled by local farmers of some standing in the community - gentlemen or substantial yeomen. All the evidence points to the fact that these men were scrupulous in carrying out their duties. "Two honest and experienced farmers" were required to present on oath "the common market prices of middling English corn and grain ... as the same is commonly bought and sold in this county". In 1728, for instance, Robert Dawson of Maidstone, yeoman, and Joseph Smallwell, a gentleman of the same town, were described as "skilfull men in ye prices of corn". In 1731 the two Canterbury farmers who presented prices in December were described as "two honest and substantial persons ... each of them having freehold lands in this county of the yearly value of twenty pounds ... and neither of them being a merchant or factor in the importing of corn nor interested in corn imported and both of them being skilfull in the prises of corn ...". The "grains" for which average market prices were assessed and presented were: wheat, barley, malt, oats, beans, peas, buckwheat and rye. Buckwheat and rye were of minor importance in the Kentish economy and occasionally the assessors recorded "prices unknown" against these commodities, a further illustration of the integrity of the farmers whose task it was to scrutinize the market situation and agree jointly on the figures which they should submit as a reliable guide to average ruling prices.[1] The farmers concerned lived at Canterbury, Maidstone, or in surrounding parishes. We can confidently assume that Canterbury prices are a true indication of the market situation in north-east Kent, while the Maidstone series is an accurate reflection of mid-Kent prices.

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[1]For example see KAO Q/SBc 1763, 1771, 1781.

TABLE 7

MARKET PRICE STATISTICS

CANTERBURY AND MAIDSTONE (KENT QUARTER SESSIONS) SERIES:

ARABLE CROPS 1726-80

(Annual average prices are given in shillings per quarter, to the nearest 0.5 shilling)

	Wheat		Barley		Malt		Oats		Beans		Peas	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Harvest Year	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.
1726	-	32.0	-	22.0	-	-	-	11.0	-	20.0	-	28.0
1727	-	48.0	-	26.0	-	-	-	16.5	-	24.0	-	32.0
1728	-	45.0	-	25.0	-	-	-	17.5	-	25.5	-	29.5
1729	-	33.0	-	18.5	-	-	-	16.5	-	24.5	-	29.5
1730	-	25.0	-	14.5	-	-	-	10.0	-	16.0	-	20.0
1731	18.0	21.5	12.0	18.0	19.0	25.0	10.0	13.5	12.0	21.0	16.0	29.0
1732	21.0	22.5	13.0	14.5	20.0	20.5	10.0	10.0	13.0	14.5	16.0	18.5
1733	25.5	27.0	13.5	15.0	18.0	20.0	9.0	10.5	12.0	15.5	17.0	20.0
1734	30.0	32.5	14.0	15.0	18.5	20.5	12.0	11.5	13.0	14.5	17.5	19.5
1735	28.0	31.5	15.5	18.0	21.0	24.0	11.5	11.5	14.0	17.0	18.0	21.5
1736	29.0	29.5	17.5	20.0	23.5	24.5	11.5	12.5	17.0	19.5	21.0	22.5

TABLE 7 (continued)

	Wheat		Barley		Malt		Oats		Beans		Peas	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Harvest Year	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.
1737	25.0	28.0	16.0	18.0	21.5	24.5	10.0	12.5	17.0	20.0	25.5	26.0
1738	26.0	30.5	14.5	16.0	20.5	21.5	11.5	12.5	13.0	15.5	19.0	21.5
1739	35.0	40.5	17.5	21.0	22.5	27.0	12.5	13.5	14.5	17.5	21.0	23.5
1740	38.0	40.5	19.0	18.5	25.0	25.5	14.0	14.5	19.0	22.0	24.0	26.0
1741	26.0	25.5	18.0	19.5	23.0	26.0	12.5	12.5	19.0	22.0	22.5	25.0
1742	22.0	22.0	18.0	20.0	25.5	27.0	12.0	13.0	17.5	19.5	21.0	23.5
1743	19.0	19.5	14.0	15.0	18.5	20.5	9.5	10.5	13.0	15.5	16.5	19.0
1744	20.0	21.5	13.0	16.0	17.5	22.0	14.0	13.5	14.0	17.5	19.5	22.0
1745	29.0	28.5	12.0	12.5	17.5	17.0	10.5	10.5	12.0	15.0	16.0	18.5
1746	27.0	30.0	12.5	16.5	18.0	19.5	8.5	9.5	14.0	16.5	17.0	20.5
1747	27.0	26.5	14.0	15.5	19.0	20.5	9.5	10.0	15.5	16.5	17.5	20.0
1748	29.0	30.5	16.5	17.5	22.0	23.0	14.5	15.0	20.5	21.5	21.0	24.5
1749	29.0	29.0	16.0	17.5	21.0	23.0	12.5	15.0	16.5	19.5	18.5	22.5
1750	28.0	28.5	14.5	17.0	20.5	23.0	12.0	12.5	15.5	18.5	19.0	22.5
1751	32.0	33.0	16.0	19.0	21.0	23.5	13.5	13.5	16.5	18.5	20.0	23.0

TABLE 7 (continued)

	Wheat		Barley		Malt		Oats		Beans		Peas	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Harvest Year	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.
1752	34.0	34.5	16.0	17.5	22.0	24.5	12.0	12.0	15.0	17.0	19.5	21.0
1753	28.0	30.5	16.5	19.5	22.0	24.5	12.5	14.0	17.0	21.0	20.5	25.0
1754	24.0	23.5	13.5	14.0	19.5	20.0	13.5	13.5	13.5	15.5	16.5	18.0
1755	27.5	26.0	15.0	14.0	19.5	20.5	12.5	11.5	16.0	16.0	18.5	19.5
1756	50.5	57.0	22.0	25.0	27.0	30.0	17.6	18.0	24.0	25.5	27.0	29.5
1757	38.5	41.5	22.0	24.0	28.0	31.0	16.0	17.5	21.0	22.0	29.0	27.5
1758	27.0	30.0	16.0	18.0	23.0	24.5	11.5	12.5	16.0	19.5	23.0	24.5
1759	26.5	27.5	14.5	17.0	20.5	24.5	11.5	13.0	16.0	18.0	19.0	27.0
1760	23.0	25.0	14.5	17.0	22.5	24.5	12.0	13.0	20.0	21.5	20.5	25.5
1761	27.0	26.5	15.5	17.5	21.5	26.0	14.0	14.0	17.5	20.0	19.5	23.0
1762	28.5	32.0	20.0	24.0	30.0	32.0	16.5	18.0	22.0	23.5	23.0	25.5
1763	33.5	36.0	19.0	20.0	29.0	31.0	14.0	14.5	17.5	19.0	20.5	21.5
1764	42.0	42.0	18.5	19.5	27.0	28.5	13.5	14.5	19.0	19.0	20.5	24.0
1765	36.0	40.0	23.0	23.0	31.0	31.5	17.5	18.0	27.5	30.5	30.0	33.5
1766	42.5	48.5	23.5	24.5	32.5	33.5	15.0	16.5	20.0	22.0	25.5	29.5

TABLE 7 (continued)

	Wheat		Barley		Malt		Oats		Beans		Peas	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Harvest Year	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.
1767	48.0	49.0	22.5	25.0	31.0	35.0	15.0	16.0	19.5	24.0	25.0	29.0
1768	36.0	45.5	18.0	18.5	30.0	28.0	13.0	13.5	17.0	20.5	23.0	25.0
1769	35.5	42.0	17.0	17.5	23.0	25.5	14.5	14.5	20.0	20.5	20.0	24.5
1770	41.5	44.0	23.5	21.0	30.5	26.0	16.5	16.0	21.5	20.0	24.0	24.0
1771	45.0	48.5	23.5	25.0	33.0	34.0	16.5	17.0	23.0	24.5	26.5	28.5
1772	50.0	54.0	26.0	28.0	36.0	40.0	16.0	16.0	24.0	28.0	28.0	36.0
1773	50.0	50.5	26.5	28.5	35.5	38.5	16.0	18.5	23.0	25.5	28.5	31.5
1774	48.5	52.5	25.0	28.5	36.0	39.0	17.0	19.0	22.5	29.5	27.5	33.0
1775	37.0	39.0	26.0	26.0	35.0	33.5	16.5	17.5	24.5	25.5	27.5	33.5
1776	40.5	42.5	19.5	20.0	28.0	30.5	15.5	18.0	25.0	26.5	30.0	32.5
1777	41.5	42.0	21.0	24.0	32.0	32.0	15.0	15.0	22.5	26.0	27.5	32.0
1778	33.0	35.5	20.5	24.0	30.5	33.5	16.0	17.5	21.0	25.0	26.5	30.5
1779	29.5	32.5	16.5	18.0	29.0	29.5	15.0	14.5	17.5	19.5	24.5	26.5
1780	43.5	46.0	16.5	17.0	29.0	30.5	14.0	15.0	19.0	19.5	25.0	23.5

Source: KAO Q/SBc.

TABLE 8

MARKET PRICE STATISTICS

KENT QUARTER SESSIONS SERIES: CROPS 1726-80

(Period average prices are given in shillings per quarter, to the nearest 0.5 shilling)

	Wheat		Barley		Malt		Oats		Beans		Peas	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Period	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.	Cant.	Maid.
1726-30	-	36.5	-	21.0	-	-	-	14.5	-	22.0	-	28.0
1731-40	27.5	30.5	15.5	17.5	21.0	23.5	11.0	12.5	14.5	17.5	19.5	23.0
1741-50	25.5	26.0	15.0	16.5	20.5	22.0	11.5	12.0	16.0	18.0	19.0	22.0
1751-60	31.0	33.0	16.5	18.5	22.5	25.0	13.0	13.5	17.5	19.5	21.5	23.5
1761-70	37.0	39.5	20.0	21.0	28.5	30.0	15.0	15.5	20.0	22.0	23.0	26.0
1771-80	42.0	42.5	22.0	24.0	32.5	34.0	16.0	17.0	22.0	25.0	27.0	31.0

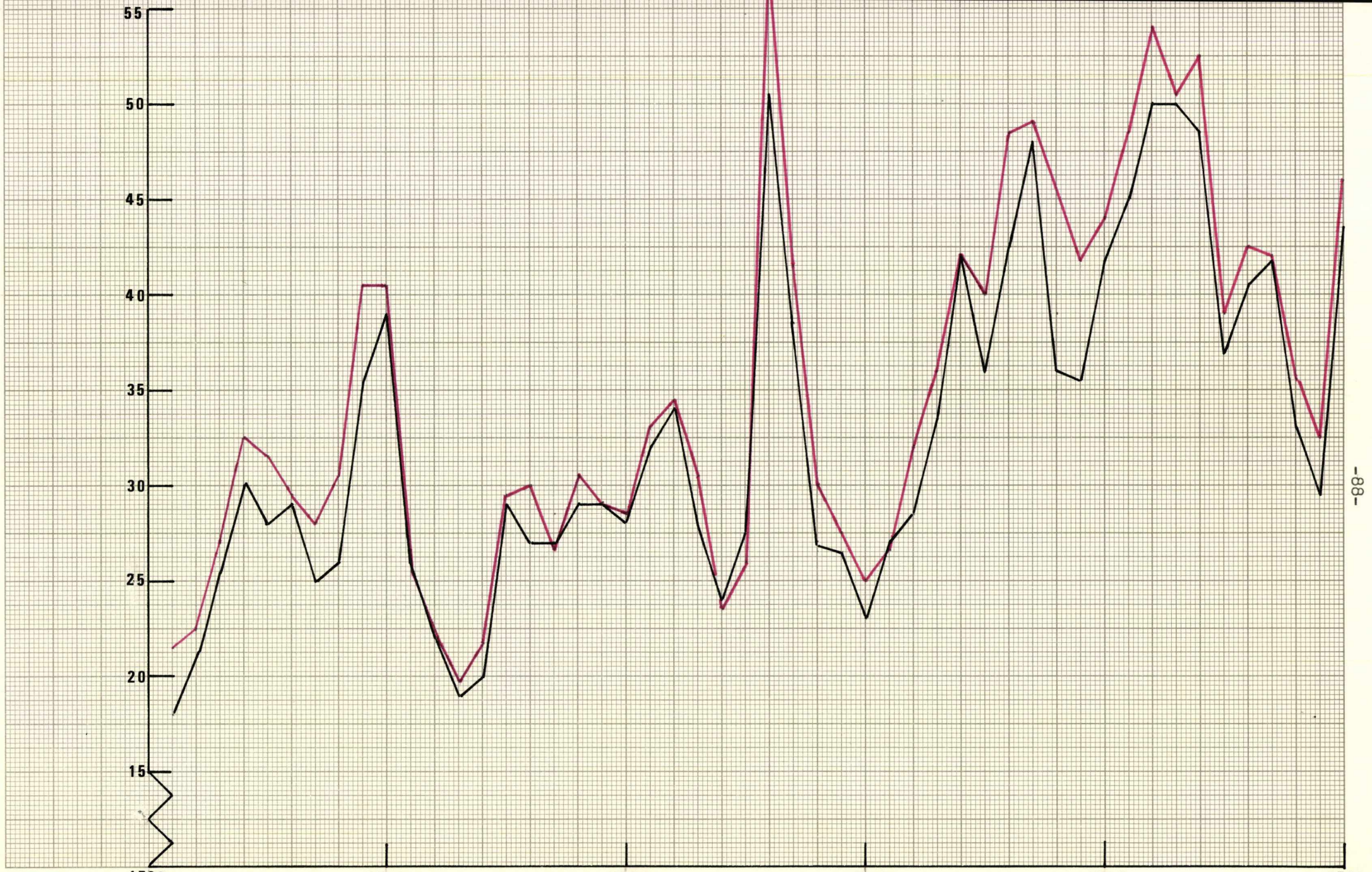

FIGURE 3 Wheat Prices: Quarter Sessions annual average in shillings per quarter.

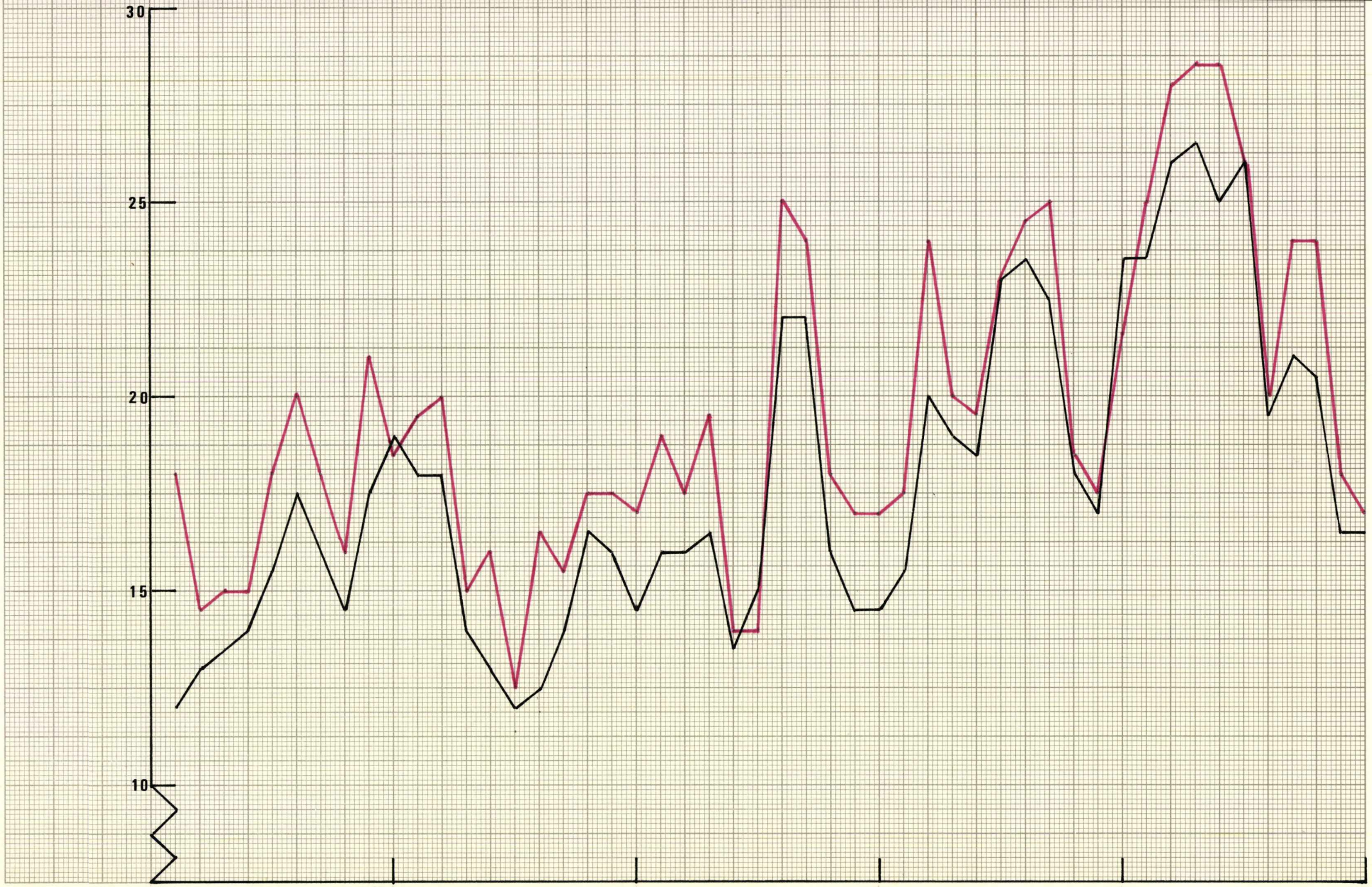

FIGURE 4 Barley Prices: Quarter Sessions annual average in shillings per quarter. Canterbury Maidstone

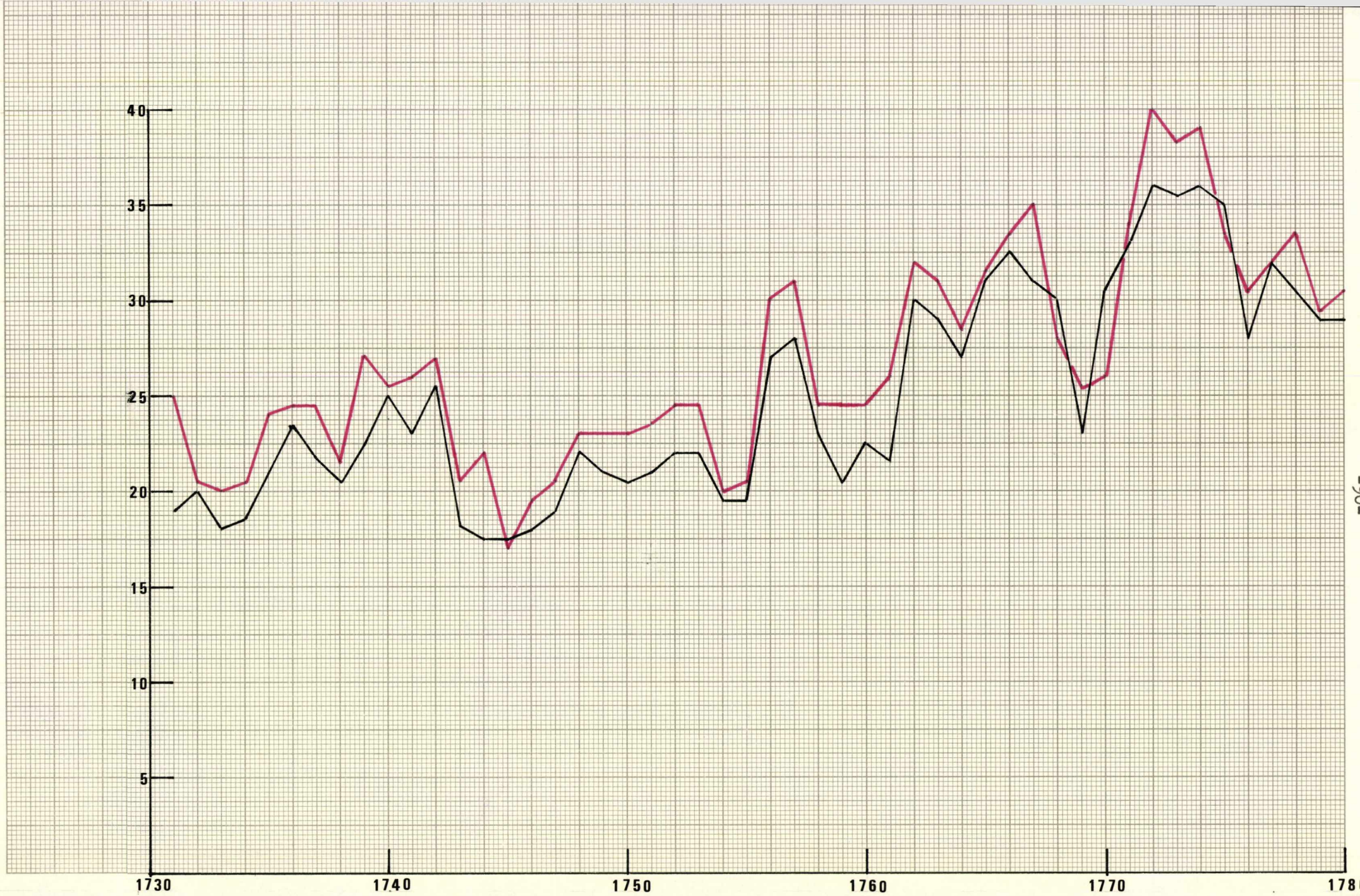

FIGURE 5 Malt Prices: Quarter Sessions annual average in shillings per quarter —— Canterbury —— Maidstone

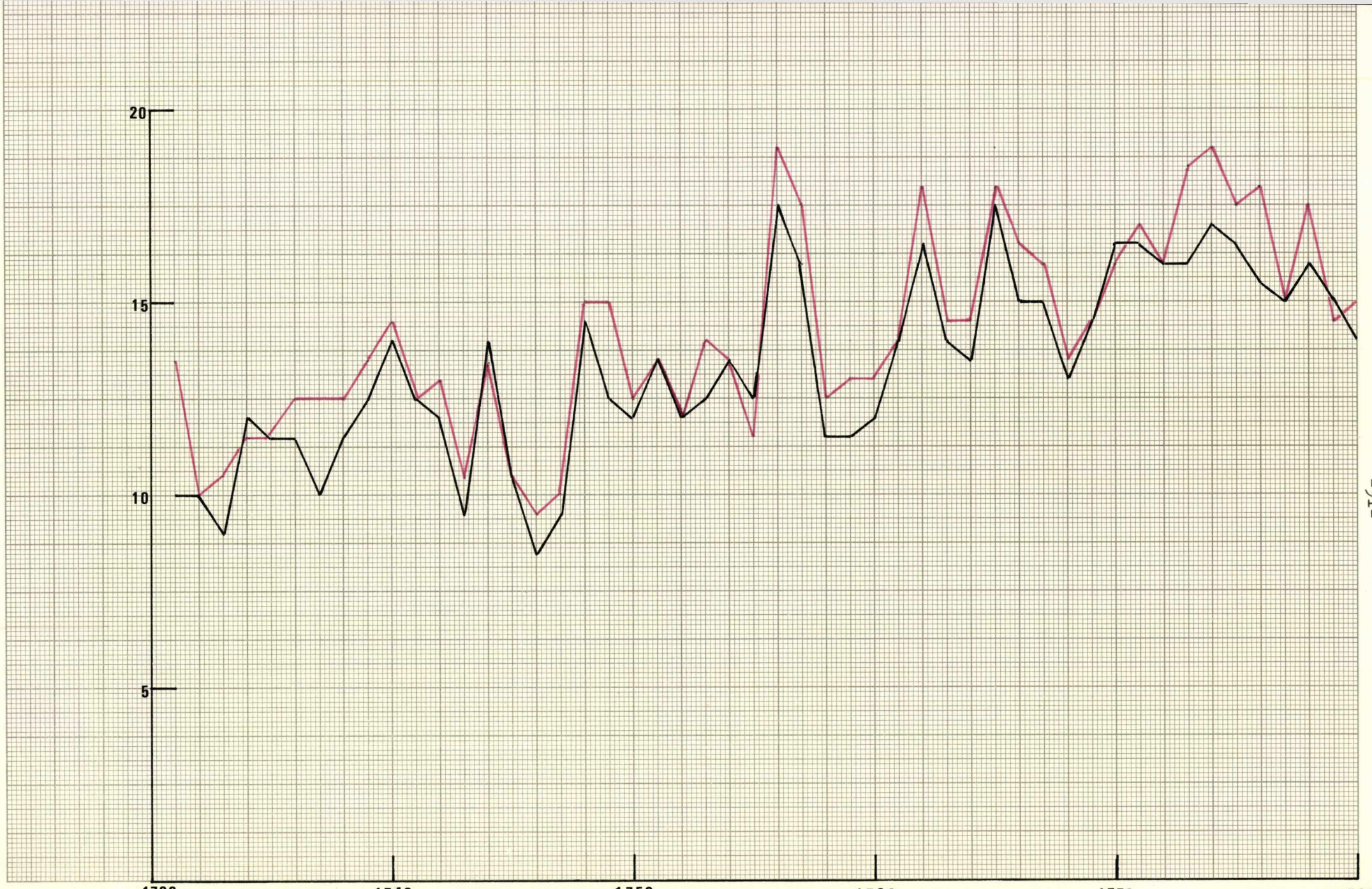

FIGURE 6 Prices of Oats: Quarter Sessions annual average in shillings per quarter.

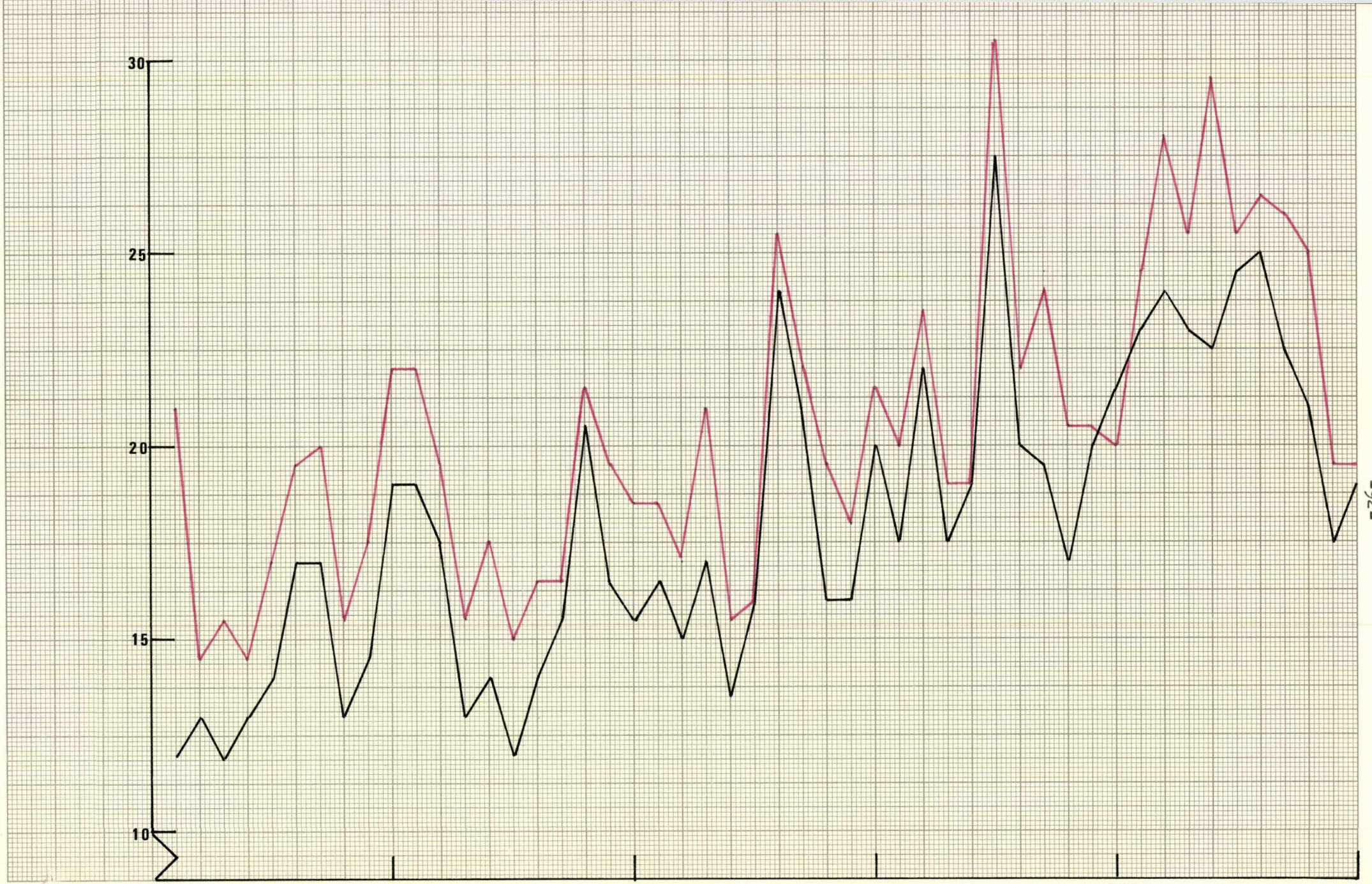

FIGURE 7 Prices of Beans : Quarter Sessions annual average in shillings per quarter.

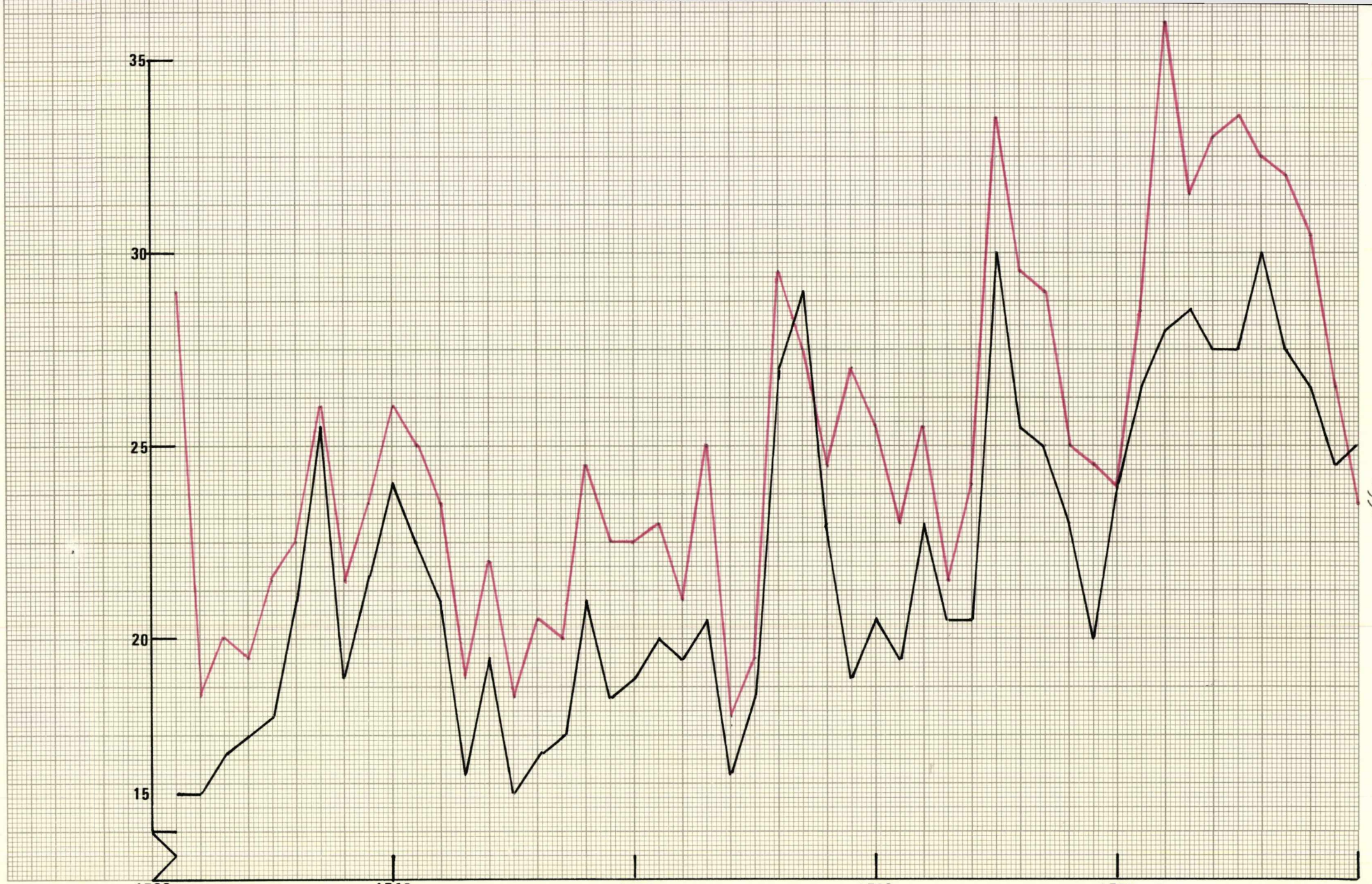

FIGURE 8 Prices of Peas: Quarter Sessions annual average in shillings per quarter

TABLE 9

PRICE STATISTICS

NORTH-EAST KENT COMBINED SERIES: WHEAT 1709-81

Milstead Selling Prices 1709-61

Canterbury Selling Prices 1762-81

(Prices are given in shillings per quarter to the nearest 0.5 shilling)

Harvest Year	Price	9-year moving average	Harvest Year	Price	9-year moving average
1709	47.0		1736	31.5	29.5
1710	41.5		1737	26.0	30.0
1711	42.0		1738	25.5	29.0
1712	33.5		1739	38.5	27.5
1713	39.5	36.0	1740	32.5	27.0
1714	28.5	33.5	1741	26.5	26.5
1715	31.5	31.5	1742	21.5	26.5
1716	34.5	30.0	1743	19.5	27.0
1717	27.5	29.0	1744	20.0	26.0
1718	22.5	27.5	1745	28.5	25.5
1719	26.5	27.5	1746	28.5	26.0
1720	28.0	28.5	1747	27.5	27.0
1721	21.5	27.5	1748	28.5	29.0
1722	29.5	29.5	1749	29.0	30.0
1723	28.5	32.0	1750	29.5	29.5
1724	36.5	34.0	1751	34.0	29.5
1725	28.5	33.5	1752	35.5	32.0
1726	45.0	33.5	1753	28.5	33.0
1727	45.5	33.0	1754	24.0	33.0
1728	42.5	32.5	1755	27.5	32.5
1729	23.0	31.5	1756	50.5	31.5
1730	24.5	32.0	1757	40.5	30.0
1731	21.5	30.0	1758	26.5	30.0
1732	25.0	28.5	1759	27.0	31.5
1733	28.5	26.5	1760	23.5	33.0
1734	32.0	27.0	1761	24.5	31.5
1735	27.5	28.5	1762	28.5	31.5

TABLE 9 (continued)

Harvest Year	Price	9-year moving average
1763	33.5	34.0
1764	42.0	35.0
1765	36.0	36.5
1766	42.5	38.0
1767	48.0	40.0
1768	36.0	42.0
1769	35.5	42.5
1770	41.5	44.0
1771	45.0	43.5
1772	50.0	42.5
1773	50.0	43.5
1774	48.5	43.0
1775	37.0	41.5
1776	40.5	41.5
1777	41.5	40.0
1778	33.0	
1779	29.5	
1780	43.5	
1781	37.0	

Sources: KAO 593 A2; Q/SBc.

Tables 7 and 8 and Figures 3 to 8 summarize the evidence.[1] Apart from one or two isolated years there are no price returns for Maidstone before 1726, or for Canterbury before 1731; thereafter the series are complete to 1781.

In order to produce a long price series for wheat which extends beyond the period, and which is representative of prices paid for wheat grown in north-east Kent, market prices for Milstead (1709-61) and Canterbury (1762-81) have been combined (Table 9). A nine-year moving average based on these prices enables us to elicit the long-term trends prior and subsequent to 1760.

Livestock prices are "difficult to collect and as difficult to correlate".[2] There is insufficient evidence to compile livestock price-series for Kent, although some general observations can be made. The beef prices shown in Table 10 relate to Hampshire and London and are based on the churchwardens' accounts of Odiham,[3] and the records of St. Thomas' Hospital and St. Bartholomew's Hospital which were made available to Professor John. A further series of beef prices, together with prices for pork, relate to the Naval Victualling office; Kent prices have been shown where possible (Table 11).

B Long-Term Trends

No worthwhile discussion of agricultural development is possible without a thoroughgoing appreciation of price trends, for "the changes in markets and prices, reflecting shifts in demand and supply, were the

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[1] Rye and buckwheat have been omitted.

[2] John, 'Agricultural Change', op. cit., 141.

[3] I am grateful to Mr Barry Stapleton for supplying the annual price data for Odiham from which the decennial averages have been calculated.

TABLE 10

BEEF PRICES

(Decennial averages, in pence per 8 lb. stone)

	1660-9	1670-9	1680-9	1690-9	1700-9	1710-19	1720-9	1730-9	1740-9	1750-9
Odiham	22.8	22.7	22.4	22.8	22.1	24.0	23.1	22.2	24.1	23.0
St. Thomas's	21.7	23.1	21.9	23.1	19.6	22.0	22.1	-	-	-
St. Bartholomew's	-	-	-	-	20.1	21.1	21.5	18.6	20.6	21.5

Sources: Odiham (Hants.) Churchwardens' Accounts; A.H. John, 'The Course of Agricultural Change 1660-1760', Studies in the Industrial Revolution, ed. L.S. Pressnell (1960), 144.

TABLE 11

BEEF AND PORK PRICES - NAVAL VICTUALLING OFFICE

(Period averages, in shillings per cwt.)

	1683-90	1691-1700	1701-10	1711-20	1721-30	1731-40	1741-7
Beef							
London	19.67	23.17	23.92	25.33	22.08	16.83	20.92
Chatham	-	23.17	20.58	20.67	-	17.08	23.00
Dover	-	21.75	22.25	23.25	-	19.33	22.50
Pork							
London	26.17	30.42	30.33	33.58	33.83	24.67	27.00
Dover	-	29.33	31.25	35.25	-	-	26.25

Source: Museum Rusticum et Commerciale (6 Vols. Royal Society of Arts), 1764-6, II, 328-31.

basic elements in the situation".[1] There were two types of price-change:

> ... the short-term, seasonal and year-to-year movements which largely reflected the influence of weather on the quantities brought to market; and the more long-term shifts in the price level of important commodities such as grain, beef, mutton, wool and dairy produce, which were the result of a gradually changing overall balance between the demand for food and raw materials and the output as determined by land-use and methods of farming.[2]

From the mid-seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth centuries "the main tendency of grain price movements in western and central Europe was in a downward direction". This observation "is valid for England, Belgium, France, Northern Italy, the Netherlands, Denmark and Poland". If the century is divided into two fifty-year periods, and the first period (1651-1700) is taken as 100, the percentages of average grain prices during the second half century (1701-50) were: "in Germany 104, in Austria 103; but in England 84; in France 75; in Belgium 73; in northern Italy 90; in Denmark 90; in Poland 60; and in the Netherlands 70".[3] Professor B.H. Slicher Van Bath believes that a marked fall in cereal prices in Europe during the years 1650-1750 means that "from an agricultural point of view this period must be described as one of depression", although he subsequently modifies this to "slight agricultural depression". However, subjective classifications aside, there is no question that the century after 1650 witnessed a downward price trend and stands in marked contrast to the preceding and subsequent

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[1] J.D. Chambers and G.E. Mingay, The Agricultural Revolution 1750-1880 (1966), 37.

[2] Ibid., 38.

[3] Wilhelm Abel, Agrarkrisen und Agrarkonjunktur (Hamburg und Berlin 1966), unpublished English translation, 152-3. I am grateful to Mrs Olive Ordish for allowing me the use of her translation of Abel's work.

centuries when prices were rising.[1]

For England, there is ample evidence of falling prices from the 1660's. Professor John has indicated a long period of declining grain prices especially for wheat:

> In 1717-24, and again in the 1730's and 1740's, wheat prices - at least over southern England - were between 25 and 33 per cent lower than the average level for the decade 1660-9.[2]

The price of oats was affected less than the prices of wheat and barley, and livestock product prices showed even less change. It seems fair to generalize that "corn prices ruled low in the first half of the eighteenth century".[3] Professor Mingay has examined in some detail the evidence of agricultural distress caused by a prolonged period of low prices during the 1730's and 1740's.[4]

Despite strong evidence indicating a long deflationary period, Professor M.W. Flinn has raised a critical, dissenting voice.[5] In particular he questions the validity of Professor John's argument that "low grain prices in the first half of the eighteenth century stimulated economic growth". In order to destroy John's hypothesis Flinn claims that there was "virtually no long-run decline /in prices/ at all". After examining the Exeter, Eton and Winchester series Professor Flinn concedes that, together, these show a trough of wheat prices in the 1730's

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[1] B.H. Slicher Van Bath, The Agrarian History of Western Europe A.D. 500-1850 (1963), 109, 113.

[2] John, 'Agricultural Productivity and Economic Growth', op. cit., 172.

[3] Chambers & Mingay, op. cit., 40.

[4] G.E. Mingay, 'The Agricultural Depression 1730-1750', Essays in Economic History ed. E.M. Carus-Wilson, II (1962).

[5] M.W. Flinn, 'Agricultural Productivity and Economic Growth in England, 1700-60: a Comment', Journal of Economic History, XXVI, i (1966), 93-8.

and 1740's: "The duration of the trough is fairly precisely twenty years (in fact, 23 years, from 1729 to 1751 inclusive), and its depth is also fairly clearly about 15 per cent below that of the average for the previous three decades". However, Flinn's case rests almost entirely on the manipulation of the Exeter price series for the period 1660-1759 in order to demonstrate the long-term trend.[1]

A seven-year moving average of Exeter wheat prices is constructed in order "to see the wood through the trees". The principle can be applauded but it might be suggested that for a period covering a hundred years a longer-term moving average is more appropriate in order to eradicate short-term fluctuations. There appears to be no statistical basis for adopting seven years.[2] In order to construct a moving average Flinn resorts to the dubious expedient of removing certain years from the series - which he terms "exceptionally high years" - replacing these with "arithmetic averages of the remaining years of their decades".[3] This is totally unrealistic and leaves us with a distorted series which fails to reflect the true state of affairs. Moreover, since eleven of the thirteen offending years lie in the period before 1729, this device favours the direction in which it is hoped the argument will flow. Despite this manipulation, Flinn nevertheless concedes: "The results of this little exercise are still not easy to summarize".[4] However, the ultimate summary appears with an anticipated slant:

> ... we may say that the secular trend of prices between the 1660's and the late 1720's was only very slightly downwards: a 10 per cent fall in nearly seventy years can hardly be more than marginally significant. In the 1730's and 1740's

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[1] Ibid., 94-5.

[2] i.e. there is no cyclical component in the raw data which approximates to seven years.

[3] Flinn, op. cit., 95.

[4] Ibid., 96.

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> prices were no lower than they had been in the late 1680's and mid 1700's, but about 20-25 per cent lower than seventy years earlier and 15 per cent lower than twenty years earlier.[1]

This dextrous argument can hardly be taken as sufficient grounds for jettisoning the belief that there was a clearly-marked, long-run decline in prices from the 1660's. Even viewing Flinn's own distorted evidence (particularly the graph on page 95) a long-term decline is immediately apparent.[2]

The compilation of price material is complex, its interpretation fraught with difficulties. Most historians would agree that "in the last resort, the whole structure of the argument rests on our knowledge of grain prices" which is "more restricted than we are often prepared to admit", although "perhaps research will produce not only a geographical distribution of price indices for this period but also indices of genuine noninstitutional market prices".[3]

The seventeen-year moving average based on the Dover series of wheat prices 1660-1760 (Table 3 and Figure 1), leaves no doubt that prices in Kent were falling in the long run.[4] Flinn claims that prices in the 1730's and 1740's show no decline when compared with the 1680's. This is, of course, a severe (but not unfair) test, since the 1680's were - for the most part - years of "remarkably low prices" by seventeenth-

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[1] Ibid., 97.

[2] If the unadulterated Exeter prices had been processed into a thirteen-year moving average this would have shown the downward trend even more clearly.

[3] Flinn, op. cit., 98.

[4] The Dover price data suggest cyclical components of 20 years (two) before 1706 and of 12-13 years (four) thereafter: the adoption of a 17-year moving average for the whole period is a statistically valid compromise. I am grateful to Mr Denis Cunningham for his advice on this point.

century standards.[1] Notwithstanding, Dover prices in the 1730's were 14 per cent lower than the 1680's, 21 per cent lower in the 1740's. If we compare the 1740's with the 1660's there is a fall of 35 per cent. The new evidence fully substantiates Professor John's claim that:

> As far as south-eastern England is concerned, the long upward trend in grain prices during and after the last quarter of the sixteenth century reached its peak in the 1660's, and it is difficult to interpret the next ninety years other than as a long-run decline.[2]

The course of farm-gate prices received for wheat at Milstead shows a long-term decline during the first half of the eighteenth century. If the two twenty-one year periods, 1709-29 and 1730-50 are compared, the price of wheat averaged almost 20 per cent less during the second period, falling from 32s. to 25.7s. per quarter. In the case of oats, during the same periods, the fall was slight, scarcely more than 4 per cent.

Quarter Sessions prices have the advantages that they relate to two distinct regions of the county and also cover a number of commodities besides wheat. Unfortunately there are no prices available for the earlier years of our period, although the series continue uninterrupted until 1781 permitting a comparison of the 1730's and 1740's with the post-1750 era when a new trend is observed.

An immediately striking fact is that Canterbury prices run at some 5 to 10 per cent lower than those for Maidstone. The plausible explanation for this seems to be the greater supply of cereals and pulses in the north-east, a region which might justifiably be termed "the granary of Kent". These tables demonstrate that price levels could vary consistently for long periods over quite short distances. However, the actual trends in east and mid-Kent show a marked similarity as we should expect.

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[1] T. Tooke, A History of Prices (4 Vols. 1838-48), I, 29.

[2] John, 'Agricultural Productivity and Economic Growth', op. cit., 191.

Wheat and barley experienced the greatest falls in price. The price of Maidstone wheat in the 1740's was 29 per cent below the average price 1726-30, similarly barley 21 per cent. Oat prices show greater buoyancy. Although the price of oats shows a drop of 14 per cent between the periods 1726-30 and 1731-40, there was only a slight further decline in the 1740's. In the case of Canterbury oats, prices in the 1740's were slightly higher than those for the previous decade, a unique trend for a cereal crop in these years and one which almost certainly reflects the growing demand for horse fodder in the City of Canterbury itself as well as on the farms of the surrounding district. The only crop which shows a higher average price in the 1740's than the 1730's for both centres is beans. These were in ever-growing demand for feeding to horses and were clearly one of the most attractive crops for farmers to cultivate; their importance in the regional economy cannot be stressed too strongly.

As we should expect, Milstead farm-gate prices for wheat followed a lower course than Canterbury, Maidstone and Dover prices. If the Dover series is assumed to represent prices paid by the final consumer, a fairly consistent differential of 25 per cent above Milstead prices is observed. It seems not unreasonable to suggest that a "mark-up" on farmers' prices of around 25 per cent (representing transport costs and middleman profits) prevailed in this period, at any rate in north-east Kent. Professor E.L. Jones has suggested that conceivably "transport improvements from the 'fifties were sufficient to narrow the gap between farm-gate prices and the price to the urban consumer".[1] This appears a reasonable assumption for many parts of the country but it does not seem to have happened in north-east Kent during the 1750's and, although firm evidence is lacking, probably not thereafter. The explanation lies in

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[1] E.L. Jones, 'Agriculture and Economic Growth in England, 1660-1750: Agricultural Change', Agriculture and Economic Growth in England 1650-1815 (1967), 40.

the fact that transport costs for farmers in this region were already low throughout the first half of the eighteenth century due to a well-established, efficient transport system, both overland and waterborne.[1]

Professor John reasons that prices of store animals - lean cattle and sheep - "were generally low during the first half of the eighteenth century".[2] An increasing animal population, a growing import of Irish wool and yarn, an influx of Scottish cattle after the Act of Union, and a long succession of dry summers (which reduced supplies of grass, tending to limit the numbers of store animals sold) together "continued the pressure upon those whose livelihood depended upon the rearing of animals". It was not until the 1740's that "the fortunes of the breeders improved permanently".[3] The best evidence available to the present writer relates to Surrey and tends to reinforce the view of Professor John. Calves sold on the Loseley estate at Compton, near Guildford fetched between 15s. and 25s. each in the later seventeenth century but during the 1720's and 1730's only 8s. to 10s.; by the later 1740's the price had risen to between 10s. and 12s. per head. The cost of runts (lean cattle) purchased for the Howard estate at Ashstead, Newstead and Epsom in the late seventeenth century varied between £4 and £6 per head. In the early eighteenth century runts purchased for this estate, and also for the estate of Edward Nicholas at West Horsley, cost from £2 5s. to £3 15s. per head. In the late 1740's the price of runts for the Clayton

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[1] Water transport costs from Crown Key, Milton to London never varied throughout the period 1709-61. For wheat, beans, peas and tares they remained at 1s. 6d. per quarter, and for barley and oats 1s. per quarter; these charges included factorage. KAO U593 A2.

[2] John, 'Agricultural Change', op. cit., 141.

[3] Ibid., 141-3.

estate at Marden and Woldingham had risen to over £4 per head.[1]

"Those who processed animals by fattening them", says Professor John, "were more happily placed". Such farmers "benefited from the cheapness of leanstock and also of grain", they were able to "exercise more control over supplies than the breeder", and they were "linked to an expanding market". Furthermore, these graziers were helped by the fact that "the prices of animal products fluctuated less violently than those of grain: and beef prices less than those of mutton".[2]

It is not always easy to determine whether the animals which feature in a transaction are "fatstock" but where "fat cows" are accounted the matter is not in doubt. Once again the Surrey evidence is fairly conclusive and shows that whereas fat cows were selling for little more than £4 per head in the late seventeenth century, the price rose to between £5 and £7 in the second decade of the following century, a level which was maintained, and even exceeded, during the 1730's and 1740's.[3]

Meat prices were remarkably stable, except for short periods; the only decade which appears to have witnessed a slight fall in meat prices was the 1730's (Tables 10 and 11). This is a conclusion reached earlier by Professor John who also noted a similar stability in the prices of butter, cheese and tallow.[4]

The long-term movement of English prices, and particularly the falling trend of grain (especially wheat) prices, raises a vital question

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[1]Guildford Museum and Muniment Room, LM 1087/1-2, 1/53/1, 22/1/1-3, 84/2/2-3; Minet Library, Lambeth, 'Account Book of the Howard Estates at Ashstead and Epsom 1693-1701'.

[2]John, 'Agricultural Change', op. cit., 143.

[3]Minet Library, Lambeth, loc. cit.; Guildford Museum and Muniment Room, 1/53/1, 22/1/1-3, LM 1087/1-2.

[4]John, 'Agricultural Productivity and Economic Growth', op. cit., 172.

which has been the subject of research and debate on the part of several leading authorities. Was there an agricultural depression in England during the first half of the eighteenth century? It must be admitted at once that there is no simple answer, and we can dismiss as unsubstantiated and fallacious the sweeping statement of one writer who is rather better known for his audacity than for the exercise of prudence:

> To all appearances the first half of the eighteenth century was a period of depression and stagnation, broken by short outbursts of restricted progress in the spread of what were by now almost completed innovations.[1]

In the printed literature of the eighteenth century writers appear to bemoan high as well as low agricultural prices, according to the ruling situation and their personal points of view. During the period of low prices in the 1730's it was observed that "rents have been sinking, and tenants unable to make as good payments as formerly". The same writer considered that in order for tenant-farmers to meet their rent payments wheat ought to sell, on average, for at least 35s. per quarter, barley 20s., oats 12s., and peas 18s., prices rarely achieved in these years. There was, he considered, "a necessity to support and add to the present prices of grain". Moreover, cattle, pigs, sheep, butter and cheese were said to be "one third part cheaper than formerly" and were below what the writer considered "a living price for the farmer".[2]

An equally large spate of propagandist literature appeared from the 1760's when prices began to rise. In order to "render corn cheap" one writer considered that "farmers should be encouraged to grow great quantities, which alone will ever reduce the price of such a necessary". This would be beneficial to producers and buyers alike since "the con-

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[1] E. Kerridge, The Agricultural Revolution (1967), 334.

[2] W. Allen, Ways and Means to Raise the Value of Land (1736), 1-3.

sumer would thereby have it at a reasonable rate, while the farmer is compensated by the quantity, for what he loses in the value".[1] Both arguments appear to carry equal conviction.

Nevertheless, there is need to consider seriously where, when and to what extent depression prevailed in English agriculture during these years. It seems likely that there was a crucial period in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries when farmers were forced to reconsider their policies and undertake long-term adjustments of costs to prices:

> In so far as a particular period can be regarded as critical, that between 1680 and 1710 has perhaps the best claim. After a prolonged downward trend, grain prices were as low between 1686 and 1691 as in any subsequent period, and the 'eighties witnessed years when the prices of meat, tallow and dairy products faltered. This was followed by two decades of extreme fluctuations. It represented the first major price adjustment after a long period of upward movement. Even the 'depression of agriculture', about which Mr. Mingay has written so illuminatingly, failed to affect all sectors of the farming community. Those who depended mainly on dairy produce for their incomes escaped it, so probably did the larger farmers of the light soils of East Anglia and elsewhere; and its impact on the grain growers of the west and the north does not seem to have been anything as great as on the clays of the Midlands.[2]

The most difficult years were undoubtedly those of the "trough" in the 1730's and 1740's for which Professor Mingay has found "clear indications of serious agricultural distress existing in some areas" even to the extent of runaway tenant-farmers unable to meet their rent payments. It seems that "the key factor in the situation was almost certainly the unusually long succession of favourable harvests" in the years 1730-50, and the worst sufferers were the farmers on the Midland clays in

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[1] Anon., The Present State of Great Britain and North America with Regard to Agriculture, Population, Trade, and Manufactures (1767), 52-3.

[2] John, 'Agricultural Change', op. cit., 151.

Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Rutland.[1]

There is no reason to believe, however, that depression was universal at this time, nor of invariable intensity: "The geographical extent and intensity of the depression remain uncertain and we should certainly expect to find large regional variations according to the nature of the soil, the type of farming, availability of markets, transport conditions and other factors".[2] The crux of the matter has been succinctly stated:

> In the first half of the eighteenth century the generally lower and often unprofitable level of prices ... often acted as a spur to improvement. When prices were low farmers had to be more efficient in order to survive. Enterprising farmers sought means of reducing their costs of production per unit of output, i.e. they tried to make more economical use of their land and labour force.[3]

Viewing European agriculture generally, Slicher Van Bath equates, uncritically, periods of rising cereal prices with "agricultural boom", falling prices with "agricultural depression".[4] Despite this manifestly hard-line approach, he concedes that farmers have open to them several ways of making adjustments. Short of retiring from farming altogether they can "take up some form of home-industry ... as an additional source of income"; they might "change from arable to livestock farming; or they can "intensify arable farming, and add to it market gardening and the cultivation of industrial crops". The final choice will depend on a number of variable factors:

> the proximity of towns with sizeable industries, good opportunities for rural industries; for a change from arable to livestock farming the nature of the land is of

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[1] Mingay, op. cit., 314, 320-1, 324.

[2] Ibid., 321.

[3] Chambers & Mingay, op. cit., 39.

[4] Slicher Van Bath, op. cit., 113.

> prime importance; for intensification a certain level of population and development of transport is necessary; and finally, for market gardening, the proximity of a large centre of population is a first essential.[1]

Professor Jones has related "the considerable innovation in agricultural practice which went on right through the low-price periods of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries" more particularly to one of the two main groups of farming systems in his scarp-and-vale distributional model of lowland Britain. This dichotomy comprises:

> on the one hand, those on the free-draining, light soils of the chalk and limestone uplands, the lightest loams, and some of the more fertile sand lands; and on the other hand, those on the heavy loams and ill-drained clays. In the former category are the Cotswolds, the Wessex chalklands, the Norfolk 'good sands', and so forth; in the latter, the Midland clay triangle and the clay vales of other parts.[2]

Jones goes on to argue that the scope for manoeuvre and innovation was not uniform across these two divisions and that the potential value of the innovations was, in sum, greater on the light lands. The light soils had previously been too infertile for permanent tillage and, for centuries, had been under sheep pasture. With the introduction of new crops they were now found to hold the greatest advantages for mixed farming. They were free-draining, their working system was long, their traction costs low. Unaided, they had been too infertile to sustain permanent cropping, but with the introduction of fodder crops - especially legumes which "fix" their own nitrogen - rotations of these and cereal courses could be maintained. The Norfolk four-course rotation was one rather limited variant of these light-land rotations. Once it became possible to keep these soils fertile cereals could be grown more cheaply than on the heavy clays. On such light lands it is the close integration

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[1] Ibid., 122.

[2] Jones, op. cit., 162.

of grain production with the management of livestock on the new fodder crops that is the crux of increased efficiency. In contrast, the farmers on the ill-drained clays and heavy soils found conditions inhibitive of innovation. Thus "the centres of arable prosperity were shifting from the heavier lands to the lighter lands".[1]

For the farmers on the light lands these adjustments meant a disproportionately bigger share of the market at the expense of the high-cost clayland cereal producers. Proximity to markets reinforced their comparative advantage. Finally, during the sharper falls in agricultural prices during the 1730's and 1740's, the light-land farmers displayed even greater energy and innovating spirit in attempts to expand output at lower unit costs in order to protect their incomes, a perverse reaction to lower prices. This type of response was to become known in the nineteenth century as "high farming".[2]

Agricultural depression during periods of falling prices was not inevitable for all farmers. We have noticed that several leading authorities, while accepting the fact that farmers faced difficulties in the early eighteenth century - and, indeed, many of them dire distress during the 'thirties and 'forties - concede, with varying degrees of emphasis, that depression could be avoided if the circumstances for adjustment were favourable. Ultimately it becomes a matter of sheer efficiency. In the text books periods of high prices are invariably, often unthinkingly, equated with agricultural prosperity with scant

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[1] Ibid., 161-4. It should be pointed out, however, that some of the thinnest light soils showed limited response to innovation. Arthur Young's references to the light soils (poor sands) in Norfolk indicate that yields remained low while costs of cultivation there were very high, since exceptionally heavy dressings of marl and other fertilizers were required. These high costs were reflected in the low rents charged for farms in that area. I am grateful to Professor G.E. Mingay for this information.

[2] Ibid., 166-8.

reference to inefficient farming. But very high prices cannot do otherwise than permit even the most inefficient farmers to survive, their high costs concealed under the cloak of inflation. Deflation provides the ultimate spur to efficiency and agriculture, pruned of its weakest elements, becomes an altogether healthier sector of the economy. Furthermore, as we know well, consumers faced with a wide range of goods at low prices experience rising standards of comfort, even though money-incomes remain unchanged.

The present study seeks to demonstrate how the positive responses of farmers in north-east Kent enabled them to survive, even prosper, during the years of low prices. A variety of soil-types (almost wholly within the light-land range) gave maximum scope for manoeuvrability. There was a shift in grain production in favour of wheat, the highest priced cereal or, where conditions were optimal as in Thanet, in favour of barley. Beans became a row crop of prime importance. The artificial grasses, especially sainfoin, helped to maintain a large animal population and, at the same time, raised the productivity of the land to unprecedented levels. The intensive cultivation of hops, a relatively new industrial crop, became a profitable and fashionable undertaking throughout the region. The production of fruit, vegetables, flax and dye-plants was widespread; alien influence was an important factor. Store animals were purchased in ever-growing numbers at favourable prices from breeders beyond the county. The fattening of cattle, dairy production, and pig breeding and fattening took on a new importance. The high level of urban development and efficient network of communications and transport, which have already been discussed, buttressed a sophisticated marketing system. Proximity to London was a crucial factor, and so too was the prevalence of by-employments which provided supplementary incomes, not least those which derived from the local fishing industry. Altogether, the farmers of north-east Kent displayed a remarkable propensity to

innovate and diversify during these deflationary decades.

C Short-term Fluctuations

Movements of prices in the short-run, largely the consequences of weather conditions, were extremely uncertain and variable. Contemporaries were keenly aware of the state of uncertainty occasioned by annual fluctuations:

> The farmer, like every other trader must have a sufficient profit, or he cannot go on long; the working his ground is equally expensive in scarce and plentifull years; in both he pays the same rent, keeps the same number of horses, has as many servants and labourers, is burthened with the same heavy taxes, and must provide himself and family with the necessaries of life ... by the difference of seasons his grounds at one time produce twice the quantity they do at another; in a favourable year, an acre of wheat may contain four quarters, in a bad one, not two; what is the poor farmer to do? Is he to sell at the same price whether he has much or little?[1]

Although the weather gave rise to great uncertainty some farmers - those in north-east Kent for instance - were better placed than others since unpredictable conditions "gave an advantage to those farmers whose soil, situation, and personal enterprise allowed more flexibility in their farming plans".[2]

Weather variations affected the size and quality of crops, numbers of livestock marketed, and conditions of transport, and hence the means of getting crops and beasts to market. The weather affects cereal crops in a number of different ways. Rainfall is probably the key factor. There is a close connection between the rainfall during the autumn and winter months, the times of sowing, and the acreage sown. Heavy autumn rains, for example, might hinder the sowing of winter wheat, a wet spring

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[1] Anon., An Impartial View of English Agriculture (1766), 23.

[2] Chambers & Mingay, op. cit., 38.

sowings of Lent corn. At harvest time "not only the total amount of rain which fell but the number of consecutive days with rain was critical".[1] Lack of sunshine during the growing and ripening season would adversely affect the size and quality of the crop and strong winds in summer might cause the plants to lodge and thereby raise the costs of harvesting. However, it is possible that the effects of the weather on farmers' sowing plans have been exaggerated. Each year, at the beginning of October, Richard Tylden of Milstead carefully recorded "an account of my seasons" or "an account of what I shall sow". The crops were listed and below them the fields (and their acreages) were written. The fields were noted again the following summer together with their respective crops and the quantities harvested. The detailed records cover a long period (1722-53) and there is not a single season when Tylden is forced to abandon or modify his cropping plans. In the case of wheat, the main crop, Tylden records the day he commenced sowing and the date of completion. Thus in 1730: "Begun to sow wheat ye 30 of Sept" and "Made an end /of the/ wheat season ye 17 of November, just 7 weeks from Michaelmas". The following year sowing of winter wheat was completed on 25th November, in 1732 on 19th November and so on.[2] These are unexceptional instances and in almost every recorded year the wheat is sown by the third week of November. Even when, in exceptional years, sowing is delayed - as in 1744 when Tylden "begun to sow wheat Nov 9" - the operation is always successfully completed and the original cropping plan remains unchanged. Although Tylden records his annual observations on weather conditions at harvest time together with the state of the crops harvested (Appendix VIII), he never feels it necessary to comment on the weather situation at sowing time. In fact there is no evidence that on this farm "excessive rain-

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[1] E.L. Jones, Seasons and Prices (1964), 56.

[2] KAO U593 A3 ff. 120v, 122v, 125v.

fall in the preceding sowing period" resulted in "a smaller than normal acreage being sown" although one can imagine that clay land farmers were not so fortunate.[1]

The uneven incidence of eighteenth-century weather conditions in different parts of the country has been observed. For example, "the harvests in the clay vales and on the uplands of scarp-and-vale England varied inversely, since the moisture-retentive soils of the vales were less able to resist a wet season but better able to withstand a drought than the free-draining soils of the hills". Thanet farmers welcomed a rainy summer which was "reckoned most kind or natural for this Island" but probably "prejudicial to the other parts of the kingdom".[2]

Less appreciated, perhaps, has been the fact that within a short harvest period weather conditions, especially rainfall, could change so rapidly within a given area as to make for varying qualities between the different cereal crops; this could happen within the bounds of a single farm. The truth of this statement is borne out in Tylden's annual harvest commentaries. Thus in 1739, for example, at Hogshaw Farm it was "a very fine harvest this year for my wheat" which was carried to the barns "very dry and in good order"; however, it was "a wet season" for black oats that year and "a good deal of care" was required to ensure that they were harvested "tollerable well"; it was also "a very bad season for barley" which involved "a great deal of trouble and care to get what was got in, in middling order". The season of 1747 brought "a very fine wheat harvest", one of the fields of barley proved troublesome but "was had in dry at last", while a field of beans "was very poorly carried so that I don't expect above 12 semes in all". In 1751 the

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[1] Chambers & Mingay, loc. cit.

[2] Jones, Seasons, op. cit., 58; J. Lewis, The History of the Isle of Tenet (Margate 1723), 12.

wheat was harvested in rainy weather and "carryd in soft and cold", the barley was "very near being spoilt" but the weather caused "little or no damage" to the black oats. However, some harvest seasons proved favourable to all the crops, as in 1749, while others proved uniformly wet and difficult, 1737 for instance. It is perhaps worth noting that there was a fair amount of rainy weather during harvest in the 1730's and 1740's and, although it would be unwise to generalize from the records of one farm, we may need to revise the popular conception of these decades as a succession of uniformly dry summers.[1]

Livestock were affected by the weather in two ways, indirectly through the variable supply of fodder crops, as well as by the more direct effects of certain diseases, the severity of which fluctuated according to weather conditions. For instance humid spells in late summer and autumn provided ideal conditions for the spread of liver rot in sheep and pleuro-pneumonic diseases in cattle, while severe winters with prolonged frost and snow could cause hardship and losses through exposure, hunger and hypothermia. A long hard winter also inhibited the growth of grass giving rise to a late spring bite, and the necessity to continue stall feeding longer than usual. A prolonged summer drought meant a lighter hay crop and stunted roots. In times of fodder shortage graziers limited their numbers of store animals and marketed fatting beasts prematurely, while abundant feed meant that ultimately a larger than usual supply of fat beasts would pour into the markets. However, if the relative stability of livestock and meat prices are a reliable guide they must indicate that the variable weather effects cancelled out over fairly short periods.

The effects of weather conditions on sheep and cattle production

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[1]KAO U593 A3 ff. 167v, 168, 218v, 219, 226, 237, 237v.

have been admirably discussed by E.L. Jones.[1] However, the author - in common with others - says little about pigs. The pig is undoubtedly the animal most neglected by agricultural historians, and the myth persists that pigs relied solely on supplies of natural feed such as acorns and beechmast. Professor Jones summarizes the well-known "pig cycle":

> Pig-keepers, making their production plans independently of one another, over-respond to rising or falling costs or prices, and as a result the pig population is in a continual state of cycle which lasts a few years until huge numbers bring prices down or very low numbers force prices back up again.[2]

But the writer goes on to relate "this perpetual instability ... to variations in the availability of natural feedstuffs like acorns or beechmast". This assertion fails to take account of the fact that, by the early-eighteenth century, many pigs were not left to fend for themselves but were housed in sties or "pounds" and fattened by the judicious hand-feeding of pulses and cereals as well as waste dairy products. Pig keeping in north-east Kent was a widespread and well-developed commercial sector of the farm economy; the fattening of pigs was carried out on a trough-feed basis; feeding off the stubble was a seasonal feature. There is no suggestion that acorns or beechmast were important; Thanet, virtually treeless, was an area of intensive pig production. Low-priced barley, and an abundance of peas and beans undoubtedly gave a fillip to pig keeping in this region. Furthermore, an unfavourable cereal harvest was likely to benefit the hogs since there would be a larger than usual supply of second-grade and poor quality corn. Or, as Tylden's comments in 1737 illustrate, the barley might scarcely be worth harvesting, but could be profitably fed to the pigs "on the stalk":

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[1] Jones, Seasons, op. cit., 78-103.

[2] Ibid., 72.

> It was exceeding wet barly harvest this year ... I had about 4½ acres of barly which lay in ye field for about a month after it was cut before I could get any of it in. At last I got about 4 acres of it in, to thrash out immediately for ye hogs. Y^e^ remainder, some part of it, I raked and gave it ye hogs in ye yard, ye rest I never raked at all but turned the hogs into it.[1]

Finally, there is no evidence for the price-induced "pig cycle" in the early eighteenth century. On the contrary, as Table 11 shows, pork prices were significantly stable, showing only a slight fall in the 1730's. If there were annual or seasonal movements in pig production these were more likely to have been the result of short-run fluctuations in the grain harvest.

The major annual fluctuations in the new price series for Kent bear a remarkable resemblance to those identified in established series; they also help to reinforce the observations of contemporary and modern writers.

Thorold Rogers described 1662 as "a famine" and the rise in the price of Dover wheat to 74s. illustrates the truth of this statement, although Professor Hoskins believes the harvest was "average". The years 1665 to 1672 witnessed "no fewer than seven good harvests out of eight, a bounty perhaps unprecedented in English history". According to Tooke "the two years 1674 and 1675 are referred to as a period of great dearth"; Dover wheat fetched 68.67s. and 64.67s. respectively in these years, following a long run of low prices which had averaged little more than 40s.[2]

The "remarkably low prices from 1685 to 1692" were, according to Tooke, the result of "a succession of favourable seasons, acting upon a probably extended cultivation". With the possible exception of 1685,

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[1] KAO U593 A3 f. 161.

[2] W.G. Hoskins, 'Harvest Fluctuations and English Economic History, 1620-1759', Agricultural History Review, XVI, pt. 1 (1968), 21; Tooke, op. cit., 25.

Dover prices confirm the low trend.[1]

The years 1693-9 brought a series of bad harvests and famine prices, which at Dover reached as high as 71s. in 1696. "A very wet summer" characterized 1693: Dover wheat averaged almost 68s. and it was said at the time that "in Kent, turnips made a considerable share of bread for the people".[2]

After 1699 "upon the cessation of the long period of dearth" it was noticed that "the fall of prices was rapid". The price of wheat fell with "dramatic swiftness" in 1700 and "with the exception of 1704, prices remained low until the harvest of 1708". The first decade of the eighteenth century reversed the pattern of the 1690's: instead of six deficient harvests, the 1700's produced as many as seven good ones. Dover prices illustrate this shift particularly well: in 1706 wheat averaged scarcely more than 25s.; 1704 was the exceptional year of the decade when the price rose temporarily to 56s.[3]

The first decade of the new century ended disastrously, however, with very poor harvests in 1708, 1709 and 1710. The winter of 1708-9 was described in the nineteenth century as "one of the most memorable of any in the last century for severity and duration" and 1709 and 1710 have been termed "famine" years which, according to Hoskins, saw "massive killer epidemics arising from malnutrition".[4] The hard times of 1708 were poignantly described in a work that has been attributed to Samuel Trowell:

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[1] Ibid., 29.

[2] Ibid., 30.

[3] Ibid., 34; John, 'Agricultural Change', op. cit., 134-5; Hoskins, op. cit., 22.

[4] Tooke, op. cit., 35; Hoskins, loc. cit.

> /In 1708/ the price of wheat rose from three shillings per bushel to thirteen shillings in less than two months time, and all other grain in proportion. By which means the poor then suffered great extremity, some died for want, others lived on grains &c. being unable to purchase a morsel of bread, or other wholesome food for themselves and families. While great part of the bisket then made for the navy and merchant ships was of horse-beans, peas, brank, barley, and a little rye, instead of good wheat as usual ... the frost was so severe that it was believed then that the greatest part of the corn in the ground would be destroyed by its severity; and indeed great part of it proved so, for which reason corn continued dear for some time after.[1]

From 1714 (and more especially 1717) until 1724 prices remained at a low level. The 1720's were a very mixed decade with three good harvests in a row (1721-3) and two years of very bad harvests and high prices (1727-8). Tooke found only five years within the period 1715-65 when there was "a marked deficiency of produce"; these include 1727 and 1728 - the others were 1740, 1756 and 1757. Dover, Maidstone and Milstead prices for wheat all exceeded 40s. in the years 1727-8.[2]

Tooke speaks of the 1730's as a decade without a single season of "deficiency of produce". In point of fact 1739 was deficient in Kent as shown in the Milstead series, and by prices at Maidstone and Canterbury. In other places, too, there was "a wet late harvest" in 1739.[3]

The winter of 1739-40, notoriously hellish, was described by Tooke as "one of extraordinary severity and duration" which stood with 1708-9 and 1794-5 as one of "the three most memorable winters" of the century. According to one contemporary: "This extraordinary winter was followed by an equally uncommon spring. In May no sign of verdure was yet to be seen; it was still cold in July, and vegetation was still then further hindered by drought. The harvest was not over till late in the autumn,

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[1] Anon., The Best Mine above Ground (1737), 8-9.

[2] Hoskins, op. cit., 23; Tooke, op. cit., 39-40.

[3] Tooke, op. cit., 41; Jones, Seasons, op. cit., 138.

and by the middle of October the frost returned before the fruit in the gardens had had time to ripen".[1] At Canterbury wheat rose to 38s. in 1740, even higher than the previous year when it had stood at 35s. The yield per acre of wheat at Milstead in 1740 was the lowest since 1708. There were rough scenes at Dover in the spring of 1740. Towards the end of May a crowd of women "rose in a tumultuous manner, cut the sacks, and took away the grain that some farmers were bringing to the port for shipping". Resenting the attempts to export corn when prices were high, these women "pelted the teams and their drivers with stones, for three miles out of town".[2]

From 1741 there was an excellent sequence of harvests which continued until at least 1750. The harvests of 1742-4 were probably the most bountiful during the first half of the eighteenth century if the record trough for these years shown in all the Kent series is a sure guide. Tylden received on average no more than 20s. for wheat in 1742, 18s. in 1743, and 18.5s. in 1744; the price of oats was hardly affected. Apart from slight rain during reaping and carting in 1744 and 1745 the four years 1741-4 were nigh-perfect at Hogshaw Farm from a harvest point of view; fine crops and good yields were recorded.

Hoskins mentions some apparent discrepancies for the early 1750's, between the harvest-picture he has deduced from the Beveridge price data and that tabulated by Professor Jones. The Kentish picture, deduced from Milstead, Maidstone and Canterbury prices can be stated briefly: 1750 was a plentiful year which accords with Jones' "abundant harvest"; prices in Kent in 1751 and 1752 suggest a measure of deficiency which again is in accord with the view of Jones that there was "a late and poor harvest" in 1751 and "a poor harvest" in 1752. Similarly, the Kent

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[1] Tooke, op. cit., 43; Jones, Seasons, op. cit., 138-9.

[2] Ipswich Journal 31 May 1740.

picture appears to agree with Jones' view of 1753 as a year which witnessed a "plentiful harvest". The further fall in Kent prices in 1754, a bountiful year, corresponds to the conditions noted by Jones to which Hoskins concurs: "a very fine harvest, after which grain prices fell".[1]

The most striking short-run fluctuation in the 1750's was the exceptional price-rise in 1756 and 1757, confirmed by all the Kent series. A contemporary observer recorded that in 1756 "great quantities of grain perished by the rains and winds, and most of what remained proved defective, both in quantity and substance, by its not duly ripening".[2] The harvest of 1757 was apparently "deficient although not in the same degree".[3] There were widespread food-riots in both years. Explanations of the high prices were eagerly sought and made; middlemen were blamed for their wickedness in hoarding supplies and manipulating the market, bakers for adulterating their bread. Only in a few instances did pamphleteers point to a deficient wheat crop.[4]

Statistics relating to seasonal swings in the price of grain are extremely scarce. The only attempt to identify these movements appears to be that of Professor Bowden for the period 1626-40, using Exeter quarterly wheat prices.[5] First, the picture we might reasonably anticipate:

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[1] Hoskins, loc. cit.; Jones, Seasons, op. cit., 140-1.

[2] Tracts on Corn quoted Tooke, op. cit., 48. These corn tracts were attributed to Charles Smith who was later described by Adam Smith as "the ingenious and well-informed author of the tracts upon the corn trade". See Sir W. Ashley, The Bread of Our Forefathers (Oxford 1928).

[3] Tooke, op. cit., 49.

[4] D.G. Barnes, A History of the English Corn Laws 1660-1846 (1930), 34-5.

[5] P. Bowden, 'Agricultural Prices, Farm Profits, and Rents', The Agrarian History of England and Wales 1500-1640, ed. Joan Thirsk (Cambridge 1967), 619-21.

> Normally, we should expect grain prices to be lowest in the months immediately following the harvest, since at this time supplies would be at their most plentiful. Subsequently, as stocks dwindled, we should expect prices to rise, reaching a peak in the late summer months before the next harvest, though the actual extent of the price rise would obviously be influenced in some degree by forecasts, which could be made with reasonable accuracy as early as April, about forthcoming crop yields.[1]

Bowden's subsequent conclusion about the early Stuart period comes, in fact, as rather a surprise; it is, as he admits, "an unfamiliar picture" which meets the eye. The most striking fact is that the price of wheat apparently fell in the late summer months when we might assume that scarcity would have forced a rise. Bowden explains this by saying that probably "growing scarcity was more than off-set by declining demand". It is suggested: "Either people ate less bread of any kind at this time of the year or they turned from the consumption of wheaten bread to the consumption of bread made from inferior cereals". Further data "which would have enabled the probability of these two hypotheses to have been tested" was not available.

The first question which must be considered is why should we necessarily expect to find the same seasonal pattern every year? By averaging a group of years (1626-40) this presumes that the years each exhibit a uniform pattern of seasonal swings. Clearly, by adopting this approach, only one of three answers is possible: the averaged quarterly figures for the period will either show a rising seasonal trend from Michaelmas to the following summer, or a falling trend, or no appreciable movement in either direction. But the swings in individual years are lost in the averaging process.

Records of sales of Milstead wheat cover the period 1709-61. Thirty-three of these years possess sufficient price data from September to the following June, July and August of each Harvest Year to enable us

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[1] Ibid., 620.

to describe broadly the seasonal changes. In fifteen of the selected years the price of wheat rose during the summer months, in five years it showed a fall, and in thirteen of the years no marked change occurred. Thus, a mixed pattern emerges which seems to indicate that there is no golden rule by which we can assess seasonal swings. However, the picture is not completely haphazard. Years in which prices are known to have been high (short-term upward fluctuations) or were expected to be high on the basis of contemporary forecasts, show an upward seasonal swing as the Harvest Year progresses, as in 1726-8, and 1738-9. Those years in the 1730's and 1740's known to have been very low-price years all show a falling trend or no appreciable movement at all during the year; in 1741-3, for instance, prices had clearly fallen by the summer months of each year. This varied picture is surely what we might reasonably expect. Following a good harvest there would be no urgency for buyers to obtain supplies out of fear that shortage was likely later in the year. Consequently sufficient grain would be available in the following spring and summer months to inhibit a price rise. If at the same time the approaching harvest was expected to be abundant this would force prices even lower as prospective buyers held back in anticipation of a further fall after harvest. Such an explanation appears feasible for the bountiful years in the early 1740's. On the other hand, if the harvest was deficient this would cause buyers to come forward prematurely for fear of later scarcity; this action would itself exacerbate the scarcity forcing up prices during the following spring and summer. If, additionally, it was anticipated that the next harvest would be as bad, or worse, than the preceding one, then a further seasonal fillip to prices would occur. Such appears to have been the case in 1727 and the years either side.

A seasonal price movement would ultimately emerge as the result of

a blend of determinant factors lying behind the demand and supply curves. There is no a priori case for thinking that every year would be the same, and indeed, every reason for expecting a variable pattern. Seasonal price swings (the result of human factors) were as unpredictable as the year-to-year movements (the result of weather conditions). Only the long-term price shifts were "more evident and more easily foreseen, and gave rise to more permanent changes in farmers' techniques and use of the land".[1]

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[1] Chambers & Mingay, op. cit., 39.

CHAPTER 3

THE SIZE OF KENTISH FARMS

A Evidence of a Changing Structure

Professor Mingay has re-examined the traditional view that "there was a tendency for farms to become larger and for small farmers to become less numerous" during the eighteenth century. He argues that "the rapid decline of small farms has been exaggerated" and demonstrates that "among the wide variety of influences affecting the size of farms there were indeed forces making for stability in the countryside". Furthermore, on the evidence of estate records, Professor Mingay suggests that "the most rapid changes in the size of farms took place in the first half of the century".[1] The purpose of the present discussion is to examine the Kentish evidence of changes in farm size and to show that this provides convincing corroboration of Professor Mingay's conclusions.

"There can be no statistics" says Professor Hobsbawm, "unless someone has first done the counting". This may sound like a truism but it serves as a timely reminder that too often the counting has not been done, either by contemporaries or historians, especially for the early modern period. Even where counting is possible the results must be treated cautiously and perhaps the most we should reasonably expect is orders of magnitude:

> Statistics collected for any purpose have a margin of error, and the earlier they have been collected, the less reliable they are. All statistics are answers to specific and extremely narrow questions, and if they are used to answer other questions, whether in their crude form or after more or less sophisticated manipulation, they must be treated with extreme caution. In other words, readers must learn to beware of the apparent solidity and hardness of tables of historical statistics, especially when presented naked

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[1] G.E. Mingay, 'The Size of Farms in the Eighteenth Century', Economic History Review, XIV, no. 3 (1962), 469-88.

> without the elaborate wrapping of description and definition with which the skilled statistician surrounds them. They are essential. They allow us to express certain things with great conciseness and (for some of us) vividness. But they are not necessarily more reliable than the approximations of prose.[1]

Manorial surveys of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have been used as a guide to farm size by historians who have been only too aware of the shortcomings of this approach. Dr Thirsk has warned that these records are "inadequate except as a rough guide, for it is likely that many tenants held land of other manors" and moreover "there is no way of reckoning the effect which the widespread practice of sub-letting had on the size of the average holding"; for these reasons manorial surveys can only establish "orders of magnitude".[2] The limitations of this source for Kent were found by Chalklin to be so great that he was obliged to conclude: "There is no satisfactory evidence for the size of Kentish farms in the seventeenth century ... no attempt has been made to obtain statistical material from the surveys".[3]

Estate records are valuable as a guide to farm sizes in the eighteenth century. The detailed surveys of the Duke of Kingston's Nottinghamshire estates, and of the Bagot and Giffard estates in Staffordshire were used in the classic study by Professor Mingay. Dr Ross Wordie has used the records of the Leveson-Gower estates in order to examine changes in farm size in Pembrokeshire.[4] However, there were no large estates in

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[1] E.J. Hobsbawm, Industry and Empire (1968), preface.

[2] Joan Thirsk, English Peasant Farming (1957), 42; cf. "... the sizes of the holdings shown in the surveys are not necessarily the same as the sizes of actual farms because tenants sometimes held land in more than one manor". - M. Havinden, 'Household and Farm Inventories in Oxfordshire, 1500-1590', Oxfordshire Record Society, XLIV (1965), 13.

[3] C.W. Chalklin, Seventeenth Century Kent (1965), 68, 267.

[4] Mingay, op. cit., 481-2; R. Wordie, 'Social Change on the Leveson-Gower Estates, 1714-1832', Economic History Review, second series, XXVII, no. 4 (1974), 593-609.

Kent and the north-eastern part of the county in particular is not well served by estate records of the type which would yield details of changes in farm size. Nevertheless, an alternative approach to the problem is possible. On Wednesday 16 October 1717, in Canterbury's commercial quarter, the last few copies of a newspaper were lifted from the press of Thomas Reeve the printer in Castle Street. Thus was born one of England's earliest and noblest provincial newspapers - the Kentish Post or Canterbury Newsletter, to be known colloquially as "the Canterbury newspaper". It is unfortunate that "the general attitude of historians has been to dismiss the country newspaper of the period as unimportant, as a mere parasite upon the London press whose news and views it faithfully reproduced" or to see it as a collection of "wretched little smutchy sheets" which contained only "notices of runaway apprentices" to supplement the "borrowed reports".[1] Professor Everitt has perhaps done more than any other modern historian to correct this misguided impression and to rehabilitate the early eighteenth-century provincial newspaper.[2] From the outset it was recognized editorial policy to attract to the Kentish Post as many advertisements as possible and "any person that hath advertisements, may have them put into this paper at two shillings each advertisement".[3] Readers were constantly reminded: "Advertisements are taken in". The large and growing number of insertions scattered over three of the four pages of each issue are tangible evidence of the success of this policy. By 1743 advertisements had "now become so very common" that one local tradesman felt he should be "publickly advertising"

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[1] G.A. Cranfield, The Development of the Provincial Newspaper, 1700-1760 (Oxford 1962), v; R.M. Wiles, Freshest Advices: Early Provincial Newspapers in England (Ohio U.S.A. 1965), vii. These two works are excellent, enlightened accounts of early provincial newspapers in England.

[2] See for example A. Everitt, 'The Food Market of the English Provincial Town, 1660-1760', Troisième Conférence Internationale d'Histoire Economique (Munich 1965), 68.

[3] Kentish Post 13 November 1717.

lest his customers thought him an oddity.[1] Common among the early Kentish advertisements were notices of farms and parcels of land for sale and to let; these range from tiny plots of orchard and marshland to grand farms of more than 300 acres.

Three five-year sample periods were chosen: 1729-33, 1745-9, 1760-4. The selected periods are equidistant (15-16 years), there are no gaps in the newspaper series, and the years approximate to those used by Professor Mingay when he examined the Bagot estates in Staffordshire, thus facilitating comparison. Altogether 1,560 issues were examined and every advertisement involving farm land recorded.[2] It was decided, for analytical purposes, to concentrate on farms "to let" since these provide the most accurate guide to the size of leasehold units actually being farmed at the time. A landlord might offer a farm for sale for a wide variety of reasons; often the farm was already tenanted and the buyer - usually another landowner - regarded his purchase in the nature of a capital investment, probably to become part of an existing estate. Farms were offered to let for one reason only - because the existing lease was due to expire and another suitable tenant was sought to take over the holding. Such farms cover a wide variety of types and sizes: there is no evidence to suggest that advertisers were selective. In this sense our advertised leasehold farms must bear the characteristics of a random sample of holdings within the area covered. It was felt important to exclude from the analysis all parcels of land which are clearly not farms. The farms themselves are either explicitly stated as such or - if the obvious seemed hardly worth repeating - the farmhouse and range of buildings advertised with the land make it clear that we are looking at a farm and not a fragment. Finally, farms were sometimes

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[1] Ibid., 6 August 1743.

[2] The Kentish Post was a bi-weekly publication.

advertised more than once, possibly in several consecutive issues, occasionally at intervals of several months. It is obviously important to include each farm once only and to avoid, by careful scrutiny, any possibility of double-counting. The results of this exercise are summarized in Tables 12-14.

It need hardly be said that the 282 leasehold farms advertised in the selected years represent only a minority of new tenancies in the period. However, if we are looking at a genuinely unbiased sample - and there are good reasons for thinking this to be the case - no serious problems arise. The same criticism, concerning relatively small numbers of farms, might equally be levelled at estate surveys where the historian is dependent on the chance survival of documents; however, no-one would suggest this is a sufficiently good reason to ignore their value. It could be argued that surveys relating to particular estates are narrowly based geographically and, furthermore, reflect the particular policies of individual landowners, a criticism which cannot apply to the broad mass of farms advertised in the local press. Professor Mingay, referring to the statistical evidence of "these few scattered estates" which he examined, points out that they represent "far too small a sample to bear the weight of broad generalization".[1] A similar qualification might be made in the present case; the number of farms examined, although comparable with those extracted from estate surveys, remains small and we should avoid weighty conclusions which the evidence can scarcely bear. Nevertheless, the striking fact remains - the information extracted from the Kentish newspaper is in close accord with the evidence derived from the records of Midland landowners.

A word of explanation concerning the use of terms is necessary. All farms have been included in the analysis: no attempt has been made to exclude genuine farms covering only a few acres on the ground that

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[1] Mingay, op. cit., 482.

they were only smallholdings; they were, indeed, an essential element in the rural economy. Thus a holding at Frindsbury near Rochester, advertised in 1728, was described as "a farm of 8 acres of land with an orchard of 8 years growth, new brick'd house, stone barn, and in very good repair", altogether a compact viable enterprise.[1] The following year an attractive farm at Ash was advertised:

> A small farm containing a messuage or tenement, barn, stable &c. and 17 acres of land, part arable and part marshland, and also a parcel of alder land unto the said messuage belonging, situate in the parish of Ash at a place there called West Marsh.[2]

In 1745 the Kentish Post advertised "a farm in the parish of Ewell near Dover containing 18 acres of arable and pasture land with a dwelling house, barn, stable and out-house".[3] Farms as small as these are numerous even today, in Britain and the United States, in the Scandinavian countries and in the countries of the EEC. In Britain, farms of between 5 and 30 acres are officially described as "very small": in 1968 there were 168,000 such farms, 48 per cent of total farm holdings. In Denmark, as late as 1960, almost half the farms were less than 10 hectares, and in the EEC countries 75 per cent of all holdings are still each less than 10 hectares.[4]

It is difficult to know precisely what was meant by a large farm, a middle-size farm, and a small farm in the early eighteenth century. One approach is to view the problem in relation to today's official descriptions for the United Kingdom: farms of 30 - 100 acres are classified as

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[1] Kentish Post 3 April 1728.

[2] Ibid., 4 January 1729.

[3] Ibid., 10 August 1745.

[4] C. Selly, Ill Fares the Land (1972), 114; M. Capstick, The Economics of Agriculture (1970), 15.

"small", 100 - 250 acres as "medium", and 250-300 acres as "large", while holdings of more than 500 acres are described as "very large".[1] It seems reasonable to assume that standards for the early eighteenth century ought to be fixed at appreciably lower levels than those used in the modern classification. Contemporary descriptions are not very helpful since only the exceptionally large farms were described as "large", for example St. Radigan's Abbey Farm near Dover which covered 334 acres in 1749; a farm of 70 acres near Tenterden was described as "very convenient" in 1747; unfortunately the majority of advertised farms bear no classification.[2] The suggestion put forward here is that farms of more than 100 acres would have been considered large in contemporary terms, those of more than 250 acres very large. Below 100 acres it is difficult to know where to draw a suitable division, but perhaps farms of 50-100 acres would have been considered medium rather than small. Any form of classification is bound to be rather subjective and it is appreciated that the present suggestions are at variance with those put forward by other writers.[3] However, the fundamental argument is not affected for we are attempting to show that farms were becoming larger, not that Britain was becoming a nation of large farmers.

Table 12 shows that proportionally the greatest changes in farm size in Kent took place during the 1730's and 1740's: the number of farms of less than 100 acres fell from almost a half to slightly less than two-fifths of the total between 1729-33 and 1745-9; a subsequent slight fall in the number of these farms meant that by 1760-4 more than two-thirds of the advertised farms in Kent were 100 acres or more in size. There was no appreciable change in the average acreage of the smaller farms by

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[1] The Changing Structure of Agriculture (HMSO 1968) cited in Selly loc. cit.

[2] Kentish Post 11 November 1749, 26 September 1747.

[3] See for example Mingay, op. cit., 470.

TABLE 12

CHANGES IN SIZE OF LEASEHOLD FARMS: KENT

Years	No. of farms of under 100 acres	Per cent	Average acreage	No. of farms of 100+ acres	Per cent	Average acreage	Average acreage (all farms)
1729-33	27	48.2	48.5	29	51.8	228.8	141.9
1745-9	53	39.0	47.1	83	61.0	203.3	140.3
1760-4	31	34.4	57.3	59	65.6	183.0	136.5

Source: Kentish Post - farms advertised "to let".

CHANGES IN SIZE OF LEASEHOLD FARMS: KENT

Acres	1729-33		1745-9		1760-4	
	No. of farms	Per cent	No. of farms	Per cent	No. of farms	Per cent
under 50	11	19.6	27	19.9	11	12.2
50 - 99	16	28.6	26	19.1	20	22.2
100 - 149	8	14.3	31	22.8	25	27.8
150 - 199	7	12.5	12	8.8	10	11.1
200 - 249	2	3.6	16	11.8	13	14.4
250 - 299	4	7.1	8	5.9	5	5.6
300+	8	14.3	16	11.8	6	6.7
TOTAL	56	100.0	136	100.1	90	100.0

Source: Kentish Post - farms advertised "to let".

TABLE 14

CHANGES IN SIZE OF LEASEHOLD FARMS: NORTH-EAST KENT

Years	No. of farms of under 100 acres	Per cent	Average acreage	No. of farms of 100+ acres	Per cent	Average acreage	Average acreage (all farms)
1729-33	10	55.6	46.2	8	44.4	242.0	133.2
1745-9	22	38.6	55.6	35	61.4	213.5	152.5
1760-4	17	39.5	57.8	26	60.5	193.1	139.6

Source: Kentish Post - farms advertised "to let".

TABLE 15

CHANGE IN SIZE OF FARMS IN BAGOT ESTATES, STAFFORDSHIRE

Year	No. of farms of under 100 acres	Per cent	Average acreage	No. of farms of 100+ acres	Per cent	Average acreage
1724	49	75.4	46	16	24.6	135
1744	31	59.6	54	21	40.4	173
1764	24	51.1	55	23	48.9	189

Source: G.E. Mingay, 'The Size of Farms in the Eighteenth Century', Econ. Hist. Rev., second series, XIV, no. 3 (1962).

1745-9 although the size increased from 47.1 acres at this time to 57.3 acres in the early 1760's. The average acreage of the larger farms (100 acres or more) fell somewhat, but this is not entirely unexpected for unless all the farms in this group grew in size - and there were increasingly more of them - this was likely to occur. In order to understand more precisely what was happening Table 13 shows a breakdown of farms into seven groups according to size. The numbers of small farms (under 50 acres) decreased noticeably between 1745-9 and 1760-4; medium-size farms (50 - 99 acres) showed the greatest decline between 1729-33 and 1745-9. The most significant increases were in the numbers of farms between 100 and 149 acres, and those in the range 200 - 249 acres. In the former group there was more than a 50 per cent increase between 1729-33 and the later 1740's, and a further substantial increase in numbers by the 1760's; by 1745-9 more than a fifth of all farms fell within this bracket making it the most significant group of farms, a position which it retained for the remainder of the period. Proportionally, farms of 200 - 249 acres showed an even more rapid increase in numbers. Table 14, which analyses the changes in farm size in north-east Kent, shows even more clearly that the significant changes occurred between the first and second periods, i.e. during the 1730's and 1740's; thereafter the position stabilized.[1] The average size of farms in each group shows a fairly close resemblance to those in Table 15 derived from Professor Mingay's work. The similarity is even more striking if median averages are deduced for north-east Kent: these show that by the 1740's the median size of farms under 100 acres was 56 acres, and for the larger farms of 100 acres or more the median was 190 acres. The corresponding Staffordshire figures (Table 15) for 1744 are 54 acres and 173 acres respectively.

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[1] Cf. "It is noticeable that the main changes occurred between 1724 and 1744, although the growth of large farms certainly continued after that period at a slower pace". - Mingay, op. cit., 481.

FARM VALUATIONS: NORTH-EAST KENT, 1680-1760

	1680	1713-17	1740-60
Number of farms analysed	42	40	32
Average per farm:	£	£	£
Crops	114.69	131.02	254.50
Gear	11.15	17.81	34.87
Horses	26.17	30.90	50.04
Cattle	23.31	30.99	32.94
Sheep	21.74	26.93	62.34
Pigs	10.19	11.16	19.80
Poultry and Bees	0.91	1.67	1.72
Total value	208.16	250.48	456.21
Average per farm:	per cent	per cent	per cent
Crops	55.1	52.3	55.8
Gear	5.4	7.1	7.6
Horses	12.6	12.3	11.0
Cattle	11.2	12.4	7.2
Sheep	10.4	10.8	13.7
Pigs	4.9	4.4	4.3
Poultry and Bees	0.4	0.7	0.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: KAO Probate Inventories.

Although probate inventories are no sure guide to farm size it is reasonable to suppose that the value of live and dead stock belonging to a farm would bear a broad relationship to the acreage. Table 16 shows the results of analysing the values of farm contents for three different periods. The proportions of crops, farm gear, and the various livestock components, expressed in money terms, show remarkable constancy throughout the period which is what we might expect in a fairly homogeneous farming region. Moreover there appears to have been little change in total farm values in the late seventeenth and early years of the eighteenth centuries. However, the average total value of farms more than doubled between 1680 and the 1740's and '50's, and most of this change took place after the second decade of the eighteenth century. Although we must use such evidence with caution and prudence it is at once apparent that the timing and direction of change in farm values corresponds to and substantiates the conclusion already deduced from the evidence of the Kentish Post with regard to changes in farm size.

In general terms it can be suggested that the farm structure in north-east Kent during the 1740's and '50's was such that three-fifths of farms in the region were 100 acres or more in size and the average (median) size of all farms was 120 acres. Furthermore, it begins to look as though a critical or optimal size of holding had evolved in Kent by the later 1740's, namely the farm of between 100 and 150 acres; there were more farms of this acreage than any others and the median size of farm in north-east Kent lay somewhere in the middle of this range.[1]

B The Optimal Farm

There are many excellent examples of advertised farms in the category 100 - 150 acres. In 1728 New House Farm at Thanington near

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[1] Cf. "Although the farms of over 100 acres were increased in number no very large units were created and the smaller farms diminished in number but did not disappear". - Mingay, op. cit., 483.

Canterbury possessed "a very good malt house, pigeon house and other conveniences" as well as "about 100 acres of land, some whereof are planted with cherries". A farm of 134 acres at Chilham, advertised in 1729, comprised "arable and pasture land, with 2 orchards, a large dove house, lime kiln & chalk pit"; prospective tenants were informed that "the land /is/ fresh chalked and limed over"; a condition of letting was that "the person who takes it must buy the horses & cattle, and the utensils belonging to the farm" which may have been a device to ensure that only a tenant with sufficient working capital would apply for the tenancy. Clows Farm, three miles from Canterbury, advertised about the same time, contained 150 acres which was described as "all pasture land besides the woodland and shaves"; the farm also possessed "a large barn to lay hay in" and altogether was considered "very suitable for the grazing business or to keep a good dairy of cows". A farm at Lyminge in 1730 comprised 140 acres of "pasture, seeds & arable" and interested farmers were informed that "there is to be sold a team & cattle & all sorts of husbandry utensils to him who hires the farm".

Sometimes landowners provided readers of the Kentish Post with additional details concerning the state of crops growing on the farm. Mr Andrew Smith of Wingmore Court at Elham advertised the lease of Bladben Farm in 1746; the 146 acres of "arable, meadow and pasture land" included "39 acres sowed with wheat in good order & 10 acres of St. Foin newly sowed" as well as "20 acres last year sowed with clover and ½ acre of good hop-ground"; the incoming tenant would be able to purchase "all the stock & husbandry tackling ... if desired", a convenient and economical arrangement which was no doubt attractive to the applicants. A 106-acre farm at Westwell, offered for sale in 1747, was said to have been occupied by Thomas Parker for "upwards of 40 years at the ancient rent", a feature of stability not uncommon in Kent at this time. A 137-acre farm at Sandwich, advertised in 1747, comprised a farmhouse and the usual

range of outbuildings as well as "arable, pasture & fresh marsh land"; this "very convenient farm" was described as "well-watered & lies very handy for the manure of the Town dung". In the summer of the same year the tenancy of Minacre Farm at Northbourne fell vacant; in addition to 120 acres of arable and pasture the farm included "18 acres of good strong land in the parish of Waldershare, adjoining the said farm, & now laid down with sanfoine, half of it is 9 yrs growth, the other half is 5 yrs growth". Colliers Farm, one of Lord Teynham's properties, extended over 135 acres of which 40 acres was growing sainfoin when the lease of the farm expired in 1763; the incoming tenant would have the benefit of "a neat farm house ... a very large barne" and "all necessary outhouses". An unusual feature of a 152-acre farm at Elham in 1764 was "a windmill for grinding out clover & trefoil seeds with all conveniences for cleaning the same" and "storehouses sufficient to hold a thousand quarters of trefoil seed".[1]

C The Large Farm

Many Kentish farms exceeded 150 acres and, as we have seen, there was a particularly significant increase in the number of holdings in the range 200 - 249 acres (Table 13). Numbers of very large farms of 250 acres or more probably changed little since, although a large farm possessed definite advantages, there were strong forces tending to maintain a degree of stability. Professor Mingay presents an excellent discussion of the economic and technical advantages arising from the operation of a large farm and it is only necessary here to summarize his conclusions. There were:

> three main reasons why the large farmer was more efficient than the small one: in the first place he was able in

[1] Kentish Post 24 August 1728, 18 June and 6 September 1729, 15 August 1730, 29 January 1746, 31 January, 4 February and 22 July 1747, 22 June 1763, 16 May 1764.

> some degree to take advantage of economies of scale; secondly, he was more progressive and had the leisure and opportunity of acquiring greater skill and knowledge; and thirdly, as a result of landlords' careful estate management, he was protected from stretching his resources over too great an acreage and therefore had the means of getting the best out of the land.[1]

Nevertheless, the trend towards larger farms - especially the very large ones - was held in check by "current practice and conventions of estate management": landlords were usually "unwilling to disturb existing occupiers who kept the land in good condition and paid the rent regularly"; moreover "even in more favourable times large tenants were always fairly scarce, and the shortage of reputable experienced tenants commanding sufficient capital to stock large farms placed a limit on the creation of larger farm units".[2]

It has been suggested that "the small number of eligible tenants for large farms gave the large farmer greater power, and so kept down the rent and obliged the landlord to provide him with adequate farm buildings. The competition for small farms, on the other hand, meant that their occupiers often paid a substantially higher rent per acre than the large farmer would do for the same land".[3] Two types of Kentish evidence can be cited in support of this claim. The first concerns rents, the second the distinctive quality of advertisements relating to the largest farms.

Farm advertisements in the Kentish Post seldom mention rents. Only twenty-four instances have been found in the sample periods, where annual rents and acreages are together stated unambiguously: fifteen advertisements relate to farms of 50 acres or less, while nine concern farms of more than 50 acres. The average rent of the fifteen smallest farms was 16.7 shillings an acre; the rents for this group varied from

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[1] Mingay, op. cit., 475.

[2] Ibid., 476-7.

[3] Ibid., 474.

as little as 6.3 shillings (the only farm with a rent of less than 10.0 shillings an acre) to as much as 25 shillings; a third of these tenants were paying rents in excess of 20.0 shillings an acre. The average rent of farms over 50 acres was 10.1 shillings; individual rents for this group varied from 3.1 shillings to 15.0 shillings although only three farms were leased for more than 12.0 shillings an acre. Rents reached a record peak in the small Canterbury hop grounds where there was a high level of marginal productivity: Canterbury hop growers paid not less than £3 an acre for their holdings.[1]

Estate records show that "the tenants of large farms were chosen with great care". Farm advertisements tell the same story. In 1747 the tenancy of "a large farm and farm house" in the manor of Stonar near Sandwich fell vacant; the annual rent was £205 which suggests a holding of between 400 and 500 acres; local farmers were informed that "any substantial person that is inclined to take the farm is desired to leave in writing his name & place of abode with Mr Smith at St. Lawrence farm-house near Canterbury". Advertisements of large farms to let were frequently couched in attractive terms in order to catch the eye of a well-to-do farmer. A tenant was sought for a 180-acre farm at Bicknor near Sittingbourne in 1728. The farm included "a new-built brick house (the front sash'd) with a barn, stable and all other conveniences requisite for a farmer"; there were orchards "well planted with good fruit" and 30 acres of the arable "were laid down with St. Foyn about 2 years ago, in excellent order". The same farm - Bicknor Court Lodge - was advertised again four years later. It has been observed that for the larger farms the landlord's choice was restricted: "usually very few suitable farmers were to be found and if none was really proper for the tenancy the proprietor might prefer to keep the farm in hand for a year or two ...". This appears to have been the situation at Bicknor in the 1720's. South

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[1] Kentish Post 1729-33, 1745-9, 1760-4; PRO C111/55.

Lees Farm at Minster (Sheppey) contained 200 acres of arable and 100 acres of reclaimed marshes in 1728; it possessed "a good house" and other buildings, the upland fields were supplied with "large ponds of very good water" - an essential requirement for a cattle breeder, and the whole property was stated to be "in good repair". Sheffield Farm (250 acres) at Canterbury was another large farm which the owner declared had "plenty of water for cattle". Three years later, Little Yaldham Farm at Wrotham near Maidstone comprised 340 acres of arable, 24 acres of pasture, 34 acres of meadow, 21 acres of woodland, hop gardens covering 4 acres, and a similar area of apple and cherry orchards, altogether an extremely attractive, diversified holding; the proprietor was careful to inform farmers that there was a hop oast and that "the farmhouse has lately been rebuilt".

Lovelace Place Farm at Bethersden - over 200 acres - included apple orchards and cherry gardens, was "well-watered", and possessed "a lime kiln thereon". Facilities for lime-burning were, indeed, considered a valuable asset on a large farm. When the lease of Paddlesworth Court Farm (263 acres) at Elham near Folkestone was advertised in 1761 prospective tenants were told: "A lime kiln is proposed to be built on the premises in order to burn lime for the improvement of the land". Nevertheless, this farm was still vacant three years later when the proprietor spelt out in greater detail the special attributes of the property:

> The land affords plenty of very good clay for making bricks, and chalk for making lime for sale or otherwise ... For an encouragement to make such improvements as the land is capable of receiving from fresh mould, lyme, chalk, or other amendments to be made, or found on the premises, the landlord will permit the breaking up of some pasture ground heretofore forbid.

Gritt Farm at Doddington contained "near 200 acres of land in very good tilt" /i.e. tilth/ for the tenant it was hoped would enter the farm

at Michaelmas 1745. In the following year two large farms at Frinsted south of Sittingbourne fell vacant. Rinsted Court - 270 acres - was said to be "very well watered & all in good order with a proper quantity of fallow & seeds thereon"; the land was described as "strong & fit for wheat" and the wide range of farm buildings included "a large barn with 2 plank'd floors, good stabling, granary, oasts, lodges, hay barn & other conveniences;" the proprietor gave an assurance that the large farmhouse would be "fitted up for the tenant". The farm at Yokes Court, in the same parish, covered 336 acres and possessed a substantial farmstead which included "a large barn with 3 plank'd floors". A 180-acre farm at Mersham near Ashford was said in 1746 to be "good and easie for tillage & very famous for bearing good barley"; prospective tenants were promised that the farmhouse would be "put into very good repair or new-built, which shall be most pleasing". On the larger farms the condition of the dwelling house was clearly an important consideration. The "handsome, modern-built sash'd house" belonging to a 185-acre farm at Margate in 1762 was an attractive feature of the property. The farm at Stalisfield Court Lodge near Charing fell vacant in 1748 when it was growing 57 acres of wheat, 64 acres of Lent corn, and 26 acres of clover, as well as leys covering 44 acres - "seeds sown this year" - and 40 acres of ploughed arable "for summer fallow for wheat next year"; there were "800 load of dung & mould maxhill'd" and "a good team of horses, harnesses, waggon courts, plows ..." available for the incoming tenant. A good tenant was sought for Newhouse Farm (300 acres) in Lenham at Michaelmas 1749 and the proprietor stated: "The land is all in good tillage & well mended. There is a lime-kiln on the farm & 2 acres planted with hops. The green land hath water in every place". Frides Farm (208 acres) lying in the coastal parish of Iwade possessed the unusual "conveniences & priviledges" of "the fishing, oystering & oyster-ground unto the said land belonging". // Farms of more than 500 acres were uncommon: they were usually rented by

wealthy, large-scale graziers. Hoorne Court - a very large farm covering 640 acres near Tenterden - was described as "very well fenced & watered & with the convenience of marle" in 1762, while in the following year a farm of similar size at Eastchurch in the Isle of Sheppey was said to possess an abundance of "good fresh marsh land" as well as arable and meadow.[1]

D The Small Farm

Between a third and two-fifths of advertised farms in Kent were still under 100 acres by 1760; at least 12 per cent were less than 50 acres. It is generally recognized that many of the smallest occupiers "often had sidelines as carriers, meal-mongers, dairymen, innkeepers, or craftsmen, and their holdings might merely be supplementary to one of these occupations". Furthermore, smallholders "could compete best in some form of specialized production, where intensive application of labour could obtain a high return from a small acreage ... The growth of specialized production catering for the growing urban demands, for dairy produce, poultry, vegetables and hops, made it possible for many small farmers to prosper". Kentish records illustrate these features particularly well.[2]

Many growers were favourably situated for undertaking various forms of intensive production on small acreages. A small farm at Hothfield near Ashford comprised 10 acres of arable, meadow and pasture in 1729, but there were also gardens, orchards and "a very good nursery of young fruit trees" making this an attractive undertaking for a horticultural specialist. The following year a holding of less than 5 acres in the

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[1] Mingay, op. cit., 473; Kentish Post 8 August 1747, 6 January 1728, 19 February 1732, 13 April 1728, 16 August 1760, 7 July 1731, 31 August 1745, 18 July 1761, 21 April 1764, 27 November 1745, 12 April, 18 October and 22 November 1746, 9 October 1762, 27 April 1748, 11 January and 5 August 1749, 6 February 1762, 1 June 1763.

[2] Mingay, op. cit., 483, 487.

Canterbury parish of Northgate included "about 3 acres of pasture ground planted with fruit trees & about 1½ acres of garden ground with a convenient dwelling house and stable", a compact property ideally situated for the production and local sale of fruit and vegetables. The Sandwich district was the premier market gardening area of Kent. In 1731 a small farm "near Newgate in Sandwich" possessed only 48½ acres of land but this area included "garden ground". When "5 acres of garden ground" was advertised in 1747 it was said to lie "near the town and port of Sandwich". Two years later a small fruit and hop enterprise at Maginford on the perimeter of Maidstone was described as: "A farm ... consisting of a dwelling house, malthouse, barn, stable & other buildings in good repair and also 30 acres of land, part planted with cherry trees and hops, the whole improveable and now let to Wm. Willard at £32 a year". A small-holding sometimes included valuable woodland in addition to fruit. A 24-acre holding near the church at Herne was occupied by the widow Hunt in 1731; the property included 6 acres "planted with cherry trees" as well as "about 3 acres of alders". Alder poles were in great demand by local hop growers and there was also a ready sale to the nearby gunpowder industry at Faversham.[1]

It was quite usual for shopkeepers and craftsmen to cultivate small farms as a supplementary means of livelihood. In 1748 a house at Wootton near Barham adjoined "3 acres of very good sowing land, very kind for corn or pasture"; it was pointed out that the property "stands very well for a tradesman".[2] When the tenancy of a small farm fell vacant in 1731 it was envisaged that a brick-maker would bid for the lease:

> To be lett at Michaelmas next - A farm lying in Biddenden, consisting of a good dwelling house, barn, stable, fatting

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[1] Kentish Post 4 October 1729, 27 June 1730, 21 August 1731, 1 August 1747, 15 July 1749, 18 September 1731.

[2] Ibid., 3 December 1748.

> lodge, and pounds and other buildings, and about 38 acres of land, whereon is a good brick kiln, and earth for making of brick & tile; and also a sandpit on the premises near adjoining to the kiln; and all other conveniences wanting will be made for the making & burning of brick & tile.
> NB. 'Tis conveniently situated for the benefit of fuel & there is no other brick-kiln in the parish, nor within some miles of the premises.[1]

Butchers frequently combined their business with small-scale farming. In the 1730's Thomas Wood, a Rainham butcher, was the tenant of a holding typical of the smaller farms in this premier fruit district; his property included "10 acres of land well planted with cherries and apples, 30 years growth"; the trees were described as "in perfection". John Medhurst, a Hartlip miller, was the owner of a 63-acre mixed farm until his death in 1762; his tenant, a local butcher, lived in the "new-built brick farmhouse" and had the use of an adjoining slaughterhouse; the land consisted of "arable, pasture and salt-marsh" as well as an orchard. It was usual for the tenants of windmills to have the use of several acres of land. Near Sevenoaks a mill, newly-built in 1747, possessed "3 acres of land adjoining"; the mill enjoyed "a good custom" since it was pointed out "there is no grist mill within some miles".[2]

In Thanet, farming and fishing were dual-occupations for large numbers of the working population:

> Nor must I here omit the mention of a thing very much to the honour of the Inhabitants, those especially who live near the roads or harbours of Margat, Ramsgate, or Broadsteer; namely, That they are exceeding industrious, and are as it were Amphibious Creatures, and get their living both by sea and land; they deal in both elements, are both fishers and ploughmen, both husbandmen and mariners; and the self same hand that holds the plough, steers the ship. According to the several seasons, they make nets, fish for Cod, Herrings, Mackerel, etc., go to sea themselves, and export their own commodities. And those very men also dung their ground, plough, sow,

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[1] Ibid., 12 June 1731.

[2] Ibid., 17 June 1730, 18 August 1733, 17 March 1762, 5 September 1747.

> harrow, reap; being quick and active in both employments; and so the course of their Labours runs round.[1]

Thus, for men of Thanet the passage between land and sea was an easy and natural transition. Sometimes the change was of long duration. At the time of his death in 1691 Nicholas Newby of Birchington was described as "sumtime husbandman but at his death seaman in theire Majesties' Ship the St. Mickell". For many working fishermen the annual grain harvest provided a means for them to supplement their income from maritime employment. Daniel Faireman of St. John's parish (Margate) was described as a seaman in 1685 but he stated that he had worked regularly for William Payne, a local farmer, "in harvest time about two or three yeares since for ye space of five years". Inventories for the parishes of St. Lawrence (Ramsgate), St. John (Margate), and St. Peter (Broadstairs) show clearly that many farmers were involved in the local fishing industry either actively in person, or by investing their surplus funds in vessels, or both. Stephen Wastell, a small Thanet farmer, was growing several fields of barley and wheat on his farm near Ramsgate in 1686, but "mackerel & herring nets" worth nearly £5, and shares in four fishing boats valued at £45 are included in this typical inventory of a Thanet amphibian. Hamond Keonard, a small farmer in the parish of St. Lawrence, was also a Ramsgate fisherman until his death in 1699; his inventory includes fields of wheat and peas, cattle, horses, pigs and sheep, as well as a quantity of mackerel nets, a tub of salt, and "Northsea codd"; Keonard also possessed "two parts of fisherboates" valued at £12 10s. It should be pointed out that interests in the fishing industry were not exclusive to the smallest farmers. John Maxted

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[1] William Camden, Britannia: Or a Chorographical Description of Great Britain and Ireland Together with the Adjacent Islands (Edmund Gibson's 2nd Ed. 1722), I, 244. Cf. Richard Pococke's comments on Thanet in 1754: "They are esteemed as good fishermen as well as husbandmen, all over this Island" - 'The Travels Through England of Dr. Richard Pococke', Camden Society Publications, New Series (1889), XLIV, 88.

the elder of Ramsgate possessed 68 acres of sown barley and 73 acres of other crops when he died in 1700; this wealthy Thanet yeoman also had nearly £100 invested in seven separate vessels, characteristically scheduled in his inventory as "Sea Venters". Peter Cramp, a yeoman of St. Peter's, owned a large flock of sheep and had 120 acres of crops growing on his farm near Broadstairs in 1702; his maritime investments included "a two and thirtieth part of John Pickenden's ketch" valued at £12 10s., "a sixteenth part of John Lister's ketch" worth £10, and "a part of John Culmer's North Sea boat now att Sea" put at £10. The largest item recorded in the inventory of William Sole of St. Peter's in 1712 was £2 10s. for a twenty-fourth share in "a Northsea Boate"; Sole, however, was described as a husbandman. Thomas Ricards, a yeoman of the same parish, left personal wealth of £230 when he died in 1720; his most valuable possessions were 55 acres of growing crops which included 24 acres of barley; some of Ricards' personal estate was "at sea in sea ventures" where he had "one eighth part of Richard Sampson's fishing boat" worth £4, and "one twelfth part of George Cock's Northsea boate" valued at £14.

Robert Bennett, husbandman, farmed near Margate until his death in 1692. A composite entre in his inventory symbolises the complexity of this Thanet family's economy: "In the outhouse and loft. - Item one woollen wheell, one bushell /measure/, one skrye, one fan, five and twenty sax, certaine herring netts and shott /mackerel/ netts, certaine harvest tooles, stake, ropes, one grindstone, fower bushells of wheat, two bushells of beans and other things there".[1]

Innkeepers frequently occupied a small acreage of farm land which usually included meadow or pasture. The landlord of The White Hart at Sittingbourne had the use of a 4-acre orchard. The Saracen's Head at

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[1]KAO PRC 27/33/161; PRO E134 1 Jas.2/East. 1; KAO PRC 11/50/92, 11/61/85, 27/35/137, 11/63/43, 27/39/96, 11/75/136, 11/56/178.

Ashford "being now repaired and made much more commodious" in 1728 was let with "14 acres of very good meadow land lying convenient for it"; the stock of hay would find a ready sale on the premises. The Bull at Ashford had "8 acres of exceeding good meadow land" belonging to it and The Ship at Dymchurch "stands well for trade, with convenient stables, outhouses & closes, and 15 acres of very good pasture & marshland adjoining".[1]

Large-scale maltsters and brewers were frequently substantial farmers. Thus, a maltster's business at Deal in 1745 included "A farm ... containing 123 acres of arable, pasture & marsh land". But the smaller maltsters also had a stake in the land. An "old-accustomed brewhouse" at Ash with "a very good malt-house to be lett with it" had "10 acres of land adjoining" in 1732. A large malt house at Deal "which for 40 years past never wanted a tenant" was sold in 1746, together with "5 acres of pasture well planted, mostly with young apple trees" and 42 acres "situate in a healthy air and pleasant soil all contiguous to the house". Two years later a combined malting business and farm property at Nonington near Canterbury fell vacant: "A farm & good accustomed malthouse with stowage for 300 quarters, and about 52 acres of arable & meadow land, with orchards & garden ground, all compacted together & well watered".[2]

Maltsters frequently occupied small hop farms. In 1748 "a well accustomed malt-house" at Crundale near Wye had 11 acres of land attached, and the proprietor informed prospective tenants that the property "is to be lett with or without 2 acres of hop-ground". The following year a farm at Woodnesborough near Sandwich consisted of "a messuage, barn, stables & other very convenient out-houses with a well-accustomed malt-

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[1] Kentish Post 13 July and 27 July 1728, 10 July 1731, 15 December 1764.

[2] Ibid., 4 May 1745, 19 February 1732, 2 July 1746, 16 April 1748.

house & 56 acres of land, 4 acres of which is a very good hop-ground & 1½ acres orchard".[1]

It is clear that sometimes small farms were occupied by families of fortune whose considerable wealth derived from sources other than land or menial trades. This was particularly so at Canterbury, a city which attracted many "pseudo-gentry" families. A small farm on St. Thomas's hill in St. Dunstan's parish, for example, consisted of "32 acres of good arable and pasture land ... also 4½ acres of hop ground". Ostensibly the tenant might have been a farmer of modest means but a description of the dwelling house shows that it was more appropriate for occupation by a wealthy lawyer, merchant, or banker: "A large and commodious dwelling house fit for a gentleman and family with a coach house and stabling for horses".[2]

Many small arable farms possessed attributes which would have appealed specially to a working farmer or a thrifty farm labourer who had been able to put aside enough money to rent a few acres on his own account. A small farm in the parish of St. Lawrence comprised 42 acres of land in 1747; much of Thanet still lay open at this time but the acres belonging to this particular farm were described as "all inclos'd except three". In the following year a neat smallholding at Faversham comprised "a house, barn & stable in good repair with 4 acres of land, part of it fruit and in perfection, with good water"; the property was "situate on Road Common" and there was said to be "room to keep 2 cows"; a useful benefit pertaining to this farm was the tenant's "liberty of the common", an unusual feature of the regional economy. John Powt, the tenant of a 5-acre smallholding at Whitstable, also possessed "right of common" as late as 1764. A 24-acre holding at St. Lawrence in Thanet

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[1] Ibid., 5 March 1748, 29 July 1749.

[2] Ibid., 20 August 1763.

was undoubtedly counted an improved farm by 1762 when it was growing 8 acres of sainfoin and there were stated to be "two or three hundred loads of dung ready to go out for wheat, which tilt was beans last year". In the same year land belonging to a 47-acre property at Great Mongeham near Deal was said to be in "very good condition" and "the house and buildings belonging to this farm are in exceeding good repair".[1]

Thus, the tenants of small farms comprised a strangely diverse group which included horticultural specialists and hop growers, dairymen, rural craftsmen and innkeepers, fishermen, lime-burners and brickmakers, and even representatives of the pseudo-gentry for whom the size and quality of the house was accounted more important than the number of acres surrounding it.

E The Agricultural Labourer

The largest numbers of small tenants were undoubtedly those who gained a living from the land by combining wage-work with labouring on their own diminutive acres: the landless labourer, wholly dependent on wages was a rarity in north-east Kent and possibly elsewhere too.

Estate records make it plain that farm labourers, other than the young men who lived-in with their employer's family, generally farmed a small acreage on their own account and kept a few livestock - a cow or two, frequently fatting hogs, even sheep; the Kentish rural labourer had a genuine stake in the land. At Milstead, for example, the men who worked for Richard Tylden on Hogshaw Farm were also his tenants to whom he frequently sold seed, hay, straw, and livestock - a calf to Thomas Eastwood in 1712, seed oats to Goodman Potten and a few pecks of barley for Goodman Frydd to sow on his land in 1715, a horse to old Tom Dutnall in 1720, weeld seed to Goodman Bowes in the same season, to John Land

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[1] Ibid., 16 May 1747, 27 August 1748, 21 March 1764, 30 October and 8 May 1762.

sainfoin hay in 1723, and to Frydd a cow in the following year. And so on. When grass was scarce Tylden allowed his men keep for their cattle. Sometimes Milstead tenants contracted to buy all the fruit growing in Hogshaw orchards. At Hartlip, where tenants specialised on their own account in fruit tree propagation, the scene was much the same. In many parts of England the poor cottager squatted on the commons where he eked out a precarious living. In Kent, where commons were few and small farms numerous, the labourers supplemented their weekly wages by gainful employment in the fields which they held by legal right. None of these labouring farmers was a wealthy man - many were very poor - but all of them were folk of independent spirit, content in their infinite wisdom of country matters. And in Kent, long since enclosed, their "three acres and a cow" were not threatened by an incipient enclosure movement.[1]

The small husbandmen and farm labourers left few records yet they creep into the inventories and estate records just far enough to enable us to establish beyond reasonable doubt that they formed not two distinct layers of rural society but a single category of part-time farmers whose skills were in constant demand in the countryside. The text books have persistently viewed labouring on a farm for wages, and working a holding on one's own account as mutually exclusive ways of life. The part-time farmer has been neglected by those who prefer neat, theoretical categorization to the blurred and fragmented structure of reality. Even today, in Britain there are "large numbers of very small holdings in the countryside which provide less than a full day's work for one man", a feature which one agricultural journalist has recently described as "an entirely

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[1] KAO U593 A2-3. This evidence raises the important question of whether many husbandmen/labourers kept their land into the nineteenth century. If they did, this seems to have escaped the notice of contemporaries, and if they did not, then there is the problem of when and why did they lose their land. An investigation is beyond the scope of the present study but should be borne in mind for future research. I wish to thank Professor G.E. Mingay for drawing my attention to the wider implications of the conclusion reached here.

desirable phenomenon". The economists who pioneered the analysis of the part-time sector of modern British agriculture have made their point well:

> Part-time farming thus survived the changes that have taken place in town and country in the course of economic progress. Nor is there any sign that it is dying out now. This kind of farming may appear "untidy" to some people, but it obviously fulfils a very real human need. It is probably true to say that in no other country in the world is there such a variety of alternative employment opportunities at the small farmer's doorstep. Whilst these opportunities exist most part-time holdings can reasonably be regarded as making a valuable contribution to that variety of life which makes living in a highly industrialised society more rewarding.[1]

Labourers, designated as such, appear in only a small number of useful inventories. We must assume therefore that many labourers' families spurned the idea of having an inventory drawn-up for probate purposes. This attitude was not peculiar to labourers, however, since many wealthier individuals have left no inventories of their possessions. In using these documents we always have to remember that they represent only a tiny proportion of the total population. It is usually assumed that it was the poorest members of society who, more than any others, failed to leave probate inventories. This may be true but has yet to be proved. Numerous inventories of very low value have survived even for the eighteenth century. It can be suggested that one of the reasons why rural labourers appear to have left few inventories is because they are designated in the documents not as labourers but as husbandmen. Clearly where an individual appears in the records either as a labourer or a husbandman (more usually the latter) his true dual-identity is lost. In order to substantiate the argument it is necessary to show that men designated as labourers also worked a small farm on their own account and

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[1] J. Ashton and B.E. Cracknell, Agricultural Holdings and Farm Business Structure in England and Wales, quoted Selly, op. cit., 113.

also that those described as husbandmen undertook work for wages. The estate records show this to have been the case and the inventories furnish further evidence.

John Horsfield, an Elham labourer, left only £6 2s. 6d. when he died in 1677; his most valuable single possession was "one young cow" valued at £1 12s. 6d.; he also kept several pigs; Horsfield's cottage was not wholly lacking in material comforts and included items of brass and pewter as well as a chest of house-linen; among his furniture was a "joyned stoole". Thomas Clements was described as "a bachelor & labourer" when he died at Rainham in 1679 worth nearly £50 in personal wealth. He had two acres of wheat sown in his fields and occupied woodland: there was "brish" /brushwood/ as well as "osstry" /rods of willow/ stacked "in the wood"; in Clements' barns wheat and barley was stored, all "unthrashed". His livestock included ten sheep, two hogs, a heifer and - his most-prized possession - a "winter milch cow". A cow valued at £3 was the most valuable possession of Absalom Hinshaw, a Monkton labourer who died the same year. John Cooper, a labourer of Whitstable, died in 1680 worth more than £50 in personal estate. His small dairy enterprise included four cows, two heifers, and two calves valued altogether at £20; a mare stood in the stable, two pigs were fattening in a sty, and ten ewes grazed in a nearby field. Unfortunately this January inventory records no sown crops. Cooper's little cottage was comfortably furnished and included two "joyned stools", a quantity of "pewter of all sorts", and a chest of house-linen. Elias Weale of Hernehill was described as a labourer at the time of his death in 1681; he lived in a small four-room cottage where he slept between sheets on a feather bed and in his hall ate from pewter dishes and platters; in his barn he stored hay and kept his working tools, but his greatest wealth (over half the inventory) was in "cattel" - three cows, a calf, three "small beasts", three pigs and nine fowls. Weale's neighbour, Robert Crampe, died the

following year worth some £30. He too was described as a labourer but, like Weale, he occupied a small stock farm; the largest sum recorded in the inventory was £13 0s. 10d. for seven "small milch cows and dry cows" but he also owned three "two yearing cattle", the same number of "yearings", and two calves. Crampe's small piggery comprised a sow and five hogs, while in a nearby field grazed "13 cupell of ewes and lames". Robert Beane of Hernehill who also died in 1682 was described as a husbandman although his personal wealth was valued at several pounds less than his neighbour Crampe's estate; he possessed ten cattle of various ages and three pigs, but no sheep. This small stock farm would have been insufficient for a full-time livelihood and it seems likely that Beane would have laboured for larger farmers during part of each week. At Hernehill during the 1670's Weale and Crampe the labourers, and Beane the husbandman were members of the same class of part-time farmers, who enjoyed similar life-styles and, when they died, left personal estates of indistinguishable extent and character.

Richard Rowland lived in the parish of Chartham until his death in 1682 when he was described as a labourer; on his small farm he had two cows, a calf, three ewes and two lambs as well as a collection of working tools. Henry Adams of St. Nicholas worked as a labourer, and was described as such when he died in 1684. The appraisers of his inventory recorded £5 "due two the decesed in money for wages"; his own small farm included a field of sown wheat, a cow, several sheep, and lean pigs fattening in the sties; he had wheat and barley stored in the barn. John Johnson of Murston left a personal estate of £72 when he died in 1696; the appraisers of his goods recorded £10 9s. "from John Hales, Barronett, for worke and wages due at our Lady day 1696"; Johnson possessed two cows "in ye marsh" valued at £12, a mare, and a small quantity of farm gear. Altogether Johnson's inventory is typical of the probate records we have come to associate with farm labourers although

in fact, he was described by others as a husbandman.

Sometimes sown acres are recorded in labourers' inventories. Joseph Davies was a wage-labourer in the Thanet parish of St. Nicholas until his death in 1691; that summer in the fields near his four-room cottage he was growing an acre each of wheat, barley and beans. Edward Pope, a labourer of Hernehill, possessed corn in his barn valued at £5 10s. in January 1710, and two acres of wheat sown in a nearby field; like most other farm labourers in the region Pope also kept pigs; his four-room cottage included joinery-made furniture as well as a stock of pewter. The inclusion of items of apparent "luxury" in labourers' inventories is such a common occurrence in north-east Kent that we must conclude either that the farmer labourer of this region enjoyed an unusually high standard of comfort, or that historians have not been wholly justified in associating certain possessions with a high standard of living; the former view is perhaps to be preferred until someone establishes that the phenomenon is true for other regions. Robert Brasher, a Sandwich labourer, left personal property worth only a few pounds when he died in 1684 but his possessions included "joynstools", some "old coushens & 3 old pictures", as well as two mirrors ("looking glasses"), a "table carpett", and even half a dozen books. Thomas Gorham, a "labawer" of Faversham who died in 1713, was clearly not lacking in material comforts during his lifetime. The furnishings of his cottage included "small table cloaths", a mirror and a clock, and seven "small picktures"; there was a stock of earthenware and a "copper porridg pott" in the kitchen, and his feather bed was amply provided with bolster, quilt and blankets. Moreover, this thrifty labourer had invested his savings wisely: £5 was described as "money upon bond" and a further £10 as "debts sopposed to be good". It was not unknown for labourers to have money owing to them - not always wages - from several persons. Thomas Doe, an Upchurch labourer, had "wages due from Thomas

Bawkham" amounting to £4 in 1712, but there were also several loans outstanding - £20 from Thomas Bawkham, £5 from Richard Lewis, and £2 from Thomas Milner. William Gunn, a labourer of Bishopsbourne near Canterbury, lived in a small cottage where there was a distinct touch of comfort, even luxury, in 1723. Gunn possessed a feather bed, sheets, table cloths and cushions, and in his kitchen were rush-bottom chairs and painted earthenware dishes; there was even a punch ladle! An outstanding debt of £15 was due to Gunn from Mr Denne of Bishopsbourne.[1]

Richard Baxter, writing at the end of the seventeenth century, described the unhappy lot of the poorest farmers: "The labor of these men is great, and circular or endless: insomuch that their bodyes are allmost in constant wearyness and their minds in constant care or trouble ... They are usually so poore that they cannot have time to read a chapter in a bible or to pray in their families. They come in weary from their labours, so that they are fitter to sleep than to read or pray". But the writer goes on to make an important comparison. "The case of their servants", says Baxter, "could they but continue so and containe themselves from marriage, is farre easyer than of the poor tenants that are their masters. For they know their worke and wages, and are troubled with no cares for paying rents, or making good markets, or for the losse of corn or cattle, the rotting of sheep or the unfavourable weather ...". George Unwin was impressed by Baxter's vivid contrasts which he considered realistic and significant. "The Poor Husbandmen of Baxter", wrote Unwin, "will appear as the less prosperous of two sections within Gregory King's class of Farmers, enjoying a smaller average income than the £42 10s. estimated for that class as a whole. So that the small master craftsman, if King's estimate of his income as

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[1] KAO PRC 11/46/17, 11/42/157, 27/28/145, 11/44/143, 27/29/194, 27/29/221, 27/29/203, 11/46/30, 27/30/3, 27/34/112, 27/33/28, 27/38/93, 11/47/152, 11/71/92, 27/39/23, 11/77/41.

£38, including savings of £2, were correct, may easily have been materially better off than the poor farmer quite apart from the lesser proportion of physical and mental wear and tear, which in Baxter's opinion fell to his lot".[1]

Neither Unwin nor any other writer, so far as can be seen, has discussed the lot of the farm servant who was also, in another guise, his own master - the man who worked for wages, perhaps at irregular intervals, but who retained his independence on the small farm which he and his family worked in their own time. "The very small farmers" says Professor Mingay, "occupiers of perhaps 25 acres and less, could hardly survive without some additional form of income".[2] There was no better way for a small farmer to supplement his livelihood than to work on the land at the tasks he knew best with the knowledge of a sure return for his labours but without the worries of entrepreneurship. Such men surely had the best of both worlds. Neither did they stay desperately poor for, as we have seen, their tiny cottages were comfortably furnished and some of them achieved the status of local creditors. A few examples from a somewhat higher wealth bracket - each of them described in the records as "labourer" - will serve to illustrate this point more forcibly. John Wallis of Monkton was worth nearly £130 when he died in 1680; most of his wealth was in the form of two bonds valued together at £110. Francis Pilcher of Herne had a personal estate of more than £70 when he died in January 1681; in his barns were 14 quarters of wheat, 12 quarters of black oats, and 5 quarters of beans; thirty-one acres of his land had been sown with winter wheat. Robert Hope of Minster in the

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[1] The Reverend Richard Baxter's Last Treatise, ed. F.J. Powicke, with an introduction by the late George Unwin (Manchester 1926), 8, 22-3.

[2] Mingay, op. cit., 472.

Isle of Sheppey possessed 100 ewes and 20 "ewe tegs"[1] which were said to be worth over £50 in 1701; it would have been especially convenient to combine labouring with the life of a small-scale grazier. Richard Wheatland of Faversham was said to be worth over £70 at the time of his death in 1718 although this does not include household effects which, for some reason, the appraisers failed to record; most of this estate - almost £60 - comprised "debts sperate & desperate", the remainder ready cash and a pair of silver buckles.[2] Edward Rigden of Canterbury was described as a "wegener" at the time of his death in 1732. A wagoner was a farm labourer who possessed special skills with horses. Apparently Rigden was self-employed for the largest valuation in his inventory was for the goods of his trade "in the stable and yard":

> 7 horses, 2 wegens, 2 carts, 1 stek of Heay and all the utensils belonging to the horses and wagenes and corts £39 17s. 6d.

Rigden's other source of income was hop growing: "1 Aker of yong hopgrowne" was valued at £20. Altogether this skilled labourer was worth more than £70 in personal estate.[3]

How important numerically were labourers who combined wage-earning with the management of a small farm? It is impossible to say with any degree of precision but an attempt has been made using all the probate inventories relating to Ash, one of the largest agricultural parishes in north-east Kent, for the period 1680-1760. Certain assumptions are necessary in order to overcome the problems involved in such an occupational analysis. Many inventories fail to specify occupation

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[1] A teg is a young sheep from the time of the summer lamb sales until it is shorn the following spring.

[2] KAO PRC 27/28/248, 27/29/161, 11/62/73, 11/74/86.

[3] Ibid., 11/80/60.

although it can often be deduced from information in the document. The Ash inventories presented few problems in this respect and only one inventory obstinately defied deduction. Small farms were easily recognised and where there was no evidence of non-agricultural economic activity in inventories of £75 or less it was assumed that the individual farmer would have derived an income from farm wages during part of the year. Thus a group emerges which can be designated small farmer - labourer. There are a large number of yeomen's inventories for Ash and a few inventories for husbandmen but since they are all above the adopted "ceiling" of £75 they have been shown in their stated categories. The results of this exercise are shown below:

TABLE 17

RECORDED AND DEDUCED OCCUPATIONS: ASH, 1680-1760

Occupation	Number of Inventories	Per cent
Yeoman	58	38.9
Husbandman	11	7.4
Small farmer-labourer	55	36.9
Gentleman	1	0.7
Tradesman	14	9.4
Widow	9	6.0
Unspecified and not deducible	1	0.7
Total	149	100.0

It hardly needs stressing that the analysis can tell us nothing about the size of farms as such. By assuming a £75 limit for small farmers we may have under-stated this category of rural worker. In other words some of those farmers described as husbandmen and yeomen might have occupied farms which failed to provide a full-time occupation even though their total personal wealth exceeded £75. We must treat the results with caution but they suggest that at least a third of the rural working population of a large agricultural parish in north-east Kent were

small part-time farmers cum labourers. Altogether the agricultural personnel of Ash accounted for 83.2 per cent of the working population of the parish.[1]

F The Process of Growth in Farm Size

The long-term tendency towards larger farm units was a gradual and almost imperceptible process. Although "landlords naturally had a general preference for large farms" it was nevertheless true that "the deliberate creation of large farm units was probably uncommon ...". The ludicrous belief that bigger means better is at least suspect when applied to business organization. Agricultural economists have come to realize that the worship of size and the belief that big units are inevitably more efficient is no longer a tenable position. "The size of the farm", says Professor Jones, "is less important than the mix of crops and stock". Kenneth Garner, principal of Hadlow (Kent) Agricultural College, recently developed the theme that efficiency is the key to the future of British agriculture and that the size of the enterprise, rather than the size of the farm, is the key factor. He argued that "many small farms are easily viable", citing in particular "poultry and pig units on quite small acreages". Professor Mingay has pointed out that "there was not necessarily a close relationship between the acreage of a farm and the value of its production".[2]

It has already been suggested in this discussion that in early Georgian Kent the dominant tendency was probably towards a farm of between 100 and 150 acres, a gradual move towards a farm of optimum size rather

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[1] Cf. the population census for Ash 1705 (KAO CTz 2: list of inhabitants for tax on births, marriages, burials and bachelors) where the comparable derived figure for farming personnel is 83.3 per cent but where the categories are farmers, day labourers and farm servants. See Chalklin, op. cit., 247.

[2] Mingay, op. cit., 475; E.L. Jones, Seasons and Prices (1964), 47; Kent Messenger 10 May 1968; Mingay, op. cit., 471.

than an unbridled rush towards large farms for the sake of bigness. In addition to the forces of stability discussed by Professor Mingay it seems reasonable to suppose that many farmers were aware that, for them, the benefits of additional acres beyond the optimum could easily be outweighed by the increasing costs and problems of management. This consideration was probably more important on the arable farms where, for instance, critical seasonal operations like sowing and harvesting have to be completed within a relatively short period. Graziers were not subject to the same limitations and this may help to explain why the largest farms in Kent at this time, those of 500 acres of more, nearly always included extensive areas of grass land. Such large-scale livestock enterprises existed in north-east Kent, especially in the Isle of Sheppey and along the coastal margin. Beyond the region Romney Marsh provides the classic example of this type of economy. Shortage of capital rather than a threat of diminishing returns was likely to have been the limiting factor for aspiring large-scale graziers. The course of change was everywhere a slow, reasoned process. "Usually, a lengthy period of years elapsed before there was a perceptible change in farm sizes, says Professor Mingay, "and where the nature of the farming offered larger units no economic or technical advantages there was no move at all away from small-scale farming".[1]

Advertisements in the Kentish Post show that there was always a very large number of plots or parcels of land available so that "small farmers seeking to expand their operations would rent or buy additional plots in their own or neighbouring parishes".

In 1730 the Poor Law Guardians at Canterbury advertised the 14-year lease of "5 acres of meadow lying between the River Stower & Whitehill House in the parish of Harbledown". In the same year the Borough of

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[1] Mingay, op. cit., 477.

Sandwich wished to lease out "35 acres of marshland lying in the parish of St. Mary in Sandwich called Canterbury-Gate Salts, being in 6 several pieces, and lying by itself", and in the parish of Iwade near Sittingbourne a tenant was sought for "65 acres of fresh marsh land". In 1731 the local newspaper advertised "52 acres of fresh marsh land at Ash Level ... within 2 miles of Sandwich". In 1748 an east-Kent landowner was offering to lease "18 acres of after-pasture near Canterbury", useful additional grazing for a local farmer. Sometimes parcels of land covered a considerable acreage, especially when they related to a pastoral economy: "90 acres of fresh marsh land and 22 acres of upland" in the parish of Bonnington near Romney Marsh were described as "all well-fenced and water'd, with a good sheep-house and pound thereon" in 1749. On the other hand, parcels of land suitable for intensive hop cultivation were always small in area: "A cockle oast and 4 acres of land not ploughed these hundred years, to plant hops" were available at Faversham in 1760. At Wickhambreux, north-east of Canterbury, "7 acres of marshland with an ozier ground thereto belonging" was an attractive proposition for a small farmer who might be interested in supplying rods of willow to the local basket making industry. Parcels of land of various sizes and catering for a multitude of needs, were so numerous throughout these years that farmers would have had no difficulty in expanding their enterprises by renting or purchasing additional acres.[1]

It was not uncommon for two farms to be amalgamated or for a large farmer to take over a complete farm some miles away. Inventories occasionally show a man occupying two or even three farms. Until his death in 1710, David Turner esquire occupied Powcys and Nash Court, substantial farms at Minster in Thanet, as well as a third holding in the neighbouring parish of Stonar. John Smith of Eastchurch managed a large

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[1] Mingay, loc. cit.; Kentish Post 27 June and 25 July 1730, 7 October 1731, 7 September 1748, 25 November 1749, 24 May and 19 April 1760.

enterprise until 1720 which extended over three Sheppey farms, including one at Harty in the south-east corner of the island. Until 1753 Justinian Cooper occupied a large farm of well over 100 acres at Linsted, and managed another farm of perhaps half this size at Lenham, a parish some seven miles distant. Thomas Stanley - a wealthy yeoman - occupied Gore Court Farm at Tunstall and Swanton Court Farm in the neighbouring parish of Bredgar until his death in 1758.[1]

Advertisements in the local press show that landowners frequently gave prospective tenants an opportunity of renting additional land or maybe a second farm. Flexibility is the keynote in all these proposals. Until 1730 two farms at Swingfield near Dover - 180 acres altogether - were occupied by Nicholas Rolfe; it is clear that the proprietor was hoping that, when the lease expired, a new tenant would come forward willing to take over both farms, although the options were left open. "A farm in the parish of Sturry called Buckwell" comprised "a small tenement ... for a labouring man, and 200 acres of arable, pasture and meadow land & 20 acres of woodland" as well as "a very good dwelling house & convenient barns and stables". The owner may have had some doubt that he would find a suitable tenant for this large farm in 1730 since he stated that "if not all lett at Michaelmas the same will be lett in parcels for one year". The following year the owner of a 70-acre farm at Rodmersham also possessed another farm of 40 acres at Headcorn, as well as several plots of ground and a malt house at Sittingbourne; he made it clear to prospective purchasers that these properties were "to be sold together or in parcels". A new tenant was sought for a 16-acre holding at Woodnesborough in 1746, "to which more pasture land adjoining may be added if required". When the owner of Plumpton Farm at Ashford advertised for a new tenant in 1746 he explained that the property was

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[1]KAO PRC 27/38/110, 11/75/149, 11/83/150, 11/84/61.

"very convenient to be used together or to be divided in two". The owner of Pent Farm at Postling may have experienced difficulty in finding a suitable tenant in 1747. The 340-acre holding was first advertised in May "to be lett & entered upon immediately or at Michaelmas next". However, in July the property was re-advertised and described as a farm of 260 acres, but it was pointed out that there was also nearby "a parcel of meadow & pasture land ... containing about 80 acres formerly lett separate from the above farm but lately together" and prospective tenants were informed that the owner would consider letting them "together or separate" in the future. In 1749 two parcels of land some distance apart were advertised "to be lett separate or together" - 92 acres of marsh land near New Romney and 40 acres of land at Seasalter near Whitstable. A large 166-acre farm at Bicknor near Sittingbourne was occupied by Isaac Doe until 1763 when the lease expired; the new tenant would be given the option of renting "about 100 acres of good woodland adjoining ... if required". A tenant was sought for a 130-acre enterprise in the Thanet parishes of St. John and St. Peter in 1764; the property was described as "two farms adjoining".[1]

As we saw in the previous chapter there was a long spell of low grain prices during the years 1730-50; in fact prices reached a nadir in the early 1740's and the difficulties for some farmers became intense. A country lawyer was well-placed to gauge the pulse of local economic life. Lee Warly had an attorney's practice at Canterbury in the 1740's and he also owned several properties at Witham in Essex where his aunt, Mrs Theed, make it her business to collect Warly's rents. The lawyer corresponded regularly with his aunt who, from time to time, visited Canterbury. "I beg the favour of you to keep all the Ten/an/ts up to

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[1] Kentish Post 3 June and 1 August 1730, 14 July 1731, 31 May and 19 July 1746, 23 May and 11 July 1747, 14 October 1749, 1 October 1763, 1 February 1764.

their payments", wrote Warly to Mrs Theed on 25 January 1741, "for the times are so bad we must not let them run on". The economic situation in the south-east showed little improvement in the short-term and, indeed, appears to have worsened by the following year. On 25 April 1742 Warly wrote again to his aunt: "I shall be glad to get as much money of the Tenants as possible for if they can't pay a small sum I fear twill be wth much difficulty in these hard times to pay a greater & I shall have occasion for money, being at a great expence in my Building".[1]

Although Kentish farmers, with their capacity for diversification, did not experience the same degree of depression which befell small open-field farmers in parts of the Midlands, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the price-trend was the major factor in the situation making for changes in the size of farms. Professor Mingay has already put forward this view strongly: "It seems possible that the first half of the eighteenth century", he says, "with all its rigours and difficulties - and also with its undoubted technical progress - saw more casualties among the farmers, and perhaps greater changes in the size of farms than subsequently, when prices were rising, markets expanding, communications improving, and there were no more disasters such as those of 1740-1".[2]

The trend towards larger farms in Kent was greatest during the 1730's and 1740's; the subsequent years to the early 1760's saw a consolidation of this position. There is an indication in the Kentish evidence that the situation was most critical in the 1740's, resulting in a larger than usual turnover of farm tenancies. In the five-year period 1729-33, fifty-six tenancies were advertised in the Kentish Post; in a similar period in the later 1740's (1745-9), the number of advertised leasehold farms was 136, an increase of 143 per cent. Undoubtedly some of this

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[1]University of Reading Library, Farm Records Collection, KEN 14/1/1, Correspondence.

[2]Mingay, op. cit., 484.

increase was due to the spread of advertising. However, the vogue continued apace until the end of the period and yet the number of advertised leasehold farms in the five years 1760-4 shows not a growth but a decline of about a third below the level of 1745-9. It looks very much as though the unusually large number of leasehold farms advertised in the second half of the fifth decade was due, at least in part, to the uncertainties arising from low prices and the consequent difficulty in finding suitable tenants. At the same time, landlords and tenants alike felt the need for more efficient and viable units of production - the need for a farm of optimal proportions which, in most cases, meant a farm of larger size.

CHAPTER 4

LAND UTILIZATION: THE COMBINATION AND CULTIVATION OF THE MAIN ARABLE CROPS

A The Pattern of Production

Following the pioneering work of Professor Hoskins and Dr Thirsk, a number of historians, as well as historical geographers, have used probate inventories in order to analyse farming systems.[1]

The reliability and value of inventories for comparing the husbandry of different regions was first established by Dr Thirsk a few years ago. At that time the view was expressed: "In course of time we shall know how far it is safe to compare the material of the probate inventories between one century and another".[2] Since that time some temporal comparisons have demonstrated the validity of this approach, as well as the problems likely to be encountered.[3] However, research based on the use of inventories has been almost entirely confined to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This is no doubt due to the paucity and poor quality of inventories in the eighteenth century - at least for many parts of the country. In the large Sussex parish of Kirdford, for example, there are "few inventories available for the eighteenth century",

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[1] The more important recent works which make extensive use of probate inventories are: W. Harwood Long, 'Regional Farming in Seventeenth-Century Yorkshire', Agricultural History Review, VIII (1960), 103-15; M.A. Havinden, 'Agricultural Progress in Open-Field Oxfordshire', Agricultural History Review, IX (1961), 73-83, reprinted in Agriculture and Economic Growth in England 1650-1815 (1967), ed. E.L. Jones; Joan Thirsk ed., The Agrarian History of England and Wales 1500-1640, IV (Cambridge 1967); J.A. Yelling, 'The Combination and Rotation of Crops in East Worcestershire 1540-1660', Agricultural History Review, XVII, pt. 1 (1969), 24-43.

[2] Joan Thirsk, English Peasant Farming (1957), 3.

[3] See especially the studies of Oxfordshire and Worcestershire: Havinden, op. cit., Yelling, op. cit.

after 1744 only three. Havinden points out that although Oxfordshire inventories "after about 1720 ... did not die out" they nevertheless "became limited to brief summaries which are of little historical value".[1]

This evidence is not borne out for Kent. There are certainly fewer inventories for each year after 1700 than for those in the seventeenth century, although some seven thousand Kent inventories have survived for the eighteenth century, hardly a negligible volume.[2] In the main these documents are not "brief summaries" possessing "little historical value". On the contrary, there are some exceptionally fine and detailed documents after 1720, although they appear to have been almost entirely neglected by historians.[3]

For purposes of the present investigation three groups, each comprising forty-five farming inventories, have been used for the region as a whole. These relate to the years 1680, 1713-17, and 1740-60 respectively.[4] In addition, all the inventories for seventeen selected parishes have been examined for the period 1680-1760; some of these parishes have been assembled into convenient groups. For the purpose of considering crop combinations the region as a whole has been analysed for three

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[1] G.H. Kenyon, 'Kirdford Inventories, 1611 to 1776', Sussex Archaeological Collections, XCIII (1955), 85, 93; M. Havinden, 'Household and Farm Inventories in Oxfordshire 1550-90', The Oxfordshire Record Society, XLIV (1965), 3.

[2] In the Kent Archdeaconry Court records (PRC 11) there are 5,050 inventories for the period 1700-66; in the Consistory Court (PRC 27) for the period 1699-1748 there are 2,005 inventories. Most of the documents relating to north-east Kent belong to the Archdeaconry Court.

[3] Two excellent examples are printed and discussed in E. Melling, 'Aspects of Agriculture and Industry', Kentish Sources, III (Maidstone 1961), 27-31.

[4] It was established that 45 usable inventories existed for the period 1740-60; it proved possible to collect the same number at the beginning of the period for the year 1680; inventories were collected for the year mid-way between 1680 and 1750 viz. 1715, together with those for certain years on either side, covering altogether the period 1713-17.

periods (Table 18) and several sub-regions for the periods 1680-1710 and 1711-60: Thanet, Ash, Chislet, the Faversham district, Downland fringe, and Minster (Sheppey) shown in Tables 19 to 24. The single parishes are extensive which ensures a sufficient number of inventories for analysis throughout the period. The importance of the tables, so far as methodology is concerned, lies in the crop proportions rather than in actual acreages. However, it is worth noting that the acreages on which the significant percentages are based are considerably greater than those used for a similar exercise relating to Worcestershire.[1] This confirms the assertion that numbers of informative eighteenth-century inventories for Kent, even for individual parishes, are not lacking. It is well known that the number of inventories which supply full quantitative information is limited: the full cropped acreage is not always stated, even in inventories made during the summer months; the historian is dependent on the conscientiousness of the appraisers. However, non-summer inventories are not entirely lacking in useful acreage statistics: an early autumn inventory sometimes records the complete acreages on which recently harvested crops (in store) were grown. The acreages to be scrupulously avoided for analytical purposes are those recorded for growing crops during the winter months. Invariably only winter-sown wheat is shown and the inclusion of such incomplete statistics would distort the final picture in favour of this crop.

We should not expect to find a dreary conformity throughout a major farming region. Mr Harwood Long has observed: "If the farms in a region today are grouped, it is always found that however homogeneous the region may appear to be, a considerable portion of the farms follow systems which differ markedly from the average". Long was able to show that even in a region "selected for its relatively high degree of homogeneity ... considerable variation from the group average on the part of

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[1] Yelling, op. cit., 27, 30.

TABLE 18

CROP STATISTICS

NORTH-EAST KENT[1] 1680-1760

		Wheat	Barley	Oats	Beans	Peas	Tares	Dredge	Woold	Flax
1680										
	acres	249.0	197.5	93.0	65.5	23.0	16.0	84.0	-	-
	per cent	34.2	27.1	12.8	9.0	3.2	2.2	11.5	-	-
1713-17										
	acres	583.5	193.25	101.0	243.25	65.5	43.5	13.0	5.0	13.0
	per cent	46.3	15.3	8.0	19.3	5.2	3.4	1.0	0.4	1.0
1740-60										
	acres	836.0	252.5	189.25	383.5	144.75	36.5	67.0	-	-
	per cent	43.8	13.2	9.9	20.1	7.6	1.9	3.5	-	-

[1] excluding Thanet

Source: Kent Probate Inventories

TABLE 19

CROP STATISTICS

ISLE OF THANET[1] 1680-1760

		Wheat	Barley	Oats	Beans	Peas	Tares	Dredge	Canary
1680-1710									
	acres	858.75	1473.75	64.5	189.75	161.0	32.75	279.75	-
	per cent	28.0	48.2	2.1	6.2	5.3	1.1	9.1	-
1711-60									
	acres	403.0	548.75	25.0	244.75	28.5	5.75	105.5	2.0
	per cent	29.6	40.2	1.8	18.0	2.1	0.4	7.7	0.1

[1]Minster, St. John, St. Lawrence, St. Peter.

Source: Kent Probate Inventories

TABLE 20

CROP STATISTICS

ASH 1680-1760

		Wheat	Barley	Oats	Beans	Peas	Tares	Dredge	Flax	Canary
1680-1710										
	acres	432.0	287.0	18.0	186.0	55.0	0.5	176.0	7.0	2.0
	per cent	37.1	24.7	1.5	16.0	4.7	0.04	15.1	0.6	0.2
1711-60										
	acres	337.0	200.0	20.25	297.0	83.5	6.75	-	1.0	5.0
	per cent	35.5	21.0	2.1	31.2	8.8	0.7	-	0.1	0.5

Source: Kent Probate Inventories

TABLE 21

CROP STATISTICS

CHISLET 1680-1760

	Wheat	Barley	Oats	Rye	Beans	Peas	Tares	Dredge	Canary
1680-1710									
acres	247.75	163.0	58.0	6.0	54.0	-	0.5	124.0	1.0
per cent	37.9	24.9	8.9	0.9	8.3	-	0.08	19.0	0.2
1711-60									
acres	272.0	189.5	29.25	-	201.25	16.0	-	15.5	3.0
per cent	37.4	26.1	4.0	-	27.7	2.2	-	2.1	0.4

Source: Kent Probate Inventories

TABLE 22

CROP STATISTICS

FAVERSHAM DISTRICT[1] 1680-1760

	Wheat	Barley	Oats	Rye	Beans	Peas	Tares	Dredge
1680-1710								
acres	363.0	286.0	35.0	-	170.0	-	-	85.0
per cent	38.7	30.5	3.7	-	18.1	-	-	9.0
1711-60								
acres	243.0	155.0	27.0	7.5	138.0	6.0	13.0	-
per cent	41.2	26.3	4.6	1.3	23.4	1.0	2.2	-

[1] Faversham, Preston, Davington, Goodnestone, Stone.

Source: Kent Probate Inventories

TABLE 23

CROP STATISTICS

DOWNLAND FRINGE[1] 1680-1760

	Wheat	Barley	Oats	Rye	Beans	Peas	Tares	Dredge	Flax
1680-1710									
acres	430.75	202.25	123.75	8.0	73.5	63.0	21.0	150.0	12.0
per cent	39.7	18.7	11.4	0.7	6.8	5.8	1.9	13.8	1.1
1711-60									
acres	229.0	62.0	85.0	-	60.75	32.25	17.0	30.0	-
per cent	44.4	12.0	16.5	-	11.8	6.2	3.3	5.8	-

[1]Newington, Hartlip, Milstead, Frinsted, Wormshill.

Source: Kent Probate Inventories

TABLE 24

CROP STATISTICS

MINSTER (ISLE OF SHEPPEY) 1680-1760

		Wheat	Barley	Oats	Beans	Peas	Tares	Dredge
1680-1710								
	acres	477.5	39.0	172.0	80.0	66.0	3.0	65.0
	per cent	52.9	4.3	19.1	8.9	7.3	0.3	7.2
1711-60								
	acres	237.75	10.0	89.0	31.0	28.0	2.0	28.0
	per cent	55.8	2.3	20.9	7.3	6.6	0.5	6.6

Source: Kent Probate Inventories

TABLE 25

CROP STATISTICS

NORTH-EAST KENT 1801

	Wheat	Barley	Oats	Rye	Beans	Peas	Potatoes	Turnips
N.E. KENT (excluding Thanet)								
acres	14,285	3,432	3,817	22	8,071	3,558	261	1,663
per cent	40.7	9.8	10.9	0.06	23.0	10.1	0.7	4.7
THANET								
acres	3,166	2,632	1,146	2	1,649	1,311	134	755
per cent	29.3	24.4	10.6	0.02	15.3	12.1	1.2	7.0
EAST OF CANTERBURY								
acres	1,665	792	426	2	1,094	629	15	172
per cent	34.7	16.5	8.9	0.04	22.8	13.1	0.3	3.6

TABLE 25 (Cont.)

		Wheat	Barley	Oats	Rye	Beans	Peas	Potatoes	Turnips
CHISLET									
	acres	525	241	127	-	417	164	8	49
	per cent	34.3	15.8	8.3	-	27.2	10.7	0.5	3.2
FAVERSHAM DISTRICT									
	acres	1,057	266	214	-	778	161	12	196
	per cent	39.4	9.9	8.0	-	29.0	6.0	0.4	7.3
DOWNLAND FRINGE									
	acres	1,706	235	562	-	727	463	50	286
	per cent	42.3	5.8	13.9	-	18.0	11.5	1.2	7.1
SHEPPEY									
	acres	482	27	109	-	307	128	37	76
	per cent	41.3	2.3	9.3	-	26.3	11.0	3.2	6.5

Source: PRO HO67/4 (1801 Crop Returns)

individual holdings must be allowed before the possession of the characteristics of regional farming are denied it". Intra-regional variations in farming systems are probably greater today than in early-modern times, and our criteria for grouping farms according to region less stringent, and therefore "it would be unreal to insist on a high degree of homogeneity" in historical studies "when present-day standards have to be so low".[1] Intra-regional differences and levels of homogeneity have received much less attention from historians than the broader contrasts between major farming regions. There is sufficient evidence to consider these questions in relation to the diversified region of north-east Kent. For comparative purposes the 1801 Crop Returns[2] have been analysed for the region as a whole and for selected intra-regional divisions (Table 25).

Most of English agriculture during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was mixed farming, that is to say the cultivation of arable crops in association with the production of livestock. Specialization was important in some areas - in the home counties for instance - but it took place in many cases within highly diversified individual structures. By contrast, the trend today - especially in the south-east - is towards the specialist farm where one major type of production predominates.[3] The unreliability of the weather, in an age so much at the mercy of the elements, undoubtedly ~~in~~weighed against too-intensive specialization: the man who put his faith in a narrow range of products ran the risk of being forced out of business in a single disastrous season. Capital reserves were generally low and a mixed farm was its own insurance

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[1] Long, op. cit., 109-10.

[2] PRO HO67/4.

[3] J.D. Chambers and G.E. Mingay, The Agricultural Revolution 1750-1880 (1966), 107; B. Platt, Farming in the South-east (1967), 26-7.

against the hand of providence:

> The high costs of a mixed farming system were endured as a built-in insurance against the hazards afflicting each individual line of production. The weather taught farmers not to put all their eggs in one basket, and where the risks to them as individual producers were so high the premiums were bound to be dear. The price was the farmer's foregone opportunity to obtain economies of scale from specializing in his production.[1]

The task is clearly not to explain further why a mixed form of farming existed in north-east Kent but to describe and account for the particular combinations which prevailed, and to identify elements of specialization within the overall pattern.

The bias towards cereal production, especially wheat, is striking. In Table 18 it can be seen that wheat occupied a third of the cultivated area in 1680, the proportion rising to somewhere between two-fifths and a half by the second decade of the eighteenth century, a position maintained until the end of the period. Wheat was by far the most important crop throughout these years.[2]

The proportion of barley was more than halved between 1680 and 1713-17, with a further slight fall thereafter. By the early eighteenth century barley had ceased to be the second most important crop, but nevertheless remained a significant feature of cereal production. Oats remained the least important of the grains, occupying between 12 and 15 per cent of the cereal acreage. Altogether, cereals occupied three quarters of the cultivated acreage at the beginning of the period, two-thirds around the middle of the following century. But the shift in

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[1] E.L. Jones, Seasons and Prices (1964), 52.

[2] Thanet inventories have been excluded from this table for two related reasons: it became apparent during the course of investigation that Thanet's cereal complexion differed from that in the rest of the region; secondly, for causes that are not clear, few Thanet inventories have survived for the period 1740-60, and their inclusion would have distorted the temporal analysis.

cereal production in favour of the highest-priced cereal, wheat, was the most significant trend. Havinden observed a similar phenomenon in Oxfordshire, a feature which was "quite contrary to continental experience during the seventeenth and early eighteenth century depression.[1]

The outstanding shift in production of non-cereals was the marked growth of bean cultivation; the acreage devoted to this crop more than doubled, from less than a tenth in 1680 to about a fifth by the second decade of the following century, a position subsequently maintained. Peas were much less important but their relative position improved during the period. Tares remained a crop of minor significance. The sowing of mixed crops - peas and tares for instance - fell markedly out of favour.[2]

The new overall position appears to have crystallized by the second decade of the eighteenth century: wheat and beans were the leading crops; barley, in third place, remained a crop of considerable importance. The timing of decisive adjustments in north-east Kent appears to lend strength to Professor John's claim that the period 1680-1710 was "critical" in determining the course of agricultural change.[3]

The most notable feature of Table 19 is the importance of barley, the leading crop, which occupied between two-fifths and a half of the cultivated acreage in Thanet, a position comparable to that of wheat in the

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[1] Havinden, 'Agricultural Progress' op. cit., 76; E.L. Jones, 'Agriculture and Economic Growth in England 1660-1750: Agricultural Change', Agriculture and Economic Growth in England 1650-1815 (1967), 157.

[2] I have used the composite term dredge to cover the various mixtures of cereals and pulses: peas and tares, or peas, tares and oats were the most common dredges sown in north-east Kent. Although dredge is strictly speaking a mixture of cereals the term is commonly used when pulses are added ~~although such a mixture should be called mashlum or maslin. See D.H. Chapman, A Farm Dictionary (1953), 64~~.

[3] A.H. John, 'The Course of Agricultural Change 1660-1760', Studies in the Industrial Revolution (1960), ed. L.S. Pressnell, 151.

rest of north-east Kent. Nevertheless wheat remained the second most important crop in Thanet, occupying well over a quarter of the sown arable. Proportionally, oats were even less important than in the region as a whole. Beans experienced a dramatic threefold increase and came to occupy almost a fifth of the sown acreage. The three leading crops in Thanet - barley, wheat and beans - were the same as those noted elsewhere in the region: it was the order of importance which was significantly different.

The crop combinations observed for selected divisions within the region conform broadly to the situation displayed in Table 18, as we should expect, but there are minor variations which merit some attention. Wheat is the leading crop everywhere but reaches its apogee in Sheppey where over half of the ploughed London clay was given over to wheat production. Oats occupied second place in Sheppey farmers' cropping schedules while barley was considered hardly worth growing. Beyond Thanet, barley reached its highest levels (but in second place to wheat) at Ash and Chislet where the crop occupied roughly a quarter of all sown acres. Beans achieved their most important position on Faversham farms and at Chislet, while oats were of greatest significance in Sheppey and along the southern margin of the Downs. The crops we have already noted as relatively insignificant in the region as a whole attained no special importance in any of the sub-divisions: tares, for example, never came to occupy more than 4 per cent of the sown acreage, peas nowhere exceed 8 per cent, and dredge declined in significance everywhere.

In so far as it is possible to make comparisons with other regions of England for which probate inventories have been analysed, the concentration on cereal production in north-east Kent must be reckoned intensive. Unfortunately, eighteenth-century inventories for other regions appear to be lacking. Comparisons can therefore only be of the broadest kind. In Lincolnshire, cereal production during the 1690's

occupied 56.2 per cent of the sown acreage in the fenland, 68.1 per cent on the claylands; during the period 1630-1700, 80.3 per cent of the cultivated land of the wolds was growing cereals. Wheat and rye together were grown on 30.8 per cent, 23 per cent, and 17 per cent of the arable of fenland, clayland and wold respectively. Barley was grown on 15 per cent, 40.6 per cent, and 41.5 per cent of the arable in the same respective areas. The proportion of land devoted to all cereals in north-east Kent in 1680 was 74.1 per cent (Thanet 78.3 per cent) comparable with the highest Lincolnshire estimates. Wheat in north-east Kent occupied 34.2 per cent of the sown arable in 1680; the highest estimate for Lincolnshire - 30.8 per cent in the fenland - includes rye. The proportion of land in Thanet devoted to barley in 1680 (48.2 per cent) exceeds the proportions grown on the Lincolnshire claylands (40.6 per cent) and wolds (41.5 per cent), the chief barley growing areas in that county.[1]

The available statistics for east Worcestershire relate to rather earlier periods. In the sixteenth century barley was the most important crop occupying about 26 per cent of the total crop acreage, closely followed by wheat (22 per cent). A feature of the east Worcestershire economy was the cultivation of rye on 17 per cent of the arable. The highest concentrations of wheat and barley were found on the Lower Lias and Keuper Marl which included superficial deposits of lighter sandstone soils along the river valleys. Thus barley occupied 38 per cent of the arable on the Lower Lias and 36 per cent on the Keuper Marl, wheat 30 per cent and 37 per cent of the same areas respectively. There were only minor changes recorded for the period 1600-60: it has been observed that rye was beginning to give way to wheat "although this trend was not yet very pronounced"; also "the spring crops were becoming relatively more important"; the highest recorded level for wheat was 30 per cent and for

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[1]Thirsk, Peasant Farming, op. cit., 136, 173, 188.

barley 38 per cent in the seven regions examined for this period.[1]

The importance of arable farming as a whole in the rural economy of north-east Kent can be seen by comparing farm valuations with those for Yorkshire. An analysis of Yorkshire probate inventories for 1688-9 shows that the highest percentage valuation of crops (compared with the total farm valuation for crops, livestock and equipment) was 45.5 per cent in the Wolds. The other regional farming groups in Yorkshire show considerably lower levels of investment in crops. In north-east Kent the comparable crop valuation for 1680 is 55.1 per cent.[2]

Commercial grain production in Kent was not new in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Professor Fisher has discussed the role of "the great granary of Kent" in relation to the development of the London food market during Tudor and early Stuart times.[3] There is convincing evidence that the heart of the Kentish granary lay in the north-east. The earliest known "Corn Certificates" returned from Kent to the Privy Council relate to 1528. These certificates recorded, on a Hundredal basis, the amount of "corn to spare for market" during the year 1527-8. According to these returns Kent possessed a total marketable surplus of 8,925 quarters of wheat and 13,208 quarters of barley at this time. What is significant, however, is that the corn available in the hundreds of north-east Kent accounted for the bulk of the total - no less than 75 per cent in the case of both wheat and barley.[4]

An interesting feature of the Corn Certificates for Kent is the

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[1] Yelling, op. cit., 24-30.

[2] Long, op. cit., 105.

[3] F.J. Fisher, 'The Development of the London Food Market 1540-1640', Essays in Economic History, I (1954), ed. E.M. Carus-Wilson, 144.

[4] Sir W. Ashley, The Bread of Our Forefathers (Oxford 1928), 41, 188. The Hundreds in north-east Kent were: Milton, Teynham, Faversham, Bleangate and Ringslow (Thanet).

absence of rye. Ashley considered the explicit nil returns for rye especially significant and compared the Kent certificates with those of other regions which show a preponderance of rye - in Nottinghamshire north and east of Sherwood Forest for instance. The case of east Worcestershire, where a considerable amount of rye was grown in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, has already been cited. However, "wheat was undoubtedly the chief bread corn cultivated in Kent from early medieval if not indeed from Roman times". Furthermore, it is now clear just where in Kent most of this wheat (and barley) was grown.[1]

The whole question of bread-corn was examined in some detail by Ashley who found remarkable, but perhaps not surprising, regional differences. This no doubt explains why the trend from rye to wheat for bread-making (and the consequent rise in the standard of living that is usually argued) is manifest at so many points of time in the text books: it happened at different times in various parts of the country. It was reckoned that, as late as the 1760's, wheat furnished 62.5 per cent of the bread-corn of the English population, rye 14.8 per cent, barley 12.3 per cent, and oats 10.4 per cent. But regional differences were very marked: in the south-east for example, wheat supplied about 90 per cent of the bread-corn at this time. Kent farmers seem to have been unique in excluding rye from their cropping schedules so early on. A thirteenth-century register of Henry Eastry, Prior of Christ Church, Canterbury, records the cereal acreages sown on the priory manors; the manors are grouped under Custodiae. In the east Kent manors very little rye was sown but in the Custodia of Essex the acreage under rye was a third of that under wheat, and in the Custodia of Surrey more than one seventh.[2]

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[1] Ibid., 121.

[2] Ibid., 6, 19.

B Rye in North-east Kent

Rye is a rarity in the Kentish inventories for this period. Nine instances, however, have been found in the parish of Upchurch, almost the only place in the region where the small-scale cultivation of rye was fairly widespread; there was a surfeit of poor, thin, gravelly soils in this parish where most crops other than rye failed to thrive. In 1691 John Wilson of Upchurch grew three acres of rye alongside eight acres of wheat: the rye was valued at £1 an acre, the wheat half as much again. Richard Vinall, an Upchurch yeoman, sowed ten acres of "red wheat" and five acres of "white wheat" during the winter 1700-1; he also set aside five acres of his poorest land for rye. The white wheat was thought to be worth as much as 72s. an acre, the red variety 30s., but the rye only 16s. an acre. The following year Henry Sockling, a well-to-do yeoman, sowed eleven acres of rye, almost a quarter of the acreage devoted to wheat growing; the wheat was valued at 50s. an acre, rye at 25s. The areas sown with rye at Upchurch ranged from 2.5 acres to 11 acres (median average 5 acres).[1]

Rye is found occasionally in other parishes. Robert Burr grew five acres of wheat and rye on his smallholding at Hernehill in 1688. As late as 1744 Edward Brown of Elbridge Farm, Littlebourne was growing a small patch of rye valued at only £1. It comes as rather a surprize, however, to find a substantial Thanet farmer growing rye in 1757: Robert Pett, a yeoman of Sarre, possessed 105 sown acres at the time of his death, including a solitary acre of rye.[2] But this was a fairly common custom in Thanet:

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[1] KAO PRC 11/56/139, 11/63/164, 11/62/184.

[2] Ibid., 27/31/204, 11/82/130, 11/84/76.

> Some farmers here have a practice of sowing rye to make bands for their sheaves, the straw being longer, and as they think tougher, than that of wheat. The reaper makes the bands which he cuts as low as he well can, and binds the sheaves.[1]

Some farmers grew rye for sheep which were allowed to crop the young, tender, growing plants in the spring during a time of "great scarcity of succulent herbage". Rye was also grown for use in the tanning business; and collar-makers considered rye straw superior to any other for their trade.[2] It seems therefore that rye was grown in north-east Kent for special purposes.

Beyond the region rye appears to have been used to some extent for bread-corn. As late as 1748 Peter Kalm saw "nearly as much rye as wheat in the fields" in Essex. He was informed that "the principal reason why they sow it is that they carry it to London, where they sell it to merchants who ship great quantities of it abroad". Kalm's informants told him that "no others but poor people use it for bread". Nevertheless, he found rye being grown near Gravesend "by some who partly sell it, partly use it to mix with wheat to grind and make bread of it". But general opinion inveighed against the use of rye for bread-making since the bread was not only less nutritious than wheaten bread but, "being of an opening quality ... has been often productive of violent diarrhoeas and other complaints in the bowels".[3]

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[1] Museum Rusticum et Commerciale: or, select papers on agriculture, commerce, arts and manufactures ... by members of the Society of Arts (6 Vols. 1764-6), I (1764), 112.

[2] J. Banister, Synopsis of Husbandry (1799), 129-30.

[3] P. Kalm, Visit to England (on his way to America in 1748), trans. J. Lucas (1892), 230, 359, 365, 415; Banister, op. cit., 129.

C Wheat Growing in "the Granary of Kent"

The predominant position of wheat in Kent was established at least as early as the thirteenth century when it was a major crop on most of the Kentish manors of Canterbury Cathedral Priory, an importance which reflected both its commercial value and its adaptability to a variety of soils.[1] The average (median) sown area of wheat per farm was 17.5 acres at the beginning of the period, 22 acres by the second decade of the eighteenth century, and no less than 41 acres in the 1740's and 1750's.

The evidence is conclusive. Thanet inventories apart, only four of the forty-five farms showing recorded acreages in 1680 possessed a larger number of acres under barley than wheat, one farm only in the inventories for 1713-17, and none in the years 1740-60; in every other instance wheat was the chief crop; other things being equal it was also the most profitable crop. Calculations made from Samuel Trowell's detailed "Annual expence" and "Produce" of a 180-acre farm show that, on average, the profit per acre for wheat was £6 0s. 9d.; the next most profitable crops were the pulses: peas £3 15s. an acre, and beans £3 6s.[2] Naturally we must treat such general estimates with caution and actual results would depend on a wide range of variables. However, given suitable conditions for cultivation, a high standard of management, and readily available markets, it seems clear enough that wheat possessed the greatest potential value for the grower. The moral was taken seriously by farmers in north-east Kent whose efforts to maximise profits - or, at any rate, incomes - under increasingly difficult price conditions, led them to invest in ever-larger acreages of wheat.

It has been observed by a modern writer on Kent that "the whole

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[1] Ann Smith, 'Regional Differences in Crop Production in Mediaeval Kent', Archaeologia Cantiana, LXXVIII (1963), 152-3.

[2] S. Trowell, A New Treatise of Husbandry (1739), 156-7.

economy of eighteenth-century arable farming in the south of England, with its carefully devised rotations, was designed in order that the land might yield a good crop of wheat as often as possible".[1] The evidence for north-east Kent substantiates this view. It is not difficult to establish the essential nature and scope of rotations which prevailed in the region. The crop which was considered most important in the farm economy succeeded a year during which the land received favoured or preferential treatment to rebuild its fertility. This is an almost invariable rule and is the key to understanding the "courses" or "seasons" which comprised a particular crop rotation. During the year preceding wheat the land either lay fallow (or "follow" as they preferred to call it in north-east Kent) or grew a beneficial nitrogen-fixing crop selected from the legumes, usually beans or clover.

Replies from Kent to the "Enquiries" of the Royal Society's Georgical Committee (1665) show the importance of fallow as a preparation for wheat, and the sowing of barley as the succeeding crop.[2] In a wide district around Canterbury it was observed that "wheat being a winter grain ... is comonly sowen upon summerland" which was land "summer fallowed to kill the grasse and weeds". The soil was "helped with dung or folding of sheep", and it was further noted that "sometymes wheat is sowen after peas or tares". To sow the same crop in successive years was regarded as bad farming. The same writer reported:

> Barly is usually sowne after wheat for it is a true observation that grownd is much releived by the change of

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[1] R. Arnold, A Yeoman of Kent (1949), 33.

[2] The returns for Kent are found in: Royal Society MSS, Classified Papers, Vol. X (3), nos. 28, 29, 30. The work of the Royal Society's Georgical Committee was discussed in general terms some years ago in R.V. Lennard, 'English Agriculture under Charles II: The Evidence of the Royal Society's Enquiries', Economic History Review, IV (1932), 23-45, reprinted in W.E. Minchinton ed., Essays in Agrarian History (2 Vols. 1968), I, 161-85.

> seeds and is almost as good as a resting one yeare and therefore there is nothing sokes grownd more then sowing barley after barley and therefore this is usually provided for by many landlords.[1]

Thus the basic rotation was:

1. Fallow (or peas and tares)
2. Wheat
3. Barley

On the chalky downlands and wherever the land was stiff and clayey "the lesse barly the better", although it was pointed out that such land was "most propper for wheat, pease all sortes, fetches /vetches or tares/, oates, beanes, ...". The rotation was modified thus:

1. Fallow
2. Wheat
3. Oats (or pulse, or tares, or a dredge)

The definition of a summer fallow was that the land should bear no crop from August until the following July during which time it was well cultivated - normally there were at least three ploughings - and liberally dunged. It was observed that "to keep the land in good heart for 30 or 40 yeares wee must fallow it every third yeare which, if wee doe, there need /be/ noe improvement by dung or otherwise and the cropps of wheat will sufficiently pay for the yeares lying fallow".[2]

While this statement was rather optimistic about obviating the need for dung, there is no doubt that the importance of fallowing was generally recognized and the benefits agreed. Fallowing thoroughly cleaned the land and improved the fertility and workability of the soil. It has recently been remarked that "the prevalent notion that bare fallows are

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[1] Royal Soc. MSS., op. cit., 29. The observer was Sir Edward Moring.

[2] Ibid., 30.

synonymous with bad, and fallow crops with good, husbandry is without foundation".[1] The Kent evidence supports this claim. Fallowing was ubiquitous, even the wealthier and wiser farmers following the practice where soil conditions dictated: bare fallows regularly preceded wheat, sometimes barley, on many farms until at least the 1750's. Austen Neame of Littlebourne had ten acres of "summer land" in 1730 which had already been "twice ploughed" in the spring. William Pett, a large cereal grower, farmed in the parish of St. Nicholas-at-Wade (Thanet) until his death in 1746. In that year Pett was growing twelve acres of trefoil, as well as canary grass, and large acreages of wheat, barley, beans and peas; he had recently carried on to his fields no less than 1,200 loads of dung and "mould"; the land which benefited from this "improvement" was almost certainly nine acres of "summerland" or fallow. Francis Tomlin of Ash, a wealthy farmer and hop grower, allowed seven acres of his farm to lie fallow in 1751; his "sumerland" that year underwent "ploughing and harrowing". Other substantial farmers in the region regularly fallowed sections of their farms each year. It is clear that "improved husbandry did not mean the abolition of bare fallows".[2]

During the period under review there were experiments with new rotations some of which became established practice. By the time of Arthur Young "the common husbandry about Faversham" was "generally in the round tilth, that is to say 1 barley; 2 beans; 3 wheat". The three-course round tilth was already renowned as "the famous rotation of East Kent". Beans, grown as a row crop, had replaced the fallow on the richer soils of the region: "In general the great feature of their husbandry, the most worthy the attention of a stranger, and in itself by

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[1] E. Kerridge, The Agricultural Revolution (1967), 27.

[2] KAO PRC 11/79/236, 27/43/157, 11/83/77. Kerridge, op. cit., 28. For the use of fallows at Hogshaw Farm, Milstead see Appendix VI.

much the most meritorious of anything in the country" affirmed Arthur Young, "is the cultivation and management of beans as a preparation for wheat".[1]

Richard Tylden experimented with the "round tilt" and its mutations at Milstead during the first half of the century; frequently oats replaced the barley course. One, or occasionally two-year clover leys were also a feature of cropping schedules at Hogshaw Farm.[2] The clover was undersown with oats or barley, the following year mown for hay and the aftermath grazed, and subsequently ploughed-up for wheat again. In those fields where Tylden temporarily eliminated the fallow (fallowing at irregular intervals remained a feature in many fields) the rotation might be:

First year:	Wheat
Second year:	Barley or Oats (undersown)
Third year:	Clover or Trefoil
Fourth year:	Wheat

A multiformity of rotations can be observed in operation at Milstead over a long period. It is frequently assumed that an individual farmer followed a single rotation, improved or otherwise. A moment's thought shows that this was possible only where equal acreages of all crops in the rotation were required. Such was rarely, if ever, the case. In north-east Kent where wheat occupied as much as half the sown arable, many farmers were apparently reluctant to employ a four-course system, but preferred a combination of improved three-course rotations in which wheat could return to a field after only two years' absence. This practice required a high level of management skills (including the keeping of careful records), and heavy applications of dung, mould, and lime

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[1] A. Young, Annals of Agriculture (46 Vols. 1784-1815), II (1784), 70, 72.

[2] KAO U593 A3. See also Appendix VI.

during the "season" which preceded wheat. There are frequent references in the inventories to mixens or dunghills and the carrying of dung and mould to the fields. Even a small farmer like John Denne of Littlebourne ensured that "two hundred loads of dunge" were "laid upon 13 acres of land for wheat" before he died in 1690. Alexander Bax, a Faversham brewer, rented the Abbey Farm until his death in 1701; in the winter 1700-1 he had paid £9 to his workers for "carrying and turning dung on Abbey farme". In the neighbouring parish of Davington Stephen Barnes possessed a small "dung maxson" in 1706, while John Bennett, of the same parish, undertook extensive improvements on his land twenty years later: local men were employed "for carrying 200 load of chalk to the maxol", and "for carrying 300 load of dung to the maxol"; later they were paid "for carrying and spreading 500 load of dung and chalk" on the fields; a further 700 loads of dung are recorded in the inventory as well as payment "for digging of mowle [mould] in orchard". John Martin, yeoman, of Teynham near Sittingbourne had "five hundred loads of dung & mould carried out on the land" and "six hundred loads of dung & mould turned in the maxhill" during 1748. The appraisers of Richard Harris's inventory in 1752 recorded "six hundred loads of mould & dung as turned and ready to carry out" on the farm at Luddenham, near Faversham.[1]

It was reported in the 1660's that Kent farmers "manure or mend ... with dung or marle upon a fallow in summer but upon other grounds indifferently either in summer or winter". The operation was described in careful detail:

> We carry with courts upon the ground and lay our loads at such an equall distance as that in spreading them, one may reach to the other. Our instrumentes of spreading are three pronged forkes, shovells, spades. If we manure or mend with dung wee lay an hundred court loads upon a statute acre; nine bushells make a load.[2]

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[1] KAO PRC 11/56/231, 27/37/169, 11/67/13, 11/78/6, 11/82/230, 11/83/129.

[2] Royal Soc. MSS. op. cit., 28.

Courts - Kentish dung carts - are common items of farm gear in the inventories. Thomas Belsey, a large-scale farmer at Minster in Thanet, possessed two courts said to be worth £6 in 1691. His land improvements that year, which would have involved the use of this transport, included the "carrying out and spreading of 480 load of dung" and the "kelping /spreading seaweed/ of twenty acres".[1]

Inventories vary widely in content and quality. Those which include composite entries are of little or no value. The record of harvested crops belonging to John Wood of Murston in 1714, for instance, tells us nothing of the relative importance of wheat in relation to other crops:

> Wheat thrasht and unthrasht and barly, and beans, and oats, unthresht, threshing tools and sixteen sacks £53 9s.[2]

Nicholas Wraight, worth almost £1,000 in personal estate when he died at his farm in Woodnesborough in 1696, possessed a large number of animals together with a hundred and seventy-three acres of growing crops.[3] All the farm items are carefully documented and appraised. The dominance of wheat and the relative importance of the other crops in his schedule for 1695-6 are immediately apparent:

On the ground	£	s.	d.
60 acres wheat	225	0	0
39 " small beans	58	0	0
9 " great "	31	0	0
20 " barley	27	10	0
31 " oats	65	0	0
10 " peas	12	0	0
4 " clover	6	0	0
	424	10	0

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[1] KAO PRC 11/55/220.

[2] Ibid., 11/72/91.

[3] Ibid., 11/60/103.

Wraight's inventory is one of scores of examples of individual records which, taken together, enable us to analyse the overall picture. Occasionally we come across a "bonus" in the form of additional detail - the colour or origin of an animal, the place where goods have been sold, the variety of a crop, possibly sowing rates and harvest yields. The initial search is very much in the nature of a lottery but the odds are not in the least unfavourable. There is probably a case for agrarian historians to study a little more closely the details of individual inventories in addition to aggregating the bald statistics. We need to see the wood through the trees but there is always the danger that we may never focus on the trees themselves.

Richard Vinall of Upchurch managed a small mixed farm until he died in 1701; among his growing crops were "six ackers of white wheate" and "6 ackers of read wheat". Other inventories, too, occasionally mention white and red wheat, providing evidence that local farmers were experimenting with new varieties, or at least were not content to carry on growing a traditional sort uncritically. Richard Cocke of Chislet possessed eleven acres of "Black wheat" which had been "new sown" in the winter 1690-1.[1]

Robert Plot, man of Kent and distinguished seventeenth-century Oxford scientist, devised in the 1690's a series of questions for his proposed enquiries into Kentish agriculture. He showed a special interest in crop varieties, particularly "sorts of grain". Plot mentioned nineteen wheat varieties by name including Red-bearded Kentish wheat, Red Lammas, White Lammas, and several related types.[2]

White wheats were reckoned to produce the whitest flour but red

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[1] Ibid., 11/63/164, 11/55/189.

[2] D. Baker, 'A Kentish Pioneer in Natural History: Robert Plot of Borden, 1640-96', Transactions of the Kent Field Club III, pt. 4 (Maidstone 1971), 215-6.

wheats were reputedly heavier yielding. By the end of the eighteenth century it was said there was "scarcely a market town but has a favourite species, which having been successfully cultivated by some farmer in the neighbourhood is by him dignified with a pompous title, and becomes the fashionable grain".[1]

Tylden's records at Milstead first distinguished between red and white wheat in 1726 when he "laid in for seed of Red wheat 67 shock & 5 sheaves, of White wheat 15 shock". In 1739-40 Tylden sowed several fields with wheat of "changed seed" specially purchased at Ulcombe, south of Maidstone; that autumn Tylden "thrasht 1 bushel of oates for the horses when they went to Ulcomb for seed wheat". In 1744 several fields were sown with "changed seed", this time "Pirky wheat". Ellis reported that Pirky wheat, together with Old Red Lammas, Yellow Lammas, and Dugdale were the four varieties "they chiefly sow in Hertfordshire". In 1746 Tylden purchased "Mother Fuller's wheat" from a neighbour, Mr Reinhard; the seed was sown in Well Field (7 acres). In the same year Red wheat "bought at Maidstone Market" was sown on fifteen acres and a further nineteen acres was sown with "White Perky wheat, my own seed". In Thanet, too, wheat growers "chuse not to sow the same seed twice together but change it every year" according to Lewis. Among the varieties sown in Thanet were "the common red wheat" and "the bearded Kentish wheat".[2]

As early as 1665 it was reported from Ashford:

> We gett ye seed we intend to sow from contrary soyle, so that where we sow it, from a hott, gravelly or chalky, we fetch seed for our soyles which are rocky, sandy and cold weeping grounds. We take care that our seed corne be

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[1] Banister, op. cit., 56-7.

[2] KAO U593 A3 ff. 109, 168v, 208v; W. Ellis, The Practical Farmer, or The Hertfordshire Husbandman (2nd ed. 1732), 9-10; J. Lewis, The History of the Isle of Tenet (Margate 1723), 12, 14.

> free from smutt, eare cockle, land cockle, drobe, drayle ... We care not how small our seed is, so /long as/ it be full not shrunke.[1]

In the later seventeenth century three bushels of wheat were sown to the acre in the Ashford district; in the neighbourhood of Canterbury "they usually allow four bushells to an acre, or if the ground fall very fine and be in a rich state three bushells"; on the downland dip slope wheat was sown on cold clayland between mid-August and Michaelmas at the rate of two or two and a half bushels an acre. John Downs who farmed at Swalecliffe had sown five fields (30 acres) of wheat during the autumn of 1741, several months before his death. His rates of sowing for each field varied between two and three bushels per acre which seems to have been accepted practice in the region.[2]

Some farmers in Restoration Kent took care to dress their seed preparatory to sowing. In the Canterbury district:

> Wee usually prepare our seed wheat with lyme before wee sow which is after this manner, they wett the seeds and after powre lyme amongst it and soe mingle it and this fortifies the wheat against coller & wormes. But there is an experiment in these parts by some of the best husbands for prepareing their seed wheat which is that they make a brine with salt and lay the seeds asoke in the brine 12 howers, and when it is taken out, run some strong unslaken lime. By degrees as you use it, and when it is run sift a bushell of lyme upon every seame of seed wheat, and turn it five or six tymes after it is mingled, and then let it lye 24 howers before you use it but you must be sure to turn it once in fower or five howers and lay it thin abroad or els it will burne the seeds (for it will be soe hott it will allmost roast an egge) and this will prevent all coller and ear cockle and wormes and keep it from all vermine but pidgeons which love salt.[3]

John Fanting of Preston near Wingham no doubt ranked among the "best husbands" for when his goods were appraised in 1716 "a stock to brine

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[1] Royal Soc. MSS., loc. cit.

[2] Ibid., 28-30; KAO PRC 11/82/51.

[3] Royal Soc. MSS. op. cit., 29.

wheat in" was recorded among his possessions. In Thanet they "wet their /wheat/ seed with sea-water, which they fetch from the sea, and lime it, to prevent smut &c".[1]

Newly-ploughed marshland produced heavy crops of wheat. Robert Gore farmed at St. Nicholas-at-Wade and in 1702 was cultivating wheat on reclaimed marshland as well as on the higher ground. In June Gore's "upland wheat" was valued at £3 10s. an acre, and his "marshland wheat" at £4 1s. 8d. an acre. Yields of wheat varied, of course, from farm to farm and from year to year. But not too wildly. Thomas Clunn, a small farmer at Monkton (Thanet), harvested an acre of wheat in 1691 which yielded 16 bushels of grain. Thirty-eight acres of wheat growing on Roger Belsey's farm at Monkton in May 1692 was valued "by estimation 20 bushells per acre". Thomas Proud of Faversham had thirty-three acres of wheat growing at his farm in July 1697 which the appraisers reckoned would yield at the rate of 18 bushels per acre. Twenty-eight acres of wheat on Francis Pettey's farm at Ash yielded as much as 22 bushels an acre in 1716. In 1757 the farm of Anne Read at Bapchild grew forty-three acres of wheat which produced 113 quarters of grain, a yield of 21 bushels per acre.[2]

Comparison of these yields (range 16 to 22 bushels per acre) with those calculated for Hogshaw Farm, Milstead over a long period (1722-53) shows that they are in the expected order of magnitude. The figures derived from inventories as well as the more abundant Milstead statistics (Appendix V) show considerably less variation than those for other parts of the country: in Devon, seventeenth-century yields of wheat ranged from 10 to 20-25 bushels per acre for example. We should expect this kind of result of course since in Kent we are investigating a region with

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[1] KAO PRC 11/73/151; Lewis, op. cit., 14.

[2] KAO PRC 27/36/21, 27/32/215, 27/33/10, 11/60/86, 27/40/66, 11/84/65.

a fair degree of homogeneity. If we assume for the moment, as Hoskins does, a sowing rate of 2 bushels an acre, yield ratios for north-east Kent were somewhere in the order of 8 to 11 in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. This corresponds very closely to the general conclusion reached by Professor Hoskins. However, the present writer has some reservation about accepting a sowing-rate as low as 2 bushels an acre for the eighteenth century: available evidence for Kent seems to point to an average sowing-rate of perhaps 2.5 bushels per acre which would produce (in the case of Kent) yield ratios between 6.4 and 8.8. No doubt a higher sowing-rate should also be assumed for other areas of the country. Professor Hoskins' estimates of yield ratios have possibly, for this reason, erred on the generous side. This seems the more likely when it is remembered - as Hoskins himself points out - that the yield ratio for wheat was only about 10 in 1929-38.[1]

D Barley on the "Improved" Light Lands

Barley occupied more than a quarter of the cropped acreage in most of north-east Kent in the late seventeenth century, scarcely more than an eighth by the end of the period. But this underestimates its local importance, for the bulk of the crop was concentrated in an area east of Canterbury and especially in the Isle of Thanet. The pattern of distribution differed little from that which obtained in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when "the presence of soils suitable for barley-growing in close proximity to Canterbury was fortunate, since the Priory used large quantities of the grain for brewing and for payment to its servants". Even today, in contrast to wheat, the growing of barley is very markedly localized on the chalky and sandy loams of east Kent including Thanet. Thanet barley has maintained a high reputation in

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[1] W.G. Hoskins, 'Harvest Fluctuations and English Economic History 1620-1759', Agricultural History Review XVI, pt. 1 (1968), 25-8.

England.[1]

In Thanet the proportion of arable land devoted to barley varied between two-fifths and a half; in parishes north-east of Canterbury - for example Ash and Chislet - between a fifth and a quarter. William Tritton farmed in the Thanet parish of Sarre until his death in 1681 when 65 acres of barley and 50 acres of wheat were growing in his fields; his only other arable crop was a mixture of peas and tares which grew on 32 acres; the possession of a "mault house" illustrates further the role of barley in the economy of this farm. Two years later Benjamin Cobb was growing six different crops in his fields: barley (46 acres) was the most extensive crop valued at £153; wheat (44 acres), however, worth £217 represented his largest investment; his other crops were beans (22 acres), peas (14 acres), and canary grass (1 acre). Altogether Cobb's cropping schedule was probably fairly typical of the larger mixed farms in Chislet and other east Kent parishes at this time.[2]

Dr Richard Pococke visited Thanet in 1754; he recorded certain aspects of the local pattern of agriculture:

> This Island with the help of sea-weed and other manure is very fruitful. They plough and manure and sow barley, then wheat, and then beans, and lastly oats, and then let the ground lie still a year and the tillage much the same about Sandwich. They have a particular way of cleaning the ground sown with beans with a machine call'd a shim, with irons at such a distance that two go between the rows and turn up the earth on each side against the beans. They mow the barley and bind it up in sheaves, and the field is raked clean with a horse-rake.[3]

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[1] Ann Smith, op. cit., 153; L.D. Stamp ed., The Report of the Land Utilization Survey of Britain, pt. 85 - Kent (1943), 578; VCH Kent, I (1908), 458.

[2] KAO PRC 27/29/183, 11/47/168.

[3] 'The Travels Through England of Dr Richard Pococke', Camden Society Publications, New Series, XLII (1888-9), 88.

Although some farmers allowed land to "lie still" (fallow) for a year this was by no means a universal practice, but restricted to "places where the land is not so good naturally, or they can't have such plenty of dung". Fallow fields were ploughed up to four times during the year and "they who keep flocks of sheep fold them on it". The cultivations carried out on ten acres of "summerland" at John Bennett's farm near Margate were valued at £6 in 1692. The inventory of Elizabeth Read of the same parish included £36 5s. for "plowing the summerland" in 1708. Two years later Richard Taddy was growing forty-two acres of barley, thirty-eight acres of wheat, and thirty acres of beans on his farm at St. Lawrence (Ramsgate). He was also "fallowing 50 acres of land for barley" to be sown in 1711. Taddy possessed a flock of 88 sheep which probably grazed on the fallow for part of the summer: a "fould and wattles" were employed for this purpose. However, where the land in Thanet was "either naturally so good as to bear being sown without laying it fallow, or who have dung enough to make it so rich as thus to be continually sown" farmers employed a "round tilth" (continuous cropping) rotation.[1]

Only about 2 per cent of the cropped acreage was used for growing oats (Table 19) - "a grain of which we have very little our farmers generally thinking their land too good for them".[2] The rotation observed by Pococke must be treated with caution: although it was employed by farmers who worked poorer soils, courses of oats and fallow were not common features of Thanet husbandry. Indeed, a variety of rotations prevailed even on a single farm; the precise combination of crops and the rotational sequence would have been dictated by local circumstances. Soils in Thanet vary considerably over quite short distances. The southern part of the Island from Pegwell Bay to St.

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[1] Lewis, op. cit., 14-15; KAO PRC 11/56/178, 11/68/106, 11/70/126.

[2] Lewis, op. cit., 15.

Nicholas (which includes Minster and Monkton) is "generally a fine, rich alluvial soil", inherently the most fertile in Thanet. The upper part of the Island is very different: the top soil above the cliffs between Margate and Ramsgate is very shallow although somewhat deeper in the neighbourhood of Birchington. But "the worst land is in the middle of the Island in a direct line between Margate and Minster".[1]

Artificial grasses, a prominent feature of Thanet farms were undersown with barley, treated as leys, and folded with sheep; a "clover or trefoil-lay" frequently preceded the wheat season.[2]

Beans were highly regarded as a preparation for barley: this sequence can be compared with the Faversham practice where beans were cultivated preparatory to sowing the chief crop of that district, wheat. Thus on the better lands in Thanet the rotation was:

1. Barley (undersown)
2. Clover
3. Wheat
4. Beans

This rotation was certainly in use by the later seventeenth century, probably from c. 1680 which represents a climacteric in the course of agricultural change in Thanet. It is worth noticing that this four-course rotation is similar but superior to the Norfolk rotation in which turnips were grown rather than beans. Thanet farmers, and indeed Kent farmers generally, were too wise to grow turnips, largely water and fibre, which have been much over-rated by agrarian historians. Beans were a valuable, high-protein crop which, according to the variety grown, supplied valuable horse-feed or catered for human requirements. Beans were also an indispensable nitrogen-fixing crop. The absence of turnips

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[1] Guide to the Isle of Thanet ... including an Article on the Geology and Agriculture of the Island (1887), 9-10.

[2] Ibid., 12.

was not detrimental to sheep numbers since the large and numerous flocks fared well on ley-grazings, sainfoin hay and pulses.

Although wheat was "sown almost all over the Island" and occupied between a quarter and a third of the cropped acreage, the importance of this crop rarely surpassed that of barley on the individual farms examined. The barley sown, at the rate of 4 bushels per acre, was "the common sort". "Sprack barley" says Lewis, "has been formerly pretty much sown in the rich land in the marshes ... but there is now very little or none of this grain sown hereabouts". Sir John Banks purchased Sprat barley seed for his farm at Boxley near Maidstone in 1680; eight years later he paid £4 6s. for four quarters of "Sprat barley to sow att Aylesford". John Philpott of Stone near Faversham had in store ten quarters of "countrey barley" and three and a half quarters of "Sprat barley" in 1690. "There are only two sorts of this grain cultivated", according to Boys, "the common long-eared English barley, and the short-eared sprat barley; the latter is only sown on some of the richest parts of the soil, where the common kind is likely to grow too stout and fall". William Ellis had seen Sprat barley growing near Erith "in their rank marshes" where it was favoured "because it is more hardy, and will not run into straw". But the same observer had also "seen it grow in drier ground about Bridge" near Canterbury. Tylden, exercising a characteristic measure of prudence, decided to grow Sprat barley on three acres of old hop ground at Milstead in 1742; we know from his crop records that this was one of the richest fields on the farm, too strong for common barley. Occasionally farmers experimented with other varieties: in 1704 the owner of Sharsted Court, Doddington purchased six quarters of "Barkeshire barley to sowe".[1]

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[1]Lewis, op. cit., 12-13, 15; KAO U234 A10, PRC 11/54/117; J. Boys, A General View of the Agriculture of the County of Kent (1796), 84; W. Ellis, The Modern Husbandman (8 Vols. 1750), V, 43; KAO U593 A3 f.199, U145 A7.

Thanet inventories show that, almost without exception, local farmers grew more barley than wheat, a reversal of the picture in the rest of the region. While the average (median) area of sown barley was 30 acres, no more than 15 acres of wheat, on average, was sown on each farm. However, the size of farms and the extent of the cropped area varied tremendously, more than in any other part of Kent. This was certainly due to the fact that, on the one hand some of Kent's largest farmers lived in Thanet and, on the other, there were numerous small growers whose incomes were dually-derived from farming and fishing.

George Christian, a wealthy Minster yeoman, was growing 120 acres of barley and 80 acres of wheat in 1699, the year of his death; the value of these two crops together amounted to more than half of his total personal estate of £903. Thorne Manor, a substantial Minster property, was farmed by Henry Austen in the early eighteenth century; in 1706, the year he died, Austen left 95 acres of barley growing in the fields. Mr David Turner lived and farmed at Powcys, an ancient manorial seat in Minster; when Turner died in the summer of 1710 he left 75 acres of barley growing at Powcys, and a further 93 acres at Nash Court; the areas sown to wheat on these farms were 75 acres and 48 acres respectively. The wealthiest farmer among the forty-five inventories collected for 1680 was John Welby who lived at Dandelion Farm in the parish of St. John the Baptist (Margate). Welby had 332 acres of growing crops; more than half the sown arable - 178 acres - was down to barley, 91 acres to wheat. Between them the value of these two crops accounted for half of Welby's personal estate of £1,284. A mile or so distant in the same parish, John Philpott farmed on a small scale: his personal wealth amounted to little more than £50 when he died in 1702; 12 acres of barley and 9 acres of wheat were Philpott's most valuable assets. Vincent Rickwood of St. Peter's was known locally as a "landman", a cryptic title employed no doubt to distinguish him from his maritime and

amphibious neighbours. When he died in 1704 worth only £45, Rickwood was growing four acres of barley and a small one-acre plot of wheat.[1]

Dr Pococke commented that "they are esteemed as good fishermen as well as husbandmen all over this Island /Thanet/". Susannah Eames of St. Lawrence (Ramsgate) was the widow of one of these Thanet amphibians; when she died in 1700 Mrs Eames' possessions included mackerel and herring nets, a pig, a couple of ewes and a lamb, and five stocks of bees; an acre of wheat and three roods of barley were the only crops growing on this property. Stephen Holman of Ramsgate died in 1701 worth more than £280 in personal estate; his largest investments were in local fishing vessels (sixteenths and thirty-seconds) including the boat he had skippered during his lifetime; he also possessed a cow, pigs, and "corne growing on ye ground" which comprised 1½ acres of barley, an acre of wheat, and an acre of tares. Fisherman cum farmers were certainly not all men of modest means. Thomas Sackett the elder of Margate was described as a "yeoman" at the time of his death in 1709; the largest item in his lengthy inventory was for grain in store: 15 quarters of wheat and 20 quarters of barley which together amounted to £81 10s.; but in addition to a wide range of farm stock Sackett possessed a "salt-house", and a "herring house" equipped with "herring spitts" and "herring barrels"; altogether he was said to be worth nearly £500.[2]

Lewis estimated, in 1723, that farmers in Thanet "often" harvested five or six quarters of barley from an acre "and sometimes seven"; he had known Sprat barley produce "7 or 8 seams or quarters per acre". "A marsh-soil in Kent", said Ellis, "has yielded eleven quarters off one acre of Sprat barley". The higher estimates clearly refer to exceptional yields and we should not generalize from them. Lewis, however, is a

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[1]KAO PRC 11/61/31, 11/70/253, 27/38/110, 11/41/155, 11/63/120, 11/65/116.

[2]'Travels ... of Dr Pococke', op. cit., 88; KAO PRC 11/62/96, 27/35/121, 11/69/112.

most reliable source and we can safely take his lower figures - five or six quarters - as somewhere near the usual yield for Thanet, a specialist barley-growing area. Little work appears to have been done concerning yield ratios for barley although Hoskins suggests a ratio of between 5 and 6 for Devon and Cornwall in 1688. The yield ratio for Thanet barley was almost certainly not less than 10 or 12 and may have risen to 14; a high level of productivity is suggested.[1]

The improvement of the light free-draining soils of Thanet by skilled cultivations, the use of "modern" rotations incorporating "new" crops and short leys, and - as we shall see later - the widespread cultivation of sainfoin and intensive stocking of the land with sheep using the "fold" system were integrated into a system of "high farming" which was admired, and not infrequently envied, by every onlooker. Professor Jones has recently said of the light soils:

> Unaided, they had been too infertile to sustain permanent cropping, but with the introduction of fodder crops - notably legumes which fix their own nitrogen - rotations of these and cereal courses could be maintained.[2]

Most of the light lands in Thanet were not naturally fertile, but energetic farmers in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries progressively raised the productivity of their holdings until they became models of perfection. The clearest contemporary statement of early eighteenth-century "high farming" comes from the pen of John Lewis:

> This fruitfulness of the generality of the Island, where the land is naturally poor and barren, is in a great measure owing to the industry and good husbandry of the occupiers of these lands, who spare neither cost nor labour to help and improve them.[3]

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[1] Lewis, op. cit., 13, 15; Ellis, op. cit., 51; Hoskins, op. cit., 26.

[2] Jones, Agriculture and Economic Growth, op. cit., 9.

[3] Lewis, op. cit., 12.

Just forty years later Thanet farming received its accolade from John Lyon:

> Agriculture is carried here to a degree of perfection, perhaps not to be found in any other part of the known world ... The land, which in almost all other places is laid in ridge and furrow, is here nearly as level as a bowling-green. The farmers spare neither labour nor expence to keep the corn clean. You will be surprised to find, that in the compass of some miles there is hardly a weed to be seen in it.[1]

Improved farming in early Georgian England reached its apogee on the barley lands of Thanet where the system, no less spectacular than Norfolk husbandry, was in certain respects of superior merit.

E Beans: a Revolutionary Row Crop

Beans were the third most important crop in Thanet after barley and wheat, by the second decade of the eighteenth century (Table 19). The average (median) acreage per farm was ten acres. In the remainder of the region beans were relatively more important: the crop accounted for at least a fifth of the sown arable, in some parishes - for example Ash - almost a third. In the region as a whole the average (median) area of beans per farm was six acres in 1680, eleven acres in 1713-17, and as much as twenty-six acres in the 1740's and 1750's.

If it is possible to select a single development as Kent's unique contribution to the progress of "agricultural revolution" in England during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, this must surely be the cultivation of beans as a row crop on the farms of the north-eastern region. Bean cultivation was "the most meritorious" aspect of Kentish agriculture according to Arthur Young, who observed

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[1] J. Lyon, A Description of the Isle of Thanet and particularly of the Town of Margate (1763), 6-7. In the nineteenth century it was recounted: "The Isle of Thanet has long been famed as a corn-growing district", Guide to the Isle of Thanet, op. cit., 8.

that the finest crops of wheat "were almost universally after beans". Marshall, who was unusually critical - misguidedly - of some features of Thanet husbandry, believed that "in the management of pulse, as a fallow crop, the Isle of Thanet farmers may claim great merit". John Banister was full of praise for the Kentish method of bean cultivation on the rich loams of the Faversham district.[1]

Detailed accounts of the Kentish method of bean-growing featured significantly in the works of contemporary writers. The first detailed authoritative statement appeared in 1723 in John Lewis' classic work on Thanet:

> The planting of beans here, is a very late and modern improvement. For this purpose they begin to plough their land as soon as wheat-season is ended viz. about the beginning of December, when some of the occupiers of the richer lands carry out their dung, thereby to fit them for a wheat tilth; others don't dung their land till their crop of beans is off. The land thus ploughed lies till about the beginning of March, when with a plough they furrow the land, and in the furrows put their beans, which they chuse to have drop'd by women &c. hired for that purpose. But where they can't get enow of them, they make use of a box out of which they are drop'd by the seedsman. The land being thus furrowed, gives the farmer an opportunity of keeping them clear of weeds, by people's going betwixt the rows of beans to pull the weeds up which grow among them, and the furrows or spaces themselves being either houghed with a large hough, or cleared of weeds and rubbish by what they call a shim or brake-plough. This is a piece of iron, at the bottom of two cheeks with holes in them, which are put thro' a frame of timber drawn with one horse, and with iron pins is let up or down as there is occasion ... With this a man, and a little boy to go with the horse, will clear of weeds, 2 acres, or 2 acres and a half in a day. Sometimes they have two of these shims in use together, a man or boy going betwixt them and guiding the two horses that draw them, by which means a greater riddance is made. By this management, the fields where these beans are planted, lie very neat and clear of weeds, they which grow among the beans, where the shim cannot come, being pull'd up by women, &c. as often as there is occasion, and the ground is thereby fitted for what they call a wheat-tilth.[2]

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[1] Young, op. cit., II, 72, 74; W. Marshall, The Rural Economy of the Southern Counties (2 Vols. 1798), II, 37; Banister, op. cit., 27-8.

[2] Lewis, op. cit., 13-14.

The evolution of a new agricultural implement - the shim or brake - was incident to this development and its importance can hardly be exaggerated. Lewis included a drawing of the shim together with those of other Thanet "utensils of husbandry" (Plate 1). The Kentish shim, a horse-hoe designed specially for producing a fine, weed-free tilth between rows of beans, was soon adapted by the region's hop growers for inter-row cultivation in the hop grounds.[1]

Shims, brakes, and brake-ploughs, numerous in the inventories of the region, were in use from at least 1680. When Thomas Holmes of Ickham, a few miles east of Canterbury, died in 1680 his possessions included three "braking ploughs for beanes". Thomas Johnson cultivated Hayne Farm in the Thanet parish of St. Lawrence until his death in 1705; included among his stock of implements was "a bean shim". Richard Wraith, a well-to-do yeoman who farmed at Sarre, had "2 shims to brake beanes with ready fixt" and stored in his wagon lodge during the winter 1707-8. In 1716 Robert Minter of Ash possessed two "brake shims" said to be worth sixteen shillings - a modest price compared with his two "dung courts" valued at £3 apiece.[2]

The evidence is unequivocal: more than half a century before Jethro Tull wrote The Horse-Hoeing Husbandry (1733) farmers in north-east Kent had revolutionized their local husbandry by the innovation of row-crop cultivation and, at the same time, had developed a custom-built horse hoe to facilitate summer field-work; the shim was an inexpensive implement manufactured by local blacksmiths and readily available to all farmers. The "bean box" was a rudimentary seed-drill in common use on Thanet farms and the hink and the twibil (bean hook) were further local innovations - hand tools specially designed for harvesting the bean crop (Plate 2).

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[1]The hop-shim became known as the nidget. See infra, 507-8.

[2]KAO PRC 27/29/116, 11/66/59, 27/37/229, 27/40/47.

Ellis described the Kentish method of harvesting beans:

> In Kent, a man cuts them down with two short instruments called there hook and hinks, or hook and swipe, with which he pulls a parcel towards him with the left hand, and cuts or chops them down with the right, and so quick, that some will cut an acre and a half of drilled beans in a day.[1]

The Society of Arts published an informative letter from a gentleman-farmer at Margate in which he described the local method of cultivating beans using "the shim or Kentish horse-hoe" (Appendix III). This letter was accompanied by illustrations of shim, hink, and twibil, obviously taken from Lewis' work. Some years later Arthur Young observed the shim in common use around Faversham. He described its construction and function, explaining that the implement was designed for work "among the beans even when they are in full blossom" and "they receive no damage from it".[2]

Finally, local versions of two other items of farm gear - associated to some extent with beans - evolved in the Thanet area. Horse-rakes "for the purpose of clearing from the ground the stubble of corn crops and tearing up the weeds" were common enough. But some horse-rakes were specially designed "for the purpose of levelling land in which the earth has been heaped up round the roots of the plants which formed the last crop" (Plate 1). This horse-rake cum cultivator was a Kentish speciality remarked upon by Thaer, the famous nineteenth-century German agriculturist:

> They are principally used for this purpose in the county of Kent, where they are employed to give a certain degree of tillage to land after the bean crops have been gathered, and to prevent the soil from becoming infested with weeds

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[1] Ellis, Modern Husbandman, op. cit., V, 68.

[2] Museum Rusticum, op. cit., I, 260-7; Young, op. cit., II, 70.

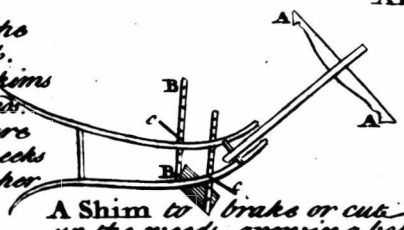
Plate 1

Farm tools and implements illustrated in the outstanding eighteenth-century book on Thanet: John Lewis, The History of the Isle of Tenet (Margate 1736, 1st edn. 1723).

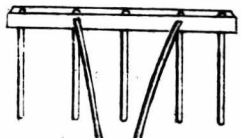
Utensils of Husbandry

A Rake to bind Barley.

AA. The billets to which the Horses traces are fastned.
BB. The Iron share which skims the ground or cuts up ye weeds.
cc. two Iron pins which are put thro the holes in ye cheeks of the share to raise it higher or let it down lower.



A Shim to brake or cut up the weeds growing betwixt the rows of beans &c.

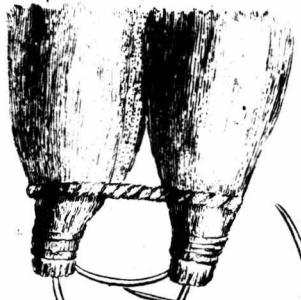


A Podware hook to reap Peas &c.

A Cleaning Rake.

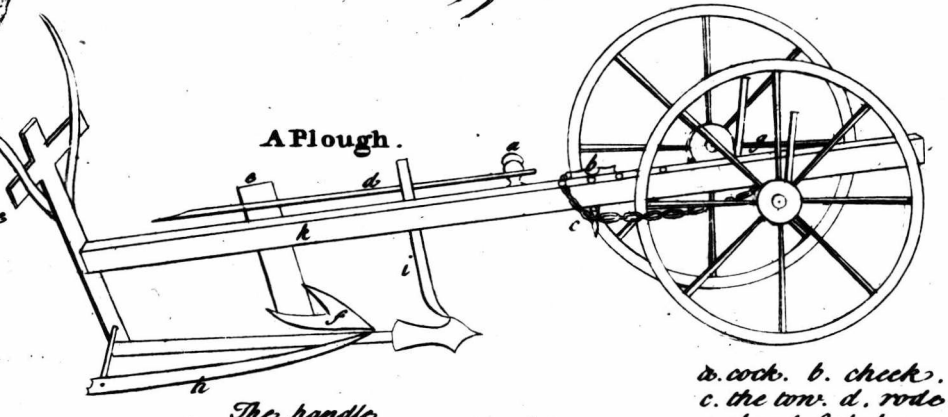
an ancient gold ring

A Scythe fixed with what they call a Cradle or Creet A.S. cræt of wood, to mow Barley with, where it is very great



A Sprye Corn to cleane with.

A Plough.



a. cock. b. cheek. c. the tow. d. rode. e. sheath. f. shehre-reste. g. bolster. h. the reste or reeste. i. the coulter. k. the plough beam.

The handle to heave up the rake with when full.

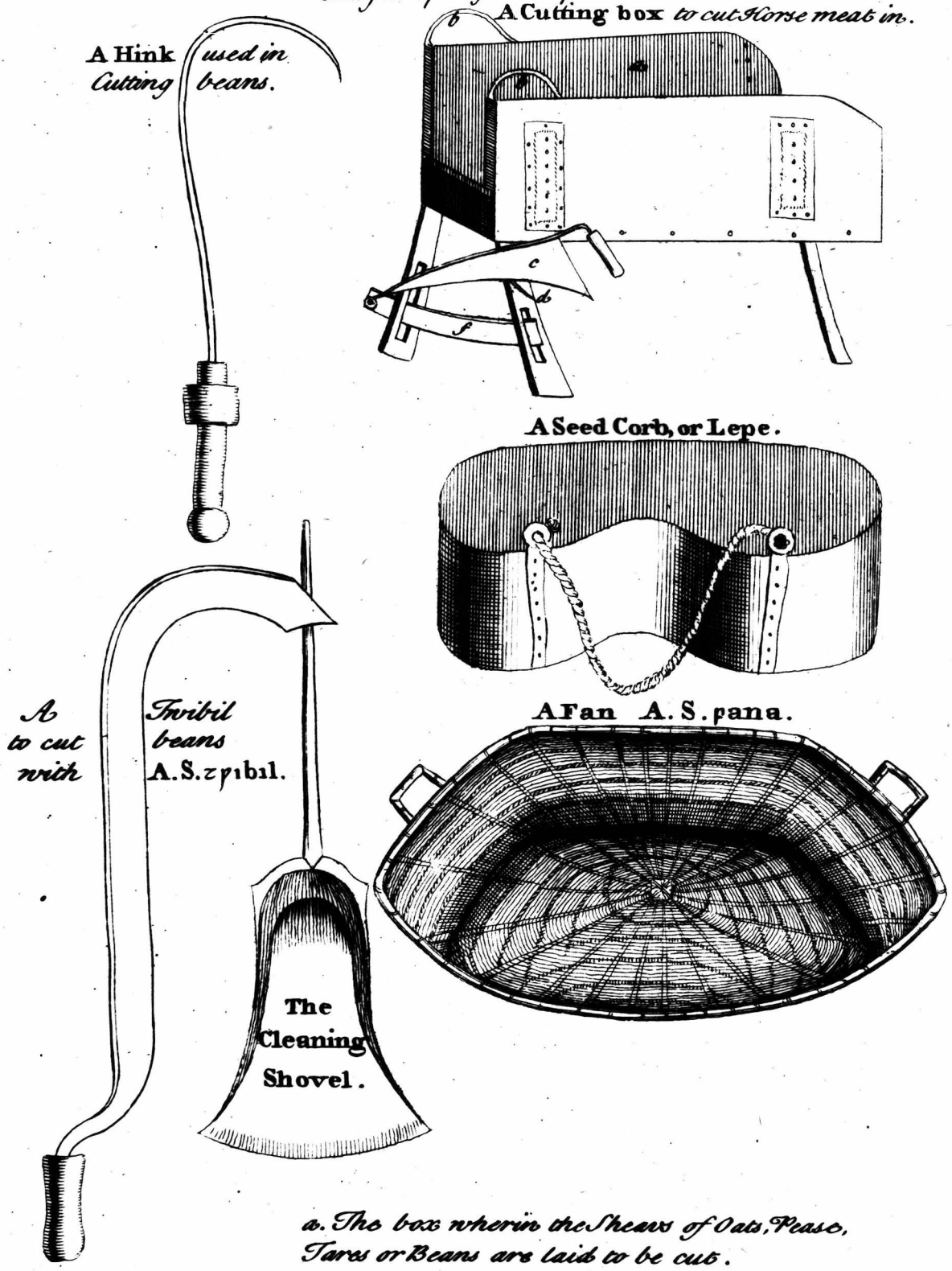
11 feet

A Horse Rake.

Plate 2

Farm tools and implements from John Lewis, The History of the Isle of Tenet (Margate 1736).

Utensils of Husbandry.



a. The box wherin the Sheaves of Oats, Pease, Tares or Beans are laid to be cut.
bb. an Iron plate with wch the mouth of the box is lined.
c. The cutting knife.
d. a rest for it when not in use.
f. The Sweep wherby the Cutter plays up & down when in use.

> during the period which has to elapse before the proper time arrives for ploughing it previous to the sowing.[1]

Cutting boxes were found on every farm where horses were kept, in other words the vast majority of farms in the region. A "cutter and box", though worth only a few shillings, is one of the most common entries in a Kentish inventory. A heavy-type version which could cope with a variety of crops was in general use in Thanet and is illustrated by Lewis (Plate 2) who describes the local method of preparing "horsemeat":

> They ... feed their horses in the stable with oats, beans, and pease, in the sheaf unthreshed, which the servants cut in a box, with a cutter made for that purpose, which is pretty hard work, and which way of feeding their horses, make it in a manner necessary that either the ploughman or his mate should be almost always with them, as they generally are, day and night.[2]

Several varieties of beans were cultivated in Kent. Field beans were grown largely for horse-feed, and for fattening hogs, and were known as horse beans or tick beans. "In England", remarked Thäer, "beans are regarded as the best of all kinds of fodder, not only for draught, but also for race horses". Lewis mentions flat ticks, round ticks, and French ticks (also known as small horse beans). The larger ticks (both flat and round) frequently appear in the inventories as "great beans" to distinguish them from the lesser ticks or "small beans". In addition there were "garden beans" referred to as such in the inventories although grown on a field-scale: Hotspurs and Gospurs were two common garden

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[1] A.D. Thäer, Principles of Agriculture (2 Vols. 1844), II, 58. A recent publication in East Germany has described Thäer as "the most important figure among agriculturalists of the world": I am grateful to Dr Joan Thirsk for this information.

[2] Lewis, op. cit., 16. The valuable drawings of Lewis appear to have gone unnoticed by historians investigating farming techniques. The cutting box, for example, appears to be the earliest illustration of its kind. I am indebted to Mr Andrew Jewell, Curator of The Museum of English Rural Life, Reading, on whose private observations my comment is based.

varieties grown in the early eighteenth century; the Windsor, Lisbon Longpod, and the Mazagan were creeping in during this period and were widely grown later in the century. William White, a yeoman who farmed at St. Nicholas-at-Wade in Thanet had ten quarters of "Hotspurs" in store in 1738. It seems that during the course of the century some of the large varieties of tick beans grown in Kent were also used for human consumption and became known as "Negro beans, so called from the quantity yearly exported to our West India islands for food to the Negroes". Tick beans were an altogether complex group. Boys says that "Common Ticks" were "the sort most generally cultivated by the Kentish farmers and is used for fattening hogs, and as food for horses"; this variety appears to correspond to Lewis' "Round Ticks", for Boys also mentions "Large Flat Ticks" (also called May beans) as well as the small ticks (which by this time include "Essex Ticks" as well as French).[1]

The inventories are rarely precise about varieties although we can assume that both "great beans" and "small beans" were varieties of ticks grown mainly for animal feed. The sowing rate was, on average, two and a half bushels per acre. According to Arthur Young yields varied from three and a half to six quarters per acre. This suggests yield ratios varying from 11.2 to 19.2, high compared with cereal crops but probably somewhere near the truth.[2]

Many inventories record sizeable acreages of beans without giving further details. Thus, wheat (49 acres) and beans (30 acres) were the most important crops grown by William Pett of St. Nicholas-at-Wade in 1746; barley (24 acres) represented his third most important investment in crops. John Prall, a wealthy Murston yeoman, grew 72 acres of wheat and 46 acres each of beans and barley in 1748; his other arable crops

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[1] Thäier, op. cit., II, 476; Lewis, op. cit., 13, 19; Banister, op. cit., 106; Boys, op. cit., 85; KAO PRC 27/43/74.

[2] Banister, op. cit., 108; Young, op. cit., II, 74.

were peas (17 acres) and oats (6 acres). Thomas Carter who farmed on the London clay at Boughton-under-Blean grew no oats or barley in 1754 but confined his arable crops to wheat (44 acres) and beans (34 acres). Occasionally beans were grown as part of a mixed crop: Josias Miles farmed at Minster in the Isle of Sheppey and in 1752, the year he died, was growing 28 acres of tares and beans, a highly-suitable dredge for horse-feed. In October 1714 the crops of Obadiah Keys were safely in store at his farm in Minster (Thanet): the most valuable crop was wheat said to be worth £85; but "great beans" (£63) and "small beans and Gospars" (£24) together slightly exceeded the value of his most important cereal.[1]

At Sandwich the holdings of both farmers and market gardeners produced a variety of bean crops. A bushel of "Turkey beanes" was recorded among the possessions of Robert Friend who died in 1680. Some years later John Lewis cited "a little farmer in the parish of Minster" who occupied a holding of about £40 a year and who had once "paid his rent with a crop of turkey beans", which, at the time, fetched 50s. a bushel; these were undoubtedly beans of the garden variety. Daniel Hoback, described as a "gardner", was growing three acres of "small beans" and six acres of "great beanes" in 1693; he also possessed in store "turkey beans" for seed valued at £4 3s. 6d. In the winter of 1727 Daniel Ambrose, "gardner", possessed in store "small beans" worth £4 10s., "great beans" valued at £15, and "Turkey beans and thyme seed" which together were said to be worth £5. Jacob Stamper, another Sandwich gardener, possessed "Turkey beans" worth £3 4s. when he died in 1729; Stamper also engaged in general farming and one of his most valuable field crops was "great beans" worth £36; he also had "small beans" worth £6. Mary Bunce grew "small beans", "garden beans" (2 acres) and "French beanes" on

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[1]KAO PRC 27/43/157, 27/43/150, 11/83/161, 11/83/123, 11/72/203.

her Sandwich smallholding in 1700.[1]

F Oats, Peas, Tares and Dredge

There is not a single farm on which oats were the predominant crop. Indeed, in much of the region, oats were the least important of the cereals and frequently less significant than pulses. The extreme position was reached in Thanet (Table 19) where fields of oats were a rare sight. Thomas Denne, a wealthy Thanet farmer, had a huge store of crops in his barns at Minster in December 1700; his wheat - two hundred quarters valued at £280 - was the most valuable crop, although in quantity barley was greater - two hundred and sixty quarters valued at £208. In addition Denne possessed two hundred quarters of "beanes great and small" worth £170, peas and tares valued at £20, but a mere three quarters of oats worth £1 10s. This was typical of large Thanet farms.[2]

In contrast to the situation in Thanet, oats were most prominent in Sheppey and along the Downland dip slope. As much as a fifth of the cropped arable was sown down to oats in Sheppey, more than 16 per cent in Downland parishes during the period 1711-60 (Tables 23 and 24). Thomas Man of Eastchurch was an arable farmer and grazier; in 1685 he was growing 50 acres of wheat, 20 acres of peas and beans, and 16 acres of "black oats". James Stamp farmed at Minster (Sheppey) in the early eighteenth century, where he occupied extensive grazings, and also grew wheat, beans and oats on his arable, altogether a typical Sheppey pattern: 55 acres of wheat grew "upon Furzen hill" in 1736, and a further 20 acres in "Rag Field" where he also had 10 acres of beans; 30 acres of oats had been sown on the "second Rag Field". The crops of Thomas Bax of Eastchurch were in store when he died in 1757: eighty quarters of wheat, forty

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[1] Lewis, op. cit., 20; KAO PRC 27/29/18, 11/58/75, 11/78/187, 11/79/74, 11/62/127.

[2] KAO PRC 11/62/94.

quarters of beans, and twenty-four quarters of oats. Almost a third of Richard Ivett's cropped acreage - 26 acres - at Hartlip Place near the foot of the Downs, was given over to the cultivation of oats in 1719. The same farm thirty years later was growing 23 acres of oats sown with tares, almost 15 per cent of the farm's arable which now extended to 161 acres; like the majority of farms in the locality wheat remained the most important crop with 43 acres sown in 1719, 73 acres in 1749.[1]

Oats were grown principally for horse-feed. There were numerous varieties usually distinguished by their colour, black, white, red, even grey. Black oats, especially the Devonshire strain, were most commonly sown on the chalky lands "and, being very hardy will grow on almost any poor soil". White oats preferred somewhat better soils, not necessarily rich. Most farmers who grew oats probably sowed several varieties according to the quality of their fields. Oats were a regular feature at Hogshaw Farm, Milstead where Richard Tylden grew between 25 and 30 acres each year during the period for which detailed records survive (1722-53): Black oats were sown every year, White oats on certain fields after 1737, and Red oats occasionally. In 1748, when Red oats first appear in Milstead records, they seem to have yielded better than the other varieties: oat yields were 23, 26.3, and 35.1 bushels per acre for White, Black and Red oats respectively. However, the following year results were rather different: yields were 41.3, 32, and 26.4 bushels per acre of White, Black and Red oats respectively. In 1750 Tylden experimented with a seed-mixture of Black and Red oats but the results show that the White variety was still superior in yield - 37.7 bushels per acre compared with 19.8 for the Red and Black together. During the period 1738-53 the average yield per acre of White oats was 28.5 bushels compared with 23.5 bushels for the Black variety. Assuming a sowing-

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[1]KAO PRC 11/49/139, 11/81/55, 11/84/71, 11/75/123, 11/83/63.

rate of 3.5 bushels per acre this suggests an average yield ratio for White oats of around 8. Yield ratios for oats in other parts of the country appear to have been much lower, reaching only 4.3 in Devon for instance.[1]

The records show that Kent farmers experimented with different varieties of oats. Nicholas Page, who farmed at Crundale south-west of Canterbury, grew Grey as well as White oats in 1709. Edward Smith harvested both Black and White oats on his farm at Ospringe in 1713. Thomas Davis planted 20 acres of "White Poland Oats" on his farm at Wickhambreux east of Canterbury in 1704; they yielded three quarters to the acre and were valued at 12s. a quarter. John Silkwood of Northbourne south of Sandwich grew "Poland oats" on his farm in 1714, the year before his death. "Poland oats" stated Banister, "have a kernel much larger than any other kind, and on rich land will produce crops very luxuriant". This variety received special mention by Plot at the end of the seventeenth century when he contrasted them with "common Black and White".[2]

Oats were frequently sown mixed with other seeds, especially peas and tares, producing a dredge suitable for horse-feed. However, during the course of the period there was a tendency towards "straight" sowings. An examination of inventory samples suggests that whereas 40 per cent of farmers might grow a dredge in 1680, the number was unlikely to exceed 15 per cent by the end of the period. This indicates a trend towards more efficient farming since the blending of fodder grains after threshing allows a much more precise control over the composition of the final mixture and is altogether a better practice. In any case, even at the

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[1]Banister, op. cit., 100; Boys, op. cit., 89; KAO U593 A3; Hoskins, op. cit., 26.

[2]KAO PRC 11/73/89, 11/71/18; PRO E134 3 Anne/Mich. 9; KAO PRC 11/72/148; Banister, op. cit., 99; Baker, op. cit., 216.

beginning of the period the fields sown with dredge normally represented a very small proportion of the cropped acreage.

A bewildering array of pea varieties was grown, although the inventories seldom state more than the colour, frequently not even that. Plot mentioned seventeen varieties of peas in his Kentish "enquiries" and by the end of the eighteenth century the list had grown and changed in composition. Banister thought that many of the variations represented only "trifling distinctions founded chiefly on the caprice of the grower". Field peas were used mainly for fattening hogs, an important activity in the region and one which no doubt largely explains the increased significance of the crop and its widespread incidence across the soils of north-east Kent where the relative importance of peas roughly doubled (from 3 or 4 per cent to almost 8 per cent) during the period.[1]

The most commonly grown peas were the yellow and grey varieties. Thomas Conyers grew 12 acres of each of these varieties at his farm in St. Martin's parish, Canterbury in 1662-3. Tylden grew up to seven acres of peas in the 1720's, ten acres in the 1750's, usually described as "yellow peas". In 1745 five acres were sown at Milstead with a variety known as "Cobham Grey peas", probably an experimental sowing since the exercise was not repeated. In 1723 John Fairman had sown $3\frac{3}{4}$ acres of "White peas" on his farm at Ash. "Roading peas" appear to have been a favourite "garden" variety although, like "garden" beans, were frequently grown on a field-scale. The Minter family of Ash grew Roading peas during the early eighteenth century: Robert Minter had nine acres of this variety in 1716; Henry Minter had ten quarters of "Ridden peas" in store in 1721, as well as twelve quarters of "Grey peas". John Collens, a neighbouring farmer, had ten bushels of "Reding peas" in his barn in the same year. The ten quarters of "ridden peas" stored in

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[1] Baker, loc. cit.; Boys, op. cit., 90; Banister, op. cit., 116.

William White's barn at St. Nicholas-at-Wade in 1738 were valued at the rate of 15s. 6d. a quarter.[1]

The method of harvesting peas was similar to that employed for beans:

> In Kent they make use of two instruments in this work, called hook and hinks, or hook and swipe, which their men dexterously manage; and when all is cut down and dried, they make bands of the same and bind the pease up in bundles for carrying home, as in the ... inning of horse-beans.[2]

Hartlib observed that "in Kent sometimes tares are sowen, which when the cattel have eaten a little of the tops, they turn them in, with very good improvements for their ground". Peter Kalm saw tares growing in Kent in 1748: "the farmers cut it up green ... and give it to horses who eat it very greedily". Tares or vetches, said Banister, "are sown chiefly with a view to sheep feed or to cut the haulm green for the horses in the summer, for both which purposes they are well adapted, falling in at a season when the clovers and other grasses are not arrived to a height sufficient to answer these ends". Tare hay, which made "excellent fodder", was also highly regarded.[3]

Peas and tares were often sown together in the same field. Edward Okenfold grew 14 acres of this mixture on his farm at St. Nicholas in 1684; this crop, together with 12 acres of tick beans, ensured a plentiful supply of fodder for his horses and cattle that winter. The same dredge was sown, albeit infrequently, at the end of the period: Thomas

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[1]PRO E134 19 Chas.2/Mich. 24; KAO U593 A3, PRC 27/41/151, 27/40/47, 27/41/36, 27/41/10, 27/43/74. I have rendered the last variety as "Roading" rather than "Reading" in view of the following comment: "At Sandwich in Kent, in the year 1738, being a hot, dry summer, I saw sacks full of the Essex Roading-pease put on board a hoy for their sale in London ...". W. Ellis, Modern Husbandman, op. cit., IV, 42.

[2]Ellis, op. cit., V, 61.

[3]S. Hartlib, The Compleat Husbandman (1659), 37; Kalm, op. cit., 440; Banister, op. cit., 124, 127.

Stanley cultivated 14 acres of peas and tares together at Gore Court Farm, Tunstall near Sittingbourne in 1758. Occasionally tares and beans were sown together: Josias Miles of Minster (Sheppey) had sown 28 acres of this dredge before he died in 1752.[1]

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[1]KAO PRC 27/30/100, 11/84/61, 11/83/123.

CHAPTER 5

LAND UTILIZATION: THE CULTIVATION OF SPECIAL CROPS

A Grassland and the Artificial Grasses

There is no satisfactory method for estimating the amount of permanent grassland (meadow, upland pasture, and marsh) in the region. Chalklin examined land-use in Kent during the seventeenth century from a limited number of estate maps. However, hardly any maps have survived for north-east Kent during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and, in any case, we can never be sure that isolated estate maps are representative of the region as a whole so far as land-use is concerned.

Chalklin's figures suggest that rather less than a quarter of agricultural land in north Kent was permanent grassland. As we have seen already, marshes abounded along the coastal fringe, as well as in the valley of the Stour in Thanet and a few other parishes north-east of Canterbury.[1]

In the eighteenth century, as in the seventeenth "there was probably little permanent conversion of arable into meadow or pasture, or of meadow or grazing land into tillage". In 1663 seventeen acres of "the Park Lands" in St. Martin's parish at Canterbury were "ploughed up and converted into tillage". However, such examples are rare and, generally speaking, clauses in tenancy agreements inveighed against the practice.[2]

Fresh marsh was occasionally ploughed-up and sown with flax, canary grass, Sprat barley, even wheat. But the amount of land broken-up in this way was a tiny proportion of the total cultivated area and, in any case, reclamations more than compensated for the small losses to the pastoral economy. Marshland was highly prized and, at least until the

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[1] C.W. Chalklin, Seventeenth-Century Kent: A Social and Economic History (1965), 76.

[2] Ibid., 77; PRO E134 19 Chas.2/Mich. 24.

mid-seventeenth century, its value was increasing. It was asserted in 1641 that marshlands in the Thanet parishes of Minster and Monkton were, at the beginning of the century, "lett for little more than halfe of what they now are in both places".[1]

Meadow land remained untouched for centuries for, as John Boys remarked: "When once a field is become a good old meadow, it is held sacred: and it is a common covenant in leases, not to break up old grass lands". Appraisers frequently considered marsh hay important enough to itemise separately in an inventory. William May of Ash possessed "marsh hay and clover" worth £11 when he died in 1707. John Philpott of the same parish had six acres of hay said to be worth £10 5s. "att the marsh at Richborow" in 1710.[2]

A familiar feature of the region today is "grass orchards grazed by sheep /which/ are the usual rule". It is not always appreciated that this system of management was already widespread in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and that such land was an indispensable source of grazing. It was observed at the beginning of the eighteenth century that "pasture ... serves not only for feeding cattle, as cows, horses, sheep &c. but for planting great orchards of apples, pears, cherries and plumbs of which it produceth great plenty". Occasionally the inventories throw light on the matter. When the possessions of Stephen Hedges, husbandman of Tonge, were assessed in 1708 the appraisers said that "grass in ye cherry garden" was worth £2. A survey of the parish of Davington near Faversham in 1793 shows that 3 per cent of the agricultural land was under orchards, mostly cherries; each orchard was further described as "pasture" or "under grass". The only permanent pasture belonging to

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[1] Camden Society Publications, Old Series, CXXX (1862), 109. I owe this reference to the kindness of Dr Joan Thirsk.

[2] J. Boys, A General View of the Agriculture of the County of Kent (1796), 107; KAO PRC 27/37/184, 27/38/95.

Hogshaw Farm at Milstead was the grass in the orchards, together with an acre of "old meadow" - twelve acres altogether, or about 6 per cent of the farm's area; sometimes an orchard was mown for hay before the fruit picking season.[1]

The value of permanent grassland for grazing and hay production should not be underestimated. The swards contained an immense variety of indigenous grasses and other highly nutritious plants including dandelion, cowslip, wild carrot, shepherd's purse, groundsel, sorrel, clovers, trefoils and many more. The value of good much sought-after meadow hay is still recognized today and it is a crude exaggeration to assert, as one recent writer has, that: "In the mid seventeenth century ... permanent grassland had almost gone by the board".[2]

Ley farming, also known variously as convertible, alternate, or up-and-down husbandry, prevailed in north-east Kent throughout the period. The introduction of leys into the pattern of arable farming facilitated the rearing and fattening of increased numbers of livestock and, at the same time, the fertility and soil structure of the farm was improved by the additional manuring due to heavier stocking, the nitrogen-fixing properties of the "new" plants, and the humus content of the swards when ploughed under. The crux of agrarian improvement was the combination of animal and crop husbandry in optimal proportions, a position more easily achieved within a system of ley farming. In short, leys ensured increased productivity in both the crop and livestock sectors of the farm economy.

Ley farming was established in Kent at least by the early seventeenth

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[1] L.D. Stamp, The Land of Britain: its Use and Misuse (3rd ed. 1962), 118; T. Cox, 'A Topographical, Ecclesiastical, and Natural History of Kent', Magna Britannia et Hibernia Antique et Nova (1700), 1193; KAO PRC 11/68/62, U390 P4, U593 A3.

[2] G.E. Fussell, The English Dairy Farmer (1966), 79-81; E. Jacob, Plantae Favershamienses (1777), passim; E. Kerridge, The Farmers of Old England (1973), 62.

century. Markham considered that the wet, cold clays of the Weald, after three or four years tillage benefited greatly from a five or six year ley "well set with a white clover" while three or four year leys were more suited to the better, more easily worked soils elsewhere in the county. On the "cold weeping ground" in the Ashford district the land was "not fitt to bee continued in tillage, but we lay it downe for pasture or meadow for ten or twelve yeares, then we convert it to tillage".[1]

The introduction of new strains of clover, trefoil, and sainfoin into ley farming was the most striking innovation during the seventeenth century. Red clover and rye grass seeds were first imported into England from the Low Countries in 1620, regularly thereafter. One of the oldest records of the cultivation of clover is the well-known description by Sir Richard Weston of the agriculture of the Waes region of the Netherlands where he stayed in 1644. During the second half of the century Hartlib, Blith, and Yarranton were the foremost champions of ley husbandry incorporating the new "artificial grasses".[2]

It is impossible to show precisely the influence of France and the Low Countries, and of the seventeenth-century agricultural writers on the ley husbandry of north-east Kent. It would be surprising, however, if the strong Dutch and French connections with Sandwich and Canterbury which proved so fruitful in other forms of intensive husbandry - for instance hop-growing and market gardening - were not of considerable significance where the new crops were concerned, especially since Kent was one of the first counties where they were taken up on any scale. Unfortunately, it is almost impossible to be exact or categorical about innovations in

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[1] G. Markham, Inrichment of the Weald (1625), 7, 13, 18, 20; Royal Society MSS. Classified Papers, 28.

[2] N. Riches, The Agricultural Revolution in Norfolk (Chapel Hill 1937), 88; Sir R. Weston, A Discourse of Husbandry used in Brabant and Flanders, showing a wonderful improvement of land there (1650); S. Hartlib, Legacy of Husbandry (1651); W. Blith, The English Improver Improved (1652); A. Yarranton, The Great Improvement of Lands by Clover (1663).

agrarian history; we are drawn inevitably into a world of rural legend, of stories which betook a slightly fuddled way from one inn to the next, and anecdotes handed down from father to son, until it is difficult to discern with any certainty where new fashions and methods began or who began them.

Although sainfoin was not the first artificial grass to be experimented with, it was the earliest to be received into the general practice of husbandry. Of sainfoin Hartlib wrote: "I have seen it sown in divers places here in England especially in Cobham Park in Kent, about 4 miles from Gravesend, where it hath thriven extraordinary well upon dry chalky banks where nothing else would grow, and indeed such dry barren land is most proper for it ... although it will grow indifferently well on all lands". Lewis wrote, in 1723, that in the Isle of Thanet "on their thinnest and most barren ground ... the farmers here have of late years, sown a French grass called Sante-Foin". He thought the crop was first grown in the area around 1680. This was a relatively early date of adoption since it was observed of sainfoin in the 1670's that "there hath not been so much of it yet sown, as that it can be generally felt throughout the kingdome". A tithe dispute in 1709 concerned 80 acres of land at Nash Court in St. John's (Margate); it was said at the time that "a great part is sown with sainfoin which has been introduced lately soe cannot be a custome". Farmers may have been deterred earlier by the heavy outlay involved in the purchase of sainfoin seed. "The seed is first to be had out of France where it is sold for about three pence a pound" wrote Blith in 1652, "but here it was sold very dear at nine pence, ten pence, or twelve pence a pound this year". It appears that eventually improved English rather than French sainfoin was grown in most places in England. Thanet farmers showed a distinct preference for the indigenous strain.[1]

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[1] Hartlib, op. cit., 2; J. Lewis, The History of the Isle of Tenet (Margate 1723), 17; Anon., St. Foine Improved or the Grasse called St. Foine (1674), 6; Cornwall Record Office, DDBu764; Blith, op. cit., 187; E. Kerridge, The Agricultural Revolution (1967), 278-9.

Kent records seem to indicate that the cultivation of sainfoin was adopted rather tardily by farmers in the 1680's and 1690's, much more rapidly thereafter when the effects of lower prices began to be felt and, at the same time, the urgency for "improvement" was greater.

Sir John Banks was growing 17 acres of sainfoin at his Aylesford estate near Maidstone in 1680; the crop was grown continuously throughout the following decade; ten quarters of "Synkfoy seed" grown at Aylesford fetched £13 14s. 6d. when it was sold in 1687. James Bradley of Upchurch near Rainham was described as a "mariner" at the time of his death in 1684. But, in addition to his maritime investments, Bradley also farmed on a modest scale: two loads of "sinkfoyle and clover" were stored "att the farme" that winter. Sainfoin was grown in the Canterbury district from at least the 1680's. Sir Anthony Aucher, who possessed lands at Bridge south of the City, first sowed sainfoin in 1687 as an undercrop with oats. The sward, regularly grazed by sheep, was reported to be in good condition some four years later. Sir Arnold Braems lived at "the Mansion House of Bridge" until his death in 1683. Shortly afterwards his son Walter sowed part of the estate with sainfoin, including "the warren" of twenty-eight acres, and "the peece called Whitehill which hath been sowen with sinkefoine or saintfoine". Several other farmers at Bridge grew sainfoin which was "comonly stocked with sheep". Roger Taddy of St. Peter's in Thanet was growing fourteen acres of "Sanfoyn" in the summer of 1695. Captain Osborne probably first sowed the crop on his farm at Hartlip Place in 1677; twelve years later he was growing thirty-three acres and by 1697 forty-eight acres. Sainfoin and clover were grown for hay at Linsted Lodge near Sittingbourne during the years 1708-14; in the summer of 1710, for instance, Lord Teynham employed John Perrin and John Hart "for brushin 12 acres and a half of sanfine and mowing ye clover in ye medow" for which

they were paid 16s. 1d.[1]

William Tylden of Milstead Manor (alias Hogshaws) bought-in his requirements of sainfoin hay until 1706 when he purchased a consignment of "cinqfoile seed" from Thomas Bateman for £4 16s. in 1709, the year after William's son Richard inherited the estate, a load of "sinkfoile hay" was sold off the farm to a local husbandman for 16s.; in the same year another Milstead farmer paid the Tyldens 10s. for the use of aftermath grazing facilities - "ye sinckfoile roughing".[2]

The most detailed information concerning the cultivation of sainfoin in north-east Kent comes from the eighteenth-century records of Hogshaw Farm. During the years 1729-53, Richard Tylden regularly cultivated sainfoin in several fields covering areas which varied each year from 25 to 35 acres (Appendices IV and VII). The system was one of long leys, ten or twelve years; the crop was grown primarily for the hay it yielded but the fields were stocked with sheep and cattle during the last year or so of the sainfoin's useful life. John Boys, writing on Kentish agriculture at the end of the century said sainfoin was "the most valuable of all the grasses cultivated in this county and is much grown on the chalk land of the eastern part". He advised that "those who cultivate this plant should observe that if it is fed off with sheep, it is very soon destroyed whereas, if sown on clean dry land, after a good summer-fallow, and preserved from sheep, it will last in the ground ten or twelve years. The aftermath is excellent to feed cattle, and the produce is sometimes very abundant".[3]

Numerous and widespread references to sainfoin or "cinquefoil" seed

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[1]KAO U234 A10, PRC 27/30/118; PRO E134 3 Wm. & Mary/East. 9; KAO PRC 11/59/205, U593 A4-6, U498 A3.

[2]KAO U593 A2.

[3]KAO U593 A3; Boys, op. cit., 96. See also Appendix VII which shows the long sainfoin leys at Milstead.

and hay in the eighteenth-century inventories show clearly the plant's increasing importance in the region, especially in Thanet and along the dip slope of the Downs. Farm records show the same pattern of distribution. Some of the driest and poorest soils at Hartlip Place were sown with sainfoin in 1730, including a large part of Queendown warren:

> for 9 semes and 3 bushells of St.foine seed to sow on ye warren £7 19s.[1]

In 1763 the Society of Arts published an authoritative account of the cultivation of sainfoin in Thanet (Appendix II). This was one of a number of articles published by the Society on agricultural improvements in north-east Kent.

Of all the artificial grasses, clover was the most commonly sown. However, whereas sainfoin was treated as a long ley (and the fields in which it was growing thereby temporarily removed from the arable sequence) clover - or more correctly the improved red clovers - was sown as a short ley of one or two years; the crop remained very much an integral part of the cropping rotation. Put another way, on a farm where both clover and sainfoin were grown, an individual field became part of two cycles: a short cycle (regular rotation) in which it supported clover once every three or four years and a longer (irregular) cycle in which every so often the field opted out of the normal rotation while it grew a continuous crop of sainfoin for ten or twelve years. Trefoil was treated in the same way as clover and sometimes a mixture of the two was sown.[2]

Detailed evidence relating to the cultivation of clover and trefoil

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[1]KAO U593 A2; In 1748 Peter Kalm observed: "Sain Foin is much used here in Kent. Most people here call it Cinquefoil which they have corrupted from Sain Foin". Visit to England on his Way to America in 1748, trans. J. Lucas (1892), 439.

[2]Trefoil (nonsuch or "hopclover") "although not a true clover, served as one, and was especially suited to chalky soils and to sheep". Kerridge, Agricultural Revolution, op. cit., 280.

derives from Milstead farm records and covers the years 1722-53. Clover at Hogshaw Farm was always undersown with oats or barley subsequently providing a twelve-month ley which was normally cut for hay or seed production, and the aftermath grazed. When he prepared his annual cropping schedules in the autumn, Tylden always recorded carefully those fields of Lent corn which were to act as "nurse" crops for clover, as well as those which, having been undersown the previous spring, would yield hay, seed, and pasturage during the coming season. Kalm, who noted that Kent was a district where "much clover is sown" was careful to record the short-ley principle: "It is hardly ever sown more than two summers in succession, and very often not more than a single summer, after which they commonly leave it to the next summer after it is mown before turning in the sheep to feed upon it".[1]

Yarranton averred that, a few years after the publication of Weston's book, clover had "so spread itself that there was some of it ... sowed in most counties in England" although there appears to have been a temporary setback by the 1660's due, to some extent, to the high price of seed, and partly to the reputed adulteration of seed in the Low Countries. Yarranton cited the "kiln-drying" of seed as one of the "base arts" practised in Flanders "lest we should get the perfect art of clover as well as they". Blith had levelled a similar tirade against Dutch trefoil seed.[2]

The high level of productivity of land sown with clover seems never to have been in doubt. Yarranton went so far as to suggest that "six acres of land in clover will keep as many cattle as thirty acres of natural grass". The artificial grasses more than compensated for any shortfall in the supply of permanent pasture. It was said that in eight-

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[1] KAO U593 A3; Kalm, op. cit., 440.

[2] Yarranton, op. cit., 4-7; Blith, op. cit., 179.

eenth-century Thanet "the farmers supply the want of natural pasture in the upper part of the island by the culture of clover, saintfoin, lucerne, trefoil and other artificial grasses". There is evidence of a decline in the rents of permanent pasture during the 1670's, possibly earlier. Daniel Cuckoo owned fifty acres of marsh grazing at Whitstable which he had difficulty in letting for a rent of £38 a year in 1679. He pointed to the earlier profitability of the pasture which had fed "a considerable number of beasts" and yielded "a considerable quantity of hay", adding that he had received a much higher rent than £38 when he had "let the lands formerly". Sir Edward Dering, Kentish landowner, wrote at some length on "the great decay of rents in ... Kent" which was apparent by around 1670. Dering attributed this decline, at least in part, to: "The improvement made of the barren and dry parts of some other counties by clover, sainfoin, and trefoil, which is not yet and probably can never be so advantageous to this country /i.e. Kent/ where the lands are not so fit for it". This was a jaundiced view probably not unrelated to the course of rents experienced by the Surrenden Dering estate in the Kentish Weald. Like all biased judgements there was probably an element of truth in the matter and similar views were expressed by others until the end of the century. Thomas Nourse inveighed against "clover, saint-foin, rye-grass, and other foreign weeds" for having spoilt the price of meadows and feeding grounds in Romney Marsh and elsewhere. Such comments did nothing, however, to change the tide of events.[1]

Like sainfoin, clover and trefoil were widely grown throughout the region in this period and we can reasonably assume a corresponding rise in the productivity of most farms. Isaac Bayley of Chartham near Canterbury had "clover in the barne and upon the ground" when he died in 1680.

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[1] Yarranton, op. cit., 12; Anon., A Short Description of the Isle of Thanet (Margate 1796), 7; PRO E134 29 Chas.2/East. 13; Joan Thirsk and J.P. Cooper eds., Seventeenth-Century Economic Documents (1972), 86; T. Nourse, Campania Foelix or a Discourse of the Benefits and Improvements of Husbandry (1700), 86-8.

Alexander Godden, a neighbouring farmer, was growing three acres of clover, while Robert Seath possessed four acres of clover on his farm at Bobbing in the same year. John Sharpe, who also died at this time, possessed "clover hay" worth £6 in his barn.[1]

Dr Kerridge has asserted that growing clover and clover hay "escaped the particular notice of appraisers in probate inventories" and suggested that, on the one hand, clover hay was "indistinguishable from other mixed hay crops" and, on the other, that the growing crop "passed with the land and was not, therefore, included amongst the goods and chattels inventoried". In the case of Kentish inventories this is blatantly untrue: the references for this period are so numerous that lack of space makes it impossible to cite them all. Were Kent appraisers so very different from their counterparts in other regions? Jacob Banister, a gentleman-farmer at Sittingbourne sold "cinqfoile" to old William Tylden at Milstead in 1703. When Banister died in 1718 the appraisers of his inventory recorded this growing crop as well as five quarters of clover seed in store worth £20, and ten loads of clover hay valued at £14; altogether Jacob Banister was worth over £3,000 in personal estate and farmed on a considerable scale. John Eley of Linsted occupied two farms when he died in 1681; on his Doddington farm he was growing nine acres of "clover grass". George Hazelwood, an Upchurch husbandman, was growing nine acres of clover on his small farm in 1690. John Greenestreete of Teynham was a carpenter by trade but he also farmed on a small scale; included in his fourteen acres of growing crops in 1700 was an acre of clover. The crop is, in fact, frequently recorded in the inventories of small tradesmen who derived a supplementary income from farming: Richard Kite, a Stockbury shopkeeper, possessed "clover and sinckfoyle" worth £3 when he died in 1681; Nathaniel Lord of Borden was the local butcher until his death in 1745; the appraisers were careful to record in his inventory "a small piece of

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[1]KAO PRC 11/44/149, 11/44/6, 11/43/174, 11/43/1.

saintfile & clover" valued at only half a guinea. James Bright, a Borden maltster, had stored in his barn "about five load of St. Foine and clover" in 1714, while John Hovenden of the same parish was growing "six acres of young clover" on his farm in 1741. Clover, growing in the fields and inbarned, as well as clover seed, feature in a wide range of Kentish inventories relating to the gentry and yeomanry, as well as those belonging to small husbandmen, and even tradesmen for whom farming was a part-time activity.[1]

Frequently a variety of the "new" crops is carefully itemised for an individual farm. Anthony Cheston who farmed at Bridge near Canterbury in the 1680's was reported to have twenty or thirty pieces of ground growing sainfoin, 17 acres of trefoil, and $1\frac{1}{4}$ acres of clover, sufficient pasturage and hay for his cattle and sheep. Sometimes a "seeds" mixture of the artificial grasses was sown: Henry Young, a yeoman of Chilham, had "troyfine and clover sowed upon y^{e} grown" and valued at £5 in 1701; he also possessed in his barn "sanfine seed" and "sanfine straw". During the 1740's clover and trefoil were sometimes sown together in the fields at Hogshaw Farm, Milstead and, in 1741, an experiment was carried out by Tylden with a mixture of clover and rye grass, undersown with five acres of Black oats; the sward was treated as a two-year ley. The rye grass seed sown at Milstead came from Herstford Farm, Westwell near Ashford, also the property of Tylden; in April 1741 Tylden purchased "2 semes of rye grass seed from Goodman Cornelius of Westwell". Again in 1745 rye grass, probably an improved strain, was sown at Milstead, while other fields that year were sown with trefoil (undersown with Black oats), and clover (undersown with 8 acres of White oats); a 10-acre field of clover and trefoil sown the previous year was "stocked" instead of mown for hay; the hay crop for 1745 was taken from 28 acres of sainfoin. By the 1740's

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[1] Kerridge, Agricultural Revolution, op. cit., 280; KAO U593 A2, PRC 27/40/111, 11/45/101, 11/54/238, 11/62/225, 11/45/269, 11/82/176, 11/72/19, 11/82/13.

the sowing of rye grass was probably a widespread feature of the regional economy when even small husbandmen experimented with an acre or two: in 1742, for instance, William Philpott had "three acres of oats and ryegrass sown" on his smallholding in the Blean parish of Saints Cosmus and Damian.[1]

One of the striking facts to emerge from the records is the extent to which farmers of quite modest means were experimenting with the "new" crops. William Hatcher of St. Peter's in Thanet had sown an acre of "trayfoyn seed" before he died in the summer of 1714; his total personal wealth was little more than £60. John Godfrey, who farmed on a small scale at Lower Halstow until his death in 1744, was growing two acres of clover from which he had already made six loads of hay that summer. John Price, a small farmer on the Blean clay, had made a quantity of "ryegrass and clover hay" in 1748, the summer before he died. John Hutson of Littlebourne, described as a "labourer" was worth only £31 when he died in 1721; like many another agricultural labourer Hutson was also a part-time farmer, and had planted $1\frac{1}{4}$ acres of wheat and an acre of barley that season (the appraisers carefully recorded that 4 bushels of seed wheat and 5 bushels of seed barley had been sown in these fields); but Hutson's "corne on the ground" included a valuation "for plowing & sowing of two acres of land for oats & for eight bushels of seed oats & for the clover seed sowne among the oats". This little inventory is both a tribute to the skill and integrity of the appraisers, and a reminder that small men - labouring farmers - participated fully in the progress that was taking place across the region.[2]

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[1]PRO E134 3 Wm. & Mary/East. 9; KAO PRC 11/62/208, U593 A1 A3, PRC 11/82/73.

[2]KAO PRC 11/72/53, 11/82/138, 11/83/27, 11/76/38.

B Turnips

Turnip cultivation appears to have been well-established in High Suffolk before 1660 and spread, during the following decade, to East Norfolk. However, in Kent - as in much of southern England - turnips were rarely to be found growing as field crops in the seventeenth century.[1]

Sir John Banks purchased turnip seed for his Aylesford estate in 1680. Two acres of turnips were grown on the glebeland of Newington parish, near Sittingbourne, in 1685 by Richard Murton, a local farmer. Turnips were grown for the first time on the Toke estate at Godinton near Ashford in 1686. John Homs was a hop grower and general farmer in the parish of St. Mary Bredin, Canterbury and in 1697, the year he died, he possessed "Turnupps upon 2 acres of land" valued at £2. This crop is extremely hard to find on farms in north-east Kent, even during the eighteenth century. Rather surprisingly, at least one field of turnips was growing in Graveney, a coastal parish, in 1715: Edward Langford, a local farmer, had sown four acres of turnips that year and the crop was still standing on the land in December. It has been pointed out that hard varieties of turnips "were suitable for pulling and could safely be left in the ground all through the winter". It seems very probable that Langford's flock of 38 "fatting sheep" and 88 "ewes and tags" were folded on this crop after his death, when the 67 wattles stored on the farm would have been brought into use; meanwhile the sheep grazed the dwindling sward in the orchards.[2]

Tylden first grew turnips at Hogshaw Farm in 1745 at a time when he was experimenting with new varieties of other crops: "the field above

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[1] E. Kerridge, 'Turnip Husbandry in High Suffolk', Economic History Review, second series, VIII, no. 3 (1956), 391; Farmers of Old England, op. cit., 119-20.

[2] KAO U234 A10; PRO E134 1 Wm. & Mary/Mich. 4; E.C. Lodge, 'The Account Book of a Kentish Estate, 1616-1704', Records of the Social and Economic History of England and Wales, VI (1927), xxx, 427; KAO PRC 27/34/284, 11/73/70; Kerridge, Farmers of Old England, op. cit., 120.

Pond Leese [was] limed" and sown with turnips, some 4½ acres. The following year the area was increased to 6½ acres, extending over two fields, East Field and "part of ye Lower Old Cherryground, most of it heald with dung". Subsequently 11 acres of turnips were grown in 1747, and 8 acres were "all limed and sowed with turneps" in 1748. However, Tylden did not persist with this crop which disappeared from his schedules thereafter. In view of the skill and prudence which this farmer exercised during his long working life at Milstead, we can safely assume that after a fair trial over four seasons he reached the conclusion that the crop was unsatisfactory for his particular situation. John Southouse, a neighbouring farmer, may have had a similar experience when he grew turnips on his farm at Tunstall in 1762; certainly Southouse risked little for, although he was reasonably well-off and farmed extensively, his investment in turnips was estimated at no more than £1.[1]

At least one Thanet farmer found an unorthodox use for his turnips. William Payne and his wife Elizabeth farmed in St. John's parish during the 1680's. It seems that, like many other farmers, they had strong objections to paying small tithes on the turnip crop. When David Turner, lay impropriator of tithes, sent his men to collect his dues, there were usually angry scenes; it was said that Payne "flong them a plum and sometyme an apple and sometyme a turnupp or a rosemary strigg and sometymes sent them away & lauffed att them ...". The turnips and other missiles apparently found their target in 1683 when one of Turner's servants "received hurt" to the extent that his hand became "much brewsed & swelled" and "the skin of his forehead was grased off about the bignesse of sixpence or a shilling", injuries which necessitated a visit to the local barber-surgeon. Any inference regarding the firmness of Thanet turnips would no doubt stretch the evidence but the episode serves to show how altercations easily arose over the payment of tithes on "new" crops;

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[1]KAO U593 A3 ff. 211v, 214v, 217, 227v, PRC 11/84/133.

hops were notorious in this respect giving rise to a multitude of tithe disputes; there were long-drawn arguments too over payment of tithe on sainfoin and clover as well as on fruit. For every bitterly-fought dispute which resulted in litigation there must have been dozens which have gone unrecorded. The numerous small pockets of rural unrest which tended to arise over tithes, as farmers diversified their economies, was one of the inevitable social costs of "improvement" which rarely gets mentioned.[1]

Turnips were spurned by farmers in north-east Kent which is not at all surprising. A contemporary author pointed out that turnips were "a very uncertain crop" which often failed "either by too dry a summer, or by rotting in the winter". More recently it has been said authoritatively that "of the new fodder crops turnips, for all their text book fame, were the least in nutritive value as fodder, and they spread more slowly than did the richer legumes and grasses". Not only were many situations unsuitable for turnips but, in north-east Kent at any rate, the cultivation of rows of beans was a superior alternative. A glance at the agricultural returns for 1801 (Table 25) shows that the position had changed little by the end of the century.[2]

C Canary Grass

One of the most unusual and interesting crops grown in the region was canary grass (Gramen phalaroides) known simply as canary. This crop has long disappeared from English farms. Today the largest grower of canary seed is Morocco followed by Australia; it is also grown in Brazil, the Argentine and Spain. The uncertainty of the crop and the fact that it stores well makes it fair game for speculators on the world markets.

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[1] PRO E134 1 Jas.2/East. 1.

[2] E. Wade, A Proposal for Improving and Adorning the Island of Great Britain (1755), 44; J.D. Chambers and G.E. Mingay, The Agricultural Revolution 1750-1880 (1966), 55.

Cage birds are kept the world over and canary seed, together with millet, is their staple diet. In recent years world shortages, partly induced by speculation, have from time to time sent the price of canary seed rocketing. In 1968, a year of shortage, the price rose to £200 a ton, but even this was low compared with the price at the beginning of the last war - £2,000 a ton; during the war, when canary seed could not be imported, 98 per cent of Britain's budgerigar population died.

In early modern Britain the keeping of cage birds was a common pastime indulged in by people from all walks of life. The staple diet of these song birds was canary seed which, so far as the present writer can ascertain, was grown in England only by farmers in north-east Kent and only there in certain parishes.

Of the social importance of cage birds there is no doubt. Joseph Blagrave, writing in the later seventeenth century, devoted a whole section of his farming book to song birds; he advised on the "taking, ordering feeding, breeding, choosing, teaching and curing of singing birds for cages, rooms, or aviaries, for closes, parks, hedges, or chamber windows. Also on canary birds, how to breed them here and how they breed them in Germany".[1]

Some of the song birds were those captured from the wild state - linnets, nightingales, and thrushes - and caged; more exotic species, including canaries, were imported. Among the goods belonging to a citizen of Hereford in 1638 was "a twiggen cage for my throstle" valued at 1s. 6d.[2] Bird cages sometimes appear in Kent inventories, more rarely the birds. Susannah Newson of Canterbury had two bird cages among her possessions when she died in 1724. Abraham Buxell, who died in 1711, owned "one bird

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[1] J. Blagrave, The Epitomy of the Whole Art of Husbandry (1675).

[2] BM Egerton MS 3054 (Joyce Jefferies' Diary). I am grateful to Dr Joan Thirsk for this reference.

cage" which was kept in the parlour of his Thanet farmhouse. Sarah Chandler's possessions included "a bird and birdcage" which were housed "in the shop" at Canterbury when she died in 1716. Bird cages woven in willow could be purchased cheaply from local basket-makers.[1]

"Another kind of crop introduced by the Flemings at Sandwich," wrote Samuel Smiles, "was canary grass, which still continues to be grown on the neighbouring farms and is indeed almost peculiar to the district". John Evelyn observed "whole fields of canary seed" near Sandwich and Deal in the 1660's. Canary seed in Thanet, explained Lewis, was usually grown as a row crop on newly-ploughed marshland for about ten years "the land being reckoned too rich to bear wheat". The fields of canary were regularly cleaned during the summer and the crop was ready for harvest from late August, conveniently after the chief grain crops had been inbarned. The crop yielded from four to six quarters an acre and fetched prices which varied from 30s. to £10 per quarter. Ellis described the cultivation of canary which he only ever found growing in Kent: "Its seed", he wrote, "is an excellent sort for feeding cage-birds, and making one of the whitest and best of oils for the limner's use".[2] The Society of Arts published, in 1763, a detailed account of the cultivation of canary seed in Thanet (Appendix I).

The inventories show that canary was grown by farmers and market gardeners in the Sandwich district, Thanet, and the parishes of Chislet and Ash. William Boys, writing at the end of the eighteenth century, said the cultivation of canary "was confined till within these few years to this corner of Kent, and is still cultivated there upon a greater scale than in any other part of the kingdom". George Buckland, writing some fifty years later, thought that the cultivation of canary in north-east

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[1] KAO PRC 11/77/114, 11/70/156, 11/73/23.

[2] S. Smiles, The Huguenots (3rd edn. 1869), 86; W. Bray and H.B. Wheatley eds., Diary of John Evelyn (4 Vols. 1906), IV, 45; Lewis, op. cit., 20-1; W. Ellis, The Modern Husbandman (8 Vols. 1750), V, 71.

Kent was declining since it was considered to be "an exhausting crop to the land".[1]

A number of useful Sandwich inventories include canary: Daniel Bubbers grew canary on his farm in 1687; Daniel Hoback, "gardner" of Flemish descent, possessed three acres of canary seed in 1693; in 1700 Mary Bunce, widow of a market gardener who had died five years earlier, was growing an acre of this crop; William Nazer, another local "gardner", was growing 1½ acres of canary "in the Downe Land" and a further 2½ acres "in the sand garden" in 1721; Daniel Ambrose, also a gardener, possessed in 1727 a large quantity of unthreshed canary seed in his barn valued at £30; another market gardener of Flemish origins, John Van Here (alias Vanhea), had three quarters of "cannary seed in the store house" in 1733.[2]

Thanet inventories, too, show investments in canary growing: Thomas Holland, a yeoman of Monkton, possessed 7½ quarters of "conneary seeds" in his barn when he died in 1696; John Dunkin of Stonar had canary seed in his barn worth £50 at the time of his death in 1719; Robert Kennett of Minster, described as a "grazier", possessed 21 acres of "sowing marsh" which included 2 acres of canary seed, besides wheat, barley, and beans. Robert Pett, a large-scale arable farmer at Sarre, was growing canary on 11 of his 105 cropped acres in 1757, and had thirty-six quarters of the seed in his barn.[3]

William Staines of Chislet had unthreshed canary "in the home barn" in 1720; Matthew Stephens of the same parish was growing 3 acres in 1753. Nicholas Collins of Ash possessed 5½ quarters of canary seed in 1696; John Thompson of this parish was growing 5 acres of canary at Molland Farm

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[1] W. Boys, Collection for an History of Sandwich (Canterbury 1792), 743; G. Buckland, 'On the Farming of Kent', Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society, VI (1845), 254.

[2] KAO PRC 11/50/81, 11/58/75, 11/62/127, 11/76/85, 11/78/187, 11/80/142.

[3] Ibid., 27/34/98, 11/74/203, 11/75/170, 11/84/76.

in 1732.[1]

Other evidence shows that the crop was grown in the Isle of Sheppey. Mr H. Elliot was the tenant of Homeplace Farm at Minster from at least 1728, the year he sowed 1½ acres of canary on old grassland, newly broken-up. He subsequently sowed canary on another part of his farm, a four-acre field "at Barrow's Hill". Just before harvest during one season in the 1730's a Mr Skinner of Chatham, prospective buyer, viewed the four acres of canary and put in a bid for £80 and, in addition, agreed to bear the costs of harvesting. Apparently the bargain was not sealed because Elliot thought the price too low, and the crop was eventually sold without difficulty for a higher bid.[2]

D Industrial Dye Plants

Weld (alias woold), woad, madder and safflower were among the specialized cash crops whose cultivation was "recommended with growing conviction and growing precision" in the pamphlet literature of the seventeenth century. It was argued that dye stuffs, requiring much hand labour, would provide more employment for the poor and, at the same time, there would be a saving in the cost of imported dyes. The second edition of Blith's text book on husbandry in 1652 - The English Improver Improved - contained "six newer pieces of improvement": one of these was the planting of weld, woad, and madder.[3]

Blith explained the cultural details of the plant known as "welde, or would as some call it, or more properly dyar's weed". He correctly pointed out that the plant would thrive on "very indifferent land" and

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[1] Ibid., 11/76/117, 11/83/142, 27/34/82, 27/42/175.

[2] PRO E134 12 Geo.2/Mich. 3.

[3] Joan Thirsk, 'Seventeenth-Century Agriculture and Social Change', Agricultural History Review Supplement, Land Church and People, XVIII (1970), 158-9.

particularly on "chalky light land". Undersown with oats or barley at the rate of a gallon of seed per acre it would produce, the following year, "a comfortable crop". The ripe plants were pulled up intact by the roots, tied into bundles, dried and inbarned. The crop was "sold for the dyer's use"; the roots and stalks produced a bright yellow dye which was held in high regard. Blith thought weld would yield a profit to the farmer which varied from forty shillings to twelve pounds an acre. The seed was easily shaken out, some kept for the next year's sowing, and the surplus marketed. The undemanding nature of the plant, low costs of cultivation and harvesting, and a ready market meant that weld cultivation was a most attractive proposition for the arable farmer on warm, dry, chalky soils. Not surprisingly "it begins much to spread and thrives very well in Kent". Blith opined that "the best place for to get the seed is in Kent clean down to Canterbury and Wy, where you see both the land, the growth and discover the mystery thereof".[1]

Hartlib observed that "would is sown in divers parts of Kent, not much in other places". Trowell reiterated that Canterbury was the best source of supply for weld seed. Ellis averred: "Wold or weld is better known to the Kentish farmer than any other, because this field vegetable is more sown in this country [i.e. county] than any other". At the end of the eighteenth century John Banister, the Horton Kirby farmer, produced an unrivalled account of the cultivation of this Kentish plant.[2]

All the evidence points to north-east Kent - especially the Downland margin - as the true home of weld-growing in England during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Thomas Godfrey of Rainham had "15 bushells of woold seed" stored in his barn in 1681. Weld was

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[1] W. Blith, The English Improver Improved (1652), 224-7.

[2] S. Hartlib, Legacy of Husbandry (1651), 92; S. Trowell, A New Treatise of Husbandry (1739), 33; W. Ellis, Agriculture Improv'd or, The Practice of Husbandry (2 Vols. 1745-6), II, 88; J. Banister, Synopsis of Husbandry (1799), 197-202.

grown in the chalky parishes south of Canterbury: Michael Hopkins of Patrixbourne grew five or six acres of "weald or woald" during 1689, probably an unfavourable season since the crop was later described as "poore stuffe". John Pierce, who farmed at Boughton-under-Blean, regularly cultivated 16 acres of weld during the period 1686-97. Charles Tomlin, a gentleman-farmer at Newington near Sittingbourne, had "2 loads & an halfe of **would**", valued at £13, stored on his farm in 1706. William Durtnall of the same parish died ten years later when "a quarter of woald seed" (10s.) and "one load of woald" (£4) were recorded among his possessions. John Southouse of Tunstall near Sittingbourne had weld seed in store at his farm in 1762. Lord Teynham's steward at Linsted Lodge purchased half a bushel of weld seed for 5s. from Christopher Ellis, a local farmer, in December 1713.[1]

The best evidence for weld cultivation comes from the records of Hogshaw Farm, Milstead. The earliest references to the crop relate to 1701, towards the end of William Tylden's life:

July 1701	£	s.	d.
Paied Wm Turner for pulling of woold	1	0	0
Given ye woold pullers to drink		1	0
Paied my cousen Giles for pullinge of woold		6	0
P^{d} Upton for woold by my cous. Giles	2	0	0
Allowed Mr Tappenden /Milton hoyman/ for carryinge my woold at 10s. p. loade	1	9	6

The crop of weld harvested during late summer was taken to London for sale by John Tappenden, the Milton hoyman who regularly transported Milstead crops to the **metropolis**. Weld was grown intermittently at Hogshaw Farm until 1740, more regularly thereafter. In the early 1740's, significantly years of exceptionally low grain prices, Tylden experimented with new varieties of several crops and implemented a policy of greater diversifica-

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[1] KAO PRC 11/45/288; PRO E134 3 Wm. & Mary/East. 9, 2 Anne/Trin. 2; KAO PRC 11/67/172, 11/73/25, 11/84/133, U498 A3.

tion; for the first time weld was integrated into the arable rotation. In 1740 Tylden sowed 9 acres of White oats in his Further Leese Field noting in his record book "y^{e} oates changed seed, part sowd with woold"; in the same year woold was undersown with 3 acres of beans in "the old hop ground". In 1742 woold was undersown with barley in the Long Acre Field and the Acre Field, $2\frac{3}{4}$ acres altogether. The crop harvested from these fields the following year was sent to London: Tylden paid Goodman King 7s. for carrying weld to the wharf at Crown Key, Sittingbourne. John Page, the Milton hoyman who had succeeded Tappenden, transported the consignment to the metropolitan markets:

> 30 July 1743
>
> Receed of Mr Page for woold sold at 3 li. 10s. per load at London £15. 0. 0.

The cash received from London for sale of Milstead weld represented a gross return of almost £5 10s. an acre in 1743, probably somewhere near the average for that crop. It was estimated in 1726 that "the whole value of an acre's crop" of weld was "sometimes worth" £7 or £8.[1]

There is no evidence that woad was grown in north-east Kent. Hartlib reported that woad was "abundantly sown about Coventry, and yet in Kent thought to be a forraign commodity". The crop was widely grown in the Midlands and to some extent in Surrey and Hampshire. Thomas Pennant said that in the Dartford district of north-west Kent woad was "cultivated in great abundance" at the end of the eighteenth century but this statement is not corroborated.[2]

It has recently been said that "the dye crops did not generally commend themselves to small growers" and, on the whole "were cultivated by

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[1] KAO U593 A1-3; J. Laurence, A New System of Agriculture (1726), 114.

[2] Hartlib, loc. cit.; Thirsk, op. cit., 161; T. Pennant, A Journey from London to the Isle of Wight (2 Vols. 1801), I, 49.

more substantial farmers with capital". This was particularly true in the case of madder which took three years to reach maturity. Furthermore, access to a madder mill was imperative, and at all times there was the threat of foreign competition from Holland - high quality Zeeland madder was imported on a large scale.[1]

The only substantial ventures into madder cultivation in Kent were on a few farms in the Faversham district around mid-century; the experiment was short-lived. The Society of Arts attempted to revive madder growing in England during the 1750's and 1760's, offering premiums of £5 for every acre planted. In 1764 premiums were paid by the Society to sixteen madder growers, including four who farmed in north-east Kent: Messrs William Kemp and J. Lane of Teynham near Faversham (7 acres); John Simmons of Preston near Faversham (2 acres); Messrs Abraham Prebbel and Joseph Royle, St. Mary Northgate, Canterbury (15 acres); and Francis Buti of Birchington (1 acre). It is significant that partnerships were deemed necessary to meet capital requirements and spread the risks where the larger acreages were grown.[2]

Edward Jacob, the Faversham historian writing in 1774, gave an account "of the cultivation of a new article lately introduced amongst us, madder". Jacob, who observed that the root was "so useful in dying reds and violets", attributed its local success to the energetic enterprise of Mr John Crow who had not only planted madder himself, but had erected a conveniently situated mill "to grind the roots proper for the trade". One of the great benefits of local madder cultivation, thought Jacob, was "in affording ample employment for all our illustrious poor, from the aged to the child, at a time when no other work could be had; for here, after the hop-picking season is over, all employ for the feeble women and

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[1] Thirsk, op. cit., 160.

[2] Museum Rusticum et Commerciale: or Select Papers on Agriculture, Commerce, Arts and Manufactures by Members of the Society of Arts (6 Vols. 1764-6), II, 370.

children, used to be at a stand, but now, when the digging up and collecting these roots commences, which soon follows the hop-picking, it gives a further employment to them for more than two months longer".[1]

The heaviest items of expenditure were the initial cost of the plants and the digging of the roots, the latter often amounting to more than £12 an acre. By Jacob's time the growers were feeling the adverse effects of prices "lower than for many years before" (due to higher imports) which were already acting as a deterrent to further planting. Ten years later when Arthur Young visited the Faversham district the madder growing saga had ended:

> It was with great regret I found that the extraordinary fall in the price of madder, of cent. per cent. had totally destroyed all the plantations, which were once so flourishing in this neighbourhood; and was exceedingly concerned to hear that Mr Crow, who had gone greater lengths, and made more spirited exertions in that culture than any other man in England, had suffered very deeply in his property, by that ruinous decline.[2]

E Market Gardening

The division between farming and market gardening is indistinct. This was particularly true in Thanet where it was said "the very improved state of cultivation ... appears to be rather the work of the gardener, than the effect of the more enlarged industry of the farmer". One of the hall-marks of Thanet agriculture was its labour-intensity and, indeed, this is a verdict that could be cast on aspects of farming in other parts of north-east Kent: the intensive cultivation of beans as a row crop in the Faversham district, the production of dyestuffs on certain farms, and - as we shall later see - hop cultivation at Canterbury and elsewhere, are outstanding examples. The region was one of the most densely popu-

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[1] E. Jacob, The History of Faversham (1774), 97-100.

[2] A. Young, Annals of Agriculture (46 Vols. 1784-1815), II (1784), 69-70.

lated in Kent, the district from Rainham to beyond Faversham, and the Isle of Thanet especially so. We can conclude that "the association between labour-intensive crops and over-populous villages in arable regions", a connection recently observed by Dr Thirsk, is admirably illustrated in the farming economy of north-east Kent.[1]

Labour-intensive cultivation reached its apogee on the holdings of market gardeners in the Sandwich district while at the same time, we find further proof of the healthy diversification which is so characteristic of the region as a whole. Market gardeners have already made their appearance in this study as growers of canary seed, a local speciality at Sandwich and in several other nearby parishes. It is not unusual to find market gardeners growing a wide range of field crops more usually associated with farming, in addition to their garden crops. Jacob Stamper of Sandwich, for example, grew wheat - his largest single investment - as well as beans on a large scale; he kept hogs and cattle and possessed a range of farm vehicles and implements that we might expect to see on any well-stocked farm. But Stamper was known locally as a "gardiner" and for good reasons. When he died in October 1729 Stamper's stock-in-trade included flax, "reddish", canary, "time", cucumber, "lettice", and hyssop seeds; the second-largest item in his inventory was "eleven packs of flax" valued at £44. This market gardener is not untypical. The range of interests of a seventeenth or eighteenth-century Kentish gardener was often, although not invariably, wider than those displayed on a modern market gardener's holding: he was a farmer and seed merchant as well as a gardener, a diversity of enterprise that spread the risks and provided a measure of built-in insurance against catastrophe. Indeed, the financial interests of such men were even wider than already suggested. John Stamper, Jacob's father, had also been described as a "gardner". During

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[1] Anon., A Short Description of the Isle of Thanet (Margate 1796), 7; Chalklin, op. cit., 28; Thirsk, op. cit., 165.

his lifetime he rented arable land at Sandwich - part of the Lydd Court estate - from the Earl of Rockingham. When he died in October 1690 John Stamper possessed "a parcell of onions" valued at £1 4s. and "foure packes of Flaxe" worth £15. No other crops are mentioned in the inventory and his other harvested crops may have been sold since debts due to him amounting to £20 are recorded - from Richard Moone and Daniel Hobacke, local gardeners. Stamper had invested in the Thanet coastal trade and one-sixteenth shares in each of three hoys, totalling £15, are carefully recorded together with the names of the vessels' masters. Finally, old Stamper was involved in the local credit business: he had £30 due on bond, and a further £57 16s. "due on meane contract".[1]

This pattern of credit had been reversed by Jacob, the son, whose borrowings we can reasonably assume were made in order to create the expanded business observed at the time of his death in 1729. Probate inventories never record the debts owed by the deceased - we must rely on the inventories of others where they are recorded as credits. Fortunately, in this case, two of them are informative. When Daniel Ambrose a "gardner" of Sandwich died in 1727 his inventory included "a debt due to the deceased from Jacob Stamper of Sandwich, Gardner, on Bond, principall money £100". Patience Parker, widow, lived in the Thanet parish of St. Peter until her death in 1730; among her papers was a bond "bearing date Sept 27 1718" which was "a debt due from Mr Jacob Stamper".[2]

The evidence makes it fairly certain that capital for the market garden industry was raised locally among friends and associates, a pattern so vividly portrayed in the local fishing industry and coastal trade of the period.

According to Hartlib market gardening was introduced into England

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[1]KAO PRC 11/79/74, 11/55/144, U471 A1.

[2]KAO PRC 11/78/187, 11/79/56.

around the end of the sixteenth century: "about 50 yeares ago ... this art of gardening began to creep into England, into Sandwich, and Surrey, Fulham, and other places".[1] Hartlib's dating is certainly on the late side for it is hardly likely that the Flemings who settled at Sandwich from the 1560's waited several decades before starting their gardening activities.[2] Samuel Smiles thought the Flemings wasted little time after their arrival before setting up workshops for the manufacture of says, bays, and other "New Draperies", and in other ways too their initiative and pioneering enterprise were soon manifest:

> Among the branches of industry introduced by the Flemings at Sandwich, that of gardening is worthy of notice. The people of Flanders had long been famous for their horticulture, and one of the first things which the foreign settlers did on arriving in the place was to turn to account the excellent qualities of the soil in the neighbourhood, so well suited for gardening purposes. Though long before practised by the monks, gardening had become almost a lost art in England ... The first Flemish gardens proved highly successful. The cabbage, carrots, and celery produced by the foreigners met with so ready a sale, and were so much in demand in London itself, that a body of gardeners shortly removed from Sandwich and settled at Wandsworth, Battersea, and Bermondsey, where many of the rich garden-grounds first planted by the Flemings continue to this day.[3]

There seems no doubt that the Flemings, long famous for their horticultural skills, were the first cultivators to realize the potential of the deep loams at Sandwich. They found the soil around the town easy of cultivation and proceeded to grow vegetables, flax, teazles, and canary grass. The alien settlers had an important influence on the locality and to this day the marshes in the neighbourhood are called by the Dutch name of "polders" and the poplar trees are reminiscent of the Low

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[1] Hartlib, op. cit., 8.

[2] A record of 1582 shows 13 gardeners in Sandwich, members of the Dutch community. See 'The Walloons at Sandwich', Kent Magazine (1896), I, 314.

[3] Smiles, op. cit., 85-6.

Countries. There are still houses at Sandwich built in the Dutch style of brick building with characteristic crow-stepped gable. It has been calculated that the ground used at Sandwich was to the east and as it was known to be sandy soil the only area which fits is alongside present-day Sandown Road. From here a narrow pathway leads to the quayside; this was the route taken by the gardeners when they carted their produce to the hoys. The vegetables and seeds supplied local markets at Canterbury and Dover but large consignments were "conveyed at an easy expence by the hoys to London and from thence disseminated over the kingdom". Sandwich radish, Sandwich peas, and Sandwich beans, were advertised in the catalogue of William Lucas, London seedsman, in 1677. Apart from Canterbury kidney beans, the only other English place-name used to denote vegetable varieties at this time was London.[1]

Daniel Valder of Sandwich was described as a "gardner" at the time of his death in 1691 but his small inventory - little more than £30 - and an absence of seeds, plants, and tools, may indicate that Valder had retired from the business sometime earlier. When Abraham Honess died in November of the following year he was still very active as a general farmer and market gardener. The most valuable single item in his inventory was a store of flax - 1,300 bundles estimated to be worth £37. Rather larger was a comprehensive valuation for "passells of seeds and peese wich came to £46". In addition there were still a number of garden crops standing in "ye field": "time and harty chokes" worth 15s.; "cabbuses" 10s.; carrots 8s.; and "licks and tesels" worth 4s.; "one acker of turnups" was valued at £1 3s., and "24 parches of passnops" at 13s. The appraisers were careful to note a quantity of "dong" in a

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[1] E. Hasted, The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent (12 Vols. 1797-1801), X, 168; W. Boys, op. cit., 743; J. Harvey, Early Gardening Catalogues (1972), 66, 71.

corner of the field.[1]

Thomas Bunce, "gardner", died at Sandwich in 1695 leaving personal wealth of some £350. Like many another gardener he was also a general farmer: Bunce possessed, for example, a quantity of wheat and oats in-barned, and a stack of horse-beans in the yard. His other crops included flax - 500 bundles "undrest" - as well as some flax seed, over five quarters of canary seed, and a quantity of garden beans of the "kidney" variety. These were all crops which were grown in the region both by gardeners and bona fide farmers, a phenomenon which serves to illustrate the intensive nature of local farming as well as the greater diversity of crops grown by market gardeners in Kent compared with the narrower range grown by their contemporaries in Surrey and London. This has been one of the most striking features to emerge from the inventory evidence and is probably unique. Another peculiarly local characteristic is the propensity of growers to invest in local shipping. The example of John Stamper has already been cited and Bunce's inventory provides another for it records his thirty-second share in a "pinke" or small sailing vessel ("Boyman Sampson master") put at £25. The economy of the Bunce family was based on a triple-income - from general farming, market gardening, and fishing. This was not unusual in the Sandwich district but is markedly different from the usual conception of a market gardener whose capital-investments were more narrowly confined.[2]

Widows frequently assumed responsibility for a business undertaking, including a market garden. Mary Bunce, Thomas' widow, ran the family business until her death in 1700. Her inventory shows that the farming side continued with wheat, barley, and beans as the chief agricultural crops as well as those which belonged to the twilight zone between farming

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[1] KAO PRC 11/54/154, 11/57/55.

[2] Ibid., 11/59/248.

and gardening, namely flax, canary, and "French beanes". Other entries impart a special gardening flavour to this inventory:

	£	s.	d.
A peice of cabages, sparragrasse & hartichoks	1	0	0
Turneps in the garden	2	10	0
Carretts and hysop in the same	1	0	0
Seeds in Chittenden's ground	1	0	0[1]

A wide range of crops is evidenced by entries in the inventory of William Nazer, a "gardner" of Sandwich who died in 1721:

	£	s.	d.
In the Downe land			
1½ acres canary seed			
2 acres wheat	11	0	0
In the land called Hell			
2 acres great beanes			
½ acre flax	11	0	0
In the Sand Garden			
2 acres wheat	8	0	0
2 acres beans	8	0	0
3 acres beans & clover			
1 acre beans & peas	8	0	0
Five acres of gardenware & other things			
and two acres & half canary seed	18	0	0
Two and a half acres of small beans	6	0	0[2]

Daniel Ambrose, another Sandwich gardener grew canary, beans, and flax on his Sandwich holding until his death in 1727; the canary was valued at £30, and flax (300 bundles in three packs) at £7. He possessed "Turkey beans", onions, and thyme seed "in the seed loft". A sixty-fourth share in a vessel (£8 15s.) and a bond for £100 (due from Jacob Stamper) completed Ambrose's network of investments.[3]

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[1] Ibid., 11/62/127.

[2] Ibid., 11/76/85.

[3] Ibid., 11/78/187.

Giles Van Hea was described as a "Flax dresser" at the time of his death in 1710. His inventory included dressed flax worth £20, a hundred bundles of undressed flax, a "flax brake" for cultivating and cleaning his fields, and four "swingles", specially designed cutting tools for reaping the crop. His harvesting tools may well have been purchased from Holland. Sandwich carried on a brisk trade with Rotterdam in the early eighteenth century: in 1701, for example, kelp (dried seaweed used by potters in the glazing process) was exported from Sandwich to Rotterdam and imports from the Dutch city included seven dozen swingles.[1]

John Van Hea, who may have been the son of Giles, was described as a "gardner" in 1733. There is no evidence of the smaller garden seeds being sown on Van Hea's holding; his chief investments were in flax and canary. Thomas Bradwell, another local gardener, possessed nine packs of flax valued at £27 and "17 seams of linnsead" worth £16 when he died in 1705. Abraham Buxell, a Sandwich yeoman, possessed 1,066 bundles of flax valued at £17 15s. 4d. when he died in 1711.[2] John Evelyn recorded a number of these crops growing in the district during the 1660's:

> About Sandwich & Deal they hedge & fence their corn fields with flax & hemp, but flax chiefly, wch they affirm keep out cattle, being bitter; they sow it about 20 ft. deep into the field - sow whole fields of canary seed - great grounds of hyssop & thime in tufts, for seeds only - the soil light & sandy, but the hyssop in richer ground.[3]

Flax was clearly a very important crop in the Sandwich district; there were also many small growers in the adjoining parish of Ash, as well as in Thanet. Dutch influence, particularly strong in this area, was undoubtedly responsible for the rise of the local flax industry and

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[1] Ibid., 11/70/133; PRO E190 678/15-16: in the same period 30 corn fans were imported at Faversham from Rotterdam.

[2] KAO PRC 11/80/142, 27/36/82, 11/70/156.

[3] Diary of John Evelyn, op. cit., IV, 45.

for the intensive form which characterized it. As late as the 1820's Von Thünen explained that "flax, which of rights belongs in the less intensively farmed areas of eastern Europe, is still the staple crop in East Flanders, the garden of Europe".[1] Why should market gardeners, in England as well as the Low Countries, invest so heavily in flax production? Perhaps the Van Heas of Sandwich provide the clue for they appear not only as growers but also as processors - flax dressers. The flax that was swingled on Sandwich holdings was, at some later stage, dressed on the premises, baled, and the packs consigned to local linen weavers. The oil-rich seeds were threshed out and marketed separately. This work could presumably be carried out during the slack winter months, providing tasks for all the family who thereby supplemented the household's income by means of a "value added" product. The flax industry viewed in its entirety was a labour-intensive activity akin to vegetable and seed production.

A glance at some of the inventories for parishes beyond Sandwich confirms our impression of the flax industry as one characterized by labour-intensity and yielding joint products. Nicholas Collins, a yeoman of Ash, possessed flax seed worth rather more than £13 in 1696. John Wood, another yeoman of the same parish, had 24 bushels of flax seed as well as "flax in the bundle" in 1715. Thomas Holland, a wealthy Monkton farmer had almost nine quarters of flax seed worth £16 in his barn in 1696. John Dunkin of Stonar, a small Thanet parish, had flax in store worth £20 in 1719. Flax was grown by a number of farmers in the coastal parishes of Chislet, Herne, and Swalecliffe. John Dunston of Herne, for example, was growing five acres of the crop in 1728 although he specialized in wheat and also grew modest acreages of barley, oats, peas and beans. Peter Le Dain farmed at Swalecliffe until 1705; he had 600 bundles of flax in his barn when he died, as well as 20 packs of flax

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[1] P. Hall ed., Von Thünen's Isolated State (Oxford 1966), 186.

"at Canterbury" for which he was owed £40. /Flax was grown too in the coastal parishes north of Sittingbourne. /Henry Cocken was described as a "mariner" in 1690 but he occupied ground in Milton on which he managed a mixed farming enterprise; the largest item recorded in Cocken's inventory was 33 packs of "swingled flax" valued at £132; he also possessed two flax brakes./ Michael Rayner, "flaxman", who lived at Iwade until his death in 1714 possessed "flax drest and in the stack" as well as a quantity of flax seed and "two brakes and other utensills to work the same". /John Tilden of Rainham rented Barksore Farm at Lower Halstow, as well as other low-lying ground at Iwade; his flax in store in 1725, wroth £20, was probably grown on newly-broken marshland in these coastal parishes.[1]/

There were a few flax growers in the Canterbury district. In 1695 Elizabeth Bourcie of Northgate parish at Canterbury possessed 11½ packs of dressed flax valued at £55, "more flax undrest" put at £5 5s. and 5½ quarters of flax seeds worth £8. William Taylor of St. Paul's was growing 14 acres of flax on his mixed farm in 1700.[2]

Most of the parishes where flax has been found growing possessed marshland, coastal or riparian: it was quite common for flax to be grown for two or three years in newly-broken grassland rather like canary; these crops often thrived in juxtaposition at least in the Sandwich-Ash district and in Thanet. The famous thread-making industry of Maidstone is well known, and flax growing in Kent is usually associated with the Wealden parishes south of that town. Other flax areas of Kent have gone almost unnoticed, although Dr Thirsk recently included "the marsh-lands of Thameside in Essex and Kent" among the pastoral areas which grew flax and hemp during the seventeenth century. But the extent to which market

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[1]KAO PRC 27/34/82, 11/88/56, 27/34/98, 11/74/203, 27/42/34, 11/66/123, 11/54/67, 11/72/71, 27/42/25, U151 E3.

[2]KAO PRC 11/58/13, 11/62/16.

gardeners and intensive arable farmers in north-east Kent were engaged in flax production has been hitherto unrecorded.[1]

Largely due to the Dutch influence flax became an established industrial crop in the region. During the period the growing and processing of "Dantzick Flax" was undoubtedly a profitable undertaking supplying a linen industry whose prosperity came increasingly to depend on the expansion of hop growing and the rapidly rising demand for hop-bagging.

Hemp remained a crop of minor importance and appears to have been grown by few farmers; the sown area was always small, usually less than an acre, and its value low. Anthony Cheston who farmed 20 acres at Bridge in the 1680's possessed half an acre of "hempland" near his house, while his neighbour, Michael Hopkins, sowed "about a tovett of hemp seed" in 1690. Samuel Mace, a hemp-dresser at Canterbury bought their crops each year. In 1717 Edward Wanstall, a Canterbury maltster, sold a small property to John Nash, a cordwainer at Goodnestone, a few miles east of the City. The transaction concerned a messuage in Goodnestone Street together with an adjoining half acre described as "hempland". Thomas Payton occupied a smallholding at Sturry, north of Canterbury; his modest farm stock included five bundles of hemp.[2]

During the period of low prices at the end of the seventeenth century it was argued that "because corn and cattel are so cheap ... they will not pay the rent of their lands and the necessary charges bestowed upon them ... but flax and hemp will do much more, because they bear a double crop at the same time, one of seed and another of flax or hemp".

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[1] Kerridge, Agricultural Revolution, op. cit., 137; W. Newton, The History and Antiquities of Maidstone (1741), 101-2; J. Russell, The History of Maidstone (Maidstone 1881), 316-8; Thirsk, op. cit., 171; Blith, op. cit., 259-60.

[2] PRO E134 2 Wm. & Mary/East. 9; KAO U373 T10, PRC 11/72/216.

Farmers in the region were not slow to appreciate the benefits.[1]

Sandwich remained the district pre-eminent for market gardening in Kent, and indeed was one of the most important horticultural areas in the country. However, individual market gardeners are also found in or near important towns in other parts of the region. Occasionally a small acreage of some garden crop or other turns up unexpectedly. William Pyles of Ash was growing an acre of onions in one of his fields in 1702, a unique venture for a general farmer. Richard Gallant was by trade a victualler in St. Dunstan's parish Canterbury until his death in 1680; in that year he was growing "two acres of turneps and pasnips in ye garden". Richard Main occupied a farm and grew hops at Canterbury and, although he was not a market gardener in the true sense, the appraisers of his inventory in 1712 were careful to record his "cowcumber glases" which they valued at £2. John Dunkin, a well-to-do yeoman at Stonar, possessed "garden ware and seeds" worth £10 and radish seed £8 in 1719. By the end of the century Thanet farmers had become famous for their radish seed, the bulk of which was marketed in London.[2]

Margate, a rapidly growing coastal resort, attracted its gardeners:

> Thomas Smith, Gardener, at Margate in the Isle of Thanet intending to leave off business at Michaelmas next ... has a large garden, well watered, the soil rich, fit for Collyflowers, a pond well stocked with fish, summer house, lodge. Hog place, frames and other glasses near house. The common sewer of the town runs close to the garden, of which he has 9 years lease to come.[3]

The outstanding professional gardener in England during the early seventeenth century was John Tradescant. He travelled the world search-

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[1] Anon., England's Improvement and Seasonable Advice to all Gentlemen and Farmers - How to prepare the Ground fit for sowing Hemp and Flax Seed (1691), 1.

[2] KAO PRC 27/35/142, 11/44/5, 27/39/64, 11/74/203.

[3] Kentish Post 30 June 1750.

ing for new plants which he sent back to England by the shipload. Tradescant owned property in Kent and was married to a Kentish maid at Meopham in 1607. He spent several years at Canterbury working in the service of Sir Edward Wotton at St. Augustine's Palace: many of Tradescant's botanical discoveries were brought back to the old gardens at Canterbury. He eventually moved to Lambeth where he took a house owned by the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury.[1]

Later in the century land in the ecclesiastical quarter of Canterbury, especially within the precincts of the Archbishop's Palace, was occupied by nurserymen who soon established high reputations for the range and quality of the plants they cultivated. There are thus strong reasons for thinking that the highly specialized work of nurserymen in early Georgian Canterbury had an illustrious foundation. Samuel Clinch, a Canterbury gardener, appears to have specialized in "fruite and onyons" in the 1690's. William Pembrey, "gardner", possessed "two small nurseries" in the parish of Holy Cross. John Brice of St. George's parish was described as a "gardiner" when he died in 1704; almost a quarter of his total personal wealth consisted of plants growing in the nursery and described as "severall kinds of greens and flowers in ye grounds" valued at £15 19s. 4d.[2] This family concern prospered. John Brice the younger had a flourishing nursery business during the 1740's and 1750's; he leased ground near the Archbishop's Palace where he cultivated a wide range of trees and plants:

> John Brice, Gardener and Nurseryman, lying in the Archbishop's Palace, Canterbury, selleth very good standard pear trees, and wall pear trees, standard apple trees, and dwarf apple trees for hedges; also very good dwarf bearing paradice apple trees of many kinds; wall peach trees, apricock trees, standard and dwarf plums, standard and

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[1] Mea Allen, The Tradescants (1964), 26, 60, 63, 92; R. Webber, The Early Horticulturalists (1968), 66-8.

[2] KAO PRC 27/33/21, 11/45/12.

> dwarf cherry trees of many kinds. Likewise, garden seeds, mellon glasses, and garden mats for covering. Also very good green asparagus to be had at any time by sending; very good kinds of Gravesend roots to plant out this spring. Colleyflower plants and colleyflower seed; cabbage plants and cabbage seed of several kinds; and many other kinds sold by John Brice.[1]

By the 1750's nurserymen beyond Canterbury were improving their marketing technique by advertising:

> To be sold by Thomas Mantle at Bridge in Kent. 1s. per 100. 8 or 9 thousand very good nursery hop sets. The sale begins on Monday and to continue till all are sold. Very good onion seed 1s. 6d. per pound. In season time, very good dwarf Turkey bean seed.[2]

One or two market gardeners had businesses in the populous town of Faversham. Stephen Neale was a Faversham "garner" who, until his death in 1680, rented several plots of ground in the locality. His inventory, barely decipherable, shows a horticultural concern covering a wide range of vegetables which no doubt found a ready sale in this busy port:

ye stock one ye land	£	s.	d.
a Acer & three yards of peas hired of Marshall beside Bising Wood	6	0	0
a acker & a halfe of Carretts hired of Orkenfeild of Musson /Murston/	5	0	0
for a Acker of peas more or lese hired of John Clouse & Cearter of ower /Oare/	6	0	0
for ye Crope of peas carretts pasnipes Cabedges & hartichokes apone two Ackers of ye fouer hired of Mr Slathorne	10	0	0
for ye Crope of Inions peas benes cabeges Cowcumbers & turnups one a Aker & a ½ of land hiered of Mrs Napulton widow	10	0	0

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[1] Kentish Post 26 March 1748.

[2] Ibid., 1 February 1752.

	£	s.	d.
in ye garne hiered of Thomas Perse ye benes & Cowcumbers	3	0	0[1]

In 1739 Stephen May, another Faversham gardener, was growing peas, kidney beans, parsnips, carrots, radishes, asparagus, even potatoes. A few miles to the west, at Sittingbourne, Nathaniel Fishenden, "gardiner", specialized in the production of young fruit trees, but several cultivated plots were set aside for "sparrowgrasse", "cabbidge plants", and "turnups".[2]

F The Fruit Industry

Kent has been famous for its fruit for over four hundred years. The pre-eminence of the Kentish fruit industry owes much to fertile soils and a favourable climate. But there are other reasons too - geographical and historical. During the Middle Ages the county established close commercial links with the Continent especially Flanders. And, of course, proximity to London always ensured access to the most lucrative markets.

English grown fruits - apples, pears, plums and damsons - were produced on a small scale in the gardens and orchards of most medieval monasteries and on the demesnes of a few lay lords. Until around the middle of the sixteenth century, however, most of the fruit eaten by Englishmen was imported. Flemish cherries and French apples, like their English counterparts, were luxuries enjoyed by the wealthy few. In the early Tudor Age a growing aristocratic interest in good quality dessert fruit set the stage for serious commercial production. Richard Harris, fruiterer to Henry VIII, has been described as "the Father of commercial fruit growing in Kent". During the 1530's, in the parish of Teynham near Sittingbourne, Harris planted over a hundred acres of cherry, apple,

[1] KAO PRC 11/44/16.

[2] Ibid., 11/81/189, 11/61/53.

and pear trees; the grafts had been imported from France and the Low Countries. Teynham quickly became the core-centre of Tudor England's most famous fruit district.[1]

In 1586 William Camden described his visit to this part of Kent:

> Then saw I Tenham ... the parent as it were of all the choice fruit gardens and orchards of Kent, and the most large and delightsome of them all, planted in the time of King Henrie the Eighth by Rich. Harris his fruiterer, to the publique good. For 30 parishes thereabout are replenished with cherrie gardens and orchards beautifully disposed in direct lines.[2]

Harris's pioneering work in large-scale fruit production created something of a sensation in the horticultural world of the sixteenth century. His most famous orchard in Teynham, at Newgardens, was visited by all kinds of people who obtained grafts for their own use.

Refugee Flemings who settled in Kent during the early years of Elizabeth's reign brought with them a rich fund of horticultural experience as well as capital, and their arrival undoubtedly gave a fillip to Kent's nascent fruit industry. "The County of Kent", wrote Fynes Moryson in the early seventeenth century, "wonderfully aboundeth with apples and cherries". John Norden, writing in 1607 on the ways to use land more profitably, considered that "Kentishmen be most apt and industrious in planting orchards with pippins and cherries, especially near the Thames about Faversham and Sittingbourne". When the Fruiterers' Company of London wished to petition Parliament in the spring of 1624, against the import of Dutch cherries and other fruit, they asked Sir Nicholas Tufton and Sir Edwin Sandys to act for them, as they represented in Parliament

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[1] Webber, op. cit., 15-16, 31-3; G.H. Garrad, A Survey of the Agriculture of Kent (1954), 106; W. Lambarde, A Perambulation of Kent (Chatham 1826, 1st edn. 1576), 222-3.

[2] W. Camden, Britannia, trans. R. Gough, (3 Vols. 1789), I, 234.

"that county in wch is the greatest plantacion".[1]

Sir William Brereton noticed a newly-planted "dainty cherry orchard" covering three acres (440 trees) situated near the Thames at Gravesend. There were older plantations in the vicinity and the fruit on an acre of mature cherryground had recently (May 1634) been sold for £20 "the grass reserved and accepted". This cryptic note in Brereton's diary refers to a practice that has continued to the present day: the sale of fruit to an acceptable bidder (today by auction) in late spring, shortly after the blossom withers; an expert eye can estimate at this stage the potential value of the setting fruit and he places his bid accordingly. The buyer purchases the right to the fruit for that year, bearing all the costs and risks himself - as well as enjoying the profits - while the landlord is paid a lump sum which represents a return on his capital investment. The landlord usually reserves the grass for his own use, commonly in Kent for the purpose of grazing sheep.[2]

According to Hartlib fruit grown in north-east Kent had been sold at inflated rates during the sixteenth century but, as more orchards were established, prices settled by the middle of the following century to under £20 an acre:

> I know in Kent, that some advance their ground even from 5s. per acre, to 5 pounds by this means /i.e. planting orchards/, and so proportionally; and if I should relate what I have heard by divers concerning the profit of a cherry orchard about Sittenbourn in Kent, you would hardly believe me; yet I have heard it so many times, that I believe it to be true: Namely, that an orchard of 30 acres of cherries produced in one year above 1,000 pound, but now the trees are almost all dead; it was one of the first orchards to be planted in Kent. Mr Camden reporteth, that King Henry the Eighth's gardiner did first begin to plant Flemish cherries in those parts, which in his time did spread into 32 other parishes, and were at

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[1] Fynes Moryson, An Itinerary, 1605-17 (Glasgow 1908), 147; Thirsk & Cooper, op. cit., 111; Chalklin, op. cit., 90.

[2] Sir W. Brereton, 'Travels in Holland, The United Provinces, England, Scotland, and Ireland, MDCXXXIV-MDCXXXV', Chetham Society, I, 1.

> that time sold at greater rates than now: yet I know that 10, or 15 pound an acre hath been given for cherries; more for pears and apples.[1]

Hartlib is our sole source for a description of a seventeenth-century Kentish orchard. He says that standard trees were planted twenty or thirty feet apart in the rows. The land was cultivated and produced crops of corn until the trees began to bear fruit, when it was grassed over. Orchard pasture was reckoned to produce an early bite and to survive hot, dry summers better than the meadows; the trees were useful in providing shelter for stock. At Milstead during the early eighteenth century, Tylden's orchards were either recorded as "eat off" or "mowed for hay"; a three-acre orchard frequently mown for hay in the 1740's produced about three loads from each cutting. As hop growing expanded from the later seventeenth century it became common practice on the part of many farmers to plant hops in young fruit orchards. Sir James Collett grew hops on his land at Boughton under Blean from the 1680's. His method was to plant the hops in orchards of young fruit trees and when the trees matured the hops were grubbed out; meanwhile hops which had been planted in other young orchards came forward in succession to take the place of the old. In 1700 Collett possessed six acres of hops interplanted with fruit trees; the man who managed the hops was described as a "fruiterer" by trade. When the lease of a hop garden near Deal was advertised in 1733, the land was described as "lately planted with good young fruit trees". Two acres of land near Witchling church was described in 1763 as "formerly hop ground, now fruit". Possessing similar soil requirements, and each demanding delicate skills, fruit and hops are the crops most often jointly-cited as peculiarly Kentish; in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries their

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[1] Hartlib, op. cit., 15.

relationship was closer than is sometimes realized.[1]

Dr Fussell has warned that during the eighteenth century, "such a possession as an orchard was only that of the privileged classes such as the Lord of the Manor and the largest farmers".[2] As it stands, this statement is demonstrably untrue for Kent, particularly from the 1730's. If numerous small-scale farmers occupied orchards it is almost certainly true, however, that the more extensive areas of fruit were cultivated by men of means, for example Sir Edward Filmer at East Sutton Park on the ragstone ridge, and Richard Tylden Esquire at Milstead Manor and Hartlip Place.

Wealthy fruit growers existed in Kent during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and their activities almost certainly overshadowed the puny efforts of lesser men. On the manor farm of Fredville at Eythorne, south-east of Canterbury, fruit growing was a considerable industry after the Restoration: some seven acres of land near the house were planted with "the best sortes of fruite" including forty pear trees of the "Burgamet" variety "besides many other of ye choisest sorte both of summer and winter fruite"; in addition, two apple orchards extended over 18 acres, and there was a four-acre cherry orchard, as well as "a very large nurserie of aple trees". It was reckoned that after the young trees had been moved from the nursery, there would be altogether some sixty acres "of planted land of ye best sortes of fruite" on this estate.[3]

Sir Arnold Braems owned an estate at Bridge where he was Lord of the Manor until his death in 1683. His son Walter managed the estate during

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[1] Ibid., 21-2; KAO U593 A3; PRO E134 2 Anne/East. 17; Kentish Post 2 June 1733, 16 July 1763.

[2] G.E. Fussell, Village Life in the Eighteenth Century (Worcester 1948), 50.

[3] KAO U214 E19/11.

the last few years of Sir Arnold's lifetime, and employed Joseph White of Bridge as his gardener until at least 1691. White reckoned that "great quantityes of apples, pears, walnutts and other fruits" were planted on the estate during these years; he mentioned in particular "the young orchard called Culvershaw" occupying four acres near the manor house, the "Redstreake orchard" of two acres, and the nine-acre "Cowleeze or Cherry ground". On average, the pears and apples produced eight hogsheads of perry and cider each year, although White could remember "a great fruite yeare" when more than twenty hogsheads had been brewed. Cider, an important local drink in Kent, was usually brewed on the larger farms. At Hartlip Place in the 1670's it seems to have been the practice to save all windfalls for several weeks before putting them into the mash tuns for cider, presumably for domestic consumption. A neighbour of Richard Bradley "made a hogshead of cyder of Kentish Codlings. He tasted it this very week. It had taste far differing from all our other cyder, not bad, nor very excellent ... it looks like perry, of a wheyish colour".[1] Other local varieties of apples were used for commercial cider-making:

> Robert Nye, at the Saracen's Head without Burgate, Canterbury, sells right Red-streak cyder at one shilling per gallon, our four shillings per dozen. Also fine Golden Pippin cyder ...[2]

Kentish cider was not without its critics, however, and local innkeepers also stocked the more reputable Herefordshire brew, which they advertised in convincing style:

> To all lovers of cyder
> Whereas many complaints were made last year, of persons being troubled with the gripes, occasioned by drinking a certain home-made, rot-gut liquor call'd cyder; this

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[1] PRO E134 3 Wm. & Mary/East. 9; KAO U593 A4; R. Bradley, New Improvements of Planting and Gardening (1724), 33.

[2] Kentish Post 11 April 1747.

> is to give notice that Thomas Munn at The Mitre in the High Street, Canterbury, has lately imported a larger quantity than usual of right Herefordshire cyder, of so curious a flavour and so noble a body that it may be drank by all sorts of persons with a great deal of safety as well as pleasure.[1]

Lord Teynham carried out a programme of planting small areas of fruit trees on his estate at Linsted and Teynham in 1680-2. His steward expended 2s. 6d. "goeing to Canterbury to look after /for/ cherrie trees and apple trees" in November 1679. His mission was apparently successful: the following month he paid Mr Thatcher, a nurseryman, £5 3s. for a quantity of "apple trees and gaskins".[2] The following month Lord Teynham's steward paid five shillings "for 100 of chesnutt stakes for to stake ye young cherry trees"; the hundred trees "to plant in ye hawkesmore garden" were delivered in February and cost £3 13s. 8d. During the same month apple trees for Newland Farm, Teynham were supplied and planted by Henry Rayner, a local nurseryman. In December of the following year 175 apple trees which cost £7 5s. were "planted att ye Courte Lodge and Petit's Farme", and in January 1682 £4 3s. 4d. was paid "for 100 of apple trees more Tenham Court Lodge". Later that year Goodman Beane was paid five shillings for work with his team "fetching apple trees from Lenham to Teynham". In the winter 1709-10, John Hatcher, "gardiner", was paid £3 18s. "for apple trees and quick sets". The fruit trees at Linsted and Teynham were apparently planted and staked with care, and the orchards were subsequently tended by the estate gardeners: in December 1712, for instance, John Perrin received £1 18s. 3d.

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[1] Ibid., 3 April 1736.

[2] gaskin: "prunus avium, a half wild variety of the damson, common in hedgerows and occasionally gathered to send to London, with the common kinds of black cherry, for the manufacture of 'port wine'". W.D. Parish and W.D. Shaw, A Dictionary of the Kentish Dialect (Lewes 1888).

"for prewning trees in the cherry orchard".[1]

The most abundant evidence for fruit growing in the region relates to Milstead and Hartlip. Richard Tylden of Milstead Manor had 16 acres of apples, pears, and cherries on his small estate until 1734 when "the old cherryground" of 5 acres was grubbed out. From this time until 1737 there remained 11 acres of top fruit including "ye young cherry ground" of 7 acres. Subsequently a further acre was planted with fruit trees and for the remainder of the period for which detailed records survive (until 1753) the acreage of fruit at Hogshaw Farm was stabilised at 12 acres, about seven per cent of the cultivated land. Tylden also records from time to time, eight or nine productive walnut trees. The fruit area with the under-grazing recorded in 1738 and subsequent years was:

Little Seedcops	7 acres	cherries
The Farm Orchard	3 "	apples pears & cherries
The House orchard	1 "	apples
The Little Meadow	1 "	apples
	12 acres	

Until 1748 the policy at Milstead was to retain all twelve acres in the landlord's hands, selling the fruit each year to a London fruiterer or local dealer, the contract being agreed each spring or early summer in the customary manner. After 1748 only five acres were retained for sale in this way, the remainder being let on a long lease.[2]

The Osborne estate of over 600 acres at Hartlip was partitioned in 1720 following the early death of Thomas Osborne, a bachelor. The co-heirs were Thomas's sisters, Elizabeth - married to Richard Tylden, and Mary Milway, wife of the rector of Borden. The property inherited by the Tyldens of Milstead included Hartlip Place and Queendown Warren.

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[1] KAO U498 A2-3.

[2] Ibid., U593 A1, A3.

Richard Tylden managed the newly-acquired lands, leasing most of the property to local tenant farmers. The largest single holding was Hartlip Place Farm and extant leases relate to 1720, 1725, and 1746. In a deed dated 30 April 1720, the house together with 176 acres of land was leased for thirteen years at £90 per annum to Thomas Rose, yeoman of Borden, a parish near Sittingbourne lying between Hartlip and Milstead. However, there was reserved to the landlord, besides the timber, "all fruit of apples, pears, cherrys and wallnuts". There were 43 acres of fruit growing on the farm at this time, comprising 22 acres of cherries, 9 acres of apples, and 12 acres of apples and pears together:

Dunly Hills	10	acres	cherries
Eden Gates	12	"	cherries
Payton Croft	5	"	apples
Spade Croft	4	"	apples
Place Orchard	8	"	apples & pears
Broad Orchard	4	"	apples & pears
	43		

The fruit acreage accounted for a quarter of the farm's area, probably a representative figure for the larger farms in this "fruit belt".

In a deed dated 1st October 1725, Hartlip Place was leased to Valentine Ruck, yeoman of Selling near Faversham, for twenty-one years at £90 per annum. The lease covenant relating to fruit remained unchanged. After Valentine Ruck's death in 1729, the property was leased to his brother Adam; in 1746 the lease was renewed for a further fourteen years for an annual rent of £80. There is no clause relating to fruit in the deed of conveyance for 1746. This suggests a change of policy.[1]

A new policy with regard to the fruit growing at Hartlip Place is confirmed and explained by other evidence. Tylden prepared a schedule of his Hartlip property in 1720, the year the estate came into his hands.

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[1] Ibid., U771 Z1.

At the time he noted: "I have upon this estate about 70 acres of fruit viz. apples, pears and cherries y^{t} I keep in my own hands to sell yearly, worth one year with another about £80".[1]

It was rare at this time for land bearing fruit trees or nuts (usually filberts) to be leased to tenants, other than for grazing purposes. An exception was the small acreage which George Shrubsal rented at Hartlip:

> Hir'd to George Shrubsal ye old nursery or filberth grown for £1 8s. per annum commencing from Michaelmas 1720. Hir'd also to him ye young nursery for £1 2s. per annum commencing from Michaelmas 1721 to have a lease of ye old nursery for 15 year & of ye young one for 21 year.[2]

In 1735 Tylden prepared another schedule of his Hartlip lands and with regard to the fruit recorded: "There is upon this estate about 36 acres of fruit viz. of apples and pears which I keep in my own hands to sell yearly and is worth about £20 per annum". The reduced acreage is immediately apparent but even more striking is the low annual valuation placed on the fruit, hardly more than 11s. an acre. This figure might be compared with Hartlib's statement in the 1650's that Kentish cherries fetched £10 or £15 an acre and "more for pears and apples"; even these respectable prices were much lower than those reported for the sixteenth century. In an illuminating record Tylden explains the dilemma in 1735:

> Fruit being very cheap and some part being let to the Place Farm to keep up the rent and some part grub'd up and ye price of the remainder being so much reduced that the

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[1] Ibid., U593 F2. The 70 acres included, of course, 43 acres of fruit at Hartlip Place, together with 27 acres distributed over various smaller holdings.

[2] KAO U593 A2.

yearly vallue of it has fallen since ye year 1720 per annum £60.[1]

Mainly due to lower fruit prices the annual value of the Hartlip estate, £628 14s. in 1720, had fallen to £558 14s. in 1735 - thus it had "fallen in ye yearly vallue £70". Of the difference, £60 is explained by the lower valuation for fruit (due to the reduced acreage in his hands and its lower per capita value) and £10 because - as he notes - "some rents /are/ fallen they being rack rented before".

The problems confronting Tylden in 1735, if not severe, are at least indicative of the downward pressures on prices and rents, the effects of which the farming community in north-east Kent could not completely avoid. In other parts of England, especially in the Midlands, low prices during the 1730's and 1740's led to "agricultural depression" which at its worst meant rapidly mounting rent arrears, even runaway tenants; landlords in these areas ameliorated the position of their tenants, for example by paying their land tax and increasing capital improvements on the farms themselves.[2]

North-east Kent certainly missed the full blast of depression during these years but no doubt felt some of the side-draughts. The Rucks at Hartlip Place, substantial yeoman farmers, were hardly men who would delay payment of their rents on the pretext of "distress", but there is a clear hint in the records that a lower rent for Hartlip Place was a possibility that Tylden could not dismiss lightly. Hence, appropriate measures were taken before 1735 "to keep up the rent". There were rent abatements to the extent of £10 on the rest of the Hartlip estate, hardly a significant sum, but one which holds a clear message since, in more fortuitous circumstances, these holdings would hardly have been considered

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[1] Ibid., U593 F2.

[2] G.E. Mingay, 'The Agricultural Depression, 1730-50', Economic History Review, second series, VIII, no. 3 (1956).

"rack rented".

If agricultural depression due mainly to falling grain prices is a now-familiar feature of early Georgian England, the phenomenon of falling fruit prices is altogether new. The 34 acres of fruit allowed to the tenant of Hartlip Place would not have fetched £60 annually as it was reckoned to have done in 1720, although no doubt it was a convenient and welcome form of rebate. There is evidence that after 1735 Tylden continued to reduce the amount of Hartlip fruit he reserved for his own use until, by 1747, it was worth no more than £10 a year. Whether or not the fruit served as annual rebates is impossible to determine, but the relevant point is that Tylden ceased to consider fruit important enough to retain or to continue marketing in London. Until 1740 Hartlip fruit was the subject of annual contracts with a London fruiterer; subsequently it was sold to one of Tylden's smaller tenants at Hartlip - until 1746 on an annual basis. In 1747 the same local buyer agreed by contract to take a lease on the fruit for eleven years paying £10 per annum. From at least 1750 Tylden's Milstead fruit was also taken by the same buyer. It seems plausible to argue that a London fruiterer would not be interested in the diminished acreage of fruit at Hartlip but this does not explain why the Milstead fruit was marketed locally instead of at London, the method used at Milstead in earlier years when the acreage was the same. In short, fruit growing was becoming less profitable in these years for Kentish farmers, and local markets were deemed as good as, or perhaps better than, sales in the metropolis.

Very little has been written about fruit production in this period, nothing on prices; this is hardly surprising in view of the dearth of source material. Nevertheless it has remained a tacit assumption that beyond cereals - especially wheat - agricultural prices were more buoyant, providing some measure of alleviation from deflation. In the case of most non-cereal commodities this would seem to be an accurate assessment

of the situation. However, the evidence presented here, though limited, strongly suggests that fruit-growing was not a high-road to prosperity in the first half of the eighteenth century. There was almost certainly a long-term decline in fruit prices from the end of the sixteenth century, with prices plummeting more rapidly from the 1730's, "fruit being very cheap" by that time. The most likely explanation seems to be that the slow but steady accretion of orchards over the years, especially in Kent, created a position of over-supply. Transport improvements, too, may have been partially responsible, by opening up more distant supplies to the markets. Farmers in north-east Kent responded to low wheat prices by growing more wheat, the mainstay of their economy. They also grew more row crops, especially beans, and concentrated on a range of specialities, the most important of which was hops. But nowhere is there anything to suggest that the extension of fruit-growing was a feature of "improvement" in the deflationary decades. On the contrary the fruit industry in north-east Kent during the early eighteenth century came to lose some of the prestige it had gained during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and appears to have experienced a recession. Small orchards of apples, pears and cherries remained a familiar feature of Kentish farms throughout the period but the hop-plant, their closest rival, had stolen a march on them by the 1730's.

Probate inventories have two serious shortcomings with regard to fruit. As we have already seen, it was normal for landowners to reserve for their own use some of the fruit growing on tenant-farms. Nevertheless, an orchard may still receive mention in an inventory if some of the farmer's goods - wood or implements for example - are stored within its bounds. The second shortcoming is more serious. For inventory purposes a distinction was drawn between, on the one hand, cultivated crops and, on the other, such produce as growing fruit and hops, and grass intended for hay, all of which were deemed in legal theory as coming from the soil

"without the industry or manurance of man". Fruit growing on the trees was considered real not personal property, part of the land itself which went direct to the heirs and was not dealt with by the executors and therefore not included in the inventory. Sometimes unlettered appraisers were not aware of this fine distinction and, in any case, they were expected to record fruit that had been picked and lay in store.[1]

Inventories can therefore shed only a limited amount of light on fruit growing in the region but they dispose of the notion that only the well-to-do possessed orchards. The distribution of references, however imperfect, is significant. Few inventories have been found which record orchard sizes but the value of fruit in store is always extremely small, frequently only shillings, sometimes a pound or two. This is quite different from hop growing where, although acreages were small - they are frequently recorded - the crop was of very high value and often comprised the largest part of the inventory total. The exclusion of fruit from an inventory would make little difference to the individual picture, the removal of hops would usually destroy it.

John Godfrey, a Rainham maltster, had fruit in store worth £3 in 1710, representing less than one per cent of his total personal wealth. In the adjoining parish of Upchurch, Richard Vinall - a general farmer - had "frute on the trees" valued at £20 in June 1701. John Hubbart, the local blacksmith, had an "apple room" containing forty bushels of apples worth £2 10s. in October 1714, and Henry Brockwell "fruit in ye orchard" valued at £8 14s. 6d. in the spring of 1719. Charles Tomlin possessed "young trees in his garden" valued at £30 in 1706. At Hartlip, Richard Gaskin possessed a cherry orchard and Mary Milner, a farmer's widow, an apple orchard in which stood four beehives. Gaskin "sold the cherrys for £9" in 1729, while Mrs Milner kept her apples in store probably for

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[1] R. Burn, Ecclesiastical Law (4th edn. 1781), IV, 242.

domestic use. Small fruit growers proliferated in this cluster of parishes at the western extremity of the north-east Kent fruit belt, but none possessed the extent of orchards found at Hartlip Place.[1]

A group of parishes stretching from Borden to Linsted and Teynham lay at the heart of the orchard country. There were two orchards of two acres apiece lying near the house at Dodman's Farm, Borden in 1623; the farm also possessed a two-acre "cherry garden" at Borden and another of similar size at Tunstall. The cherries of Isaac Jones, husbandman of Borden, were valued at four guineas around picking-time 1689. In October 1734 John Wells of the same parish possessed "fifty mauns of fruit & six ladders" valued altogether at £25, seven per cent of his personal estate. A maun (alias maund or moan) of 10 bushels was the largest unit of measure for fruit: it was a huge, round, open, deep wicker basket, larger at the top than bottom, with a handle on each side. Sir Edward Filmer sold 24 maunds of fruit to a Maidstone fruiterer in 1713 for which he received "1s. per bushel or 10s. a maund upon the trees". The fruit belonging to Wells was valued at a slightly lower rate. Daniel Shrubsall of Borden was described as a "fruiterer" in 1753. He bought fruit each year from local growers and had links with metropolitan dealers: in the year he died Shrubsall was owed £20 by "John Goodale of London, fruiterer". Shrubsall also raised young fruit trees for sale: in the year of his death he possessed three "grafting ladders", a quantity of "seambling wood" (scions or grafts?), and "young trees in the nursery".[2]

James Hinckley, a Linsted yeoman, had three acres of cherry orchard during the 1650's; in 1652 the total crop of 57 bushels was sold to John Duncombe, a local fruiterer, for £12. Stephen Hedges of Tong possessed

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[1] KAO PRC 11/70/24, 11/63/164, 11/72/192, 11/75/5, 11/67/172, 11/81/31, 11/82/179.

[2] Ibid., U390 Acc 694/E24, PRC 11/53/140, 11/80/202, 11/83/121; E. Melling, 'Aspects of Agriculture and Industry', Kentish Sources, III (Maidstone 1961), 57.

a small "cherry garden" in 1708; his inventory also included "pears and apples in ye pear garden" valued at £2 10s. As we might expect there were numerous small fruit growers at Teynham: the appraisers of James Curtis's inventory in 1680 allowed £3 for "the frute in the garden"; Joseph Allen had timber worth £1 10s. stacked in his cherry orchard in 1715; and "fruite on ye trees" belonging to John Murfoot in 1728 was valued at £6 6s.[1]

Inventories and other records relating to the famous Newgardens at Teynham are rather disappointing from the point of view of fruit. Thomas Hall, a yeoman of Luddenham, grew crops "at the farme called Newgardens in Tenham" until his death in 1682, but there is no mention of orchards or fruit. Stephen Smith farmed at Bogle in Linsted and also grew wheat and other crops, and grazed sheep "att Newgardens in Tenham" until 1692. Subsequently, John Smith - probably Stephen's son - was the sub-tenant at Newgardens, and in the period 1710-11 paid an annual rent of £68 to Lord Teynham; thereafter, Smith paid an annual rent of £90 direct to Sir Henry Furnese who had purchased Newgardens as part of the Waldershare estate from Lord Poulett of Somerset for £20,000 in 1705. During the Smiths' tenure of Newgardens there is no mention of fruit, which almost certainly indicates that successive landlords made separate contracts for its sale. However, from the 1730's the Kemp family, of wealthy yeoman stock, became tenants of Newgardens. At this time the farm covered 225 acres. Isaac Kemp died in 1750 worth £3,550 17s. 4d. in personal estate - his was the most valuable of forty-five inventories found for the region in the years 1740-60. Kemp's possessions at Newgardens included £26 for fruit in the September following his death, a sizeable sum compared with the usual farm valuation for this item, but extremely small when compared with the value of Kemp's corn -

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[1]PRO E134, 1653-4, Hil. 2; KAO PRC 11/68/62, 11/44/99, 11/72/127.

£1,436 14s. 6d. It is clear that by this time the tenant of Newgardens had the use of an extensive fruit plantation but whether this was included in the rent of £105 which he paid annually to the Waldershare estate is unknown. Isaac's son William took over the farm in 1750 and, like his father before him, became one of the most prominent leasehold farmers of the district. It was William Kemp who formed a madder-growing partnership at Teynham and was awarded a prize by the Society of Arts in 1764. The Kemps were still lessees of Newgardens as late as 1810 when the annual rent had risen to £200. The Kemps of Teynham are an outstanding example of prosperous leasehold farmers - a model of the type of reputable, experienced tenant, commanding sizeable capital resources, preferred by landlords before all others.[1]

Milton near Sittingbourne was heavily engaged in the fruit industry. During the 1680's a number of growers regularly sold their cherries and hard fruit to Thomas Goldsmith, a London fruiterer with strong local connections. Growers in Milton and Bobbing at this time included Mr Francis Rumney, a gentleman-farmer who grew fruit in "Spratt's Hill Garden"; Edward Fryday, a yeoman who occupied three acres of orchard; and Clement Collins, a labourer who was employed for much of the summer picking fruit for others but who, from time to time, sold small consignments of his own apples to the fruiterers.[2]

In the early eighteenth century William King possessed a small orchard and had 70 bushels of apples in his garret when he died in 1714. A ten-acre holding at Bobbing, occupied by Jonathan and William Day was described as "partly planted with cherries" in 1753. Equipment related to fruit growing is sometimes recorded in the inventories: William Griffen, a Milton husbandman, possessed "8 old cherrye seiffes" valued at

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[1] KAO PRC 11/46/19, 11/56/72, U498 A3, U471 A1-2, 10/6-9, PRC 11/83/68.

[2] PRO E134 35 Chas.2/Mich. 1.

2s. in 1690; William Whibley of Bobbing had a quantity of "cherry sives & baskets" in his house when he died in 1713.[1]

Milton was the centre for a number of industrial activities including wool mongering, tanning, and basket making. The basket makers serviced a number of economic activities the most important of which were fruit and hop growing, fishing, and general farming. Inventories relating to Milton basket makers show a wide range of products including the bushel and half-bushel baskets (known locally as "sieves" and "half-sieves") in which fruit was marketed. Simon Gilker possessed "cherry seives & other ware of the baskett maker's trade" when he died in 1686; this local craftsman was well-stocked in readiness for the approaching fruit season. Ten years later Simon Gilker the younger died leaving a stock which included fish baskets, hop baskets, hampers and chaff baskets; eighteen bushel baskets and four dozen half-bushels had been made for the local fruit industry. Interesting items in this inventory are the raw materials of the trade: "brown and white rodds" and "green rodds on ye ground". The appraisers of George Moore's inventory in 1705 were careful to list every type of basketware in the workshop and stores, including "white cherry sieves", "half sieves", and the baskets used by the cherry pickers - 48 "kibseys" valued at 6d. each as well as 7 "great kibseys". In addition there were woven wheat baskets, gardener's baskets, and baskets for hop growers. Moore also catered for domestic needs: cradles, children's stools, even "three bird caiges" were ready for sale. John Shrubsall, another Milton basket maker, possessed a large stock of baskets for fruit and hops as well as gallon measures and "seed cords". The largest item in his inventory in 1719 was "for the rodds in the Water Lane ozier ground" valued at £35; he also had "rodds cut at Newington, white and brown" as well as "band rods at Otterham Key"

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[1] KAO PRC 11/72/202, U1431 T4, PRC 11/54/191, 11/71/47.

photocopy

near Rainham.[1]

If Milton tradesmen serviced the harvesting and marketing sector of the local fruit industry, nurserymen at Newington and Sittingbourne met the growers' substantial requirements for healthy trees to plant their orchards or replace dead stock. John Davies specialized in fruit tree production on his nursery at Newington during the 1680's. Mr Peter Theobald, a gentleman-farmer of Sittingbourne "intended to plant some grounds with apple trees lyeing in ... Sittingborne, Lynstead & Tong & haveing occasion to purchase trees for that purpose was informed that ... Davies had a nursery lyeing in the parish of Newington, well stored with such trees and that hee would sell some of them". In 1686 Theobald purchased sixty apple trees from Davies at 1s. 5d. each and in the following year a further four hundred and thirty-six trees for £27 5s. 2d. These large consignments of young trees were "sett and planted" in Theobald's orchards at Sittingbourne, Tong, and Linsted by John Goodchild, a gardener employed by Davies. It was later stated that "Davies desired him /i.e. Goodchild/ not to discover the number of the trees soe taken upp for that hee was afraid the Viccar would demand tythes of him for the same". Apparently the worst fears of Davies were justified! Richard Murton, another Newington gardener, was said to occupy a local nursery "in which are a great many trees now ready to draw" in 1689. It was stated that Murton normally paid the tithe on his trees "when he takes them up".

Thomas Rayner of Newington, was also engaged in the local business of fruit tree propagation. Henry Rayner, a member of the same family, appears to have worked for other land holders in the district including Mr Pordage of Rodmersham who possessed several nurseries of fruit trees; this was undoubtedly the Henry Rayner who had supplied and planted Lord

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[1] KAO PRC 11/50/128, 27/34/93, 27/36/188, 11/74/144.

Teynham's trees at Newland Farm in 1680. The Rayner family conducted a flourishing business at this time, growing and supplying young stock, and carrying out, on contract, skilled fruit tree operations for the local gentry. Some years later, in 1695, Robert Plot of Borden mentioned his cherry orchard at Sutton Barn which "my Man John Rayner" tended; it seems a reasonable guess that he was a younger member of the family renowned locally for their horticultural skills. Newington, in the heartland of Kent's premier fruit growing district was indeed famous for its nurseries. In addition to those specialists already mentioned there were others - Ellis Rayner, Henry Crowd, John King and Daniel Beard among them - who "kept severall greate nurseryes of yong fruite trees in Newington parish" during the 1680's and 1690's, while it was stated that not far away at Bredgar, Thomas Bowell "hath severall tymes sold many yong trees out of his nursery ... to other parishes & places to be planted".[1]

Nathaniel Fishenden, a gardener of Sittingbourne, cultivated several plots of vegetables although his main investments were in fruit tree production. At the time of his death in 1699 the appraisers of his inventory recorded four hundred "stocks dead and alive", four hundred and fifty "small stocks", the same number of "stocks of a larger sort & some trees", together with a hundred and fifty "wilding stocks" all for grafting. Thomas Stowestreet, another local nurseryman, rented a house and lands in Sittingbourne called "Pullivers" from the Tyldens of Milstead from at least as early as 1728 until 1751. Stowestreet supplied Richard Tylden with fruit trees, quicksets, yew trees, and garden seeds during the 1720's and 1730's.[2]

Cobbett observed the "deep loam upon chalk" in the Faversham district, noting that "orchards grow well upon this soil". Matthew

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[1] PRO E134 1 Wm. & Mary/Mich. 4; Baker, op. cit., 222.

[2] KAO PRC 11/61/53, U593 A1.

Austen of Faversham had "fruite in two orchards" valued at £6 in 1680, while "a parcell of fruite on the trees" at Ewell Farm, occupied by Mary Holt, was said to be worth £3 in 1687. At this time apples, pears and cherries growing in the orchards of Ambrose Plane were sold for £7, or so he is reputed to have told Peter Reynolds, a local fisherman; local fruit sales provided a lively topic of conversation in the market place at Faversham. John Lacey of Boughton under Blean left personal estate worth only £20 15s. 3d. when he died in 1716. Nevertheless he possessed an orchard, and his appraisers recorded the sum of £3 9s. "due for the fruite sold last summer" as well as 6s. for "a small parcel of wind fallen fruite". John Knowler's interests in fruit growing were on a grander scale: this Ospringe gentleman had "cherryes and apples" worth £20 in the summer of 1700, and standing in his orchards were sixteen "stocks and swarms of bees". Many fruit growers and smallholders in this part of Kent kept bees, usually two or three hives in a garden or orchard, the larger beekeepers a dozen or more. James Bates of Sittingbourne had only three stocks of bees in his orchard, valued at a mere 5s. in 1732, while William Somes of Bapchild possessed twenty-two hives in 1725. Stephen Laslett kept ten beehives in his orchard at Woodnesborough until 1703 and had stored in the house "a small rack of mead".[1]

Small orchards were numerous in the Canterbury district during the seventeenth century. A survey in 1649 recorded small cherry orchards growing in several parishes within the City walls; for example, three acres of pasture called "Brick Close" in the parish of St. Mary Castle had been "planted with cherry trees" and the property leased to William Berry since 1638 for an annual rent of £6 10s. At Thanington, a peripheral parish, an attractive property included "a faire orchard planted

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[1] W. Cobbett, Rural Rides (2 Vols. 1853), I, 250; KAO PRC 11/44/107, 11/51/220; PRO E134 4 Wm. & Mary/Mich. 16; KAO PRC 27/40/42, 11/62/241, 11/80/13, 11/77/215, 27/36/38.

with cherry trees". Thomas Wilkes occupied a property in the parish of St. Mary Northgate which included a close, a garden, and two cherry orchards. The holding was part of the estates of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the cherries had been planted before 1660; some twenty years afterwards the fruit and pasture in the orchards was considered to be worth between £16 and £20 annually. The appraisers of Thomas Munning's inventory allowed £10 "for the frute" he had gathered from his orchards in 1679. In the spring 1700 the "fruite in the orchard and all pasture" belonging to William Taylor of St. Paul's parish was valued at £12. Thomas Younge, a "gardner" of St. Mildred's, was a fruit and hop grower; in the autumn of 1701 he possessed "in the stoare house" forty-five hundredweight of hops valued at £131 4s., and forty-eight bushels of apples said to be worth £2 8s.; his hops accounted for well over half his personal estate, the fruit about one per cent. This is a typical record: fruit always represented a minute proportion of a farmer's personal wealth, usually less than one per cent and, even in the case of large growers, scarcely ever more than five per cent. Hardly surprisingly, the trend at Canterbury and elsewhere was increasingly towards hop growing with a diminishing interest in commercial fruit production.[1]

Orchards, mostly of apples, were quite numerous on the fertile loams east of Canterbury, although valuations for fruit remain generally small. Inventories relating to Ash and neighbouring parishes are typical: Michael Impett's "apples, pears and other fruit" were valued at £11 in 1681, a relatively large sum for this item and representing about five per cent of Impett's total personal wealth. A measure of care is apparent in the preservation of fruit in this locality, and special storage rooms are frequently found in Ash inventories: William Rogers and

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[1]Cathedral Archives and Library, Canterbury: 1649 Parliamentary Survey ff. 108-9, 113; PRO E134 35 Chas.2/Mich. 9; KAO PRC 11/43/50, 11/62/16, 11/62/207.

Abraham Chapman each possessed apple lofts during the 1680's and Mercy Solley had an "apple chamber". It is not unusual to find hard fruit stored in sacks: Edward Dale of Hammel Court at Woodnesborough had "six sackes of apples and pears" stored in his apple loft in 1694. An unusually large entry, the "apeles and nutts" on Thomas Hatcher's farm at Ash were valued at £19 12s. 6d. in 1694, almost eight per cent of his personal wealth. Nicholas Collins, a large-scale general farmer, had nine sacks of apples on his premises at Ash in 1696 and "in a storehouse at Sandwich about 9 sacks of apples"; this fruit may have been awaiting shipment to London since Collins already had "corn on boare a hoy" at the same port. Occasionally references to cherries appear in these parishes: William Pyles possessed cherry sieves as well as apple ladders at his Ash farm in 1702; George Joy occupied both cherry and apple orchards at Ash in 1716. Elias Barton had orchard hay valued at £18 on his farm at Worth near Sandwich in 1719 and was owed £8 10s. for fruit sold to Thomas Goldring, a local fruiterer. Fruit dealers appear only occasionally in this part of the region: Abraham Hutton of Sandwich was described as a "Fruteror" in 1691; his personal estate - which included "a parcel of apples" valued at £5 as well as three ladders worth only 5s. - amounted to only £23 9s. 6d.[1]

Despite auspicious beginnings in north-east Kent during the sixteenth century, and the spread of commercial fruit production into other parts of this traditional orchard county, the numerous enterprises in fruit growing remained small-scale during the following two centuries. Orchards of less than an acre were the most common, more than three or four acres exceptional. Furthermore, the total acreage devoted to fruit growing in Kent was never very large before the nineteenth century.[2]

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[1] KAO PRC 27/29/133, 27/29/171, 27/30/16, 27/30/241, 11/45/96, 27/34/49, 27/34/34, 27/34/82, 27/35/142, 27/40/39, 27/41/5, 11/55/67.

[2] For nineteenth-century developments in Kentish fruit growing see my discussion in the forthcoming publication: G.E. Mingay ed., Two Centuries of Kent Farming.

CHAPTER 6

THE MARKETING OF FRUIT AND ARABLE CROPS[1]

The home market was at least six times as valuable as the overseas market in the early eighteenth century. The ratio could have been much higher and one contemporary estimate even puts it at 32 to 1. Throughout the early modern period the vast bulk of this traffic concerned agricultural produce, for in 1760 England was still a predominantly agricultural economy.[2]

Marketing, nevertheless, remains one of the most neglected areas of agricultural history.[3] There is a dearth of suitable source material. We know much about the management of crops and livestock in the field, little about their journey beyond the farm gate. A thorough exploration of the various outlets leading from farm to consumer is a rare venture. More frequently we seek shelter in some terminological cul-de-sac like "commercialized agriculture" or "farming for the market". Admittedly, in some regions the market outlets were few or fraught with hazards; such, for instance, was the difficult position of those who farmed the Midland clays, ill-drained and intractable. But others, more fortunately placed, could choose from a wide range of marketing possibilities; this held true, for example, over much of the eastern and home counties.

The farmers of north-east Kent possessed a number of competitive

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[1]The main arguments relating to the corn trade were first put forward in my article, 'The Marketing of Corn in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century: North-East Kent', Agricultural History Review, XVIII, pt. 2 (1970), 126-150.

[2]R.B. Westerfield, Middlemen in English Business, particularly between 1660 and 1760, Transactions Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, XIX (New Haven, Conn. 1915), 123; T.S. Ashton, An Economic History of England: The 18th Century (1955), 63; Phyllis Deane, The First Industrial Revolution (Cambridge 1965), 13-14.

[3]A noteworthy exception is Professor Alan Everitt's pioneering study 'The Marketing of Agricultural Produce', in Joan Thirsk, ed., The Agrarian History of England and Wales, 1500-1640, IV (Cambridge 1967), 466-592.

advantages, but none more valuable than proximity to the markets both local and in London. The Canterbury food market was the most important of a number of local markets in the region: Sittingbourne, Milton, Faversham, Whitstable, Herne, Margate, Ramsgate and Sandwich put together, consumed perhaps twice as much as Canterbury. Each of these smaller towns competed with each other and with Canterbury for the local farm products. On, or just beyond the periphery, burgeoning naval stations at Sheerness, Chatham, Dover and Deal were dependent on the region for at least some of their victuals. But beyond them all and, in a real sense, competing with them all, lay the London food market, so important in the early commercialization of agriculture in north-east Kent.[1] The population of London had risen from 400,000 in 1650 to 575,000 by the end of the century and to 675,000 in 1750, representing a notable increased demand for foodstuffs. The steady expansion of the metropolitan market "necessarily caused great changes in the methods used on farms over a wider and wider area, in the commercial organization of the food market, and in the transport of food".[2]

The method of marketing agricultural products, and consequently the organization by which the producer was linked with the consumer, varied according to the product. Perishable goods like milk, eggs, and certain fresh vegetables were produced in close proximity to the consumers, towns being supplied by the immediate neighbourhood. This direct method of supply involved only a simple organization. Milk, for instance, was rarely transported more than ten miles and the individual producer was

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[1] See F.J. Fisher, 'The Development of the London Food Market, 1540-1640', Economic History Review, V (1935), 56, and C.W. Chalklin, Seventeenth Century Kent: A Social and Economic History (1965), 2-3 and Ch. XI passim. For some cautionary words on the dangers of overstating London's role, see A. Everitt, Agricultural History Review, XIV, pt. 1 (1966), 67, and 'The Peers and the Provinces', Agricultural History Review, XVI, pt. 1 (1968), 66.

[2] E.A. Wrigley, 'A Simple Model of London's Importance in Changing English Society and Economy, 1650-1750', Past and Present, 37 (July 1967), 44, 58.

normally in direct touch with the individual consumer. There were few opportunities for middlemen.[1] In contrast, the methods and organization involved in marketing fruit and arable crops - especially grains - were indirect, complex, and involved a high level of competition and speculation.

A The Fruit Trade

The average Kentish farmer would most probably lay out a small orchard or two near the house. After domestic requirements had been met the surplus would go to nearby markets. Kentish appetites were keen, local fruit consumption considerable. A large variety of cooking apple, which went under the local name of "Cat's Head" was a particular favourite in the countryside. William Ellis, Hertfordshire farmer and agricultural journalist, described this variety as:

> a very useful apple to the farmer, because one of them pared and wrapped in dough serves with little trouble for making an apple dumpling, so much in request with the Kentish farmer, for being part of a ready meal, that in the cheapest manner satiates the keen appetite of the hungry ploughman, both at home and in the field, and, therefore, has now got into such reputation in Hertfordshire, and some other counties, that it is become the most common food with a piece of bacon or pickle-pork for families.[2]

Cooking apples, mainly for local consumption, went under the name of "codlin", probably because they were good to "coddle" or stew. The Kentish Codlin, a district variety, was described by John Parkinson in 1629 as a "faire great greenish apple, and good to eat when it is ripe; but the best to coddle of all apples" while still green. Dartford Codlins were grown at Hartlip Place and Milstead Manor in the early eighteenth century. The Redstreak variety was grown in Kent for cider which

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[1] W. Moffit, England on the Eve of the Industrial Revolution (1925), 69-70.

[2] quoted R. Webber, The Early Horticulturalists (1968), 38.

was brewed in local farmhouses and sold to innkeepers at Canterbury and other towns, although it never achieved the high national reputation of Herefordshire cider.[1]

There were a number of good dessert varieties produced in the region. The most sought-after Kentish dessert apple was the Golden Pippin - golden yellow with a slight russeting - widely grown and usually distinguished from "common apples" by both growers and buyers. Richard Harris probably planted pippins at Teynham in the sixteenth century, but the Golden strain is believed to have originated at Barham Park in Sussex. Sir Edward Filmer kept orchards of Golden Pippins, as well as Golden Reinettes and Sharp Russetings at East Sutton Park near Maidstone in the early eighteenth century; this fruit, together with his cherries, plums and nuts, was sold to Maidstone fruiterers during the years 1718-22. Apples grown at Milstead Manor from the 1660's included "French rennets", pippins, "permaines" (Pearmains), and "grinnins" (Greenings). Two sacks of Golden Pippins were purchased by the Earl of Rockingham for use at Waldershare Park in 1740; John Harvey, a fruiterer of Worth, was paid 16s. for this consignment. Lady Holland purchased Golden Pippins from a local fruiterer for her household at Kingsgate (Thanet) in 1773.[2]

A work written shortly before the Restoration mentions fourteen varieties of cherries which were grown in England, noting that "the ordinary cherries grow most familiarly in Kent and there are abundance of black cherries". The writer included the "Early Flaunders" cherry, the "Late Flaunders", and the "Duke Cherry" as well as two kinds of "Hart" among the ordinary varieties. The Royal Society's Georgical Committee reported in 1664 that there were ten varieties of cherries grown in Eng-

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[1] Ibid., 37; KAO U593 A2-3; Kentish Post 11 April 1747.

[2] Webber, loc. cit.; E. Melling, 'Aspects of Agriculture and Industry', Kentish Sources, III (Maidstone 1961), 56-9; KAO U593 A1, U471 A18; "Lady Holland's Housekeeping Book from Lady Day 1772", on private loan from Mr Christopher Powell-Cotton of Quex Park, Birchington.

land at that time including "the Flanders cherry - to wch did belong ye Kentish cherry" and the "Duke Cherry". Richard Tylden had cherries which he described as "Flemish", "English" (probably Black and White Hearts) and "May Dukes" growing in his orchards at Milstead during the early eighteenth century. Boys mentions Black Heart, White Heart, Flemish or Early Kentish, and May Duke, as well as Morello, among the varieties most commonly grown in Kent at the end of the century.[1]

It was customary for landowners to retain in their own hands most of the fruit growing on their estates, contracting annually with fruiterers for its sale. Thus an agreement for the sale of hard fruit growing at Milstead Manor was recorded by William Tylden in 1667:

> Received of younge Mr Duncombe for winter fruite, June 24 1667, ye sum of 5 li. 15s. I reserved out of this bargaine ye pippin tree in ye close, all ye peares, ye rade ripe apple tree, ye permaine apple tree, 12 bushells of French rennets and grinnins, and 20 bushells of pippins.[2]

In 1709 Lord Teynham's steward "received of Mr Holland for ye fruite at Tenham and ye cherries at /Linsted/ Lodge £24". Four years later, Richard Fox paid £8 "for cheryes grond in the archard next the gardin" at Linsted. In 1714 Mr Holland bought the cherries growing at Linsted Lodge for £5, and paid a further £20 "for aples in feners archard at Tenham". It was quite common, even in the seventeenth century, for non-professional dealers to buy the produce of small orchards. In 1664 John Dunkin, a Canterbury innkeeper, took a seven-year lease on "the fruite of the cherry garden" belonging to Thomas Hales esquire at Bekesbourne near Canterbury.[3]

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[1] W. Coles, Adam in Eden (1657), 270; Royal Society, Domestic MSS., V, 64 (20 October 1664); KAO U593 A2-3; J. Boys, A General View of the Agriculture of the County of Kent (1796), 115-6.

[2] KAO U593 A1.

[3] KAO U498 A3; PRO E134 26 Chas.2/Mich. 8.

The practice of leasing orchards to farm tenants became common from at least the 1730's as fruit prices declined and fruit farming lost some of its traditional attraction for landlords. Responsibility for selling the crop now lay with the farmer who normally sold to a fruiterer. Contracts were agreed in late spring, either to buy the fruit "on the trees" - the fruiterer taking responsibility for the picking arrangements, or "at the ladder's foot", that is picked by the grower and put in "sieves" ready for immediate despatch.

The key figure in the marketing business was the fruiterer. As we have seen already, local fruiterers often possessed orchards of their own and sometimes also fruit tree nurseries. They purchased annually the crops of other growers in the area which they marketed with their own produce. Sometimes the fruit was resold at London, or it might be parcelled out in numerous small lots to higglers. Some local fruiterers were in the retail business themselves.

Daniel Shrubsall, a Borden fruiterer, possessed mature orchards and a tree nursery, and had dealings in London - John Goodale, a London fruiterer owed him £20 in 1753; at the time of his death this local fruit specialist was said to be worth £93 12s. 5d. In the same year Richard Hutt, a fruiterer of Herne, possessed personal estate worth £172 13s. 6d. which included £35 in ready money and £19 4s. in "book debts" due to him. Slightly wealthier, Richard White of Maidstone was described as a "fruterer" with a personal estate of £234 17s. 8d. in 1719; his assets included £103 in ready money and £57 10s. "in good debts oweing for fruite uppon contratt and otherwise"; White was a wholesale fruiterer. John Wood of Sandwich was a small retailing "fruttrur" who was said to be worth little more than £17 when he died in 1704; his only goods "in the shopp" were four empty fruit baskets - "ould cherry sives". Generally speaking local wholesale fruiterers were men of modest personal wealth - less than £250, while fruit retailers were relatively poor men,

possessing estates worth less than £50.[1]

London provided the largest single market for Kentish fruit. The effects of the metropolitan fruit market were felt over a relatively small area of England and, although London drew some of its supplies from Middlesex, Surrey and Essex, the importance of Kent was paramount: the areas known today as the mid-Kent fruit belt (around Maidstone) and the north-Kent fruit belt (in the Sittingbourne-Faversham district) supplied the bulk of London's requirements.

Most of the Kentish fruit bound for London travelled coastwise, in the seventeenth century in small purpose-built sailing craft, by the early eighteenth century in the larger hoys which carried bulky crops to the metropolis. A seventeenth-century manuscript records that "cherry boats" sailed from the ports of Faversham and Milton for the London wharves. It seems probable that the flotillas of "small boats which only bring cherrys or fruit" from north-east Kent each summer were, for the rest of the year, used by the local inshore fishing industry. We have a unique description of this seventeenth-century trade:

> The Company of Fruiterers always bring their cherrys and summer fruits to London markets in smacks with sails, and covered ... boats from seven to fourteen tons which usually carry two thirds of their tonnage in ballast (without shifting) and without which they cannot sail. They also make use of three oars for expedition to save their markets by reason the same will admit no delay.[2]

In the 1720's Defoe reported that "very great quantities of fruit" were sent from Kent to London each year "such as Kentish pipins, runetts, &c. which come up as cherries do, whole hoy-loads at a time to the wharf call'd the Three Cranes in London; which is the greatest pipin market perhaps in the world". It is not clear precisely when Three Cranes wharf became the great wholesale fruit market for London. Until the early

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[1] KAO PRC 11/83/121, 11/83/108, 27/40/206, 11/64/147.

[2] BM Hargrave MS. 222 ff. 143-4.

seventeenth century this part of Thameside was involved with the wine import trade. John Stow said Three Cranes Lane was "so called not only of a sign of three cranes at a tavern door, but rather of three strong cranes of timber placed on the Vintry wharf by the Thames side, to crane up wines there". The site probably developed as a fruit market during the early Stuart period although it does not seem to have been formally established as a market by the City authorities. Strype said: "At the lower end of the street /Three Cranes Lane/ next the Thames is a pair of steps, the usual place for the Lord Mayor and Aldermen to take water at to go to Westminster Hall for the new Lord Mayor to be sworn before the Barons of the Exchequer. This place, with the Three Cranes, is now of some account for the Fruiterers where they have their warehouses for their fruit". The historian of the Fruiterers' Company of London believes that the site was "an ideal one having the advantage of a good landing stage for fruit landed from our own shores, or imported from abroad, with large warehouses known far and wide as the Three Cranes which were used for storage and from which the fruit was retailed to the multitude of fruiterers" who had their premises in the vicinity. The costermongers according to Strype "are congregated in Three Cranes Lane, which is long and narrow running down to the Thames, where there is a pair of stairs, the whole being taken up by the Fruiterers".[1]

Three Cranes Wharf was situated a little way below Queenhithe near the northern end of Southwark Bridge; the site today is occupied by the modern Riverside Inn.[2] By 1739 Three Cranes Lane was also known as

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[1] D. Defoe, A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain (2 Vols. 1962) I, 114; J. Stow, Survey of London (1912), 214; P.V. McGrath, The Marketing of Food, Fodder and Livestock in the London Area in the Seventeenth Century, University of London M.A. Thesis (1948), 212, 340; J. Strype, A Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster (3 Vols. 1720), III, 13; A.W. Gould, History of The Worshipful Company of Fruiterers of the City of London (Private Publication 1912), xxiv.

[2] I owe this information to the kindness of Mr Ives, assistant librarian at the Custom House.

Fruiterers' Alley "taking its name no doubt from the trade which was, and had been centred in this locality for generations past, being near to Fruiterers' Hall in Worcester House Thames Street, and in close proximity to the Three Cranes".[1]

Fruit distribution in London was in the hands of the Free Fruiterers while various mongers, hucksters and higglers engaged in a multitude of smaller transactions. The Free Fruiterers of London had been a Fellowship since at least the fifteenth century but they were not incorporated until 1606 when they were given control of the trade within a three-mile radius of London.[2]

During the course of the seventeenth century, as the fruit trade expanded, the Fruiterers' Company of London met competition from petty dealers who bought great quantities of fruit at the country markets and who were alleged to sell unwholesome produce at inflated prices in London. In order to restrain the activities of unauthorized middlemen the Fruiterers obtained a second charter from James II which extended their area of jurisdiction to a six-mile radius around the City, and prohibited all but the Fruiterers and country people from selling fruit in the metropolitan area. The Fruiterers, freemen of the City of London, had liberty to sell either in a shop or in the markets. Apparently many of them employed servants to sell their produce in various centres - the Stocks

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[1]Gould, loc. cit.

[2]The Charter granted by James I on 9 February 1606 recited: "We do give and grant unto the said Master, Wardens & Comonalty of the Mistery of Fruiterers of London and their successors that the Master Wardens and Assistants of the said Mistery for the time being for ever hereafter shall have the correction oversight View and Search as well by Water as by Land of all and singular person and persons whatever occupying exercising or using the said Mistery or Trade of Fruiterers within the said City of London and the suburbs thereof or within three miles of the same City ... our will and pleasure is that this our grant ... shall not extend to hinder or bar any person or persons whatsoever to bring or cause to be brought by Land or by Water into our said City of London or Suburbs thereof any manner of Fruit whatsoever as well from any part of this our Realm of England or any other of our dominions as from any the parts beyond the seas ...". See Gould, op. cit., 5-6.

Market and Covent Garden were the chief retail markets "but most of the general markets also contained fruit sellers". In addition fruit continued to be "sold in the markets by a considerable number of country people who brought their own produce to London, and by a number of hawkers in the streets".[1]

The Fruiterers came to exert greater influence in the areas which were their chief sources of supply: "Like the butchers and fishmongers the Fruiterers did not always wait for supplies to be brought to the City, but made their own arrangements to see that they were forthcoming. Some of them helped to establish orchards and others rented them from their owners".[2] It is now possible to illustrate this process of backward integration from examples in north-east Kent. Furthermore, the evidence suggests that the origins of some of the leading London Fruiterers must be sought in this region.

Thomas Goldsmith, who was described as a "London fruiterer" in 1689, claimed, according to a business associate, that he "hath beene well acquainted & delt in yong trees & fruite of his own & others within ... Newington by the space of nere fifty years or thereabouts". Goldsmith occupied nurseries and orchards at Newington and Milton, and leased grazing land at Milton and Bobbing from Sir Edward Dering. Goldsmith was the leading buyer of fruit in these parishes during the 1680's, conducting a thriving long-established business.

In 1680 Goldsmith bought the crop of fruit in a cherry garden called "Abbington" at Milton, as well as cherries growing in several orchards belonging to Grovehurst Farm, for which he paid 4s. a bushel. Grovehurst apples were also purchased by Goldsmith that year, Pippins for 2s. 6d. a bushel and other varieties 1s. and 1s. 3d. David Daw, a Milton labourer, and William Mansfield, a local cordwainer, were employed

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[1] McGrath, op. cit., 212.

[2] Ibid.

as Goldsmith's servants during the 1680 fruit picking season when they carted from Grovehurst orchards "several drayloads of fruite", 140 maunds (1,400 bushels) in all.

In 1681 the fruit of Edward Fryday of Milton was purchased by Goldsmith. Fryday possessed a cherry garden and two orchards, three acres altogether. 62 bushels of cherries and 11 maunds of apples and pears were sold from this holding; the cherries were reckoned to be worth 2s. a bushel "at the ladder's foote", the apples a shilling, pears 8d. However, higher prices were paid by Goldsmith for prime quality fruit - as much as 4s. 6d. a bushel for fine cherries and 2s. 6d. for Pippins. The varieties of apples which fetched the lower prices were described as "common fruite".

In 1682 Mr Francis Rumney sold Goldsmith "the fruite growing in a garden or orchard called Spratt's Hill Garden in Milton"; altogether 90 maunds of apples and pears were picked that season; the "apples called pippins" were purchased at the rate of "eighteen pence per bushell at the ladder's foote" while "common apples" fetched a shilling per bushel. Goldsmith also bought fruit that year from Clement Collins, a Milton labourer: 30 maunds featured in this transaction, half of them Pippins. It seems that Collins also worked for other local growers picking "pippins and other sortes of winter fruite". Later that year Goldsmith bought local walnuts for 2s. a bushel "at the ladder's foote". It was quite usual for farmers and landowners to sell the produce of their walnut and filbert trees to fruiterers. Some thirty years later walnuts fetched half the price paid in 1682: 22 bushels of Lord Teynham's "warnuts" growing at Linsted were sold to George Marsh, a local fruiterer, for 22s. in 1712.

In 1686 Mr Cheney Bourne, a gentleman-farmer at Milton, sold three acres of cherries to Goldsmith who paid £21 for the crop. It was later stated that "the cherry trees in the ground that year were indifferent

full of cherrys" although Goldsmith's deal was said to have made him "a considerable gainer". In the same year Goldsmith also bought fruit from numerous growers in the neighbouring parish of Bobbing.

It is clear from the evidence that Goldsmith, born in the 1620's, had known the heart of the fruit district of north-east Kent all his life and had spent much of that time buying fruit in the locality and shipping it from Milton to London. This fruit specialist was probably born in the area, built up his business from small local beginnings, and later traded in London as his transactions became more numerous and the business expanded. It seems highly probable that a number of London Fruiterers had Kentish origins and retained close links with the county throughout their working lives.[1]

The Pembertons were leading London Fruiterers in the early eighteenth century. John Pemberton was a Freeman before 1713 and six years later was one of the two wardens of the Fruiterers' Company; he was still active in the fruit trade during the 1720's and 1730's when his address was given as Three Cranes.[2]

Edward Pemberton bought Richard Tylden's Milstead fruit in 1710. The previous year Tylden had sold his fruit to Mr Haddock, probably a local fruiterer, for £9, reserving - in the usual manner - sufficient fruit for the household:

> June 7 1709
> Sold then to Mr Haddock my fruitt y^t^ is ye peares and aplles in ye two orchards reserving outt of ye same 15 bushells of apples one bushell of ye same is to be Pippins and ye rest as I think fitt and likewise ye cherrys reserving outt of ye same about ten or twelve pounds there being butt very few in all, for which fruitt he is to give me nine pounds and ye payment is to be ye 29 of September next ensewing. I have reced in part of ye sd nine pounds five shillings which he gave me in earnest.[3]

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[1]PRO E134 1 Wm. & Mary/Mich. 4, 35 Chas.2/Mich. 1, 20, 22, 1 Wm. & Mary/East. 3; KAO U498 A3.

[2]Gould, op. cit., 102, 114.

[3]KAO U593 A1.

The sale of Milstead apples, pears and cherries to a London fruiterer in 1710 may have been the outcome of some hard bargaining and a final bid of £15 1s. 6d. from Mr Edward Pemberton which clinched the deal. The arrangement was apparently satisfactory to both parties for Pemberton - who was already buying Hartlip fruit at this time from Thomas Osborne, Tylden's brother-in-law - agreed to buy the fruit at Milstead again in 1711, for which he paid £12.[1]

The contract relating to Milstead fruit in 1711 was carefully recorded in Tylden's accounts and was signed by both parties and two witnesses, including Thomas Osborne:

> My Agreement with Mr Pemberton for my Fruit is as follows: Memorandum this 9th of June 1711 itt is agreed between Mr Richard Tylden of Milsted and Mr Edward Pemberton of London, Fruiterer, as followeth viz. the sd Mr Tylden doth sell unto ye sd Mr Pemberton all his Fruitte of Apples and Peares growing this present yeare on his lands in Milsted att ye rate of Forty Shillings per maund ye same measure and under all ye same agreements as is agreed with Mr Osborne - 5s. being now paid downe in part, Mr Tylden excepts to himself such Fruite one with another as he shall have occasion for in his family. Witness their hands ye day and yeare abovesaid.
>
> /Signed/ Richard Tylden
> Edward Pemberton
>
> In ye presence of:
>
> /Signed/ Thomas Osborne
> William Backes

Tylden attached a codicil to this agreement:

> All windfalls are comprized in this agreement which shall fall or blow downe after ye severall times following (to witt) all peares after ye 1st day of August next, all common Apples after ye 24 day of August aforesaid and all pippins and other Winter Fruitte after ye 23 day of September next. Y^e^ payment is to be on or before ye delivery of ye sd Fruitte. Mr Pemberton is to pay all tithe and other charges whatsoever of gathering picking up and carrying & otherwise howsoever (except all taxes and assessments).

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[1] Ibid., A2.

Fruit sales were thus the subject of agreements drafted with meticulous precision. There is further evidence that the arrangement at Milstead was carried out in a scrupulous manner:

> Y^{e} measure of ye sd Fruitte is to be as followeth. Mr Jourden of Maidstone having a prickle holding a Bushell by statute measure of which prickle there is to be ten of them of ye maund.

Tylden later noted that "this yeare Fruitt came to £12 besides what I reserved in my house".[1]

William Shrubsall was a Freeman of the Fruiterers' Company of London and was elected a warden in 1720; his address at this time was given as Three Cranes.[2] Shrubsall bought fruit in the Faversham district, for example from the Lees Court estate of the Earl of Rockingham, as the steward's records show:

> Reced the 7th of July 1731 of Mr George Huddlestone a Contract signed by John Carr for Fruite, sold him in the year 1729 on acc^{t} of his master William Shrubsole, growing at Lees Court and belonging to the Right Honorable the Lord Rockingham for the sume of thirty pounds which contract I promise to return on demand.
>
> James Hanson.[3]

Tylden's Hartlip records show that the same London Fruiterer was buying all the fruit belonging to the estate as early as 1722:

> April 28 1722
> Reced then of Mr Wm Shrubsal of London by ye hands of James Talbot /Tylden's cousin resident in London/ and Mr Tappenden /hoyman/ ye sume of fifty pounds in part for fruit.[4]

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[1] Ibid., A1.

[2] Gould, op. cit., 102, 115.

[3] KAO U791 E79.

[4] KAO U593 A2.

No record has been found showing the size of the balance which Shrubsall subsequently paid in 1722, but we know that Tylden averaged the value of the whole crop of Hartlip fruit around this time at £80. Shrubsall continued to buy Hartlip fruit during the 1720's and 1730's but the records are incomplete and it is impossible to say how much was paid in every year. However, in 1732, the total sum agreed was twenty-five pounds, in 1735 twenty-six pounds, and in 1739 as little as eighteen pounds - a fraction of the value of Hartlip fruit in the early 1720's. As we have already seen the 1730's were years of sharply declining fruit prices when Tylden reduced the acreage of fruit which he farmed directly on his Hartlip estate, leasing much of his orchard land to tenants; he also received a considerably lower per capita payment for the smaller acreage left in his hands. A striking piece of evidence shows that fruiterers, too, were in difficulty during these years. It was long-accepted practice for payment to be made before the crop was picked. To do otherwise was, in the 1720's, unthinkable. In the early 1730's Shrubsall started to make his payments by instalment and, at the same time incurred mounting arrears. The rapidly deteriorating situation is apparent from Tylden's entry in the winter of 1736:

> November 2 1736
> Received of William Shrubsal by ye hands of my cousin Talbot the Sum of Twenty Six Pounds in full for my Fruitt growing in ye year 1735 at Hartlip.[1]

Tylden continued to condone or tolerate the arrangement whereby he received payment for his fruit some eighteen months in arrears until 1740, the last year in which he contracted with a fruiterer from London. The pattern of these records shows the deepening liquidity problem faced by large fruit buyers and goes some way to strengthen the belief that there was a recession in the Kentish fruit industry during the 1730's and

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[1] Ibid.

1740's. After 1740 Tylden was content to sell his fruit and nuts growing at Hartlip and Milstead to local buyers, including his own tenants and farm servants; the sums involved were modest. In 1748, for example, Milstead fruit and nuts were sold to one of Tylden's Hartlip tenants - Stephen Shrubsall[1] - who had taken an 11-year lease on Hartlip fruit the previous year:

> July ye 5th 1748
> Sold then to Stephen Shrubsal, my apples, pears, and walnuts and cherrys growing in Milsted this year viz. in ye Seedcops Cherryground, in ye great Old^e Orchard, in the little Orchard, and Meadow Orchard, and ye Timber yard Orchard, and in the Parsonage Orchard, only reserved out of ye said Fruitgrounds 16 Bushells of Apples, 1 Bushell of Pears, a Sieve /i.e. bushel/ of walnuts and 5 Sieves of Cherrys, some Flemmish and some English for Nine^e guineas, I to pay ye Tithe. Stephen Shrubsal pay'd me ye 9 guineas for ye said fruit at ye same time, and I also paid Ossy[2] the tithe at ye same time.[3]

The halcyon days of the Kentish fruit industry were at an end by 1730 and there was no marked revival until the end of the century when, as hops hit hard times, farmers grubbed up some of their grounds and planted orchards in their stead. Meanwhile Kentish fruit still found its way to metropolitan markets and the cry "Fine Kentish cherries a penny a pound" continued to resound through London's ancient streets. According to the itinerant Matthew Bramble some of that fruit was destined to meet an ignoble end in the City. The fruit was:

> distributed by such filthy hands, as I cannot look at without loathing. It was but yesterday that I saw a dirty barrow-bunter in the street, cleaning her dusty fruit with her own spittle; and, who knows but some fine lady of St. James's parish might admit into her delicate mouth those very cherries which had been rolled

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[1] No relationship to the London fruiterer is known; the surname was common in this part of the region which may suggest that William Shrubsall the London Fruiterer had Kentish origins.

[2] Richard Tylden's son, Rev. Osborne Tylden who was Rector of Milstead.

[3] KAO U593 A3 f. 227.

> and moistened between the filthy, and perhaps ulcerated chops of a St Giles's huckster.[1]

B The London Corn Trade

Corn - a collective term used here in the eighteenth-century sense to include wheat, barley, malt, oats, beans and peas - can be handled easily in bulk, is durable in storage, and can be graded and standardized. Supply is liable to severe fluctuations while demand tends to be inelastic. These qualities make corn "especially subject to speculation, and occasion a class of specialized, speculative traders in corn". The English corn market was an ideal "forcing bed" for the growth of the middleman. Wherever market opportunities existed, the farmer - having first reserved sufficient corn for his household's consumption - "turned the surplus into the hands of the middlemen, on its way to consumers who were not producers and who resided principally in the cities and larger towns, or abroad".[2]

John Boys wrote, in the 1790's, that "the chief part of the agricultural commerce of this county is that of exporting corn to the London Markets" [my italics]. This was almost certainly an exaggeration, although the London market was undoubtedly still an important outlet for Kent's produce in the late eighteenth century. It has been estimated that by the end of the seventeenth century the corn trade of London comprised 80 per cent of the total trade of the country. This figure is probably too large, but whatever the actual proportion, there seems little doubt that Kent, especially the north-east region, played a prominent part in this activity. From 1 October 1657 to 25 June 1658, London received 786 coastal shipments of corn. Five Kent ports headed the list: Faversham (157), Sandwich (110), Margate (94), Milton (94) and

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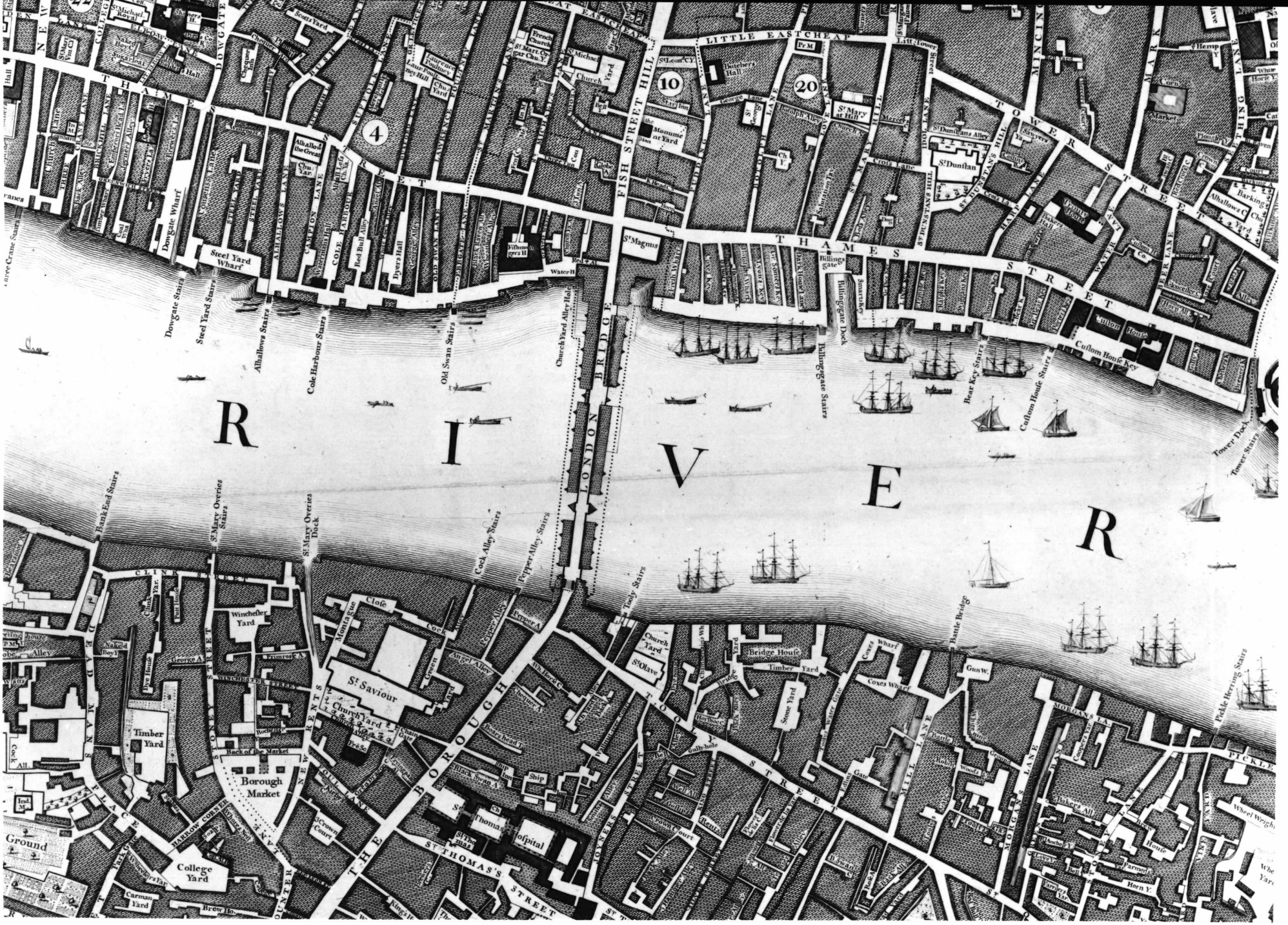
[1] Tobias Smollett, The Expedition of Humphry Clinker (1771), 121-2.

[2] Westerfield, op. cit., 130-1.

Plate 3

London's Thameside markets and wharfs from John Rocque, A Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster and Borough of Southwark (1761, 1st edn. 1746), based on an actual survey taken by John Rocque, land surveyor, and engraved by John Pine.



RIVER
THAMES STREET
LITTLE EASTCHEAP
FISH STREET HILL
LONDON BRIDGE
TOWER STREET
MINCING LANE
DOWGATE
COLEMAN STREET
CLINK STREET
DEAD MANS PLACE
WINCHESTER STREET
THE BOROUGH
ST THOMAS'S STREET
TOOLEY STREET
MILL LANE
MORGANS LA
PICKLE
Dowgate Wharf
Steel Yard Wharf
Dowgate Stairs
Steel Yard Stairs
Alhallows Stairs
Cole Harbour Stairs
Old Swan Stairs
Church Yard Alley Hall
Billingsgate Dock
Billingsgate Stairs
Bear Key Stairs
Custom House Stairs
Custom House Key
Tower Dock
Tower Stairs
Bank End Stairs
St Mary Overies Stairs
St Mary Overies Dock
Cock Alley Stairs
Pepper Alley Stairs
Tooly Stairs
Battle Bridge
Pickle Herring Stairs
St Magnus
St Michael
St Mary at Hill
St Dunstan
St Olave
St Saviour
Church Yard
Winchester Yard
Timber Yard
Borough Market
Back of the Market
College Yard
Ground
St Thomas Hospital
Bridge House
Timber Yard
Stone Yard
Coxes Wharf
Gun W.
Butchers Hall
Monument Yard
Fishmongers H
Water H
Red Bull Alley
Dyers Hall
Alhallows the Great
Seeds Yard
Black Swan A
Ship
Crown Court
Carman Yard
Brew Ho.
Horn Y.
Wheel Wrights

Rochester (58). The four leading English ports sending corn coastwise to London lay along the edge of the north-east region of Kent and, between them, they accounted for 455 shipments or nearly three-fifths of London's coastwise trade in corn. In 1699-1700 Faversham sent 312 shipments (29,714 qrs.), Sandwich 220 shipments (34,184 qrs.), and Milton 115 shipments (10,571 qrs.) of corn to London. However, not all 647 shipments originated in the four places actually stated in the Port Books. The Customs port of Faversham, as defined by an Exchequer Commission of 1676, included a considerable portion of the north-east coast: not only Faversham itself but Whitstable, Herne and Reculver were included. Of these, Reculver was insignificant. Unfortunately, the Faversham port books rarely distinguish between the trade of these various places. However, despite all the documentary difficulties, "it is at least certain that the port of Faversham, in the technical sense of the word, was by no means identical with the town and harbour of the same name; it included three ports in the topographical sense of the term - Faversham, Whitstable, and Herne". The Sandwich port books similarly related not merely to the port of Sandwich but also to Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate, which were not recognized as fully fledged ports by the Customs Commissioners. Milton continued to keep its own set of port books, recording the trade of Conyer, Upchurch, Rainham and Otterham in addition to its own. Finally, the port books have a serious limitation in the eighteenth century. From 1702, Customs officers were no longer required to record the coastwise trade from north Kent to London, except in coal and wool.[1]

Records of crop sales in probate inventories almost always relate to

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[1] Boys, op. cit., 172; N.S.B. Gras, The Evolution of the English Corn Market (Cambridge, Mass. 1926), 74, 106; Chalklin, op. cit., 183; D.C. Coleman, The Economy of Kent under the Later Stuarts, University of London Ph.D. Thesis (1951), 129; J.H. Andrews, 'The Trade of the Port of Faversham, 1650-1750', Archaeologia Cantiana, LXIX (1956), 125-6, and 'The Thanet Seaports, 1650-1750', Arch. Cant. LXVI (1954), 37; 1 Anne c.26; Andrews, 'Trade of Faversham' loc. cit., 126.

London in those instances where the market is specified. The appraisers of the inventory of Edward Chapman of Eastchurch recorded six quarters of wheat which had been "sent in a hoy to London to be sold" in 1682. Ten years later, Thomas Greenstreet of Selling and John Welby of Herne had both received money for "wheate sent to London". In the same year Thomas Brown, a yeoman of Herne had "sent to London" wheat and oats. In 1696 Nicholas Collins of Ash possessed "corn on boare a hoy" at Sandwich worth almost £20. Rye, an uncommon crop in Kent, was only occasionally freighted on the hoys: John Tucker of Goodnestone near Faversham "sent to London two seams of wheate & three seams of rye" in 1697 for which he received £7 10s. John Bridges farmed extensively in the Thanet parish of St. Nicholas-at-Wade until his death in 1704; the appraisers of his estate accounted wheat and barley "ship'd for London and sold for £7 13s." Six quarters of Reculver wheat "sent to London" in 1705 by Thomas Scott fetched £8. Jeffrey Foarte and John Wood, substantial yeomen of Ash, sent grain to London from Sandwich harbour during the early years of the century. The inventory of Robert Court of Reculver taken in 1720 records "Corn sent to & sold at London market, four quarters of wheat and eighteen quarters of barley £21 4s.". The following year Daniel Pamflett of St. Nicholas-at-Wade had "six quarters of wheat & one quarter of barley on board the hoy for London Markett". Wheat and beans were the main cash crops grown by Samuel Creed of Milton until his death in 1754. In that year a local hoyman had sold Creed's wheat at London for £14 12s. and beans for £19 19s. 6d.; this transaction was carefully recorded as "money in the hands of Mr John Page, hoyman, for goods sold by him at Bear Key Markett".[1]

The greatest part of farmers' incomes from sales at London derived from shipments of wheat and barley. But other crops too featured in the

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[1]KAO PRC 11/46/87, 11/56/156, 27/33/88, 27/32/201, 27/34/82, 11/60/97, 27/36/79, 27/36/128, 27/38/21, 11/88/56, 11/75/84, 27/41/89, 11/83/162.

coastal trade. The "corn sent to London" by Richard Gilman of Herne in 1697 comprised 17½ quarters of "White oats" and 4 bushels of beans which, altogether, returned £6. Throughout the first half of the eighteenth century Richard Tylden of Milstead consigned large quantities of wheat to London each year, but Milton hoymen also transported to the metropolitan markets sizeable quantities of oats, beans and tares, as well as sacks of clover seed and sainfoin seed and bundles of weld which had been grown at Hogshaw Farm. A notable aspect of Tylden's commercial policy, repeated on many other farms in the region, was an all-the-year trading programme. Crops were sold according to prevailing market conditions. At the time this was a widely recognized feature of agricultural marketing: "The rich farmers, who are in a capacity as to fortune, to keep the whole, or the greatest part of their crop the year over, speculate on the markets, thresh out and sell when they like the price".[1]

Kentish corn bound for the capital, to supply the London food market or the fast-growing export market, was carried up the Thames in the coastal craft of Faversham, Milton, Whitstable, Herne, and the Thanet ports. It was in these estuary ports, particularly at Faversham, that the Kentish hoy was born. Hoys - "among the most interesting of all coastal craft" - had to be "sturdy enough to weather the oft-times foul weathers of Sea-Reach" and "shallow enough to creep up above Queenhithe"; they also had to be "fast enough to make regular passages". The cutter-rigged Faversham hoys were "the race-horses of the port". The slower brigs and other square-riggers operated in the coal trade from Wales and the north and the Baltic timber and iron trades but were unsuitable for the scheduled London runs. In the 1580's Faversham already possessed sixteen hoys, six of which sailed regularly to London with corn. By the early seventeenth century there were eight Faversham corn-hoys, 20 to 30

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[1] KAO PRC 27/35/17, U593 A2-3; C. Smith, Essay on the Corn Trade and the Corn Laws (1758), 12.

Plate 4

Early eighteenth-century English hoy from William Sutherland, Britain's Glory or Ship-Building Unvail'd (1717).

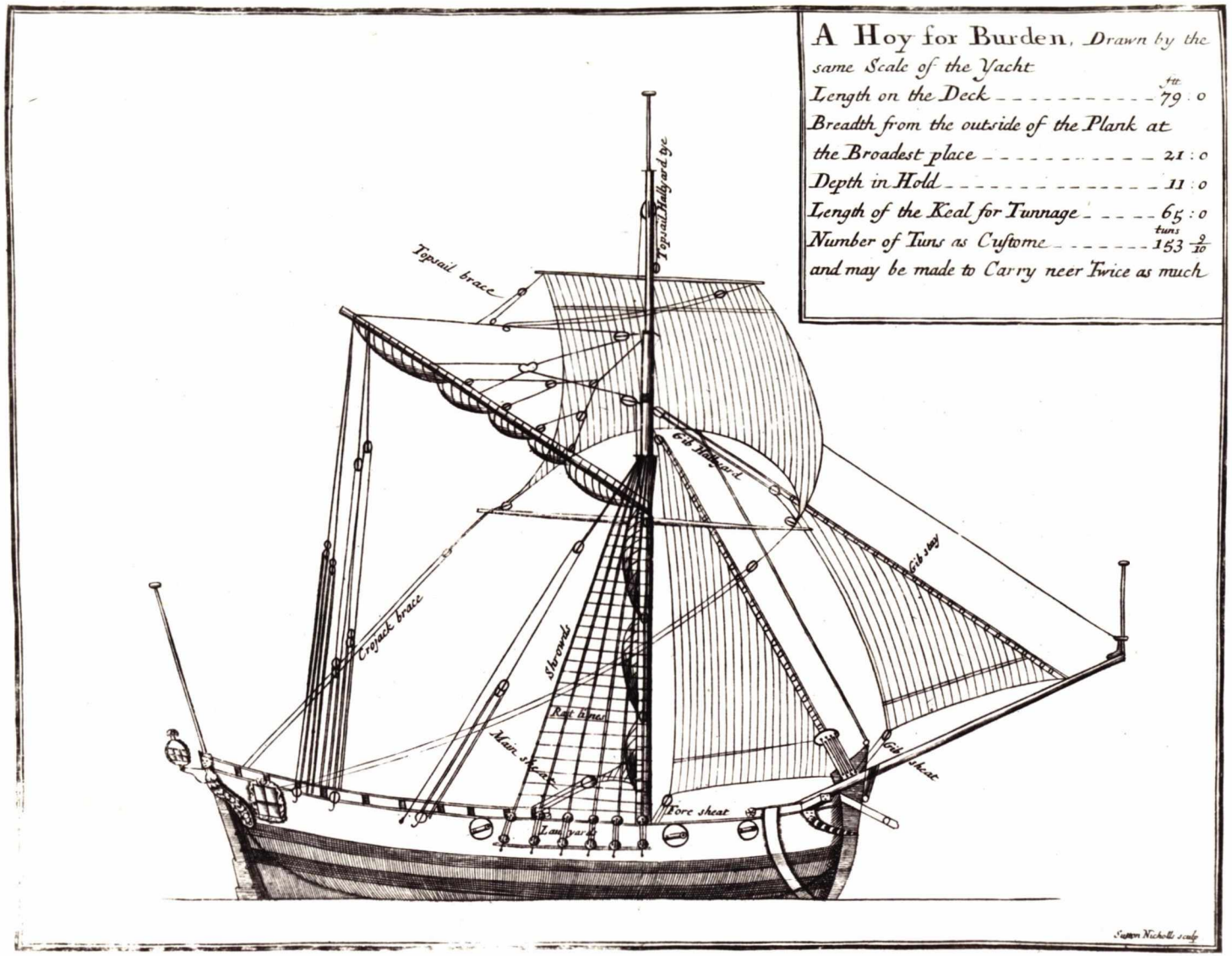
A Hoy for Burden, Drawn by the same Scale of the Yacht
Length on the Deck ---------- ftt 79 : 0
Breadth from the outside of the Plank at the Broadest place ---------- 21 : 0
Depth in Hold ---------- 11 : 0
Length of the Keal for Tunnage ----- 65 : 0
Number of Tuns as Custome ------- tuns 153 9/10
and may be made to Carry neer Twice as much
Topsail Hallyard tye
Topsail brace
Gib Hallyard
Gib stay
Crojack brace
Shrowds
Rait lines
Main sheat
Fore sheat
Gib sheat
Lau yards
Sutton Nicholls sculp

Plate 5

English hoy from a model in The Science Museum, South Kensington. Based on Sutherland's hoy (Plate 4).

1
2
SCALE OF INCHES
5
6

tons apiece, on the London route. The hoys of the early eighteenth century followed the same cutter-rigged design but were "decked-in" - an obvious improvement on the earlier open hold. They were also larger than their predecessors, reaching 60 tons by the 1720's.[1]

The Kentish hoys had an excellent safety record and insurance was considered unnecessary. The loss of a coastal hoy at sea was an extremely rare occurrence. A Margate hoy "deeply laden with corn for the London market" foundered off Reculver during a storm on the night of 6 February 1802. Ten lives were saved out of a total of twenty-nine passengers and four crew. A disaster fund organized by "gentlemen of Margate" raised £350 within the space of a few weeks. It was believed that the last occasion on which a Thanet hoy had been lost at sea was 3 November 1631.[2]

Until 1750 London's two great corn marts were Bear Key and Queenhithe. The latter was the chief market for the malt of the upper Thames valley. During the course of the seventeenth century Bear Key became the great London wholesale market for grain brought by water from below London Bridge. Precisely when it was first officially recognized as a market is not clear but in 1681 it was described as "the usual place or chief market for corn". Some forty years later it was said that at Bear Key "more corn is sold than any ten markets in this kingdom". Bear Key was probably the greatest corn market in Europe, to which "comes all the vast quantities of corn that is brought into the city by sea, and here corn may be said, not to be sold by cart loads, or horse loads, but by ship loads ... from all the counties of England near the sea coast ...". It was sold on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.[3]

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[1]Richard Hugh-Perks, 'The Hoys and After', Faversham Magazine, I, no. 4 (1968), 9-10; Kentish Post 17 September, 22 November 1729, 4 August 1731, 3 November 1736.

[2]John Mockett, Mockett's Journals (Canterbury 1636), 57.

[3]Thomas De Laune, The Present State of London (1681), 342; Guildhall Record Office MS. 85/17 "James Brown's Queries about the Markett at Bear Key, 1722"; Defoe, op. cit., I, 345.

By the 1720's the Kentish hoys were sailing to Bear Key according to an advertised schedule, and they frequently carried passengers as well as corn and other freight. The single voyage took two or three days. In 1726 the Richard and Elizabeth sailed from Whitstable every Saturday bound for London and loaded with goods and passengers. Two years later, Henry Hall of Maidstone moved his hoy business to Faversham in order to carry corn, hops, other goods, and passengers to London on alternate Fridays. Hall remained in Faversham for eight years before moving to Crown Key, Sittingbourne, a wharf which, throughout the eighteenth century, was "of great use to this part of the country for the exporting of corn and wood, and re-landing the several commodities from London and elsewhere". Henry's brother George took over the Faversham branch of the family business with "a very good hoy" providing a reliable service "according to the usual prices". In 1728, Mark Pearce moved from Faversham to Herne and carried "Hops, corn, goods and passengers" to London fortnightly. William Turner sailed a hoy from Herne at this time and when he died in 1736, his brother Francis took over "the hoy and business" which included the carriage of corn to London. The Kentish hoy business consisted of a growing number of small family concerns with sons, brothers, and even widows inheriting vessels and "good will". The hoy was usually the family's most valuable possession. When Nicholas Parker, a Faversham hoyman, died in 1689 the largest item in his inventory was "a hy & har furniture" valued at £100 - more than a third of his total personal wealth. Thomas Bennett, a Milton hoyman, died in 1708 leaving "a hoy with the Mast, sayles, sayle-yards, Anchors, Cables, boate, Oares, ropes, rigging, takle, apparrel and furniture thereunto belonging and one little store-house built ... on the Key" valued altogether at £162 and representing more than half Bennett's personal wealth. John Langford, another hoyman of Milton, possessed "one Hoy [and] one Peter Boate [small fishing vessel]" valued at £200 when he died in 1740; this mariner's

personal estate totalled £231 9s. 6d. // Some of the Faversham hoymen amassed considerable wealth. John Mears left a personal estate worth £736 14s. 6d. when he died in 1716, which included "an Hoy with her Tackle & Furniture sold for £400". The Jones family were leading hoymen and prominent businessmen at Faversham during the first half of the eighteenth century. When Michael Jones died in 1715 his personal wealth totalled £1,184 17s. 4d. and included £158 5s. for "one Hoy or vessell with Boat and oares and all ye furniture to her belonging as she lyes at ye Key"; the largest item in this inventory was £710 2s. 4d. for "Debts Sperate" - he also had "Debts Desperate" totalling £40 - which illustrates the considerable importance of hoymen as a local source of credit. Isaac Jones "left off his business" before the corn harvest of 1748. He "assigned his business to Henry Southouse", presumably because he had no close relatives or none willing to take over the business. Jones was anxious that his old clients, including "gentlemen, farmers, hop-planters, and shop-keepers" should transfer their custom to his successor.[1]

The various corn crops provided the hoymen with their chief bulk cargoes which they transported to London throughout the year, according to the state of the market. John Hopson's 50-ton Faversham-built vessel, carrying "two suits of sails and in good repair", was aptly described as "A Bear-Key hoy" in 1746. /The smallest hoys were around 40 tons unladen, with cargo space for 160 or 180 quarters of corn. Such was the vessel which Robert Downe of Faversham offered for sale in 1732. /Typical of the larger coastal hoys was the 60-ton William and Mary built at Milton in 1728 with a capacity of "400 quarters of corn under deck". / Smaller hoys than these were still to be found in English ports. A 20-ton hoy

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[1] Kentish Post 3 September 1726, 3 April 1728; E. Hasted, The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent (2nd Ed., Canterbury 1797-1801), VI, 151; Kentish Post 8 May 1736, 21 August 1728, 24 January 1736; KAO PRC 11/53/55, 11/68/14, 11/81/230, 11/73/84, 11/72/200; Kentish Post 13 July, 20 July 1748.

built in the west of England and launched in 1725 was owned by Joseph Wiles of Faversham in 1733 and was berthed at Swan Key along Faversham creek. Hoys larger than 60 tons were employed as sea-going vessels on the cross-channel routes and to Spain and Portugal and were suitably armed for that purpose. The 65-ton Margate hoy, Ceres, described as "a prime sailor", was employed "in the corn trade" in 1748. She carried "four swivel guns and some small arms", no doubt essential equipment to ward off attacks by smugglers and pirates. The previous year a similar vessel "laden with corn" for export had been left unattended at Hythe, whereupon it received the attentions of "persons unknown" who, under cover of darkness, made off with the four swivel guns and forced an entry into the holds and a nearby warehouse.[1]

The cargoes returned from London to the Kentish ports displayed an immense variety and included stock-in-trade for grocers, drapers, apothecaries and other local shopkeepers. Thus in May 1697 the Endeavour, a Faversham hoy, brought a miscellaneous cargo from London which included brandy, cheese, vinegar and other "grocery wares", soap, pewter, copper, mercury, oil, candlewick, cotton, flannel and wearing apparel, as well as "apothecary's wares" and "a bag of dying stuff". Other coastal vessels returning to Kent from the Port of London carried similar cargoes which might also include confectionery, gingerbread, oranges, lemons, tobacco, cider, and French and Portuguese wines, together with small shipments of glassware, ironware, lead, cork and whalebone. Raw hides were regularly sent by sea from the metropolis to Faversham, for use by local tanners. Much of the dressed leather was subsequently sent back to London.[2]

A growing intensive spirit of competition among the various family

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[1] Kentish Post 4 June 1746, 2 December 1732, 22 November 1729, 2 September 1747, 9 May 1733, 3 December 1748, 14 February 1747.

[2] PRO E190 159/8; L.A. Clarkson, 'The Leather Crafts in Tudor and Stuart England', Agricultural History Review, XIV, pt. 1 (1966), 36.

firms characterized the Kentish hoy business in this period. Some hoymen would offer what purported to be a superior service. Others would devote their energies to the spreading of rumours, aimed at discrediting their competitors. There was keen competition for passengers who, more often than not, "were forced to accommodate themselves wherever they could". The newly-built William and Mary of Sandwich was quite exceptional. She possessed "a spacious cabbin, with a stow, and all conveniences more than are common in such vessels, purely for the accommodation of passengers".[1] Francis Turner conducted a successful carrying business between Herne and London. It was the normal practice for hoymen to use the local inns as information and collection centres. The Canterbury inns were in the most favoured position to attract the custom of the neighbourhood, not only to their own victualling business but also to the various trades in which some of their customers engaged.[2] In 1738, each Wednesday, Turner or his agent were at The Rose in St. George's Street, ready to meet customers wishing to make arrangements for carriage of goods or passenger bookings. The goods to be carried to London were "taken in" at The Rose and road transport arranged from there to the quayside at Herne. A packet-wagon left the inn on alternate Fridays taking the passengers and less bulky commodities. On the intervening Fridays it made the reverse trip with passengers and goods from London. Turner made special arrangements for farmers who lived at a distance and wished to send corn to the London market. It was only necessary for them to

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[1] Hugh-Perks, op. cit., 10; Kentish Post 22 November 1729.

[2] Some of Canterbury's inns can lay claim to a medieval foundation. Until it was destroyed by German bombs in 1942, the Fountain was reckoned to be the oldest hostelry extant in England. "The inns of England", wrote the Holy Roman Emperor's Ambassador in 1299, "are the best in Europe, those of Canterbury are the best in England, and the Fountain, where I am now lodged as handsomely as I were in the King's Palace, the best in Canterbury". In the eighteenth century The Fountain was described as "one of the most commodious Inns in the City". - D.C. Maynard, The Old Inns of Kent (1925), 87-9, and Kentish Post 6 February 1760.

bring their sacks of corn as far as Canterbury. For a small charge Turner did the rest. His wagons carried wheat and beans from the warehouses of Canterbury inns to the quayside at Herne for 12d. per quarter and barley and oats for 9d. This was a valuable, though rather expensive, overland service. Not surprisingly, his business prospered and the following year he moved his agency to the larger Bull's Head Inn in Burgate Street where he transacted business personally on alternate Wednesdays and Saturdays. Edward West, landlord of The Bull's Head, represented Turner's interests at all other times.[1] There is no doubt that Turner was a shrewd and successful businessman who aroused envy among his competitors. Some of the more unscrupulous of these began to spread the story around that he was careless and inefficient, and Turner was obliged to insert the following notice in the Kentish Post on 15 November 1740:

> Whereas false and malicious reports have lately been industriously spread about this place and in the country by persons designing their own interest in the ruin of my credit, and hindring me of my bread, I thought proper to publish this advertisement, declaring to all who will be so kind to employ me, that they may depend on my utmost care and faithful discharge in the trust they repose in their humble servant, Francis Turner, Hoyman at Hearn.

Whitstable, the nearest harbour to Canterbury, was the main outlet for the City's trade with London. A petition for a Bill "to repair the highways from Whitstable to St. Dunstan's Cross" was presented to Parliament in 1736 by "the Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen and Common Council-men of the City of Canterbury, and the principal inhabitants and tradesmen of the said City, and of the inhabitants and farmers dwelling in the several places between the said City and Whitstable". It was stated that:

> ... the City of Canterbury is the principal Town of Trade in the Eastern parts of the said County; and that the Town and Port of Whitstable ... is the nearest Port to the said City; and that the road leading from the said City to the

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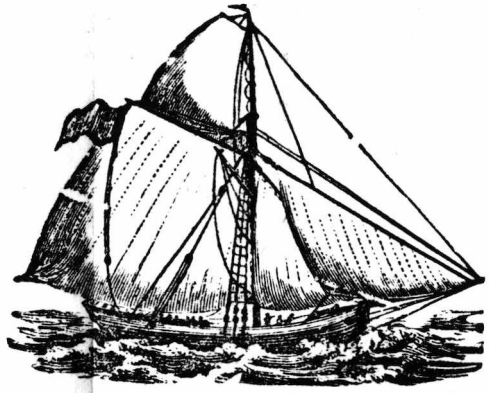
[1] Kentish Post 15 February 1738, 31 March 1739.

Plate 6

Kent Wharf near London Bridge (Canterbury and Whitstable hoy advertisement) from an original wharf notice, dated 29 August 1837, in The National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

KENT WHARF,

Montague Close, Borough, near London Bridge.



CANTERBURY & WHITSTABLE HOY,

TWO SISTERS,

EDWARD JURY, Master,

H. A. HOPE, OWNER,

Takes in Goods and Passengers, and clears out every Wednesday Evening for

Whitstable & Canterbury,

Ashford	Bourn	Crundale	Godmersham	*Littlebourn	Seasalter	Waltham
*Ash	*Brambling	Elham	Higham	Lower Hardres	Stone Street	Westwell
Adisham	Bridge	Eastwell	Harbledown	Nackington	Stouting	Whitstable
Boughton	Brabourn	*Elmstead	Herne Hill	Nonnington	Shalmesford Street	*Wickham
Barham	Chilham	Eythorn	*Ickham	Patrixbourn	Street End	*Wingham
Beaksbourn	Canterbury	Fordwich	Kingstone	Petham	Sturry	Wye
Bishopsbourne	Chartham	Grove	Kennington	Postling	Upper Hardres	Willesborough

All Goods received for the purpose of being carried, will be considered as subject to a general lien, and held for money due for the Carriage of such Goods, and also for the general balance due by the Owners.

THE ABOVE VESSEL LEAVES EVERY WEDNESDAY EVENING.

The Master to be spoken with on Board, or the Shipping Clerk on the Wharf.

N. B.--A Vessel Every Wednesday & Saturday.

W. MERCER, Wharfinger.

Please to observe, the Wharfinger and Owners are not accountable for Goods damaged by Fire, Leakage, or High Tides, the dangers and accidents of the Sea and Navigation, while in his possession, nor any loss or damage they may sustain in the Lighterage of them from his Wharf to the Ship, or the Shipment of them by any particular Vessel, or for Jewellery or Plate, unless paid as such, (this Bill being merely an acknowledgement for Receipt of the Goods), for any Goods not marked with the name and place of abode at full length, nor for the loss or damage of any Goods put into return Packages, nor for any Goods left till called for, or to order, or warehoused for the convenience of those parties to whom they are consigned

You will please to observe the Wharfinger or Owners will not pay claim for loss or damage, unless application is made within one week from the date of this Receipt.

29 August 1837

Received for Wharfage 1/6

Whitstable Hoy

3 Boxes

Vessels Loading for Canterbury, Margate, Ramsgate, Sandwich, Deal, Rochester, Maidstone, &c.

HOY OFFICE, BEER CART LANE, CANTERBURY.

Please to direct your Goods to KENT WHARF, MONTAGUE CLOSE, BOROUGH, Near LONDON BRIDGE, by Whitstable Hoys.

> said Town and Port of Whitstable, by reason of the many heavy Carriages passing and repassing through the same, is become ruinous and unsafe, and will soon become impassable; and that the several Parishes through which the said Road runs, have constantly every year performed their respective Works required by the Laws, and raised a Six Penny Cess at full Rents, and applied it towards repairing the same; but that the said road cannot be effectually amended without some other Provision for raising Money for that Purpose.[1]

The Bill became law on 24 March 1736 and the six-mile stretch of road between Canterbury and Whitstable was turnpiked shortly afterwards.[2] Trustees were appointed "for the better surveying, ordering, repairing, widening and keeping in repair" of this thoroughfare.

The names of those who were to serve as trustees were contained in each turnpike act and included "men of local importance, promoters of the legislation, town officials, local landowners, justices of the peace, and members of parliament".[3]

The sixty-one trustees of the new Kentish turnpike included, as we might expect, prominent local gentry - Sir Edward Dering, Sir William Hardres, Sir John and Sir Thomas Hales, and Sir George Oxinden, as well as the Dean of Canterbury. From various records it has been possible to establish the interests of a large number of the other trustees: Canterbury brewers and hop planters, and Whitstable hoymen were the chief groups represented. For example, Nicholas Durant, Samuel Fremoult, Rest Fenner, John Ludd, and William Rigden were the leading City brewers at this time. Richard Waddell of Longport (St. Paul's parish) was a wealthy hop merchant, hop planter and maltster. A significant number of the trustees were hop planters who rented grounds from Waddell in St.

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[1] Journal of the House of Commons XXII (1732-7), 544.

[2] 9 Geo.2 c.10 "An Act for repairing and widening the road leading from St. Dunstan's Cross, near the City of Canterbury, to the waterside at Whitstable, in the County of Kent".

[3] W. Albert, The Turnpike Road System in England 1663-1840 (Cambridge 1972), 5.

Paul's while others were growers in St. Dunstan's. The local transport industry was well represented: James Fagg, John Knowler, William Philpott, and James Talbut were prominent Whitstable hoymen, while Thomas Hartcup operated the largest stage-coach business at Canterbury.

The strength of the brewing and hop-growing interests on the board of trustees is further borne out by the toll exemption clauses in the act. Toll was not payable for "carrying through the said Turnpikes any Dung, Mould, or Compost ... for manuring of Land or Gardens in the said Parishes or Townships" through which the road passed. Also exempt were "Waggons, Wains, Carts, Carriages, or horses carrying undried hops from the hop-grounds to the Kilns or Oast-houses in or about any of the Towns or Parishes through which the said road runs, or old hop poles for fuel from the said grounds". The pattern of local control at Canterbury is similar to that found in certain other parts of the country. Recent detailed investigation of the turnpike system has revealed at least two trusts in Staffordshire which were controlled by those engaged in the potteries while in Leeds the woollen interests were a strong force in several trusts.[1]

Goods for London were frequently stored at Canterbury or Whitstable inns before being taken to the hoys at the quayside. The farmers of the district scrutinized the Bear Key prices printed regularly in the Kentish Post and, when they judged the time propitious, gave instructions for their corn to be moved from store to hoy without delay.[2] At Whitstable, the

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[1] Ibid., 64.

[2] Every week the Kentish Post published an Extract of a Letter from London which quoted ruling market prices for a number of agricultural products. For example, the current "corn prices" in late July and early August 1726 were: Wheat 16s. to 25s. per qr.; Brown Malt 12s. to 21s.; Pale Malt 12s. to 22s.; Barley 9s. to 14s.; Oats 8s. to 11s.; Beans 10s. to 14s.; Peas 16s. to 27s.; Rye 12s. to 15s. Farmers were informed at this time that "some fine Wheat" was selling for "28s. per qr." and "very fine" for as much as 30s., and "Very fine brown Malt 23s., very fine pale 24s." - See Kentish Post 30 July, 3 August 1726.

chief waterside depot for farm crops was the inn known as The Ship which possessed extensive warehouse facilities.

John Wells of Whitstable purchased a new hoy in 1746. Named appropriately the Canterbury, she was specially designed for the London trade "and nothing of the kind will exceed her, in good accommodation for goods and passengers". Sailings to London were scheduled for every other Saturday "if the weather will permit". Two years later the Canterbury was sold to Stephen Matthews who informed likely clients that he would "take particular care of such goods as he shall be favour'd with". Matthews offered a further service: he stood prepared "to receive and pay money at London himself". In accepting receipts and making disbursements for others, Matthews was acting as a financial intermediary at a time when banking facilities were inadequate to cope with the growing number of business transactions as markets and middlemen proliferated. At Canterbury Matthews arranged to meet customers at his house in St. George's or at The Rose Inn just along the street if they preferred to do business over a pot of the local brew. When in London, Matthews put up at the inn which all the merchant seamen from the estuary ports frequented, The Kentish Hoy, which stood in Harp Lane, just off Thames Street and near to Bear Key. Richard Jones, the landlord of The Kentish Hoy during the 1730's, said he relied chiefly on the Kentish trade for business. Not far away were two other inns which catered for coastal traders and travellers, The Old Bear and Key in Thames Street, and The Bear and Wheatsheaf which stood "over against the corn-market" and where "gentlemen and passengers may depend upon the best accommodation for lodging, wine, beer, and other necessaries".[1]

Hoymen would sometimes disappear without trace, especially along the metropolitan waterfront. William Baker, Master of the Whitstable hoy

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[1] Kentish Post 15 November 1746, 8 October 1748, 12 July 1740, 20 June 1741.

New Canterbury may well have been the victim of a naval press-gang when he vanished from Bear Key on 18 March 1731. Or was he kidnapped by rivals bent on ruination of the business? John Knowler, the vessel's owner, offered a reward of five pounds to "whoever can secure him" and enlisted the aid of Richard Jones, landlord of The Kentish Hoy. Apparently without success, for Knowler was employing James Fagg as skipper of his hoy shortly afterwards. Two years later Fagg had purchased the New Canterbury and was sailing "to London in the usual turn and will carry all goods and passengers at common rates". The lost William Baker is immortalized in the pages of the Kentish Post in what is probably our only description of an early eighteenth-century hoyman:

> He is a middle siz'd man, full fac'd, of a ruddy complection, his own dark short hair, about 30 years of age, wore a blue-grey coat, a white dimity waistcoat, and was a little lame in his right foot by the cutting of a corn, and wore his shoe cut for it.[1]

//In the case of one notable hoy firm, banking functions eventually gained the ascendancy over trading activities.// The Tappendens of Milton and Sittingbourne possessed a well-established hoy business at Crown Key by 1680, carrying bulky goods to other parts of Kent (brushwood, for example, was carried to the Isle of Grain to reinforce the sea-wall), grain and hops to London, and imported commodities such as deals and pan-tiles from London to Crown Key.// But besides transporting goods, the Tappendens were transmitting cash to London for well-to-do clients. In November 1679, for instance, Richard Tappenden paid £100 to Mr Knight of London, on behalf of Lord Teynham. In June 1684, when Lord Teynham was staying in London, his steward at Linsted Lodge entrusted Tappenden with the sum of £141 10s. "to carrie to my Lord in money". When his father died in 1694, John Tappenden assumed responsibility for directing the

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[1] Ibid., 27 March 1731, 30 June 1733.

family business. By 1700 a wider range of goods was being carried in the Tappenden hoys, a credit policy operated, loans-at-interest were made, and the earlier service of transmitting cash in settlement of clients' accounts in London and elsewhere continued. Richard Tappenden was known as a "mariner" at the time of his death in 1694, and his son John was similarly described on the occasion of his marriage the previous year. Yet within a quarter of a century John Tappenden, man of means, became a "gentleman". During the 1720's the Tappendens established themselves as hoymen in Faversham. The attractions of Faversham as a growing commercial port with a flourishing "London trade", together with the fact that John had three sons for whom he wished to make provision, are the likely explanations for the geographical shift. The Crown Key side of the business continued to expand; in 1733 it appears to have been taken over by John Page, a substantial Milton hoyman. However, by this time the family was firmly established in the larger, and presumably more profitable, port of Faversham. James Tappenden, "hoyman of Faversham" supervised the firm during the 1730's and 1740's. The commercial and financial standing of the Tappendens enabled this enterprising family in 1789, to found the Faversham Bank. However, like many other banks which mushroomed in this period, it failed at the end of the Napoleonic Wars: in 1814 "the Bank of Tappenden and Co., stopped payment to the great loss of many inhabitants and others". Nevertheless, the growth of an eighteenth-century country bank out of a seventeenth-century hoyman's business is not without significance. The Bank of the Black Ox at Llandovery and the Bank of the Black Sheep at Aberystwyth developed out of the activities of Welsh drovers and the herding of stores from the west country. Tappenden's Faversham Bank was their counterpart in south-east England, growing out of the activities of Kentish hoymen and

the carriage of grain and hops to London.[1]

The keen competitive spirit evident in the Kentish hoy business brought benefits to the growers. Farmers found it an easy matter to obtain "good usage" and to be "faithfully served" in the carriage of their corn to London, particularly if they remained aware of the facilities available by reading the advertisements in the Kentish Post. An extraordinary degree of common interest and mutual dependence existed among farmers and hoymen as groups in spite of the competition between individual firms. This is clearly illustrated by an episode in 1732. Kentish corn unloaded at Bear Key was purchased by a galaxy of corn dealers, wholesale and retail, as well as millers, mealmen, flourmen, maltsters, brewers, and distillers, many of whom were engaged in "dealings" or speculative activities alongside their basic trades.[2] These various buyers of corn and corn products at Bear Key had long been responsible for the payment of certain market dues. In 1732 the buyers, flouting authority, attempted to shift these charges on to the sellers. The farmers and hoymen of Kent would have none of it and quickly took steps to clarify and strengthen their position. In Thanet, farmers and hoymen held a joint meeting on 9 February, resolving to petition the Lord Mayor and Common Council of the City of London. They subsequently received the firm support of farmers and hoymen in other districts. Faversham's response was particularly prompt and forthright. This is not surprising. Five years earlier - on 21 June 1727 - a number of yeomen in the district had founded a Farmers' Club, the first in England. The organization of the Faversham Farmers' Club would have provided a valuable means of coordinating local opinion. The feeling of the Faversham men carried

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[1]KAO U498 A2-3, PRC 17/78, 35/59, U593 A2-3, PRC 17/94, 32/62; F.F. Giraud and C.E. Donne, Guide to Faversham (Faversham 1876), 40-1; Ashton, op. cit., 102.

[2]Westerfield, op. cit., Ch. 2 passim.

considerable weight, since club members, hoymen as well as farmers, also tended to be closely involved in Borough affairs and, at the time of the dispute, John Law, a founder-member, was Mayor of Faversham. A substantial local hoyman, Isaac Jones, was elected to membership of the Farmers' Club in 1729 and the Mayoralty in 1735. In early March, the men of Milton and Sittingbourne joined the furore, expressing their indignation at "a combination enter'd into by the distillers and others (buyers of corn at Bear Key)", believing it to be "too great a concern to us by reason of its consequences, not to be opposed".[1]

We hear no more of this "warm dispute" and must assume that the farmers and hoymen presented their petition and won the day. However, the whole affair is one of great significance for three reasons. In the first place, it shows that no matter how keenly or surreptitiously the hoymen competed with each other, when they faced a common threat they combined speedily and effectively for the benefit of the whole group. We see here an early example of a vigorous confrontation of interests between two organized commercial factions.

Secondly, the Kent participants in this affair were able to demonstrate the measure of their unity and determination through the medium of the local press. To be effective, instant action was essential. The Kentish Post provided the necessary publicity for the cause, whereby others, once aware of the crisis, were able to lend support to the initiators in Thanet.

Finally, it is clear that the hoymen as a group were already powerful and influential in Kent and London. This makes sense only if they are seen as something more than employees whose sole business was transportation. Such a view will also enable us to appreciate why farmers

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[1] Kentish Post 12, 16, 26 February 1732; P.G. Selby, The Faversham Farmers' Club and its Members (Faversham 1927), 1, 14, 26; Kentish Post 4 March 1732.

and hoymen were meeting on equal terms and why there was such a large measure of affinity and unity of purpose apparent in their speech and actions. The truth is that hoymen were factors. As corn-factors they accepted commissions from farmers to sell at Bear Key where their status was well established before 1730. The local gentry and tenant-farmers were the principals of the hoymen. The factors were employed on the consignment plan, the corn consigned to them being sold at Bear Key for the most favourable price, which in turn depended on the quality of the product and the state of the market. The hoymen-factors of Kent received their consignments at Canterbury or one of the coastal ports, carried the corn to Bear Key, arranged for its unloading on the quayside, and then sold to the highest bidder.

Freight charges, by coastal hoy on the route from north-east Kent to London, were comparatively low. In the case of wheat, freightage and factorage together amounted to only 5 or 6 per cent of the selling price at Bear Key, and in years of high prices were as little as 3 per cent. For oats, these costs represented around 8 per cent (falling at times to 6 per cent), and for beans, a fairly steady 10 per cent of the selling price. The carriage, handling, and selling of his grain crops on this water route incurred, for the farmer, the low cost of 1½d. per ton-mile. The costs within the region, under favourable operating conditions, was in the order of 7½d. Water transport possessed a cost-advantage over land transport in the ratio of one to five.[1] Average costs of carriage, for the country as a whole, during the first half of the eighteenth century, were probably 2½d. and 1s. per ton-mile, for "improved" rivers and roads respectively.[2] These figures also suggest that the cost of transporting goods by water was a mere fifth of land-carriage costs.

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[1] KAO U593 A2; Kentish Post 15 February 1738.

[2] H.J. Dyos and D.H. Aldcroft, British Transport (Leicester 1969), 40.

The somewhat lower rates per ton-mile in the calculations for Kent, may indicate greater than usual mechanical/operating efficiency.

Wheat was "chiefly sold to the millers, and at times of exportation to shipping factors; the barley to maltsters and distillers; the oats are chiefly sold to what are called jobbers or dealers; to them also is sold a material part of the beans; the tick beans, a material part of them, are sold to the shipping factors for the West India plantations; the white pease are sold for the use of the Navy, and to persons who make a trade of splitting them, and furnish the corn chandlers with them for general consumption".[1]

Some factors were known to deal on their own account, as merchants or jobbers, but on the whole they abstained from such dealings since they considered that "the business of a corn factor is perfectly distinct from that of a corn merchant, because a person who receives consignments, and deals at the same time on his own account, may not always be inclined to serve his employers with that impartiality he otherwise would do".[2] Although the Kentish hoymen were already combining the functions of "ship-master, super cargo, and factor" there is no evidence that they speculated as jobbers in this period. They seemed content to dispose of their consignments at a good price for ready cash and return promptly to their home ports to make settlements with their principals.[3] In 1729, Robert Sharewood of Faversham was sailing to London on alternate Fridays. He

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[1] Reports from the Committees of the House of Commons (1774-1802), IX, 146.

[2] Ibid., 144.

[3] One of the advantages enjoyed by Thanet farmers was "the Privilege of sending their Corn by Water to London Market, where they have ready Money for their Commodity". - J. Lewis, The History of the Isle of Tenet (Margate 1723), 24. Mr Charles Pratt, a mealman from Tottenham Mills, stated: "Wheat by the Kentish hoymen, is paid for by us in a week in which it is bought" in contrast to wheat from other areas which "is bought at one month's credit". - Rep. Com. HC., op. cit., IX, 158.

set sail for home on the following Thursdays and offered immediate settlement with the farmers. He "proposed pay-days on Saturdays or any other day the week ensuing".[1]

Factors and dealers "carried on their business at Bear Quay, exposed to the weather, and other inconveniences" until 1750 when, seeking improved working conditions, they erected the Corn Exchange on a newly acquired site in Mark Lane. The "buying of corn by samples only" evolved during the 1720's when it was described as "a new way of buying and selling corn". By 1750 it was established practice to bring only samples to the market instead of whole loads of corn, leaving the actual deliveries to take place at other times by mutual arrangement. This method of selling rationalized carriage arrangements and led to economies of scale. It also effected a change in the appearance of markets, as Defoe observed in 1738: "Instead of the vast number of horses and wagons of corn on market days there were crowds of farmers, with their samples, and buyers such as mealmen, millers, corn-buyers, brewers, etc., thronging the market; and on the days between the markets the farmers carried their corn and received their pay".[2]

The sample-selling vogue was almost certainly the reason why the Corn Exchange in Mark Lane could be "erected in a confined space and on a limited scale". This private property was divided into eighty shares which were held by dealers and factors, including Kentish hoymen. The proprietors elected a management committee of three, entrusting to them "the uncontrolled disposal of all the stands on which the samples of corn are exposed to sale, and which are limited to the numbers of 72, 64 of them being leased to factors or dealers, and the remaining eight appropriated to the use of the Kentish hoymen". The proprietors would allow

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[1] Kentish Post 27 August 1729.

[2] Rep. Com. HC., op. cit., IX, 144; D. Defoe, The Complete English Tradesman (2 Vols. 1727), 43, (4th Edn., 2 Vols. 1738), 265-6.

no more stands to be built. When existing stands became vacant they were relet, although "there is some reason to suspect partiality in the manner of transferring and leasing the stands". Sometimes interlopers tried to transact business, using samples they hawked around in their pockets. Occasionally, more desperate measures were attempted as on the occasion when a stand was brought into the building and then turned out "by force" whereupon the stand "was brought in again and chained to the pillars". This led to "a considerable dispute" and ended with the Committee leasing one of the existing stands to the dissidents. Although the Mark Lane Exchange was nominally "open" it is all too clear that, in practice, control rested with a small influential group. By the end of the century the London corn trade at Mark Lane was the monopoly of fourteen factors. The day of the "regulated public Corn Market" had long since passed. The hoymen of Kent, trading principally in the corn of the county's north-east region, played a significant role in this transformation.[1]

C Local Markets

Local dealings in corn had reached sizeable proportions. Although it is impossible to establish exactly the size of this trade, the main lines of activity are clear. Private bargaining between individuals characterized the trade; the "regulated" or "open" market was insignificant. Wheat and barley were the chief crops featuring in local transactions. Millers and maltsters were the main industrial buyers and they, in turn, sold their processed products to bakers and brewers. Oats, rye, tares, beans and peas were relatively unimportant as local "cash" crops, being used mainly on the farms where they were grown. By the early seventeenth century corn was already one of the principal groups of English farm products being handled in the "private sector", the others being

[1] Rep. Com. HC., op. cit., IX, 144-5, 154.

sheep and wool. At this time "it was gentlemen, yeomen, brewers, maltsters, millers, and the like" who were engaged in such activity, negotiating and reaching agreement in numerous farmhouses, mills, barns, warehouses, corn-chambers, and inns.[1] This style of trading was rapidly increasing at this time and it seems certain that the metamorphosis was virtually complete by about 1700.

Marshall said that Kentish wheat which was not sent to the London market was sold to country millers. In normal times a miller would expect to hold a stock of wheat sufficient for eight to ten weeks grinding. A feature of the Dane John Mill at Canterbury was the large granary adjoining the windmill. The work of a windmiller was very irregular, due to the vagaries of the weather. In calm periods lack of wind might hold up grinding for several days. Then the breeze would get up and the miller would set his sails for work for "his whole being is attuned to the breezes, and if the wind shifts when he is sleeping, it wakes him up". If the wind stayed favourable he would work through the night and all the next day to reduce the backlog of customers' work as well as grind some of the wheat from his own stock.[2]

In 1695 there were 23 working windmills in Kent and 13 of these were situated in the north-east region. By 1736 the county possessed 51 windmills, 16 of them in the north-east with another dozen or so lying just to the south of the region, on the dip-slope of the Downs. By 1769 the number of windmills in Kent stood at 95.[3] Most of these early struc-

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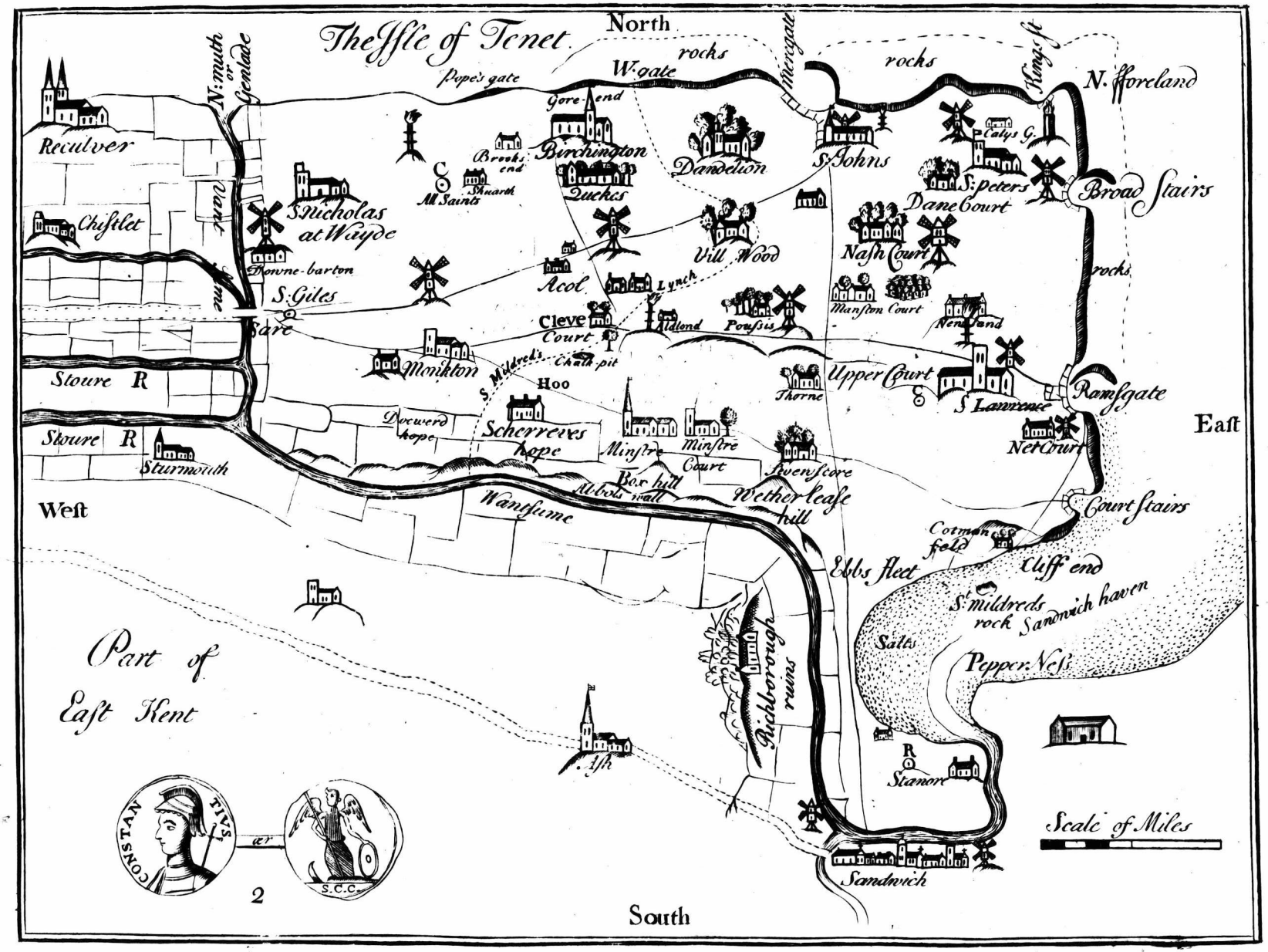
[1] Everitt, 'Marketing of Agricultural Produce', op. cit., 543, 545, 553, 559.

[2] W. Marshall, Rural Economy of the Southern Counties (2 Vols. 1798), I, 122; Rep. Com. HC., op. cit., IX, 153; Kentish Post 30 August 1729; R. Thurston Hopkins, Old Watermills and Windmills (1930), 33.

[3] William Coles Finch, Watermills and Windmills: A Historical Survey of their Rise, Decline and Fall as Portrayed by those of Kent (1933), 135-7.

Plate 7

Map of Thanet showing sites of windmills from John Lewis, Isle of Tenet (Margate, 1736).


The Isle of Tenet
North
South
East
West
Pope's gate
W. gate
rocks
Mercgate
rocks
King's st
N. Foreland
N: muth or Genlade
Reculver
Chistlet
Vant Sume
S. Nicholas at Wayde
Downe-barton
S: Giles
Sare
Stoure R
Stoure R
Sturmouth
Gore-end
Brooks end
Shuarth
All Saints
Birchington
Quekes
Dandelion
S: Johns
Calys G.
S: peters
Dane Court
Broad Stairs
Vill Wood
Nash Court
Acol
Lynch
Cleve Court
Aldlond
Poussis
Manston Court
Nent land
rocks
Monkton
S. Mildred's
Chalk pit
Hoo
Thorne
Upper Court
S Lawrence
Ramsgate
Docwerd hope
Scherreves hope
Minstre
Minstre Court
Sevenscore
Net Court
Box hill
Abbots wall
Wetherlease hill
Wantsume
Court Stairs
Cotman fold
Ebbs fleet
Cliff end
St mildreds rock
Sandwich haven
Salts
Pepper Ness
Richborough ruins
Ash
Stanore
Sandwich
Scale of Miles
Part of East Kent
CONSTANTIVS
S.C.C.
2

tures were post mills.[1] A map dated 1719 was specially designed to show the sites of the 10 post mills standing in the Isle of Thanet at that time. A few years later another map showed 12 such mills spread over the same area.[2] In a lease dated 31 March 1775, a four-acre pasture field at Bobbing near Sittingbourne was rented to John Orpin, a Milton miller for 99 years, at an annual rent of £4. Conditions of the lease were that "a good and substantial corn wind mill" should be built on the plot within six months and that all wheat brought to the mill "for the purpose of being ground for griste" by persons living within a five-mile radius should be properly ground on payment of 4d. a bushel. By such methods it seems that landlords encouraged the building and efficient operation of new mills within the region.[3]

How much wheat could these mills grind in a given period? This is a difficult question to answer accurately. It has proved impossible to trace any figures relating to early eighteenth-century post mills. One thing is certain - wide variations in "throughput" would be experienced from day to day and week to week according to weather conditions. In the late nineteenth century, the owner of a smock mill at Petham, near Canterbury, said he could grind as many as 50 quarters of corn in one night if the wind kept up. Friston Mill at Saxmundham was the largest and most powerful post mill still active in 1949. On 17 October that year the Miller, Mr Reynold Wright, ground 80 quarters of grist - about $3\frac{1}{2}$ tons! He had set her in full sail running on into the late evening "just to see what she could do when she was set in a good wind". How-

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[1] "Here the whole upper part of the mill revolves to face the wind on a central post, which rests on, and is braced to, crossed beams of great strength, kept off the ground by low plinths of brick and stone". - Hopkins, op. cit., 17.

[2] J. Harris, History of Kent (1719), map facing page 313; Lewis, op. cit., map facing page 2.

[3] KAO U1431/T5.

ever impressive, these results must be off-set by the calm, non-productive days in summer. Such "records" are of limited use for our purpose.[1] In 1798 the owners of 25 windmills in Buckinghamshire estimated - for "census" purposes - that they could grind between them an average of 400 quarters of wheat per week. Actual figures for each mill would vary from 2 quarters to 30 quarters according to the time of year.[2] An average *per capita* throughput of 16 quarters per week is probably not too high for the Thanet mills in the first half of the century, especially when we consider that early eighteenth-century *water*-mills claimed a much higher throughput. In 1733 William Lamper claimed that his watermill at Dover "will grind 60 quarters of wheat a week". A mill on the River Len near Maidstone was supposed to have a weekly throughput of 90 quarters of wheat.[3] It seems reasonable to assume that the dozen post mills in Thanet would be able to grind between them half of the estimate for Bucks., viz. 200 quarters per week.

Of course the windmills in Buckinghamshire at the end of the century may have been larger than the Thanet mills in the first half of the century. But there is no way of being certain about this. On the other hand, there are good reasons for thinking that the Thanet and other coastal windmills in Kent were becoming more efficient during the early part of the century. In the first place, Thanet was "very bleak and open, especially toward the sea-side where there are very few hedges or trees".[4] It was not uncommon at this time for Kentish windmills to be moved from one part of a village to another or even into an adjoining

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[1] Finch, *op. cit.*, 77; Stanley Freese, *Windmills and Millwrighting* (1957), 112.

[2] I owe this reference to the kindness of Professor P.S. Bagwell: Freese, *op. cit.*, 110-11.

[3] *Kentish Post* 10 March 1733, 2 March 1747.

[4] Lewis, *op. cit.*, 11.

parish to take fullest advantage of the prevailing sou'westerlies from a more exposed position. A large, new smock mill at Whitstable was offered for sale in 1746 and prospective purchasers were informed that if they "liked the mill and not its situation it shall be removed to any place at a very reasonable charge".[1] A French traveller gives us an unrivalled description of a Kentish windmill being removed to a new site during 1765:

> Between Canterbury and Rochester the inhabitants of a village situated on the side of a highway had made choice of that day /Sunday/ on which the high road was to be free, to remove a windmill from the left to the right side of the road, to the place which seemed best suited to it. Now, as that country is very woody, the body of these mills is a sort of high cage, which receives the wind above the trees: this case, which bears a strong resemblance to a bee-hive, consists of a circular frame of wood, surrounded with a lattice rough-cast with lime. That which was to be removed, having the form of a cone thirty feet high, with a diameter of twelve or fourteen feet, moved on in a hollow way which we then travelling in, and which it filled: twenty or thirty men, some of whom dragged it along with cords, the remainder pushing it on with their hands, advanced slowly; and, as it had twenty fathom length of road still to go, we had but little hopes of soon getting rid of it: coachmen, postillions, passengers, all present alighted, and joined those who pulled or pushed it on: after about an hour's labour, we reached a part of the road where the slope which bordered one of its sides was least steep; this slope was made level and lengthened out by the pick-ax: at last the carriages reached the ridge of the road with the help of cords, which entered the body of each carriage and the coach box. All the Frenchmen present laughed heartily at the adventure, but this had not the least effect upon the flegmatic temper of the English: both young and old talked of many different expedients to get rid of us: at last they went about the work in good earnest, disengaged our carriages, and resumed their business with all the seriousness of men who had passed their lives in removing windmills.[2]

Secondly, many Kentish windmills were being refitted with high-quality French "buhr stones".[3] Defoe considered the best quality mill-

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[1] Kentish Post 6 September 1746.

[2] Pierre Grosley, A Tour to London or New Observations on England (2 Vols. 1772), I, 12-13.

[3] The "buhr", a very hard silicate found in the Seine valley, produced the finest millstone for grinding wheat. - Hopkins, op. cit., 12, 48.

stones came "out of Derbyshire or from France".[1] A post mill erected at Ringleton in the parish of Woodnesborough in 1735 was "rebuilt with French stones" in 1742. This mill, a particularly fine specimen, possessed "a round house and good conveniences for dressing of flour". In 1818 the mill was moved to a new site, half a mile distant, at Mount Ephraim, where it was still active in the 1930's.[2]

The installation of French millstones together with critical site adjustments in a situation already generally exposed would have tended to raise the productivity of Thanet windmills before 1760. Also, it seems probable that the maps of this period show only the largest and most important windmills. Possibly, too, there were a few active watermills. Taking all these factors into account, if we say that Thanet millers were processing 200 quarters of wheat into flour each week we are almost certainly underestimating the true milling capacity of the district. Even at this (low) rate of throughput the Thanet mills would have been able to grind, in 18 weeks, a volume of wheat equivalent to the total annual exports from Thanet to London.[3] In other words the wheat which left the Thanet ports for the capital each year would, if marketed locally, have kept the local millers employed for little more than four months. The value of local markets in relation to the London market was, therefore, in the ratio of 3 to 1, in a district where we might least expect it. If this is a reasonable estimate for the north-east corner of the county, we can be certain that the ratio would have been higher in most of the other regions of Kent.

The chief function of the miller was the processing of corn (mainly

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[1] D. Defoe, A Brief State of the Inland or Home Trade of England (1730), 9.

[2] Kentish Post 15 January 1743; Finch, op. cit., 154, 307.

[3] In the period for which records survive (1650-1701) the average annual export of wheat from Thanet ports was 3,500 quarters. This volume was probably maintained in the first half of the eighteenth century. - Andrews, 'Thanet Seaports', op. cit., 41.

wheat) into meal and flour. He was "essentially a manufacturer who served the corn owners by grinding their corn when brought to his mill". However, during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, millers frequently engaged in the occupations of mealman, flourman, and corn merchant. This may have represented a large-scale revival of old practices which had been successfully prohibited by early seventeenth-century governments. By regular purchases of grain from local sources a miller could avoid the worst excesses of underemployment which he would experience if he relied solely on grinding for corn-owners on a commission basis. After grinding, he would seek out the best markets for his meal and flour. The integration of several related activities - corn buying, grinding, dealing in meal and flour wholesale and retail - gave the miller "a much better control of the flour and meal market and consequently of prices". Millers, said Defoe, "have cut out the mealman in the country; and whereas they formerly only ground the corn for the mealmen, they now scorn that trade, buy the corn and grind it for themselves; so the baker goes to the miller for his meal, and the miller goes to the market for the corn". The owner of a Canterbury windmill in 1731 was known appropriately as a "meal seller".[1]

John Turner of Halstow was the local miller until his death in 1741. More than two-fifths of his personal estate was for "a messuage ... and water corn mill ... held of the Warden & College of All Souls Oxford by lease dated 6 November 1735 wherein there is now about fourteen years yet to come" valued at £205. He had in store "fine flower" and "fine brann" as well as "doubles" and "rough meal". The appraisers of Turner's inventory listed thirty-six debts due from his customers, some of whom lived locally, others who came from a cluster of parishes south and west of Halstow - Gillingham, Rainham, Upchurch, Stockbury, and Newington.

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[1] Westerfield, op. cit., 167-9; Defoe, Com. Eng. Tr. (1738), op. cit., II, 178-9; Kentish Post 27 March 1731.

Turner had given credit to the extent of more than £145, representing nearly a third of his personal wealth. No further details of these transactions are recorded but it is clear from the size of some of the debts that they represent sales of flour and meal, for example £12 18s. 3d. due from "the overseers of the parish of Halstow", £28 7s. 8d. from Robert Seers of Stockbury, and £31 4s. 9d. from John Burden of Gillingham - almost certainly a baker or retailer of that town. John Pack of Chartham near Canterbury was described as a miller at the time of his death in 1743. Stored in the sizeable millhouse were "3 pair of stones and the tackling thereunto belonging, two bolting mills, forty quarters of wheat, ten quarters of bran and two hundred sacks valued in the whole at £107 2s.". This miller had bad debts totalling almost £225 due from customers to whom he had sold flour and meal.[1]

William Colley owned at least two mills in 1751, one at Tonge and the other at Herne. The post mill at Herne was situated on Beacon Hill and was described as "a very good windmill" which was "convenient for carriage to London". A mill had stood on this site since the early sixteenth century. By 1750 it was equipped with French stones and horse-driven "flour tackle" and produced high quality flour "fit for the London trade". Colley purchased his grain locally from farmers and dealers. Neighbouring yeomen like Matthew Stephens of Chislet, growing 35 acres of wheat in 1753, would welcome the opportunity for a farm-gate sale or at least a deal which involved minimal transport costs. George Schooler who kept The Mermaid at Canterbury was a friend of Colley. He was in a good position to arrange deals between local growers and the miller at Herne. Trading in corn was an important by-employment of some Canterbury innkeepers, providing for them a supplementary source of income. Ralph Claringbole who kept The Castle in Butchery Lane during the late 1720's, and Edward Howland who came from Dover to take over The Bull's

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[1] KAO PRC 27/43/91, 11/82/164.

Head in Burgate Street in 1728, were both active in the corn trade. Claringbole was a local agent for Whitstable hoymen. These two innkeepers probably knew as much about corn-dealing as the drink-business. The Castle and The Bull's Head both possessed ample facilities for "stowage of corn". Some of this corn was still sold in the "open" market at the end of Butchery Lane but the greater part was privately dealt in. Inns such as The Mermaid, Castle, and Bull's Head in Canterbury, The Ship at Whitstable, The George at Sittingbourne and The Bear at Faversham became well known locally as "exchanges" where farmers, millers and other dealers could meet and transact their business.[1]

We cannot possibly say how much meal and flour was being sent to London from Kentish mills. Those mills on coastal sites, such as Herne, were probably heavily involved in this trade. There is some evidence that London middlemen were investing in mill properties in Kent. Mr Thomas Shelmardine, the owner of a Maidstone waterside mill and granary in 1747, was described as a "meal-factor and baker in East Smithfield London". It seems likely that sacks of flour were despatched from this mill to London regularly throughout the year. Shelmardine's business activities probably involved, in one way or another, corn-buying, grinding, wholesale and retail dealing in flour and meal, and the baking and retailing to the consumer of the final product. Altogether this would have been a complex and tightly integrated business organization.[2]

Not all coastal mills marketed their products in London. Local markets might offer comparative cost advantages. The output of the large smock mill at Whitstable was probably sold locally; the windmill was owned by a Canterbury tradesman, John Philpot, who was described as a

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[1] Kentish Post 26 January 1751; Finch, op. cit., 221-2; KAO PRC 11/83/142; Kentish Post 26 January 1751, 3 September 1726, 3 April 1738, 11 and 15 March 1732.

[2] Ibid., 21 March 1747.

"mealman and grocer". He would have retailed flour and meal in his grocer's shop in Burgate Street but, in addition, he probably did a wholesale business with local bakers. When he decided to sell the Whitstable mill in 1746 he envisaged that "a miller or a baker" would purchase it. This clearly suggests that local bakers were reaching back along the distribution chain and, like millers and other middlemen, were engaged in the complex business of integrating their enterprises. In the seventeenth century the more prosperous bakers were already active in the grain trade. For example, 60 bushels of wheat grown on Lord Teynham's estate at Linsted were, in 1682, sold "to a Baker att Sittingbourne". At the same time the poorer bakers tended more and more to fall into debt to the flour merchants. The Bakers Company of London, for instance, was split by these developments for "while the poorer members ... were falling into utter dependence on the mealmen and flour dealers, the wealthier were branching out even more actively than before into the corn trade" and by the early eighteenth century were engaged in the flour trade and the milling business as well. "It was quite common", says Westerfield, "for bakers in country places to buy corn and have it ground on hire or at mills of their own, thus combining the functions of corn miller, mealman, and baker". Their activities illustrated a feature common to all middlemen in the early eighteenth-century corn business - "to function in several capacities and break down the ordinary demarcations that in public estimation and policy were supposed to put and keep each man in one trade only".[1]

A London baker who moved to Canterbury, in the winter of 1736, was clearly aiming to break into the local aristocratic market:

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[1] Kentish Post 6 September 1746; KAO U498 A2; Sylvia Thrupp, A Short History of the Worshipful Company of Bakers of London (1933), 7-8, 26-8; Westerfield, op. cit., 175.

> Eustace Amos (from Mr Tomlin's His Majesty's Baker, near St. James, London) gives notice, that he shall open a baker's shop next Friday near the Two Bells in St. George's, Canterbury, where he will make and sell all sorts of bread, after the London manner, /such/ as household bread, second bread, French rolls, halfpenny rolls, and halfpenny loaves, and will bake all necessary things for dinners, as well as all sorts of cakes or pastry.[1]

This migrant London baker added a challenging note: "He will also sell the best Hertfordshire white flower from London". Around Ware was a great milling district in Hertfordshire, which produced very high quality flour. Much of this was sent by barge to London. Amos, with his metropolitan connections, would not find it difficult to arrange a supply of this white flour to be sent from London to Canterbury, by hoy and road carrier. We know his policy aroused the ire of the old-established Canterbury bakers who had long used the locally milled product. Four of these bakers - John Talphitt, William Reynolds, Valentine Cantis, and Hercules Hills - put out a smart rejoinder in the local press, announcing that they too would sell "the very best Hertfordshire Whites at 1s. 2d. the Gallon or 2d. the Pound". We are left to speculate how much alum found its way into their Kentish flour that year![2]

The market for Kentish barley, according to Marshall, lay "chiefly or wholly within the neighbourhood of its growth". The main buyers were local maltsters. During the period for which records of Kent's coastal trade are available, the second half of the seventeenth century, Thanet exported annually to other English ports only 500 quarters of barley compared with 7,000 quarters of malt. This clearly suggests that the bulk of the barley crop was malted locally and not in London. It is impossible to say how much of the total malt product was used by the local brewing

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[1] Kentish Post 24 January 1736.

[2] Kentish Post 28 February 1736; the most conclusive evidence about food adulteration in the mid-eighteenth century is that there was "a widespread and reckless use of alum in flour to make bread white". - D. Davies, A History of Shopping (1966), 207.

industry but in a growing city like Canterbury and in ports such as Faversham, Sandwich, Dover, Deal and Margate there were expanding local markets for beer as well as opportunities for supplying beer for victualling ships.[1]

Malt is an intermediate product standing between barley and beer. It also happens that malting was the most profitable use to which barley could be put. It was natural therefore that farmers "encouraged by brewers anxious to maximise the efficiency of their raw materials" should turn their attention to barley's malting qualities. It was just as certain that some barley-growers would become maltsters. Of course many farmers dabbled in domestic brewing and hence malting. A "malt-mill" is commonly found in farmers' inventories alongside brewing utensils. But some farmers went further and not only malted their home-grown barley but also purchased malting barley from neighbouring farmers and marketed the industrial product, locally or in London. Some of these maltster-farmers gave up farming and became pure maltsters, but in many cases the two employments continued side by side. In any event, malting would not occupy a man fully throughout the year since, for technical reasons, the best season for malting was during the cooler months from October to May. John Wilson of St. Peter's (Broadstairs) was described as a maltster at the time of his death in 1687 but he was also a cereal grower whose inventory records "certaine malt & certaine barly & more of malt & wheat sent to London" where it fetched £35 8s. Henry Chidwick, a Sandwich maltster possessed 120 quarters of malt in store, valued at £110 in 1694; this was the largest item in his inventory and represented over a third of his personal estate. But Chidwick also farmed in the locality and at the time of his death had 15 quarters of small beans "in Marie Adkin's hoy ready to be sent to London for a markett" and a further 36 quarters of

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[1] Marshall, op. cit., I, 124; Andrews, 'Thanet Seaports', op. cit., 41; Melling, op. cit., 120.

beans "in Thomas Hashford's hoy to be sent to London for a markett". The appraisers of Chidwick's inventory also accounted £83 2s. 6d. "for Corne ... sold at London and found to bee due uppon Accounts made upp with the Hoymen after his decease". John Smith, tenant of Newgardens Farm at Teynham was also a practising maltster. In 1710 Lord Teynham's steward paid Smith £23 4s. "in full for malt" and three years later he received £22 for "making of barley into malt" for the same landowner.[1]

John Collard, a yeoman in the parish of Herne, was working three farms until his death in 1758. In spite of his large-scale and varied farming activities - he was one of the wealthiest farmers in the district - Collard engaged in the malting business. He possessed a "malthouse", the contents of which included two malt-mills, three malt-shovels and a store of malt "dry'd and undry'd" valued at £162 15s. He also owned an "oust" and a "grinding house". Ultimately it may have been the milling business which proved the most profitable part of the enterprise for by the early nineteenth century the Collard family were owners of Chislet windmill.[2]

Sometimes we find a malting business being undertaken alongside apparently unrelated occupations. Westerfield mentions three maltsters of Thame who were also a bricklayer, a shoemaker, and a butcher respectively. Solomon Ferrier of Strand Street, Sandwich, described himself as a "maltster and draper" in 1741. He advertised the fact that he "buyeth wooll" but perhaps it was too obvious for remark that he also bought barley.[3]

Sandwich, in close proximity to the Thanet barley grounds, possessed the largest concentration of maltsters in the county. In the sixteenth

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[1] P. Mathias, The Brewing Industry in England, 1700-1830 (Cambridge 1959), 403, 406; KAO PRC 11/51/178, 27/34/80, U498 A3.

[2] KAO PRC 11/84/56; Finch, op. cit., 187.

[3] Westerfield, op. cit., 172; Kentish Post 1 July 1741.

century most of the malt shipped from Kent to London came from Sandwich and its environs. In the late seventeenth century Baskerville observed that the main industrial activity of the port was "the trade of malting" while Dr Richard Pococke, who visited Sandwich in 1754 believed that the main supports of the town's economy were "an export of malt and an import of wine and other foreign commodities for the use of Canterbury and other neighbouring towns". Vessels from Milford Haven regularly brought "fine Welch coals" to Sandwich for the use of the local maltsters. The collier masters sold their consignments within eight or ten days of berthing. When the lease of a Sandwich malt house was advertised in 1730, the premises were described as "large enough to make 1,000 quarters of malt in a year, with a new oust for drying pale or brown malt and all other conveniences proper for a maltster".[1]

When Anthony Oldfield, maltster of Sandwich, died in 1679 he possessed "greene malt" and "dryed malt" in his malt house valued at £50, together with 105 quarters of "dry barley" worth £70. In addition, 31½ quarters of malt had been "shipt off in /the hoy/ Marie Adkins" to London where it fetched £19. In common with other local maltsters, Oldfield had invested in the coastal trade: a "one eighth part of a certaine vessell or ketch called the Anne of Sandwich whereof John Wilson is Master" was valued at £15.[2]

The malting business was an important industrial activity at Sittingbourne and Milton where numerous inns catered for a brisk transit trade. The Tongs were leading maltsters at Sittingbourne. James Tong managed the family concern until his death in 1700 when his son John took over

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[1] Fisher, op. cit., 56; 'Thomas Baskerville's Journeys in England', Hist. MSS. Com. 13th Rep., App. II, Portland, II, 279; J.J. Cartwright, ed., 'The Travels Through England of Dr Richard Pococke', Camden Soc. Pubs., XLIV (1888-9), 89; Kentish Post 26 June, 7 August 1745, 14 November 1730.

[2] KAO PRC 11/44/17; for other examples of maltsters' investments in local shipping see the inventories of Samuel Paramore (11/43/73), John Pettit (27/28/202), John Ladd (11/51/125), James How (11/56/77), and Stephen Hobday (11/73/123).

the business. During the first half of the eighteenth century Richard Tylden of Milstead sent all his barley each year to John Tong's malt house. Some of the barley was returned to Milstead as malt - for Tylden's domestic brewing which included "seedcake" and "harvest" beer for his farm workers, while the balance was purchased by Tong; at regular intervals Tylden records in detail "My reckoning with Mr Tong My Maltman". John Tong branched into the brewing industry - he was also known in the records as "Brewer Tong" - and he rented from Tylden The Ship Inn at Minster (Sheppey) as well as a hop ground at Milton.[1]

Sittingbourne held a special attraction for malting specialists in other areas. One such migrant was Thomas Boulding of Crundale near Wye who described himself as a "maltman" in his marriage licence (1722); in 1745 he removed to Sittingbourne where subsequent generations of Bouldings were graziers and general farmers.[2]

At Canterbury and Faversham there appear to have been few "pure" maltsters. It was the local brewers and hop planters who bought the local barleys for conversion into malt. It is hardly surprising to find the malting business combined with brewing since this gave the brewer greater control over the supply and price of one of his raw materials and is a simple example of integration backwards.[3] Alexander Bax, probably the largest brewer at Faversham until his death in 1701, had a "Mault-house" in which was stored 120 quarters of malt worth almost £100. In

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[1] KAO PRC 11/62/15, U593 A2-3, F2, T20/2; for other local maltsters see PRC 11/64/77, 11/65/4, 11/62/168, 11/79/20.

[2] I am grateful to Mr H.S. Boulding of Tonbridge for the information about his ancestor.

[3] "Of those who were engaged in private marketing, none held a more powerful position than maltsters and brewers. As manufacturers, they were concerned to obtain regular supplies of grain at fixed and certain prices ... As local capitalists, moreover, brewers and maltsters often became the moneylenders of the rural community, and sometimes obtained a powerful hold over feckless tradesmen or husbandmen". - Everitt, 'Marketing of Agricultural Produce', op. cit., 556.

1733 Samuel Shepherd, a leading Faversham brewer, manufactured "superfine Pale Malt" and "Brown Malt" which he sold by wholesale and retail.[1] A quarter of a century later, his son Julius purchased some of the malt requirements for his rapidly expanding brewery from the eastern extremity of the region, arranging its shipment from Deal.[2]

Nicholas Durant was one of several Common Brewers at Canterbury in the 1730's. In addition to his Castle Street brewery he owned several oast houses, a malt house, and a number of public houses in the City of Canterbury and neighbouring towns. Such a business involved an investment of four to five thousand pounds. Rev. Samuel Fremoult of St. Mildred's parish possessed oast houses and accepted hops for contract-drying. He was also a brewer and for a while was in partnership with a Mr Hubbard. Messrs. Fremoult and Hubbard possessed a brewery, two malt houses, and several public houses including The Mitre in the High Street and The Half Moon in the Butter Market. Rev. Samuel Fremoult appears to have been active in Canterbury as a hop-dryer, maltster, and brewer from the 1730's until 1760. The provision of such bodily comfort might seem an unusual by-employment for one otherwise concerned in spiritual welfare.[3]

Frequently, malting was combined with hop-drying. Sometimes, of course, a brewer would undertake both these activities alongside his main enterprise in order to gain greater control over his raw materials and enjoy the economies of scale. Samuel Fremoult's business was in this category and it was true of other Common Brewers at Canterbury and Faver-

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[1] Samuel Shepherd, of the famous Faversham brewing family, was a member of Faversham Farmers' Club. He was also Mayor of the Borough in 1733, an office which he held again in 1755. - Selby, op. cit., 26.

[2] A.N. Bax, A Bax Family of East Kent (1950), 97; Kentish Post 17 January 1733; KAO Q/SO E7.

[3] Kentish Post 23 June 1739, 18 March 1738, 1 August 1744, 30 January and 16 August 1760.

sham. Nevertheless there were hop-growers like Joseph Greenland who were maltsters but not brewers.[1] Greenland described himself as a "maltster and hop-planter". He lived in the Riding-gate suburb of Canterbury during the 1730's. He owned hop-gardens and ten "cockle and charcoal" oast houses. Besides drying his own hops he undertook contract-drying for other growers - a common feature of the industry at this time, at least in Canterbury. Greenland even offered his customers a choice of oast! On the malting side he claimed to manufacture brown and pale malt "in the same manner as at Hertfordshire". He sold the product wholesale and retail along with dried hops. There is no indication that he was growing his own barley. Farmers in the district would find Greenland a good customer for their best malting barley.[2]

Many local inns performed a vital "exchange" function for buyers and sellers of barley and malt as for other farm products. William Friend, a maltster of Deal, had business relationships with innkeepers in five different towns: at The Butcher's Arms in Canterbury, The Saracen's Head in Dover, The Bell in Sandwich, The Rose in Elham, and The King's Arms in Deal. Each of these inns had a local reputation as a mart for corn and

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[1]The Waddell's of St. Paul's parish were leading hop growers and merchants, but Richard Waddell was also known as a maltster; his malt was sold locally and at London. - PRO C111/55.

[2]Kentish Post 4 December 1731, 15 July 1732, 22 June 1736, 28 June 1740. In the first half of the eighteenth century there was a premium on top-grade Hertfordshire barleys and malts. There are good reasons for thinking that charcoal-fired hop oasts in Canterbury could dry malt as successfully as the malt kilns of Hertfordshire. Cf. "The tapering flues of the malt kilns at the end of the maltings gave as characteristic an appearance to the little Hertfordshire malting towns as did the oasts to a Kentish hop-village. Their general similarity reflected a similarity of function". - Mathias, op. cit., 411. Whether the pale and brown malts of Canterbury were as good as Hertfordshire malts is another matter. It would depend not only on the methods and skill used in drying but also on the malting quality of the barley used. When the best Thanet barleys were malted in Canterbury, there was probably little difference between the Hertfordshire and Kent products.

corn products.[1]

Our knowledge of local trade in beans, peas, oats and other arable crops is very limited but such evidence as there is seems to indicate that many farmers regarded these crops as mainly "consumption" crops for their livestock rather than as "cash" crops to be marketed. Most of the beans were "Common Ticks" and used as fodder for horses and pigs. Various strains of grey peas were used for fattening hogs. Oats were regarded almost exclusively as horse-feed. Tares and rye were fed to work horses as "soiling" or "green forage" in the stables during the summer months. This view needs to be qualified somewhat for peas and beans grown in the Sittingbourne and Faversham districts, where exports to London were of some significance. In the second half of the seventeenth century annual exports of corn and corn products from Faversham amounted to 15,000 quarters of which peas and beans accounted for 2,000 quarters.[2]

Oats were an important crop at Hogshaw Farm, Milstead: between 25 and 35 acres were sown every year. Immediately after harvest Tylden allocated a large quantity - usually 30 shocks (300 sheaves) - to John Croyden his wagoner for immediate threshing and feeding to the horses during the autumn and winter. This was the season when farm horses, engaged on heavy ploughing duties, required substantial daily rations. In the records there are frequent memoranda which relate to oats as horse-feed. Thus, in 1725 "theze oats that have been thrasht to this time ye 30 of December being 30 S/eams/ 5 B/ushels/ should last my horses to y^{e}

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[1] Kentish Post 19 February 1729, 18 February 1730. Cf. "By James I's reign such inns were acquiring a reputation as marts for particular kinds of product, and were visited year after year by the same clientèle. The George at Milton Regis in Kent was a barley-mart, where merchants, maltmen, and yeomen from Faversham, Ospringe, Margate, Borden, Sittingbourne and other places sold their goods". - Everitt, 'Marketing of Agricultural Produce', op. cit., 560.

[2] Boys, op. cit., 85, 90; Marshall, op. cit., I, 126, 138; Andrews, 'Trade of Faversham', op. cit., 128.

14 of March and 6 B/ushels/ over". In 1728 "John Croyden began to give the horses oates Nov. ye 11. He has oates allow'd him till ye 2^d of December at 10 Bushell per week". And so on.

Tares were also fed to the horses at Milstead. Thus in 1749 there were 2½ acres of this crop growing in Stable Field of which Tylden "cut about 1 acre green for the horses" and "the rest were harvested and carry'd in very well". Once the priority needs of the horses had been met, stocks surplus to requirements were marketed at London throughout the year. There were very few seasons when Milstead oats were not consigned to Crown Key at Sittingbourne for shipment to metropolitan markets, a pattern probably typical of the larger farms along the Downland margin. Tares were marketed at London in about half of the recorded seasons 1709-61, beans in a third of these years, peas in less than a quarter. Local sales of these crops were numerous, but individual transactions were always small; the petty buyers were mostly tenants and workpeople at Milstead.[1]

John Prall, a yeoman of Murston, was a wealthy arable farmer. In 1748 he was growing 72 acres of wheat and 46 acres of barley as "cash" crops. His 6 acres of oats were obviously intended as fodder for his twelve horses which also received clover hay and possibly some beans. But since he grew the same acreage of beans as barley he clearly intended to market much of the crop. Prall bred and fattened pigs and possessed two hog pounds. There were, on the farm, three in-pig sows and twenty-seven stores in various stages of growth. His six brine tubs and 64 score pounds of pork valued at £37 indicate clearly the purpose of the pig enterprise. The "tail" barley and much of the yield of his 17 acres of peas would no doubt go to fatten the stores.[2]

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[1] KAO U593 A2-3.

[2] KAO PRC 27/43/150.

Thomas Bax, a yeoman of Eastchurch on the Isle of Sheppey, grew mainly wheat on his heavy clayland farm. In December 1757, 52 acres had been sown down to winter wheat. That autumn he had sent 12½ quarters of wheat and 7½ quarters of beans to London for which he had received £32 10s. There remained in his barns 80 quarters of wheat and 40 quarters of beans, presumably to be marketed later in the winter or in the opening months of 1758. There is no suggestion that Bax intended marketing the oats (24 qrs.) or peas (18 qrs.). Since he possessed nine working horses the oats would not leave the farm premises, except in small quantities to local farmer-purchasers. The presence of hog troughs and brine tubs on the farm suggests hand-feeding of pigs for pork production for the household. Since he appeared to grow no barley, this left him with only peas as a suitable concentrate for the pigs.[1]

In so far as they entered the markets at all, the buying and selling of these crops were characterized by numerous, local, small-scale transactions. The larger shipments of beans to London were a noticeable exception but these did not affect the whole region. Innkeepers probably handled most of the local trade in peas, beans and oats. In the first place they would need a regular and adequate supply of hay, oats and beans for the succession of horses stabled on their premises. This would be particularly true of the larger coaching inns like The Ship at Faversham and The Fountain in Canterbury.

But the smaller inns played their part too. As early as 1686, the inns of Sittingbourne and Milton, bestride the Old Dover Road, could accommodate altogether 135 travellers and 200 horses; those of Faversham, some seven miles distant and nine miles from Canterbury, 81 men and 131 horses. In Canterbury itself, as many as 236 guests could be accommodated in the numerous inns, whose stables at the same time, provided shelter, bedding and fodder for some 467 horses. Innkeepers were some-

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[1] Ibid., 11/84/71.

what reluctant to furnish full details of the capacities of their establishments in the inquiries of 1756. Nevertheless, "A List of the Spare Beds & Stable Room" /My italics/ for the Sittingbourne, Milton, Faversham and Canterbury areas, returned to the Excise Commissioners by the local Supervisor, shows as many as 810 beds and stabling for 804 horses. In Sandwich and its rural environs, in the same year, 43 inns and alehouses were recorded, in Margate 28, and in Ramsgate 21. The Sandwich inns possessed between them spare accommodation for at least 68 men and stabling for an additional 133 horses, Margate accommodated 65 men and 62 horses, and Ramsgate 34 men and 56 horses.[1] Wayfarers boosted the local food markets; their horses, the sales of straw and feed. Through inevitable contacts with local farmers some of the innkeepers would build up stocks surplus to their requirements. These surpluses were then offered for sale in small lots, the innkeeper assuming the role of corn chandler. The following advertisement appeared in the Kentish Post on 26 November 1729:

> This is to give notice to gentlemen and others, that Philip Driver at the Two Bells in St. George's Canterbury, sells by retail, all sorts of oats, beans, peas, barley, and clover seed, at reasonable rates.

This may help to explain an apparent absence of corn chandlers among Canterbury shopkeepers.

Clover seed, in constant demand everywhere in north-east Kent, was produced only in the remoter parts of the region along the Downland fringe - for example, at Hogshaw Farm, Milstead. Tylden supplied clover seed as well as sainfoin seed direct to other farmers in the district. Von Thünen said the costs of producing clover seed, a labour-intensive activity, were fairly high and therefore "clover seeds will tend to be cultivated in the remoter parts of the ring of the improved system; areas

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[1] PRO W030/48-9.

nearer the Town will find it more profitable to buy seeds than grow them".[1]

William Friend, the Deal maltster, imported "seed" oats, and peas from Wales into Sandwich. In the early spring of 1730 he offered for sale 100 quarters of "Black Oats" and 50 quarters of "Gray Pease". He left "samples of the said corn" with various innkeepers at Sandwich, Elham, Dover, Deal and Canterbury. A Dover merchant who, in the 1730's, imported Spanish and Portuguese wines and "Norwegian goods" and exported corn, also handled imports of "Black Oats", "Small Gray Pease", and "Poor-land Gray Pease" all "for seed".[2]

Flax growers sometimes sold their crops to local flax dressers; more usually they undertook the processing themselves and negotiated the sale of packs of dressed flax to linen weavers at Canterbury, Sandwich and other towns within the region. John Saunders, a flax grower at Ash, recorded £4 18s. "oweing to me for one pack /of flax/ at Canterbury" in 1719. Daniel Dawson of St. Mary Magdalene's parish Canterbury was described as a "linnen weaver" at the time of his death in 1736. His "stock in trade", assessed at almost £190 and representing well over half his personal estate, included sizeable quantities of "rough flax", "tow", and "drest hemp and flax". His finished products in store included 50 pieces of "hop-bagging", and over 40 yards of "hair cloth" (for hop drying), as well as more than 200 "sacks of different sorts" and a quantity of "brown linnen".[3]

Flax producers found themselves with considerable surpluses of flax seed and occasionally this was sold at London: John Young of Chirk's Court, Murston received £17 10s. 6d. for "thirteene Qters of wheat and

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[1] P. Hall ed., Von Thünen's Isolated State (Oxford 1966), 184.

[2] Kentish Post 18 February 1730, 1 May 1736.

[3] KAO PRC 27/40/197, 11/80/219, 11/51/157.

three Qters & an halfe of flax seed sold at London" in 1687. However, local markets were probably of greater importance. There is very little information regarding oil mills although such evidence as there is suggests that the setting up of a small mill was relatively easy and involved modest capital, and that the expertise was provided by alien settlers. Daniel Devine, his brother Andrew, and Abraham Newhouse entered into a partnership for setting up "a certaine oyle mill near the Citty of Canterbury" in 1700. The purpose of the mill was to manufacture rape oil and linseed oil. The Devines invested twenty guineas apiece in the enterprise, Newhouse forty guineas. Andrew and Daniel Devine were Canterbury woolcombers who were also described as "partners and joyntly concerned in the trade of makeing of oyles and planting of seeds". This partnership became the subject of litigation when Andrew defaulted on his financial responsibilities after he became disenchanted with the whole business; he claimed to have lost money making oil and claimed "the Mill was never any advantage" to him. The partners employed Nicholas Debugny of Holy Cross parish Canterbury as their millwright; he gave evidence with the aid of Jacob Fedarb his interpreter. Another witness was Jacob Dehane described as a Canterbury merchant. This tantalising evidence - we are given no further details of the business - is another example of Walloon involvement in the economic life of Canterbury. We can only guess that similar ventures were undertaken in that other Dutch stronghold at Sandwich, a district where, as we have seen, flax growers abounded.[1]

Dye-plants found a ready sale at Canterbury, centre of the local textile industry. Mathias Gray, a Canterbury dyer, possessed huge stocks of various dyestuffs on his premises in 1683. The most valuable item in stock was "5 hundreds /cwt./ of madder" of £15 estimated worth. He also had "16 hundreds of woold" valued at £4. James Le Froy, "dier" of All

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[1]PRO E134 7 Anne/Mich. 28.

Saints parish Canterbury, had woold and madder in his storeroom in 1702.[1] The only woold grower who has left a record of his marketing policy is Richard Tylden of Milstead who appears to have always sold his crop to London dyers. The first record of sales of Milstead woold relates to 1701 when William Tylden - Richard's father - commissioned John Tappenden, the Milton hoyman, to transport the crop to London. In April 1711 Richard Tylden received £1 4s. 2d. from Tappenden for "5 bundles of woold" sold at London; a similar quantity the following year fetched 15s. 10d. In 1714 the 83 bundles sent to the Capital fetched 2s. each, £7 12s. 2d. in all; the sum of 13s. 10d. was deducted to cover transport charges. In the spring of 1718 Tylden sold a peck of woold seed to Goodman Wyatt, a local husbandman; Hogshaw Farm produced only 8 bundles of woold that year which sold at 1s. 3d. each. In the summer of 1728 Tylden records:

> Woold. Had on the two further fields 3 load and 43 bundles of woold, tithe paid, and lay'd in ye oast barn.

This crop was sent to London shortly after it was harvested where it sold at £4 10s. per load. Although Tylden sold woold seed locally, in small quantities, there is no record that the harvested plants found markets in Kent. The Canterbury dyers almost certainly obtained their supplies from the chalky parishes south of that city.[2]

D Conclusion

A broad conclusion emerges from this regional marketing survey. In the local markets and in London, strict lines of demarcation in the marketing system were being eroded. The marketing organization grew in complexity with the proliferation of middlemen who were integrating successive (or parallel) manufacturing and distributive processes under

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[1] KAO PRC 11/47/195, 11/64/162.

[2] KAO U593 A2.

one management. Integration was taking place throughout the chain of distribution as forward, backward, and horizontal linkages were fashioned.

London Fruiterers, who already had close links with a host of petty dealers in the City, now reached out into the Kentish orchard lands where they purchased or rented property and established a permanent foothold in the territories of their chief suppliers. Mealmen and flourmen reached backwards into processing and became mill owners and millers. Similarly, the millers, no longer content to grind corn for others, also looked backwards; they sought out the wheat farms and bought in their own supplies. In droves brewers moved into the malting business. Farmers with sufficient capital moved forward into commercial milling and malting. Millers, moving in the same direction, entered the meal and flour trades and the baking business. Coastal and inland carriers became merchants and factors. Factors moved across into jobbing and hop-planters into malting. On every side, local and metropolitan commercial permutations were growing. With each move greater control of the product brought lower unit handling costs. This encouraged or forced others to integrate for the first time or more extensively as competition became increasingly severe. In a developing economy, it is not unusual for "the diversification of business activities" to reflect to some extent "the endeavour of the established firms to limit the prospects of new competing firms".[1] Against a background of generally low prices, middlemen proliferated their activities in an effort to maintain or maximize incomes. These cost-reducing integrations can be seen as the commercial counterpart of farmers' cost-reducing innovations on the light and medium soils. The closer integration of arable and livestock husbandry was matched by the closer integration of processing and marketing functions. Farmers appear as the co-beneficiaries of changes taking place in the distributive sector (via

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[1] P.T. Bauer and B.S. Yamey, The Economics of Under-developed Countries (Cambridge 1957), 36-7.

lower marketing costs) in the same way that middlemen were sharing in the profitable changes taking place in the farming sector (via larger outputs handled in the markets). Cost-conscious light-land farmers could not have taken a larger share of the market without a corresponding growth in the efficiency of the marketing sector. This dual-sectoral advance which is apparent in north-east Kent exemplifies the changes taking place in the whole of the light-land, market-oriented sector.[1]

"Access to the market" takes on new meaning as we become aware of the wide range of marketing possibilities confronting the farmer. Much more significant than trying to establish the relative importance of the London and local market is awareness that they were both essential to the prosperity of farming districts lying within the metropolitan market area. Farmers would avail themselves of all the marketing outlets at one time or another, throughout the year. Weather and price situations would be matters for earnest discussion in the local inns; products would be dispatched according to individual and group assessments. Thus, the strong winds which kept the hoys in port would turn the sails of the post mills with a fury. At times when the malthouses of the London brewers overflowed with prime Hertfordshire barley the victualling brewers of Canterbury were secure in the knowledge that the malt from the oasts of local hop-growers was of similar high quality. Wagon loads of Thanet barley would move over the little bridge at Sarre on their way to the buyers in Canterbury, as favourable market news spread from brewery to inns and from innkeepers to farmers. But once the "Letter from London" in the Kentish Post gave a hint of a shortage of barley in the capital, some of the crop would move coastwards to the waiting hoys and then to Bear Key "if the weather will permit".

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[1]For a discussion of the agricultural adjustments see E.L. Jones, Agriculture and Economic Growth in England, 1650-1815 (1967), 1-48, 152-171.

CHAPTER 7

LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION AND MARKETING

Farmers in north-east Kent invested at least twice as heavily in arable farming as in livestock production. If the value of crops, farm gear and horses together are taken as an indication of farmers' commitments to arable cultivation it is clear that somewhere between two-thirds and three-quarters of working capital was concentrated in this sector (Table 16). Crops represented the bulk of investment - well over 50 per cent - horses between 11 and 13 per cent, and farm gear between 5 and 8 per cent. A measure of stability in the proportions is evident throughout the period. The farm valuations calculated for north-east Kent can be broadly compared and contrasted with those for Yorkshire at the end of the seventeenth century.[1]

Only one of the ten farming groups in Yorkshire, designated "Lowland farms - mainly corn", bears any resemblance to the Kentish region: it is the only group in the county in which arable crops account for more than 50 per cent of the farm investment.[2] For Yorkshire it was observed that "probably the outstanding feature of the farming is the importance of cattle in all groups" and, in the case of five groups, "the valuation of cattle exceeded the valuation of any other individual item". However, with regard to the arable side it was noted: "The greater importance of corn on the lowland groups than elsewhere is very apparent, and the relatively higher valuation of corn on the larger than on the smaller farms suggests that corn-growing was a function of size".[3] Thus the farms of north-east Kent resemble in one important respect the largest

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[1] W. Harwood Long, 'Regional Farming in Seventeenth-Century Yorkshire', Agricultural History Review, VIII (1960), 111.

[2] The actual estimate is 53 per cent.

[3] Long, op. cit., 110-12.

LIVESTOCK NUMBERS: AVERAGE (MEDIAN) PER FARM

	Horses	Pigs	Sheep	Cattle
North-east Kent:				
1680	5	14	25	6
1713-17	6	11	37	7
1740-60	8	15	66	9
Ash:				
1680-1710	6	10	35	9
1711-60	6	10	18	9
Thanet:				
1680-1710	5	9	20	3
1711-60	6	11	29	4
Minster (Sheppey):				
1680-1710	6	10	96	8
1711-60	6	5	150	12
Chislet:				
1680-1710	4	5	12	5
1711-60	5	15	37	5
Faversham:				
1680-1710	7	19	85	9
1711-60	8	10	76	10
Downland Margin:				
1680-1710	5	7	26	5
1711-60	7	10	27	6

Source: KAO Probate Inventories.

farms of lowland Yorkshire at this time. But the similarity can scarcely be extended, for the Yorkshire farms display little diversity of crops and the livestock sector of Kentish farms fails to show a dominant specialization in any one type of animal. Furthermore, farmers in lowland Yorkshire at the end of the seventeenth century were investing only half as much working capital in agriculture as their Kentish counterparts. It is to be regretted that this type of analysis does not appear to have been undertaken for other regions of the country.

A complementary approach is to employ the records of livestock numbers in probate inventories in order to calculate median averages.[1] The results for north-east Kent are shown in Table 26. This data is useful if it is interpreted in conjunction with a closer scrutiny of the inventories themselves and corroborated by other evidence.

A Horses

Almost every farmer in north-east Kent possessed a few horses. Only four of the forty-five farms examined for 1680 had no horses and one out of a similar number covering the years 1713-17; during the 1740's and '50's, when the average (median) number of horses per farm had risen to eight, none of the farms examined for the region as a whole lacked horse-power.

At the end of the seventeenth century "oxen were still the main working animals south of the Downs" says Chalklin, although "in north Kent horses had probably almost entirely replaced oxen at the plough ...". In fact oxen are extremely hard to find in north-east Kent after 1680. Thomas Hasleden of Rainham possessed eight oxen in 1680. Thomas Godfrey of the same parish had four working oxen valued at £22 in 1681 but he possessed twice that number of horses valued at £44. Thomas Everinden,

[1] This method of analysis has been used in Joan Thirsk, English Peasant Farming (1957), and M.A. Havinden, 'Agricultural Progress in Open-field Oxfordshire', Agricultural History Review, IX (1961), 73-83.

a yeoman of Wickhambreux, possessed ten oxen valued at £60 and sixteen horses worth £140 in 1682. On his farm at Charing Richard Kingsnorth kept "one yoke of oxen" until 1686. These are the only examples found for the 1680's and few others exist for subsequent years. The farm of John Dyason on the London clay near Whitstable was quite exceptional; altogether this farm supported fourteen "working oxen" in 1716 as well as a dozen horses - six mares, two geldings and four colts. But, in general, oxen must have been a rare sight in the region during the eighteenth century although they were used as draught beasts on the clayland farms of the Weald until the nineteenth century.[1]

Young horses are frequently mentioned among those of farmers possessing three or more animals. It seems that, although horses were not often bred for sale, replacements for the farm were bred and reared on the premises according to requirements. In 1714 Obadiah Keys of Minster (Thanet) had a team of four work-horses; he also possessed "in the marsh" a mare and suckling colt and two weaned colts. William Pett of St. Nicholas possessed three geldings, five mares, and one suckling colt in 1746. John Woods of Stone near Faversham owned five mares and two colts in 1748. The following year John Price of Blean had five horses, and two mares with a young colt apiece. John Austen, a Murston husbandman, had three horses, two two-yearling colts, and two suckling colts on his farm when he died in 1753.[2]

Individually horses were the most valuable animals on a farm. Fully grown work-horses were frequently rated at £8 or £10 each and horses for riding at £5 or rather less. Thus James Edmeds of Hartlip possessed five "waggon horses" worth £50 and four "riding horses" valued at £20 in 1754. Where a farmer owned nine or ten horses, or maybe more, this

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[1] C.W. Chalklin, Seventeenth Century Kent: A Social and Economic History (1965), 104; KAO PRC 27/29/32, 11/45/288, 11/46/189, 27/31/29, 11/73/145.

[2] Ibid., 11/72/203, 27/43/157, 11/82/251, 11/83/27, 11/83/135.

represented a considerable investment. John Prall who farmed at Murston Court Lodge until his death in 1748 owned eleven horses and a colt said to be worth altogether more than £100. Francis Tomlin of Ash owned four wagon horses, three mares, a gelding, two yearling-colts, and a riding horse valued at £115 in 1751, representing more than 12 per cent of his considerable wealth. Although large numbers of horses are recorded in relatively few inventories, the high individual values accorded these animals explains why, in the region as a whole, horses represent as much as 11 or 12 per cent of the average farm valuation.[1]

Inventories of the larger farmers sometimes record work-horses by teams according to quality. An excellent example is the inventory of Thomas Holmes of Ickham near Canterbury which shows that this farmer owned thirty horses at the time of his death in 1680. Holmes' first team of four wagon horses were valued at £40, the second team £20, the third £12. He also possessed "fower harrowing horses" - probably animals past their prime and unfit for heavy duties - valued at only £1 10s. each. In addition there was "one black gelding", ten colts, a "lame mare" and a "market mare"; altogether the horses on this farm were estimated to be worth £115 10s., or 14 per cent of Holmes' total personal wealth.[2]

While it is clear that farmers bred from their own mares to provide replacement stock it is impossible to say how often they sold young horses surplus to requirements. John Mount of Birchington possessed eight geldings; he also owned a stallion and seven brood mares; however, the record shows only three yearling-colts on his farm in 1713 which may suggest that others had been sold locally.[3] Isaac Kemp lived and farmed

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[1] Ibid., 11/83/151, 27/43/150, 11/83/77.

[2] Ibid., 27/29/116.

[3] Ibid., 23/39/145.

at Newgardens in Teynham until his death in 1750. This wealthy yeoman - he leased three farms and left £3,550 in personal estate - possessed thirty-three horses, including at least half a dozen brood mares and seven colts.[1] An advertisement in the local press in 1746 shows that Kemp took more than a passing interest in horse-breeding:

> There is now in the hands of Isaac Kemp of Tenham near Sittingbourne a fine high-bred gray stallion fifteen hands three inches high kept for covering mares this season at half a guinea and a shilling to the man.
> N.B. This horse was known by the name of Tinker, and won several King's Plates.[2]

Similar advertisements were common in the Kentish Post reflecting a keen interest in bloodstock improvement on the part of the wealthier sections of the rural community.[3] The Kentish racing season culminated on Barham Downs near Canterbury where each August riders competed for "the King's Plate of One Hundred Guineas". Robert Gore, a yeoman of St. Nicholas in Thanet, left more than £1,100 in personal estate when he died in 1702; the appraisers of his inventory carefully recorded four mares, three geldings, three colts and "ye Jockey-horse".[4]

We should be careful not to underestimate the horse-breeding skills of Kentish farmers. "There are many very fine teams", wrote Boys, "each consisting of four horses, in the hands of the farmers of the Isle of Thanet and East Kent, some of which were bred here from a sort that has long been established; and others are a cross, between the old Kentish cart-mares and stallions from the midland counties; or half-bred Flemish". Most of these horses were black in colour and stood at from

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[1] Ibid., 11/83/68.

[2] Kentish Post 23 April 1746.

[3] See, for example, Kentish Post 28 March 1747.

[4] Kentish Post 5 August 1730; KAO PRC 27/36/21.

fifteen to sixteen and a half hands, possessing "much bone and good action". A team of four such horses could plough two acres in a day. Another indigenous strain was found in the Isle of Sheppey where "the horses for the plough are bred principally from a sort that has been in the isle time out of mind. The mares are covered by stallions that come from other parts of the county in the season". However, according to Boys, Sheppey horses were "somewhat of a size smaller than those in other parts of Kent" which he found difficult to understand since "it is natural to suppose that such very stiff heavy land must require strong horses". It seems that Sheppey farmers may have been less skilled in horse-breeding than farmers in other parts of the region and that their animals had "become small from neglect"; Boys thus considered "it would perhaps be better if more attention was paid to the breeding and rearing the colts in these parts".[1]

Despite the evidence indicating that many farmers in the region bred their own draught horses, and possibly a few for sale locally, there must have been a considerable demand for animals bred in the Midlands and northern counties. Of Kent Boys says: "The breeding of horses is not practised in this county as a separate branch of business as in many parts of the north". At the end of the eighteenth century many young horses were brought from the Midlands by dealers who had purchased stock at the local horse fairs.[2] This trade almost certainly had its beginnings earlier in the century when dealers commonly brought strings of horses to the larger towns and particularly to Canterbury. From the 1730's horse dealers began to advertise their business:

> This is to acquaint all gentlemen and others, that Stephen Yates, at his house over against the Flower-de-Luce in High Street, Canterbury, deals in all sorts of horses, as

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[1] J. Boys, A General View of the Agriculture of the County of Kent (1796), 156.

[2] Ibid., 158.

> coach horses, saddle horses, farmers' horses &c. and disposes of them at reasonable rates. If there is any mislike to them, after tryal, he will be very ready to make an exchange. He keeps stables behind his said dwelling house.[1]

Inns were favourite venues for horse-traders:

> Mr Giles Shanks, dealer in horses, will be at the Fountain Tavern in Canterbury on Saturday next 11 March, where gentlemen and others may then be suited with all sorts of geldings and mares, he having great choice of them.[2]

William Clarke sold horses at Canterbury at least as early as 1738 when he could be found at The Star in St. George's parish on certain market days. An advertisement in 1743 shows clearly the itinerant character of his business:

> William Clarke is just now come out of the country with a fresh string of good horses; and on Saturday next will be at Mr Nye's at the Saracen's Head in Canterbury where gentlemen and others may be furnished with cart horses and mares, or coach horses, with very good saddle horses.[3]

It was said that in Kent excellent teams of heavy horses were "kept at great expense".[4] The heaviest expenditure lay in feeding costs, mainly hay - including clover, tare and sainfoin hay - and oats. A prudent farmer such as Richard Tylden of Milstead took care to allow his wagoner ample oats for the horses especially during the autumn ploughing season. In 1740, for instance, he recorded:

> Allowed /John Croyden, wagoner/ to cut for the horses before and 6 weeks after Michaelmas, 30 shocks /300 sheaves/ and I allow'd him ye 4 shocks 8 sheaves extraordinary more y^n^ usual to cut for ye horses when

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[1] Kentish Post 9 April 1737.

[2] Ibid., 8 March 1738.

[3] Ibid., 18 May 1743; also see 22 April 1738.

[4] J.C. Loudon, Encyclopaedia of Agriculture (1825), 1086.

> they went out and came in from work 3 weeks before Michaelmas they working hard in ye wheat season.[1]

Further costs were involved when horses needed to be shod or when they fell victim to illness or disease. There were always neglectful farmers but probably few as bad as Thomas White of Waltham near Canterbury who allowed his farm to fall into a ruinous state by 1725 and kept horses which were described as "old and starved and so weak that they could not rise alone". The wiser and more skilful farmer would quickly seek the aid of a local blacksmith when any of his horses were seriously out of condition. It is clear from the records that many blacksmiths were also farriers or horse-doctors. Joseph Dove of Newington was described as a blacksmith at the time of his death in 1746 but, in addition to his work-shop and usual stock-in-trade, he possessed: "In the farrier's shop ... a parcel of oyls, ointments and other drugs with ye bottles & pots".[2]

B Pig Keeping

Agricultural historians have, in general, neglected the role of the pig in English farming and a great deal of misunderstanding has arisen concerning pig husbandry in earlier times. One gains the impression from modern writers that swine were kept mainly by cottagers who allowed their few animals to forage at will in the woods for acorns and beechmast, and who eventually slaughtered the fattened pigs in slow succession for their

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[1]KAO U593 A3 f. 195v.

[2]PRO E134 11 Geo.I/East. 5; KAO PRC 11/82/207. The farrier was described as "a compound of the Smith and Doctor. He makes shoes for horses, and puts them on; he is supposed acquainted with all the diseases incident to that useful animal and possessed of the method of cure. He has a certain Materia Medica of his own adapted to the constitution of his patient ...". R. Campbell, The London Tradesman (1747), 237.

own households.[1] The Chairman of the pre-war Bacon Development Board was ill-advised when he described pig keeping in the eighteenth century: "Pigs had to find their own living in the woods and on the commons, and it was only at the end of their second or third autumn that, fattened on acorns or beech mast, they were fit for slaughter". Furthermore, his claim that "the sty-feeding of pigs ... followed the great Georgian Enclosure movement" is entirely without foundation.[2]

It is not difficult to see why there is such a dearth of information on the history of pig farming: "The pig was not a fashionable animal, and its breeding and improvement never became a fashionable pursuit". Most agricultural writers of the time paid no more than lip service to swine and even for the closing decades of the eighteenth century the evidence is "scanty in comparison with that for other types of farm stock".[3] Moreover, contemporary writers frequently maligned the pig. Matthew Bramble, focal figure in Smollett's famous work, considered the pig "an abominable carnivorous animal fed with horse-flesh and distillers' grains". John Laurence says: "Hogs are the most hurtful, spoiling and ravenous beasts, and are in themselves great evils; yet they are almost necessary ones to the husbandman". Banister considers pigs "peculiarly disgustful ... on account of their unsightly make, as the universal filthiness of their nature". Despite giving further vent to his feelings on the subject of pigs the writer nevertheless admits their value to the farmer and devotes a chapter to their study: "... in the horse, the

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[1]The historian of English livestock farming mentions briefly the use of sties and the practice of hand-feeding in the seventeenth century but says nothing about eighteenth-century developments before 1770. See R. Trow-Smith, A History of British Livestock Husbandry (2 Vols. 1957-9), I, 250-2 and II, 154-8. Eric Kerridge ignores pigs in his otherwise detailed work - The Agricultural Revolution (1967). The author of a comprehensive economic study of Kent during the seventeenth century devotes two lines to pig keeping - Chalklin, op. cit., 105.

[2]Lord Portal, 'Bacon Curing in Great Britain', The Times 1 February 1938.

[3]Trow-Smith, op. cit., II, 154.

ox and the sheep, we may trace out a pleasing countenance, with a strict adherence to cleanliness, both as to the external form, and in the choice of their food: the hog, on the contrary, with an aspect the most forbidding, betrays marks of inward discontent by his perpetual gruntings; and if ever he appears satisfied, it is at those times when he is wallowing in mire and nastiness, and indulging his appetite by voraciously devouring the most offensive and corrupted aliment. Yet this creature, loathsome as he is, forms a very necessary link in the chain of animals, nor could his presence be conveniently dispensed with in the farm yard".[1]

An omnivorous, woodland creature by nature and most content when rooting vigorously in the earth for choice morsels, the pig appeared unendearing alongside his more gentle herbivorous companions. Devoid of sweat glands, the pig's natural inclination to wallow in cool mud during hot spells made him appear even less attractive than usual. Yet despite the pig's distinct lack of innate aesthetic qualities, English farmers were not slow to appreciate his economic potential. "There are immense numbers of swine" wrote Harrison in the sixteenth century "which are larger than in any other country". "The husbandman that is well furnished with other cattel" said Blagrave in 1669, "it will also be very profitable for him that he have swine. It is a common saying, that he that hath sheep, swine, and bees, sleep he or wake he, may thrive; and the saying is because that from these things the greatest profit ariseth with the least cost". Lambert, writing a few years later, thought "there is no country in the world breedeth naturally better hogs than England". In the eighteenth century Mortimer opined that "swine are very advantageous to the countryman, not only for their great increase, but also in that they feed upon what would otherwise be of no use or advantage but would be flung away". Low, writing in the nineteenth

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[1] Tobias Smollett, The Expedition of Humphry Clinker (1771), 121; J. Laurence, A New System of Agriculture (1726), 147; J. Banister, A Synopsis of Husbandry (1799), 438.

century, said: "The hog is truly the poor man's stock since it may be raised by the cottager as well as by the breeder on a larger scale ... it is a great error for a farmer, however extended his own concerns may be, to disregard this branch of farm-stock; it is to him a source of household economy and comfort. He can raise the most delicate pork for use at all times and with the greatest facility, and will always derive a sufficient profit from the remainder to repay him for his feeding". Thaer, leading nineteenth-century German agriculturalist, affirmed: "The English certainly pay great attention to the management of swine, and possess many different breeds".[1]

Very little can be said about breeds of pigs in England before the late eighteenth century when there still existed "an inchoate mass of regional varieties of which only one or two yet bore the semblance of breeds". Three colour-types can be distinguished - white, black and brown - but the only English breeds clearly discernible before 1800 are the white Shropshire, black Berkshire, and sandy-coloured Tamworth. Boys says that a few farmers in west Kent "have the larger kind, or Berkshire breed of hogs" but admits that in general they kept "mixtures of many different sorts". The pigs of east Kent Boys describes as "of various sorts, some farmers preferring large, and others small ones; but there are none very large and coarse". By the end of the eighteenth century "the native, or older, British varieties had been much modified by foreign crosses of which" says Trow-Smith "the most important was the Chinese pig ... small, fine-coated, light-boned and quick maturing, but short in body: a pork pig closely resembling in bodily conformation the black breeds of later times". Trow-Smith believes that "all the evi-

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[1] William Harrison, Harrison's Description of England in Shakspere's Youth, ed. F.J. Furnivall, New Shakspere Society, 6th Series, I and VIII (1877 and 1881), pt. I, lxxxiii; J. Blagrave, The Epitomy of the Whole Art of Husbandry (1669), 90; J. Lambert, The Country-man's Treasure (1676), 31; J. Mortimer, The Whole Art of Husbandry (2nd Ed., 1708-12), pt. I, 185; D. Low, Elements of Practical Agriculture (5th Ed., 1847), 698-9; A.D. Thaer, Principles of Agriculture (2 Vols. 1844), II, 756.

dence points to its arrival long ante-dating the conventionally accepted decade of its introduction, 1770-80".[1] A single piece of Kentish evidence puts the date of introduction at least as early as the 1740's. Matthew Chapman of Eastling lost one such pig in 1749:

> Stolen or stray'd from Eastling near Faversham in Kent. A small boar of the Chinese breed, about sixteen inches high, remarkable for the shortness of his neck, of a very surly temper, his ears much torn, and his tail cut pretty short.[2]

Boys affirms that in east Kent - an area in which he farmed himself - "the smaller sorts /of pigs/ are those mixed with the Chinese breed. They are fattened at the age of eighteen or twenty months, for the use of the family of servants in farmhouses; and made to weigh from ten to twenty-five score each". In 1845 George Buckland, writing on east Kent, says: "Of swine there is a great variety; but a breed denominated "Maylams", after the name of its introducer, more generally prevails. They are black, of a hardy nature, grow fast, with a good tendency to fatten". This evidence, admittedly slight, points to a perpetuation in the region of those characteristics and qualities noted in the Chinese pig, and it is tempting to conclude that the later Kentish Black - a distinct and important regional breed in the earlier years of the present century - was the modern descendant of previous crosses between the Chinese and local indigenous types.[3]

Inventories relating to north-east Kent yield abundant information on pig keeping: numerous animals in various stages of growth, housing facilities, feeding utensils, tubs of salt pork and crocks of lard. Let

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[1] Trow-Smith, op. cit., II, 154-6; Boys, op. cit., 158-9.

[2] Kentish Post 25 January 1749.

[3] Boys, op. cit., 158; G. Buckland, 'On the Farming of Kent', Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society, VI (1845), 264; A.D. Hall and Sir J. Russell, The Agriculture and Soils of Kent, Surrey and Sussex (1911), 47-8.

us first, however, clarify our terms. The word pigs occurs rather less frequently than one might expect and usually implies young suckling pigs or piglets. The terms sow and boar are fairly common but hogs is the most frequently-employed description which, in most cases, means fattened pigs or those nearing the killing stage. In contrast to (fat) hogs there are sheats (or shoots), which are the young lean stock or stores; this dialect word is very common but the equivalent terms liveware, lyward, or lyard are frequently substituted. Standardization is, of course, imperfect but it is usually possible to interpret the essential character of an enterprise. Examples illustrate the point. Thus Edward Wild of Ash possessed in 1671 "a sowe with seven piges" together with thirteen "sheets" or lean hogs. Daniel Nott of the same parish was also a small-scale breeder who possessed in 1672 two sows with eleven young pigs between them, as well as fifteen "fatting hogs" and fourteen animals already fattened and described as "great hogs". Henry Jenkin of Stourmouth near Canterbury had sixteen "fatting hogs" worth £24 and a large number of "lean hogs" valued at £26 13s. in 1679; there is no sign of breeding stock and this farmer obviously bought-in his stores locally. John Welby of Dandelion Farm near Margate had forty stores described as "lywards" in 1680, while the lean stock of Robert Foart of Eastchurch (Sheppey) were described as "liveware hogs" in 1681. Twenty-nine pigs belonging to John Wood of Goodnestone near Wingham were described as "yonge liveweare shets" in 1691; he also had eight older animals termed simply "hogs"; the possession of five sows shows that Wood bred his own stock. John Harnett had five sows and a boar on his Monkton farm in 1699, from which he had bred "thirty lyard or young hoggs". John Hubbard of Newington possessed only two pigs in 1705, described as "young lyard hogs"; this is an example of a tiny cottage enterprise to meet domestic needs. Edward Philpot of Minster (Thanet) kept five sows, a "large boar", and twenty-seven "young lyard hogs" on his farm in 1708.

And so on. These examples could be multiplied many times over since it was rare to find a farm without pigs, and the animals were usually adequately described.[1]

The average value of pigs of farms in north-east Kent (Table 16) includes pork, bacon and lard in store; the value almost doubled between 1680 and the years 1740-60 (from £10.19 to £19.80) but, since the average value of farms also approximately doubled in this period, pigs accounted for a proportion of total value which changed little, varying between 4.3 and 4.9 per cent. The average (median) number of pigs per farm in the region was fourteen in 1680 and fifteen during the 1740's and '50's (Table 26).[2] 44 per cent of the pig farmers in the region had fewer than ten pigs in 1680, but by the 1740's the proportion had fallen to 23 per cent. In 1680 almost a tenth of pig farmers had herds of more than thirty pigs and this figure remained unchanged in the period 1740-60. The most marked growth was therefore in the number of medium-size herds containing between ten and thirty pigs. Numbers of pigs kept by farmers in different parts of the region varied quite widely and this was no doubt due to peculiarly local circumstances. For example, a marked fall in pig numbers between the two periods 1680-1710 and 1711-60 can be observed in Sheppey where the average size of herd declined from 10 to 5; this was almost certainly due to concentration on and further specialization in sheep farming. At Faversham the decline in herd-size from 19 to 10 in the same period may have been due to larger investments in cattle production and a growing interest in horse-breeding in the locality.

A more detailed examination of the holdings of 45 farmers (48 holdings) during the 1740's and 1750's demonstrates the structure of the early

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[1] KAO PRC 27/23/3, 27/24/109, 11/42/193, 11/43/152, 11/45/111, 27/32/295, 27/35/18, 11/66/161, 11/70/100.

[2] The calculations for 1713-17 show eleven pigs per farm but I can find no obvious explanation for this apparent temporary recession.

Georgian pig industry in north-east Kent.[1] There is clear evidence in the sample that every farmer kept or had kept pigs during his lifetime: the only farmer without live pigs possessed hog troughs, brine tubs, and pork in store. The median number of pigs per farmer was fifteen. The arithmetic average was somewhat higher, 18.3, which - rather surprisingly perhaps - compares not unfavourably with the official "average number of pigs per keeper" in England and Wales in 1954, viz. twenty-seven.[2]

Twenty-three farmers, or 50 per cent of the sample, possessed sows, which varied from one to four per farm. John Downs of Swalecliffe, for example, possessed four sows "in pigg" in 1742; John Prall had three sows "with pigg" at Murston Court Lodge in 1748; a "breeding sow" belonging to Edmund Fairbrace of Chartham in 1745 was valued at £1 and a sow and seven piglets belonging to William Hodgman of Woodnesborough were said to be worth £2 in 1742, altogether typical valuations.[3]

Evidence of litter-size is fairly conclusive. Three examples are specific: William Hodgman's sow with seven piglets has been cited already; William Pett of St. Nicholas had a sow with ten "small pigs" in 1746; and James Weeks's sow at Iwade had eight pigs suckling in 1758.[4] An alternative approach to the question is to divide aggregate numbers of pigs by the total number of sows shown in the inventory sample. The pig is a rapid breeder with a gestation period of only 116-120 days, or approximately four months; two litters per sow could be bred and weaned in 12-14 months. It is a practical assumption that, at any one time, the live progeny of one dam would be represented on the farm by two

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[1] The 45 records covering 48 farms (three farmers managed 2 farms apiece) represent the extant inventories for north-east Kent, 1740-60.

[2] D.K. Britton, The Changing Structure of British Agriculture, Seale-Hayne Agricultural College, Newton Abbot (1968), 6.

[3] KAO PRC 11/82/51, 27/43/150, 11/82/199, 11/82/58.

[4] Ibid., 11/82/58, 27/43/157, 11/84/58.

successive litters. The oldest or largest fattening pigs in the sample (hogs) totalled 277, or more than a third of the number of pigs recorded. At the youngest end of the scale there were 205 small pigs or piglets. The intermediate group - sheats or lywards - numbered 233 and, for analytical purposes, this group was "shared" equally between the other two. This produced two groups of 322 and 393 pigs, the youngest and oldest respectively, which can be taken to represent the aggregates of two generations, or the progeny of 47 sows recorded in the inventories. Simple division produces average litters of 7 and 8 respectively. The results suggested by this little exercise appear to be close to the truth. In 1715 Isaac Chiddick of Herne had a sow "in the stye" with "8 sucking pigs"; in the same year Henry Bradley of Preston near Wingham possessed "a sow with 9 pigs", and John Shrubsole's sow on his farm at Boughton under Blean had a litter of similar size. In 1740-1 sows belonging to Thomas Tattersall of Chipstead in Surrey produced two farrows "there being 7 piggs & no more in each of the said farrows". Banister says that, although some sows produced "12 or 14 pigs at a litter", there were nevertheless occasions when "sows do not bring more than two or three"; he considered six or seven pigs per litter was a more usual number.[1]

In the sample of inventories 1740-60 only four farmers possessed boars. Isaac Kemp of Teynham, the wealthiest farmer in the group, possessed two boars, one on each of his farms, in 1750, and each boar is recorded alongside three sows. John Downs of Swalecliffe had a boar running with his four sows in 1742, Richard Bushell of Minster (Thanet) similarly in 1759. William Pett of St. Nicholas possessed a boar in 1746 but there is evidence of only one sow in his inventory, an exceptional situation. Normally farmers would not consider keeping a stock boar unless they had at least three or four breeding sows. Small farmers

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[1] Ibid., 27/39/170, 11/72/146, 27/39/222; PRO E134 16 Geo.2/Mich. 4; Banister, op. cit., 438.

would take their sows at mating time to the larger pig farms where boars were available.[1]

The free-range system was, and still is, the best method of management for in-pig gilts and sows. Range consisted of rough pasture or woodland and fences or dense hedges were essential to control the stock. Jeffrey Tomlin who farmed near Margate in the 1680's warned on the importance of maintaining fences and hedges, and keeping gates closed for "ye Isle of Thannet ... is a very open place so y^{t} if ye hoggs be not kept in they may ramble through the whole island". The ringing of pigs was practised in order to preserve pastures from excessive rooting; a peg of holly or, more effective, a ring of copper, iron or "white" wire, were used for ringing the nostril. There is no evidence that pigs were tethered in north-east Kent and, indeed, Tusser had earlier warned that tethered pigs were always at the mercy of neighbours' dogs.

Despite the importance of range for in-pig females, by the 1680's farrowing was "probably invariably in the sty, except in the few cases of semi-wild woodland herds". "Let every sow have a particular stye for herself" advised James Lambert "and let her not go abroad nine or ten days after her farrowing. Keep her stye clean, for though they be foul and filthy feeders, yet they desire to lie dry and clean in the styes".[2]

Sties are mentioned occasionally in the Kentish inventories. Stephen Court of Reculver had twelve pigs, probably weaners, "in the stye" in 1692, Isaac Chiddick possessed sties on his Herne farm in 1714, and John Thompson of Ash had pigs "in styes" in 1732. However, the terms more often used for pig-housing in Kent were pound and lodge which are mentioned frequently in the inventories and which were used for fattening as well as farrowing purposes. Augustine Gore had "one fat-

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[1]KAO PRC 11/83/68, 11/82/51, 11/84/112, 27/43/157.

[2]PRO E134 I Jas.2/East. 1; Trow-Smith, op. cit., I, 251-2; Lambert, op. cit., 33.

ting hog in the pound place" on his St. Nicholas farm in 1704. John Carr of Ash had seven pigs "in the lodge where they fat the hoggs" in 1719. The inventory of Thomas Emptage, a husbandman who farmed at St. Peter's (Thanet) until 1735, mentions "the hogpound fence". Thomas Brisley possessed a hogpound on his farm at Hernehill in 1742, and John Prall of Murston, who maintained a herd of thirty pigs in 1748, possessed two hogpounds. Thomas Bax had a herd of twenty-five pigs, some of them in a hogpound, at Brickwall Farm in Eastchurch (Sheppey) in 1757. Richard Bushell possessed a herd of similar size on his farm at Minster (Thanet) where he had erected a hog pound sometime before 1759. In the same year William Taylor of Leysdown (Sheppey) had nine "fatting hogs" in "a hogs' pound".[1]

"The oldest of all pig foods" says Trow-Smith "was the fruit of the woods, the acorns and beechmast", but he opines that, by the end of the eighteenth century, "the use of these for pigs appears to have died out except for the herds of Hampshire which grazed in the New Forest". Even where mast was available it usually provided no more than six or eight weeks' pannage in the autumn followed by a period of trough-feeding to produce prime animals for slaughter. On Wealden farms, thickly wooded, large numbers of pigs fed on acorns each autumn, but in the north-east region the evidence for fattening pigs in this way is scant indeed. A solitary reference relates to Thomas Davis who farmed at Wickhambreux during the first decade and who, in 1702, had twenty hogs "which he bought to feed and runn in his woods and grattens". Davis was fortunate in possessing beech trees on his land but over much of the region, and especially in Thanet, there were few extensive tracts of woodland.[2]

The evidence points to a highly-developed system of trough-feeding

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[1]KAO PRC 27/33/26, 27/39/170, 27/42/175, 27/36/93, 27/40/154, 11/81/18, 27/43/103, 27/43/150, 11/84/71, 11/84/112, 11/84/77.

[2]Trow-Smith, op. cit., I, 250-1 and II, 218; PRO E134 3 Anne/Mich. 9.

throughout the region. Almost every pig farmer possessed, in addition to "hog stocks" for water, a supply of hog troughs for feeding grain and pulse mixtures. Michael Wood of Sarre possessed a quantity of "hog troughs for the fatting hogs" in 1699. John Webb of Ash who had eight hogs in 1722 was equipped with five hog stocks and a trough. The "husbandry utensills" of Thomas Rose, a Milton farmer, included, in 1743, three hog troughs which were used for feeding twenty-two sheats fattening on the farm. Austen Neame, a pig breeder at Littlebourne near Canterbury, possessed a herd of seventy-four pigs in 1754; among the gear on this farm were five large hog troughs.[1]

Peas and beans mixed with "tail" corn - especially barley - were the chief concentrates fed to pigs in Kent; these crops were plentiful throughout our region. Boys cites peas and beans as examples of "hog corn" while Banister says "the most proper food" for fattening porkers is "barley-meal mixed up with water" but also mentions pollards (millers' offal, also known as middlings), peas, beans, buckwheat and potatoes as suitable foods "appropriated by different people for the use of fatting swine". The feeding of peas and beans to fatting hogs was practised by Robert Loder of Harwell in the early seventeenth century. A hundred years later Mortimer recounted that farmers in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire fattened "the largest swine and the greatest numbers for any particular places" which he thought was due to "the great quantities of beans and peas sowed in those parts". Thaer noted that beans were "made use of for the purpose of fattening pigs and are exceedingly adapted for this, but then they should be soaked in water". John Laurence wisely considered that "the art of feeding a hog well is to give him only a little at a time, and often". He goes on: "In woody countries they turn them loose in autumn to search for haws, sloes, pears, crabs, and nuts, but especially acorns; and after a fortnight or three weeks, when

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[1]KAO PRC 27/35/38, 27/41/110, 11/82/148, 11/83/173.

they are glutted with these, they stie them up, and feed them with pease or beans; and some, with flower of rye or barley made into a stiff paste, letting them never want water".

At Stowting near Wye a small watermill in active use during the 1690's was designed to grind "course corne for hoggs or such like"; apparently this little mill was "not capable of grinding of wheat without spoyling" since it "standeth soe far from the water that it can have but little force to grinde". There is no evidence that windmills specialized in grinding corn for stock-feed but no doubt second-quality grain was milled for this purpose in off-peak periods and, of course, millers found ready markets for their offals among the livestock farmers of the region.[1]

Arthur Young considered: "There is no sort of cattle in a farm that require more attention than hogs". He followed this precept himself and carried out numerous feeding trials using, at various times, carrots, parsnips, beets, potatoes and artichokes. Young concluded that "boiled carrots is much the most profitable food that has been tried" although there is little sign that others followed his methods. Moreover, the feeding of root crops was never a feature of Kentish pig farms before 1760. Young also regarded those who grazed their herds of pigs on clover as the most skilful pig keepers although Trow-Smith considers that clover grazing by pigs "like carrots, cabbage and plow oxen, was a bee in the bonnet of the secretary of the Board of Agriculture".[2]

Low considered the hog "an animal of vast importance" in providing for domestic needs. Although large numbers of live pigs were marketed this trade "does not give an idea of the quantity of pork produced and consumed" since it was "almost the only animal food which the peasants of

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[1] Boys, op. cit., 159; Banister, op. cit., 444, 446; Trow-Smith, op. cit., I, 251; Mortimer, op. cit., pt. I, 185; Thaler, op. cit., II, 476; Laurence, op. cit., 148; PRO E134 7 Wm.3/East. 9.

[2] A. Young, An Essay on the Management of Hogs (1769), xiii, 40-1; Trow-Smith, op. cit., 217-8.

many parts of the country ever touch; and happily the animal can be reared on the small scale as well as on the large, by the peasant at his cabin, as well as by the opulent farmer". The widespread nature of pig keeping on all types of Kentish farms demonstrates the reality of this observation. "The fat of the hog", explained Low, "is termed lard, and differs in chemical composition and properties from the fat of the ruminating animals. It more readily imbibes salt than any other kind of fat, and the same property being possessed by the flesh, there is no animal food better suited than pork for preservation by salting". Most pigs intended for pork were fattened and slaughtered at between six and twelve months of age, although younger animals of three or four months produced prime roasting pork, and some farmers specialized in the production of heavy hogs for slaughter at eighteen or twenty months. At the Waldershare Park estate a few young pigs were slaughtered for roasting pork, but the majority were fattened to the heavy hog stage. In the autumn of 1766 four "pigs" which were killed averaged deadweight slightly more than 3 score; in the first three months of 1767 eleven "hogs" were slaughtered for the household at Waldershare Park, averaging rather more than 10 score deadweight.[1]

The Kentish inventories are brim-full of pork in brine tubs and, even if the tubs stood empty, the appraisers considered them sufficiently important to record. It was rare indeed for a farming family not to possess one or two brine tubs, and an examination of inventories for the 1740's and '50's shows an average of four tubs per household. Crocks of lard - known colloquially as seam - are also frequently recorded. The price of salt pork during the period 1680-1760 varied between 6s. and 7s. per score or around 4d. a pound. John Whitton, a poor husbandman of Preston near Wingham, possessed "poarke in the tubs" worth £1 8s. in 1680.

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[1] D. Low, Breeds of Domestic Animals of the British Isles (2 Vols. 1842), 5-6; Boys, loc. cit.; KAO U471 E3.

In the same year Reginald Verrier had "2 brine tubbs full of porke" valued at £7 10s. as well as "2 crocks of seame" standing in the milk-house. Robert Lovell who kept twenty-eight hogs "small and great" on his farm at Herne in 1680 had in store "3 brine tubs with a parcel of porke and bacon". Thomas Holmes farmed at Ickham until his death in October 1680; the appraisers of his inventory recorded: "In the sellar seven brine tubes and in them beefe and porke 20 hundred wait £23 2s." as well as 60 lbs. of "hogs' seam" said to be worth 15s.; it was unusual, however, to find salt beef among a farmer's possessions. In 1683 "4 bryne tubbs, a tubbe of salt & the meat in salte" were stored in "the meat buttery" of Elizabeth Goldfinch who farmed at St. Lawrence in Thanet. In 1691 Bartholomew Baker of Herne had two brine tubs containing altogether "20 score of pork". Although the size of brine tubs was not standardized it is common to find a hundred pounds of pork in a single tub, sometimes twice as much. Some of the probate records state the price of the pork as well as its weight. Thus, in 1717 Nicholas Sampson of St. Peter's had four small brine tubs containing five score pounds of pork which was priced at 6s. a score. "Fifteen score pounds of pork" salted down on John Fairman's farm at Ash was valued at this price in 1723. John Blaxland of Goodnestone Court near Faversham possessed a herd of forty pigs in 1751; he had in his cellars three large and two small brine tubs containing altogether 31 score of pork priced at 7s. a score. The wealthy John Prall of Murston boasted a "pork room" in his farmhouse in which "64 score pounds of pork" were salted down in six brine tubs in 1748; this meat was said to be worth £37 of more than 11s. a score, an unusually high price which may indicate lean pork of prime quality. These examples are typical of some hundreds which have survived. Occasionally the phraseology varies. In 1715, for instance, John Shrubsole of Boughton under Blean had "one hog killed in ye house" and John Silkwood of Northbourne near Canterbury possessed "sides of porke

fatted and pickled" valued at £21 5s.[1]

Equipment and utensils necessary for dressing the carcases - hog blocks or forms, and hog tubs for example - are common entries in the inventories. William Masterson of Birchington possessed a "salting board" in his well-stocked "meat house" in 1736, and Isaac Kemp had a "leaden hog cistern" at Newgardens Farm, Teynham in 1750.

Lard is described in various ways although frequently not given a separate valuation. In 1694 Elizabeth Pettey of Ash had three crocks of "swine fatt" in her cellar, Henry Nethersole of St. Peter's a crock of "hoggs lard" in 1712, and Thomas Carter "12 bladders of seim" in "the tub room" of his Blean farmhouse in 1754; each of these pig farmers also possessed numerous brine tubs of pork. In 1728 Robert Gore of St. Nicholas had five tubs of pork as well as "89 pounds of hog's lade" priced at 4¼d. a pound.[2]

It would be interesting to know whether the pig industry was as highly developed in other parts of the country as in the north-east region of Kent. In Essex, for example, Francis Steer found that pigs were "not so common as one would expect" and he attributed "the relatively small number of pigs noted in the inventories" to the clearance of woodland and the consequent loss of natural supplies of food. This argument, however, is hardly tenable in view of the numerous herds of pigs which Kentish farmers managed on intensive and semi-intensive systems and there must be other reasons which explain the lack of interest in pig keeping on Essex farms. From a large number of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Essex inventories Steer found only two instances where salt pork was listed. It begins to look as though the intensity and scale of specialization in salt pork production throughout the Kentish region was unusual, perhaps

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[1] KAO PRC 11/43/161, 27/28/245, 27/28/177, 27/29/116, 11/47/143, 27/33/7, 11/73/172, 27/41/151, 11/83/182, 27/43/150, 27/39/222, 11/76/214.

[2] Ibid., 27/43/27, 11/83/68, 27/34/49, 11/70/160, 11/83/161, 27/42/77.

unique.[1]

Documentary evidence indicating a Kentish pig industry specializing in the production of salt pork is corroborated by contemporary literature. William Ellis, writing in 1736, considered that "pickled pork" was a "most convenient excellent meat ... and about forty years ago began to be in common use in the county of Kent, since which it has got so general, as almost to supplant bacon, especially with the farmer, who is certainly an ill husband if he does not get a stock of this for all the year". Ellis devoted a substantial section of his new work to the subject of pickled pork, describing in detail the processes involved. "The ploughman and his boy", he wrote, "will carry some of this pork and cold apple dumplings with them, particularly in Kent, and serves them, as cheese and bread does ours in Hertfordshire". John Banister, writing at the end of the century, declared: "In Kent, the usual method with the housewives is to salt down their hog meat for pickled pork, which is far more profitable than bacon, and to such who have been accustomed to feed on it, more grateful to the palate". This writer also produced a comprehensive account of the method of curing pig meat. Boys, too, was in no doubt on the matter: "Pork is the chief food of farmhouse servants and labourers in husbandry in this county".[2]

Pig meat was also preserved by drying the sides as well as salting in order to produce bacon. In some parts of the country - Yorkshire, Hampshire and Wiltshire, for example - bacon curing became a regional speciality. A visitor to Georgian Chichester noted: "The bacon racks were loaded with bacon, for little porke was made in thease times". The reverse was true in Kent where bacon was uncommon. The Kentish inventories yield little evidence of bacon-curing. Two farmers at Ash

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[1] F.W. Steer, Farm and Cottage Inventories of Mid-Essex 1635-1749 (Essex County Council 1950), 56.

[2] W. Ellis, New Experiments in Husbandry (1736), 104-8; Banister, op. cit., 449-50; Boys, op. cit., 159.

possessed bacon in the early seventeenth century: Peter Hawkes had "2 fleches of baccon" worth 6s. 8d. in his wheat loft and Bartholomew Cleveland possessed "tow fliches of bakon" valued at 10s. in the "lytell lofte" of his farmhouse. In 1702 William Pyles of the same parish had "4 fliches of bacon". Richard Cocke of Chislet had two brine tubs of pork and two pieces of bacon in his cellar in 1691 while the bacon hanging in the kitchen of James Tylden at Rainham in 1702 was valued at £2.[1]

Robert Brown, writing in the mid-eighteenth century, described the method of drying bacon by smoking it in the upper storeys of farmhouses, a process that was common in "bacon countries" such as Westphalia. In continental countries they relied "chiefly upon the smoke for curing their bacon" while in England "our bacon makers depend chiefly on the quantity of salt" followed by drying over the heat of a domestic fire "it being an over common method to hang bacon up to dry too near the fire it commonly turns rusty in a little time". Brown related, however, that earlier in the century "Dr Corbet of Bourn Place near Canterbury ... built a bacon house capable of drying sixty large hogs at one time, and has improv'd upon the Westphalia method, viz. by drying so many with one fire, when their drying rooms and closets do not cure but perhaps five or six at a time". Nothing more is known about this unique experiment in large-scale bacon production at Canterbury and there is no evidence to show that the local product improved generally. Town dwellers probably had a greater taste for bacon than their country cousins. There was a "bacon warehouse in the Borough of Staplegate, near Northgate, Canterbury" in 1762 but it was owned by a London grocer who sold "all sorts of cheese, butter and bacon, wholesale and retail", produce which almost certainly came from outside the county. Two years later Henry Kemp of Ramsgate

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[1] Banister, op. cit., 449; Low, Breeds, op. cit., 6; M.D. George, English Social Life in the Eighteenth Century (1923), 117; PRO prerogative Court of Canterbury, Inventory of Peter Hawkes; KAO PRC 27/35/142, 11/55/189, 27/36/212.

advertised "very good and sweet pickled pork, for five shillings a score, and very good and sweet salt beef for two shillings and sixpence a score", probably the products of local farms. But significantly Kemp also sold "very good Yorkshire bacon, by the side, for sixpence a pound".[1]

There is little evidence to show to what extent pigs were marketed "on the hoof" in the region although small-scale, local transactions were probably a universal feature both in Kent and elsewhere. Henry Purefoy who kept pigs on his farm at Shalstone in Buckinghamshire wrote to a neighbour: "You spoke to my mother /Elizabeth Purefoy/ about having one of the fat hogs by the score. You talkt 4 shillings was the market price, but it is 4s. 6d. a score and if you like one of them at that price you may have it".[2] Such dealings between friends and neighbours must have been very common. Sometimes a pig breeder would advertise stock for sale:

> To be sold at Thomas Lushington's at Walton Farm in the parish of Folkestone, 13 very good young fat hogs or sheats from 6 score to 8 score per hog. The price is as the buyer and seller can agree.[3]

Henry Sayer, a Sandwich butcher, bought pigs locally. In 1760 he advertised: "Fine fat (English) laying pork at 4½d. per lb. by the score" and was careful to inform his customers that "none of the hogs weigh'd less than eight or nine score when kill'd" and that they were "all clean hogs".[4] Large numbers of pigs were sold to the Naval Victualling

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[1] R. Brown, The Compleat Farmer, or the Whole Art of Husbandry (1759), 62; Kentish Post 15 December 1762, 2 May 1764. In Yorkshire "the surplus pigs were fatted, butchered and sold whole to bacon-makers who supplied the West Riding and exported their product to London". - G.E. Fussell, 'Eighteenth-Century Traffic in Livestock', Economic History, III (1936), 233.

[2] G. Eland, ed., Purefoy Letters 1735-53 (2 Vols. 1931), I, 160: Henry Purefoy to Mr Johnson 17 November 1738.

[3] Kentish Post 10 March 1764; see also 12 February 1746, 9 November 1748.

[4] Ibid., 10 May 1760.

Board.[1] Some of the pigs of Daniel Nott, a breeder at Ash, had probably been marketed in this way in 1672: the appraisers of his inventory recorded "20 hogs sold to Dover for 20 li.". However, in Kent there was no large-scale movement of pigs to distant markets comparable with the pig trade of the Welsh drovers in Somerset, or the dealings of pig-jobbers in Devon and Cornwall who, each year, drove vast herds into Dorset and elsewhere.[2]

Canterbury was undoubtedly the most important local market for pigs. City pork butchers bought hogs from farmers in the surrounding district. If these tradesmen lacked slaughtering facilities they were able to use those provided by The Castle inn, situated appropriately in Butchery Lane. When the lease of The Castle was advertised in 1728 it was stated that the inn not only stood well for its principal trade but also possessed "a lead for killing of hogs for butchers" which was claimed as "a great advantage" to the landlord. Two years later, when The Castle was re-let, prospective tenants were informed: "There also may be had with the house, the leads and stable for the butchers to kill hogs of which there has been more money made than would pay the rent of the House".[3]

Among those butchers who used the facilities offered at The Castle were the city brawn makers. Brawn - traditionally pickled boar's flesh - was a Canterbury speciality which achieved a national reputation in the eighteenth century although the industry appears to have gone unnoticed by modern writers. Well-made brawn, in season each year from late October until after Christmas, was reckoned a great delicacy. The Earl of Aylesbury, a Jacobite exiled in Brussels, never lost his taste for English delicacies which included dried neats' tongues, cakes of orange-

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[1] See, for example, KAO U1015 C42 ("Letter Book of Philip Papillon 1690-4"), ff. 1, 34.

[2] KAO PRC 27/24/109; Fussell, loc. cit.

[3] Kentish Post 3 August 1728, 21 January 1730.

flower, and collared-brawns which were consigned to him by Isaac Minet a merchant of Dover who traded in Ostend. Francis Gillow, a London hop factor, placed his orders for Canterbury brawn through his cousin Richard Waddell, a maltster of St. Paul's parish. In 1729, for example, Gillow wrote to Waddell: "Pray ask your brawn maker if /he/ cannot make brawn as good a little after Michaelmas as about Xmas. Parsons will be Mayor next year & beleeve would willingly have ye brawn about ye latter end of October".[1]

The earliest literary reference to this small, high-class industry appears to be Benjamin Martin's comment in 1759 that "the Town /Canterbury/ is also as famous as Shrewsbury for collars of brawn". "This City and Shrewsbury", wrote a Thanet resident a few years later, "are the two most noted places in England for brawn, of which they send great numbers of collars, every Christmas, to London". William Gostling, the Canterbury topographer and historian, wrote in 1774: "Brawn is also in its season a considerable article in the trade of our city, not only for the supply of the most elegant tables in these parts, but of those in London also, whither great quantities of it are sent, and sold at the highest price".[2]

It is impossible to say precisely when brawn-making first started at Canterbury but it was certainly a nascent industry in the early years of the century. In January 1710 Lord Teynham's steward paid £1 2s. "for brawn" to Thomas Gill a Canterbury butcher. The Gills were still making brawn in Canterbury some fifty years later. Mary Gill announced in 1750 that she would continue the business of her late husband Peter Gill in

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[1] William Minet, 'Extracts from the Letter-Book of a Dover Merchant 1737-41', Archaeologia Cantiana, XXXII (1917), 271; PRO C111/55.

[2] B. Martin, The Natural History of England (2 Vols. 1759), I, 195; J. Lyon, A Description of the Isle of Thanet and particularly of the Town of Margate (1763), 50; W. Gostling, A Walk in and about the City of Canterbury (5th Ed., 1804), 2.

making brawn. Seven years later her daughter, also Mary, took over the family business:

> The best Canterbury brawn may be had in the proper season, by applying to Mary Gill in Lamb Lane. She hopes for the favours of those ladies and gentlemen who so constantly honoured her mother, lately deceased; since she has several seasons past been principally concerned in making that brawn which has given such universal satisfaction.[1]

Samuel Sharp and James Tong, butchers of Canterbury, were brawn-making specialists from at least 1730:

> The season for making brawn drawing near, notice is hereby given to all persons who are disposed to have any, that it will be made as usual by Samuel Sharp, butcher in Canterbury; and all orders sent in due time to him or his brother Jacob Sharp will be carefully observed.
>
> To be sold by James Tong, butcher in Canterbury - best Canterbury brawn prepar'd by a skilful person who has been us'd to make it a considerable time with approbation, where all gentlemen and others may depend on kind usage and a good commodity.[2]

John Ginder of Moat Farm in St. Martin's parish announced in 1748 that he "makes and sells brawn as usual; and will be obliged to all gentlemen who shall favour him with their custom". Brawn-making was very much a family business for the Ginders, as for others. In 1767 John "resigned the brawn business" to his son William. Another member of the family who specialized in brawn manufacture was Richard Ginder who owned a butchery business in Burgate Street.[3]

The fat hogs of north-east Kent supplied copious quantities of fresh and pickled pork to households in town and country throughout the region; the fat, rendered as lard, was a stock item in the farmhouse kitchen;

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[1] KAO U498 A3; Kentish Post 27 October 1750, 23 September 1757.

[2] Ibid., 10, 16 October 1730.

[3] Ibid., 9 November 1748, 28 November 1767.

trotters and even the head provided tasty delicacies; collars of best Canterbury brawn graced many a gentleman's table in the county and further afield. Nothing was wasted for it is well-known that every part of the pig is used except its squeal!

C Poultry

In Kent there was no poultry industry worth the name, although many farmers kept a few hens, some had ducks and geese, and a few bred turkeys. The value of poultry, even on the larger farms, was never high - usually shillings, occasionally a few pounds. Poultry and bees together represented, on average, less than one per cent of a farmer's total personal estate. "From time immemorial", wrote the Principal of Harper Adams Agricultural College, "poultry have found a place among the livestock of the farm, but until very recent years only as a minor part of the farm enterprise, relegated to the womenfolk as a convenient 'pin-money' occupation ... Under the "barndoor" regime the average production of eggs per hen probably did not exceed eighty per annum, and these were mostly laid in the late winter and early spring months".[1]

Susan Holmes of Chislet possessed two geese and a gander worth 6s. in 1695, and Henry Darby of the same parish had "ducks and fowls" valued at 10s. in 1728. The fourteen fowls and eleven ducks belonging to William Carr of Ash were said to be worth 18s. in 1695 and the poultry of John Ladd of Oare near Faversham - three geese, a gander and twelve fowls - were valued at 14s. in 1699. John Ellet of Milstead had six hens and a cock valued at only 5s. in 1730. Poultry were more numerous on several of the larger farms at Ash: Thomas Hatcher had ten geese and twenty ducks and fowls in 1694; Solomon Jefford's poultry in 1715 comprised fifteen geese, six ducks and thirty fowls worth in all £2 4s.; John Fairman possessed sixty fowls in 1723 and William Holjohn had forty

[1] C. Crowther, 'Poultry Farming', The Times 1 February 1938.

hens valued at £3 15s. in 1746. At his Davington farm in 1706 Stephen Barnes had "geese & fowls in ye close" worth £2. George Whitelock of Upchurch possessed twenty-five geese valued at £2, and eight hens and a cock worth 6s. in 1714. The "44 hins and duks" of Robert Godfrey of Chartham were said to be worth 25s. in 1721. At his farm in Lambertsland (Dunkirk), between Faversham and Canterbury, James Marsh possessed "48 cocks, henns and chickens", seven geese, and ten ducks valued altogether at £2 5s. 6d. in 1755. The records suggest that hens and ducks were usually worth no more than a shilling each, geese up to two shillings. The only sizeable poultry undertaking that has been found in the region belonged to Thomas Bunce, a wealthy Faversham yeoman. When he died in 1731 Bunce possessed a hundred and eleven geese valued at 2s. each, and forty-eight ducks valued at 16s. a dozen, £14 6s. in all; a further thirty-five geese worth 2s. apiece were grazing on his second farm at Throwley; an enterprise of these proportions was quite exceptional.[1]

The inventories tell us nothing about breeds of poultry and we are probably safe in assuming that, scattered around Kentish farmyards, there was a motley collection of birds, the result of indiscriminate breeding. A few farmers may have bred from choice stock purchased outside the county. The Dorking breed, for example, was noted for its fine table qualities. In 1767 Israel Gore of Canterbury advertised for sale "some large fowls of the Darking breed from eight to ten pounds weight".[2]

Turkeys did not reach England (from Mexico) until after 1530 and within half a century had apparently become quite popular. Nicholas

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[1] KAO PRC 11/59/297, 11/79/93, 27/33/225, 11/53/82, 11/79/120, 27/34/34, 27/39/211, 27/41/151, 27/43/129, 11/67/13, 11/72/89, 11/76/46, 11/83/187, 11/79/199.

[2] Kentish Post 18 July 1767. "The Dorking Market was the most famous poultry market of all England". - R.B. Westerfield, Middlemen in English Business, particularly between 1660 and 1760, Transactions Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, XIX (Connecticut, U.S.A. 1915), 204.

Wigmore of Goodnestone Court near Faversham had "2 turky hens and a cock" strutting around his farmyard when he died in 1560. This Kentish farmer was one of the first turkey breeders in England and the documentary reference to them one of the earliest we possess. Turkeys can be found on a few farms in the region during the eighteenth century. William Bachel of Ash possessed "turkeys and fowls" in 1710. In the winter of 1767 the Kentish Post mentioned "Turkies stolen from Mr Hey's at Wickhambreux ... two old hens and eleven young ones of the Black Breed".[1]

In the sixteenth century Sheppey smallholders may have depended on the rearing and sale of poultry for their meagre livelihoods: in 1583 it was reported that many poor inhabitants of the Island had "lately been greatly oppressed by the loss of their lambs, capons, hens, chickens and such like ordinary provisions of household by Her Majesty's takers /i.e. purveyors/, the breeding of these being the greatest part of some of their livings".[2]

Producers usually sold their surplus stocks of birds to higglers who were licensed by the magistrates in Quarter Sessions to deal in poultry, eggs, and dairy products. When Arthur Young visited the farm of John Boys at Betshanger in 1793 he observed that "a higler's cart carried off above twelve dozen fowls for one draft". Young found that "such plenty" was explained by the fact that "the labourers' wives and families, who live on Mr Boys' farm do the whole; he supplies them with what offal corn is necessary, and they return Mrs Boys the grown fowls, ready for market, at 3d. each, 6d. for turkies and geese, and 3d. for ducks; and her account, well kept, states a profit of 20 l. per annum, after all expences are paid and the family well supplied". It is not known

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[1] D. Baker, 'A Sixteenth-Century Farmer of Goodnestone-next-Faversham', Faversham Magazine, II, no. 1 (1970), 11; KAO PRC 27/38/120; Kentish Post 18 November 1767.

[2] BM Landsdowne MS. 42, no. 11 (Burghley MS. 1584). I owe this reference to the kindness of Dr Joan Thirsk.

whether this unusual version of the "putting-out" system was practised on other farms in the region. Young thought that "the climate and soil here both agree with poultry" and mentioned another local farmer who produced 140 turkeys annually. Nevertheless, poultry farming in Kent remained small business compared with the large-scale, specialized undertakings found in Sussex, Suffolk and Norfolk from whence huge droves of geese and turkeys were driven on foot to the London markets each year. John Boys wrote: "Geese and turkies, fowls and ducks, are bred in this county /Kent/ sufficiently to supply the inhabitants, and a few to spare for the supply of the shipping that sail from Gravesend and the Downs".[1]

D Sheep and the Wool Trade

The statement by Fussell that "sheep were a part of the economy of every farm in the early eighteenth century" is wildly inaccurate if the Kentish evidence is a reliable guide.[2] In the samples of 45 farming inventories for each of the periods 1680, 1713-17, and 1740-60 scarcely a farmer was without horses, pigs and cattle but numerous farms lacked sheep; in 1680 eight farmers (18 per cent) possessed no sheep, and in 1713-17 sixteen farmers (36 per cent) were without sheep, while in the 1740's and '50's as many as twenty-one farmers (53 per cent) had no investments in sheep production.

Although the size of flocks increased throughout the period, numbers were never large, with the notable exception of the Isle of Sheppey. In 1680 the average (median) size of flock was twenty-five; by 1713-17 the average had risen to thirty-seven; in the years 1740-60 there were sixty-six sheep in the median flock. The corresponding arithmetic averages

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[1] KAO Q/SB passim; A. Young, Annals of Agriculture (46 Vols. 1784-1815), XX, 251-2; Westerfield, loc. cit.; Boys, op. cit., 160.

[2] G.E. Fussell, Village Life in the Eighteenth Century (Worcester 1948), 77.

were considerably higher - forty-five, eighty-seven, and a hundred and twenty-four sheep in each of the periods respectively, reflecting unduly the flocks of a small number of large-scale graziers. The distribution of sheep was very uneven and, moreover, sheep farming was becoming more and more a specialized undertaking. At the beginning of the period 46 per cent of sheep farmers possessed fewer than twenty-five animals, by the '40's and '50's only 25 per cent. Over the same period the number of graziers with more than a hundred sheep rose from 15 per cent to 40 per cent.

An examination of selected parishes within the region shows a more varied pattern of distribution for sheep than is the case with other livestock. In the large parish of Ash, for example, farmers invested in cattle rather than sheep. There are 124 farming inventories relating to Ash for the period 1680-1760, of which 76, or almost two-thirds, show no evidence of sheep. Moreover flocks remained very small: no Ash farmer possessed more than seventy-five sheep; only six farmers had flocks of more than fifty. In contrast, sheep farmers in Sheppey were numerous, their flocks sizeable. In the large Sheppey parish of Minster 70 inventories relate to farmers - ranging from petty husbandmen to wealthy graziers - for the period 1680-1760; 52 inventories, or three-quarters of the total, show evidence of sheep farming; although 14 per cent of these farmers kept fewer than twenty-five animals a similar proportion had flocks of more than 300 apiece; by the end of the period the median sheep flock at Minster numbered 150.

The average value of sheep per farm remained fairly steady over the first half of the period, ranging from about £22 to £27. However, the value more than doubled by the 1740's and '50's (Table 16). The average worth of sheep expressed as a percentage of total farm value similarly remained steady at around 10 or 11 per cent until after the second decade of the eighteenth century; by the fourth and fifth decades

the proportion had risen to almost 14 per cent, the highest level achieved for any type of livestock throughout the period. The relatively significant position of sheep in the inventories is largely explained by the records of large-scale Sheppey graziers, and to a lesser extent those of farmers in the coastal parishes lying between Rainham and Faversham as well as in Thanet.

Chalklin opines that, during the seventeenth century, flocks of sheep were "not of primary importance" in any part of Kent except Romney Marsh.[1] This observation is undoubtedly near the truth and the position had changed little by the eighteenth century. But the agricultural pattern of Romney Marsh at this time provides a supreme example of monoculture, a unique instance of over-specialization which, with the advent of falling wool prices at home and a continuing ban on wool exports, forced many a Marsh farmer to seek a desperate remedy in the wool-smuggling business in order to retain solvency. Economically healthier, sheep farming in north-east Kent remained part of a mixed farming pattern. Even in Sheppey, where specialization in sheep was highly-developed, many graziers were also arable farmers on a considerable scale.

"The pasture and meadowe", wrote Lambarde in 1576 when he described the Kentish landscape, "is not only sufficient in proportion to the quantitie of the country /i.e. county/ itselfe for breeding, but is comparable in fertilitie also to any other that is neare it, in so muche that it gayneth by feeding". No part of Kent, save Romney Marsh, had better feeding grounds than Sheppey. The "Ile of Sheep", said Lambarde, produced animals noted for "exceeding fineness of the fleece which passeth all other in Europe at this day".[2]

Thomas Mitchell, a gentleman-grazier of Minster, possessed 120 tegs

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[1] Chalklin, op. cit., 99.

[2] W. Lambarde, A Perambulation of Kent (1826), 4, 225.

and 242 wethers "att Laysdowne land" in April 1702 as well as 703 head of sheep - ewes and wethers of various ages - "at Bells Farme Marshes". Stored in his house were two and a half packs of "lambswool" and two packs of "locks" valued at £19, the remainder of the previous season's wool clip. Mitchell's sheep and wool were valued altogether at £719. Another member of this well-to-do family, David Mitchell of Leysdown, owned a flock of 700 sheep which included 285 yearling wethers, 255 two-yearling wethers, and 147 wether tegs; there were only thirteen ewes on this farm which suggests that David Mitchell was primarily a grazier who bought the bulk of his stores from local breeders.[1]

In 1716 John Elliot of Queenborough was the tenant of Bells Farm. He possessed 162 breeding ewes and six rams; his young stock comprised 172 lambs together with forty-four "ewe tags" selected for future breeding, and 171 "taggs of all sorts". 144 store sheep (two-yearling wethers) were in process of fattening on lush Sheppey grazings while 183 sheep - 158 "fat wethers" and twenty-five "fat barrens" - were ready for the butcher. This huge flock of 883 sheep was valued altogether at £513 or more than a third of Elliot's considerable personal wealth. This Sheppey grazier also possessed a herd of ninety-eight cattle worth £514.[2]

Elliot's neighbour, James Longley of Minster, also died in 1716; he was a breeder and grazier who farmed on a somewhat smaller scale than Elliot but whose inventory also shows clearly the range and value of various types of sheep. Longley possessed 157 breeding ewes "in Netts marsh" valued at 12s. a head, thirty-six ewes "in Coldharbour marsh att

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[1] KAO PRC 27/36/40, 27/37/255. A teg (or tag) is a young sheep from the time of the summer lamb sales until it is shorn the following spring; in some parts of the country they are known as hoggs or hoggets. Female tegs are known as ewe-tegs and the young castrated males as wether-tegs. The older stock are, of course, simply known as ewes and wethers. The inventories frequently state the age of wethers, for example yearling wethers, or they may refer to fatted wethers which can be taken to mean three or four-yearlings. A barren is an old ewe past bearing offspring.

[2] KAO PRC 11/73/29.

eleven shillings per peice" and thirty-eight "ewe tags in the same marsh at seven shillings per peice". 168 wethers of various ages were fattening in Netts Marsh and Coldharbour Marsh: the fattest were priced at 17s., some at 14s., and forty "wether tags ... at nine shillings per peice". Altogether Longley had 400 sheep worth £242 18s. or two-thirds of his personal wealth. The appraisers allowed £8 "for hay standing in Netts marsh", £1 5s. "for six slitt gates & a small parcell of hay att Milton", and more than £100 for cattle and horses.[1]

William Burgess rented the Abbey Farm at Minster until his death in 1709. Unlike some of his neighbours Burgess had invested most of his wealth in arable crops - wheat, oats and beans - and he also had herds of cattle and pigs. But like most Sheppey holdings Abbey Farm had its flock of sheep, 316 head in all. The 110 "ewe sheep" were priced at 11s., seven "Ram Sheep" at 10s. each; sixty-eight tegs were described as "twelve monthing sheep half ews & weathers"; thirty-eight "two yearing weathers" were said to be worth 13s. each, fifty-four "wether sheep" (probably three-yearlings) at 14s., and twenty mature "four-yearing weathers" 16s. apiece; Burgess was also fattening nineteen "barren ews" priced at 11s. each. The sheep enterprise belonging to this mixed farm represented 15 per cent of the occupier's total personal wealth of almost £1,200. The figures quoted from the inventories of Longley and Burgess give a good indication of early eighteenth-century sheep prices. Most types were valued at between 10s. and 15s. a head, young stock slightly less, prime fat wethers rather more.[2]

Leysdown, covering more than 2,000 acres, has been described as "almost wholly pasture grounds". The two largest sheep farmers in the sample of inventories for 1740-60 belonged to this parish. John Swift

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[1] Ibid., 11/73/71.

[2] Ibid., 11/69/13. For other excellent Minster inventories see 11/81/55 and 11/83/123.

possessed 491 head of sheep when he died in 1746. Swift's inventory shows that the breeding flock comprised fifty-seven four-yearling ewes (15s. each), sixty-four three-yearlings (14s.), and seventy-two yearlings (14s.); a number of culled barrens were priced at 10s. apiece; 138 ewe and wether tegs were calculated at 8s. each, two-yearling wethers at 11s., and three-yearlings at 13s. Altogether the sheep represented 38 per cent of Swift's total personal wealth of £756. The sheep of William Taylor also represented this proportion of his personal estate in 1759, although the appraisers were content to describe this breeder's "stock in the marshes" as 220 "sheep of different sorts" together with 255 lambs "out at keep and at home".[1]

Each Sheppey parish possessed its sheep breeders and graziers who usually also had herds of cattle and frequently cropped fields as well. Harty, covering more than 2,500 acres in the south-east corner of the Island was almost entirely "rich grazing land" while Eastchurch (7,500 acres), more centrally placed, possessed extensive tracts of arable as well as excellent pastures. The inventories of John Randall (1713) and Elizabeth Saffory (1740) of Harty are typically those of specialist graziers, while Thomas Man's inventory (1685) and that of John Baker (1710) are representative of the large-scale general farmer in Eastchurch who might have a third of more of his wealth in sheep. The organization of sheep husbandry which prevailed in Sheppey was an extensive system of management on open marsh grazings. The Sheppey marshes have recently been described as "almost uninhabited rough pasture, still among the most lonely and inaccessible country in the south-east, the haunt of sheep and cattle and many birds". There is no evidence that sheep were ever folded on the central high ground in any integrated intensive system.[2]

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[1] S. Bagshaw, History, Gazeteer and Directory of the County of Kent (2 Vols. 1847), II, 501; KAO PRC 11/82/190, 11/84/77.

[2] Bagshaw, op. cit., II, 499, 573; KAO PRC 11/71/9, 11/81/241, 11/49/139; M. Crouch, Kent (1966), 244.

The same extensive system of sheep husbandry can be observed all along the coastal marshes from Rainham to Faversham and beyond. A striking feature of the region is the number of upland farmers in parishes adjacent to Watling Street who owned or rented coastal grazings a few miles to the north. Sheep farmers at Newington, Sittingbourne and Borden for instance - parishes in the core of the north-Kent fruit belt - grazed stock in numerous small orchards. But these local upland grazings, of limited extent, were supplemented by the more extensive feeding grounds along the coast which thereby enabled farmers to increase the scale of their enterprises. Nathaniel Jorden of Newington, described as a grocer, farmed on a considerable scale and was said to be worth more than £1,000 at the time of his death. His sheep were dispersed over a wide area: "Att Stockbury" on the Downs he had 150 breeding ewes and 108 ewe and wether tegs in the summer of 1719; a further ninety ewes and wethers grazed locally "in Mr Sissell's ground"; but his lean stock - eighty-five yearling wethers - were "att Ridham". Ridham marshes at Milton face Sheppey across the Swale and are joined to the north-east by pastures at Kemsley, and the extensive grazings of Chetney marshes at Iwade. The marshes of these Swale parishes are some of the finest feeding grounds for sheep in north-east Kent. Nathaniel Brenchley, a Newington farmer, kept most of his sheep as well as a herd of cattle along the Swale estuary. In 1724 Brenchley had a flock of 580 sheep, worth more than £240, "att Readham marshes". Edward Turner, a Sittingbourne butcher, had a farm on the Isle of Sheppey and occupied extensive Swale grazings on the mainland. In 1689, in addition to horses, cattle and fields of arable crops, Turner had a hundred sheep and lambs, and twenty "refuge sheep" or culls "in Sheppey"; 127 sheep and lambs grazed "att Iwade" and further breeding stock "att Luddenham" a small pastoral parish bordering the Swale near Faversham. Jacob Banister was a wealthy gentleman-farmer of Sittingbourne who, at the time of his death in 1718, was stated to be

worth £3,275. He possessed at this time 1,065 sheep, 400 of which were "on the land att Foulston" in Sittingbourne; however, Banister also occupied extensive marshland at Elmley, a small Sheppey parish bordering the Swale estuary, where he grazed 171 ewes, 200 tegs, 150 two-yearling wethers, fifty-four fat wethers and ninety barrens; in his house at Sittingbourne Banister had fourteen packs of wool valued at £112. Thomas Whibley farmed on a more modest scale at Borden until his death in 1697; he kept a small flock of ewes in the home orchard but most of his sheep - eighty-two ewes, seventy-two wethers, ten barrens, and 126 tegs - were grazing "att Kemsley Downs" in Milton where fifteen loads of hay had been made that summer. John Simmons farmed a few miles eastward at Preston near Faversham; in 1705 he grazed his flock of 225 sheep "in the marsh" north of that parish. Charles Poole who farmed at Bapchild, possessed 1,456 sheep in 1712, including a flock of 320 breeding ewes. In addition he had in store nineteen packs of "fleece wool", a pack of "lambswool", and a pack of "locks" worth altogether nearly £120. In all, the value of the sheep and wool amounted to 63 per cent of Poole's sizeable wealth.[1]

As we might expect, most farmers who themselves lived in the coastal parishes kept flocks of sheep, although these tended on the whole to be smaller than those of the wealthier upland farmers. Stephen Frood lived at Upchurch on the Medway estuary where he occupied a small mixed farm until his death in 1697; he had 60 sown acres, a herd of twenty-seven cattle, fourteen pigs, and a flock of thirty-nine breeding ewes with their lambs. John Salmon of Milton kept a herd of thirty-six cattle and a flock of 232 sheep "in the marsh" comprising 120 in-lamb ewes, twenty ewe-tegs, forty-two wether-tegs, and fifty two-yearling wethers kept for fattening. Further along the coast at Graveney, north-east of Faversham, James Reade kept a flock of 146 ewes and a small number of store sheep on

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[1] KAO PRC 11/75/92, 11/77/164, 27/32/78, 27/40/111, 11/60/107, 11/66/71, 11/71/218.

local marshes until his death in 1681; the value of his sheep and wool amounted to almost three-quarters of his personal estate of £94. Stephen Court was a small sheep farmer at Reculver between Herne and Thanet; in May 1692 Court had some sixty sheep grazing on local marshes and had recently "sould to the butcher" five fat wethers, and four lambs culled from his flock. Isaac Kemp of Teynham, four miles east of Sittingbourne, was a very wealthy farmer whose varied activities covered fruit and hops, arable crops, cattle and horse-breeding; the wide range of land-use at Teynham is further illustrated by the flock of 300 sheep which grazed "in the new-inned marshes" along the parish's coastal margin. In the autumn of 1750 Kemp also had "sheep keeping in east Kent" and "lambs in keeping" on the land of a neighbouring farmer, a good example of agistment which was a common practice in the region; finally "sheep in Chetney" valued at almost £90, and further stock "in Mr Miller's marshes" completed this Teynham yeoman's widely dispersed sheep-farming enterprise.[1]

Not surprisingly, some of the smaller sheep farmers who lived along the north-east coast of Kent also had interests in fishing and wild fowling, useful supplements to their livelihoods from the land. Henry Codd of Iwade was described as a yeoman. He was a small-scale livestock farmer with investments in horses, cattle and sheep; his flock in 1701 comprised seventy ewes, twenty ewe-lambs, twenty ram lambs, and thirty wethers; that September he had 126 fleeces in his loft. Codd also possessed "one fishing boate", a "yawle", and "two fowling pieces". Two Herne farmers had economies similarly structured. John Locke, in 1689, owned modest numbers of livestock as well as two fishing boats complete with nets and anchors. His neighbour Thomas Quested, "yeoman", died two years later when he possessed three ewes, two lambs, and eleven wethers as well as four cows and a couple of pigs. The appraisers were careful to include "Sea Affaires" in his inventory noting in particular a fishing

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[1] Ibid., 11/60/36, 11/74/70, 11/45/15, 27/33/26, 11/83/68.

boat and all its gear.[1]

Although there were rich riparian grazings in Thanet, especially in the parishes of Monkton, Sarre, St. Nicholas-at-Wade and Minster, the sheep farmers of the district also integrated their flocks into the arable routine using the fold system. Lewis observed that in Thanet sheep were used on light land to settle the seed after sowing, and to eat off young rank wheat in March. Sheep were also folded on fallow ground - summerland - after ploughing, and also on land sown with sainfoin, trefoil and clover, as a preparation for cereals. Lewis pointed out that the artificial grasses in Thanet were of special benefit "to those who keep flocks of sheep" but he was also aware of the reciprocal effect on soil structure and fertility: "the treading of sheep" and the "manure ... /from/ folding the land with sheep". Sainfoin was in fact held in special regard by sheep farmers throughout the region. Richard Tylden of Milstead regularly stocked fields of sainfoin with sheep when the leys became too old to produce a hay sward. The same was true at Acrise. "You may turn out what sheep you think fitting into the cinqfoile", wrote Philip Papillon to his agent at Acrise Place in November 1693, adding that he considered sheep "the best sort of cattle for that ground at present". It was not unusual for farmers without sheep to borrow the flocks of local breeders for short periods in order to improve their land. In 1685 it was reported that William Payne, who farmed near Margate, often took in sheep after harvest and depastured them on the stubble until late autumn when they were returned to their owners. A local farmer recounted that in 1682 Payne "did borrow about ye number of three hundred sheep to fold on the land ... on purpose to dung & improve the land" and that the animals were "taken in after harvest & returned again in or about ye month of

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[1] Ibid., 11/62/262, 27/32/159, 27/32/265.

November".[1]

Thanet inventories bear ample testimony to a widespread use of the fold-system for sheep, a method of management also employed by farmers in several parishes east of Canterbury but rarely seen elsewhere. Wattle gates, a form of portable fencing made by local carpenters and used by sheep farmers to control their folded flocks, are common entries in Thanet inventories.

William Creed of Minster had a flock of sheep "in ye marsh" in October 1680 but the appraisers were careful to record "ye fold being a dozen & eight wattles". When Thomas Sackett of Minster died in 1689 he had twenty-eight wethers "at ye fold". Thomas Belsey of the same parish possessed sixty-four sheep "in fould" and twenty sheep "newly fold" in 1691, and his inventory records a quantity of wattles. The sheep of Valentine Stone, a Minster yeoman, were described as "Flock in ye marsh" in October 1691, but the appraisers of his inventory also recorded wattles and sheep troughs and allowed for "6 acres folded" that summer; furthermore, the sizeable sum of £40 was considered appropriate "for the improvement of the farm". Henry Austen farmed at Thorne, an ancient manorial seat in Minster; he had 185 "sheep in fold" in the spring 1706, and £52 was allowed "for one year's folding and carrying out the dung" on his land; he possessed "wattles for folding" as well as a quantity of sheep racks for feeding hay. The numerous sheep racks, cribs and troughs in these inventories are evidence of a widely-practised system of hand-feeding for sheep - hay, pulse and grains - during the leaner months of winter.

The larger farmers at any rate used a combination of systems according to the time of year, the particular needs of the arable, and the management appropriate for different ages of sheep. David Turner, a wealthy gentleman-farmer who lived at Powcys in Minster, also farmed at

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[1] J. Lewis, The History of the Isle of Tenet (Margate 1723), 12, 15, 18; KAO U593 A3, U1015 C42 f. 34; PRO E134 1 Jas.2/East. 1.

Nash Court and on lands in the small adjoining parish of Stonar. Besides "the flock of sheep at Powsies" Turner had stock "in ye marsh at St. Nicholas", and "sheep at Nash" - 176 ewe and wether-tegs which were folded on 15 acres of arable in June 1710. He kept 400 breeding ewes as well as young stock "att Stonnar". Turner's inventory records wattles, cribs, racks, and an abundance of sainfoin hay. In 1727 "140 sheep in the flock & all wattels" belonging to John Fuller were valued at £84; he had ample stocks of "saintfoil" and "rush hay" stored on his Thanet farm that autumn. John Bridges of St. Nicholas had barren ewes "a fatting in ye marsh" in 1704 but his main flock of 268 sheep were grazing "in the fold"; his inventory records "wattles of the fold four dozen" as well as ten sheep troughs. Ralph Greedier's flock of 331 sheep were "in Sarr marshes" in July 1696 but he also possessed forty wattles for his sheep fold, sixteen sheep troughs, and "a sheep tunn to wash sheep in". Daniel Pamflett of St. Nicholas had 400 sheep in 1721, as well as a quantity of "fold wattles"; the appraisers of his inventory allowed for "folding 17 acres of barley ground" and "folding wheat land". John Harnett farmed over 200 acres at Monkton until 1699 and, like all large-scale cereal growers in Thanet, kept a sizeable flock of sheep; the appraisers of his inventory were careful to note recent improvements carried out on the farm - "plowing, dunging and folding of sixty acres of land for a wheat tilt". Michael Wood, a grain farmer at Sarre, possessed herds of cattle and pigs and a flock of 120 tegs together with 40 "elderly ewe sheep" in 1699; the possession of forty-eight wattles testifies to the importance of the fold-system on this farm.

A small but indispensable item on these farms was an iron peeler for driving holes to take the supporting stakes for the sheep-fold wattles. In 1685 Thomas Parker had forty-eight "slay wattles" and a peeler alongside numerous sheep troughs, cribs and racks. Austen Neame rented a large farm at Littlebourne until 1730; he had a flock of 135 sheep and

possessed thirty-six wattles; his appraisers gave due regard to "folding of barley" which had recently improved the farm. His son, also Austen, farmed at Littlebourne until his death in 1754. His inventory records 157 sown acres which included 60 acres of wheat and 40 acres of barley as well as "trayfoine seed and ... clover seed sowed among the barley and oats"; sixty "fold gates" and three "iron peelers" were employed to pen his flock of 215 sheep on the extensive arable. John Halke of Nackington possessed a "fold peeler" for securing his forty-five "wattle gates" in 1748; among his sown crops were sainfoin and "a clover lay".[1]

The fold system of east Kent, which probably changed little during the century, was admirably described by John Boys:

> A great number of fold-flocks of lean sheep are kept by the farmers of the eastern part of this county, of from eight to twenty score in number. These are each attended by a shepherd, who removes the fold every morning to fresh ground, at six o'clock in summer, and at break of day in winter; the flock is then driven away to the most inferior keep at the first part of the morning, and is returned into the fold for two or three hours in the middle of the day, while the shepherd goes to dinner; in the afternoon it is gradually led to the best keep on the farm, that the sheep may return full fed to the fold in the evening.[2]

The county boasted a famous, hardy breed of sheep - the Romney Marsh, more usually known in the markets as the Kent. Many farmers in north-east Kent bought-in or bred the Romney Marsh. The Romney Fair, held each year on 20 August, was a great gathering for flock masters from all over the county and beyond, who came to this centre to buy their supplies of lambs. This large breed is ideally suited to an extensive system of management on lush grazings. Boys says: "The sheep in the Isle of Sheppey are of the Romney Marsh sort, true Kents". The breed also adapts

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[1] KAO PRC 11/44/92, 11/53/192, 11/55/219, 11/56/101, 11/70/253, 27/38/110, 11/79/28, 27/36/79, 27/34/199, 27/41/89, 27/35/18, 27/35/38, 27/31/48, 11/79/236, 11/83/173, 11/83/22.

[2] Boys, op. cit., 155.

to a system of orchard management and it is virtually certain that the breed predominated throughout the north-Kent fruit belt as well as in the rich alluvial marshes bordering the Medway and Swale.[1]

However, although the Romney Marsh was "the principal sort of sheep" kept in Kent "many of the upland farmers ... keep those of Wiltshire, Dorsetshire and the South Downs". The sheep from Wiltshire and Dorset, generally known as West Country sheep, became very popular in north-east Kent during the eighteenth century, especially among farmers who used the fold-system. Ellis was full of praise for "the good properties of the West Country sheep" and accounted them "the very best for soundness of body, for living on our short grass, /and/ for folding to dress our land". These short-legged, compact sheep with "broad loins and fine curled close wools" produced ideal joints for the butcher and were found to "best answer the service of a private family who find their conveniency best answered in having the pleasure to enjoy a hot joint of meat every day at their table, when a larger joint would incommode them". These sheep could be fattened to one of two stages: "West Country sheep that weigh about eight stone when they are fat I call the smaller sort; those that weigh about ten stone when they are fat I call the larger sort". Renowned for their early maturity and excellent mothering qualities, West Country sheep were bought in large numbers by sheep jobbers in Dorset, Wiltshire and Hampshire and taken to farms and markets in Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Middlesex, Surrey and Kent where "for folding, fatting and breeding lambs" the flock masters "cannot have a better sort".[2]

On 20 October 1736 Richard Mayes, who farmed at Cobham in north-west Kent, bought fifty Dorset ewes at the famous Weyhill Sheep Fair for £27

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[1] Ibid., 150-2.

[2] Ibid., 151, 153; W. Ellis, The Shepherd's Sure Guide (1749), 41-3.

10s. and fifty Wiltshire ewes for £20, and paid 15s. to drovers for bringing them home.[1] In the 1740's, '50's and '60's several firms of Kentish drovers specialized in West Country sheep which they purchased at Weyhill and other markets. The droves were returned to Kent where they were sold at various centres, the most important of which was Penenden Heath near Maidstone. Thomas Barker was the leading Kentish sheep drover in the 1740's. In 1743, for instance, Barker advertised "One thousand three hundred and twenty six West Country Sheep and Lambs to be sold on 6th and 7th of October - being Maidstone Fair - at The Bull on Penenden Heath".[2] From at least 1748 Barker was in a business partnership with John Terry: on 24 October of that year Barker and Terry sold jointly "a quantity of West Country Sheep at Penenden Heath, Maidstone" and similarly for the following five years.[3] Walter Bell was another leading sheep drover who, after Barker's death, went into partnership with Terry. They announced:

> that the fairs of West Country Sheep (that us'd to be kept at Penenden Heath by the late Thomas Barker of Willesborough near Ashford, deceased, in partnership with John Terry) will be continued in partnership with the said John Terry & Walter Bell & there will be one kept at Penenden Heath on Saturday next /3 November 1753/.[4]

This particular partnership was subsequently dissolved. In October 1756 "a very large quantity of West Country sheep" was sold at Penenden Heath by "Walter Bell & Co", probably by this time a family undertaking. John Terry advertised his droves separately, for example in November 1763 when

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[1] R. Arnold, A Yeoman of Kent (1949), 155.

[2] Kentish Post 28 September 1743. See also 3 May 1746.

[3] Ibid., 19 October 1748. See also 10 November 1750, 5, 19 October and 7 December 1751.

[4] Ibid., 31 October 1753.

he sold "all sorts of West Country sheep and lambs".[1] By the 1760's other Kentish drovers were competing in this growing sector of agricultural marketing:

> At George Clouts at The George at Newnham on Wednesday the 4th Day of November next, there will be a sale of a large quantity of West Country Horned Sheep, ewes and weathers, by Thomas Ely of Newnham and William Leese of Norton.[2]

"Welch sheep", says Ellis, "are less fit for folding and mostly sold ... into Kent and Essex, to farmers for fatting them in their marshes; for here they are confin'd by deep large ditches, and always under a full belly of grass; if they stay anywhere they will here". Among the livestock sold by the Culpeppers of Leeds Castle near Maidstone to Robert Austin of Tenterden in 1678 were "four Welsh weathers". James Ward of Linsted near Sittingbourne possessed twenty-two "small Welsh sheep" which grazed "at the marshland in the parish of Teynham" in 1742. However, further evidence for Welsh sheep in Kent is lacking and it seems certain that they never attained a position of prominence similar to that of their bovine brethren.[3]

Probate records and farm accounts yield little information concerning sheep breeds in eighteenth-century Kent. However, the flock book relating to the Earl of Guildford's Waldershare Park estate near Deal shows that on the larger farms at any rate, several breeds were kept and used for crossing purposes as well as for the production of pure strains.[4] The earliest entry is an "Account of sheep at Waldershare taken 20th June 1765". Most of the rams, ewes, wethers and lambs in the schedule are not designated by breed and we can reasonably assume that these were

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[1] Ibid., 13 October 1756, 5 November 1763.

[2] Ibid., 31 October 1767.

[3] Ellis, Shepherd's Guide, op. cit., 50; KAO U23 E4, PRC 11/82/115.

[4] KAO U471 E15.

Romney Marsh or Kents.[1] However, nineteen Dorsetshire ewes - probably yearlings - had been purchased that year. Among the ewe-lambs were a number of "Kent-Dorsetshire", a cross which apparently found favour on this farm. One of the stock rams is described as a "Sussex Ram stag", clearly a forerunner of the famous Southdown breed. In November 1765 a record was made in the Waldershare flock book of "Ewes put to Ram & mark'd with Tiver".[2] Included in the list were "30 Dorsetshire Ews Mark'd on the Head & Cross the Shoulder". It is not clear which particular ram was used in this instance although it is clear from subsequent entries that the Waldershare estate was breeding pure Dorset sheep as well as Kent/Dorset crossbreds in these years. And, of course, pure Kents. A close examination of the record indicates a policy of careful selection and control in order to breed a succession of lambs for various purposes. Thus, for example:

> Nov. 15th 1766
> Ewes put to Ram & Mark^{d} with Tiver as followeth:
> 29 Dorsetshire Ewes head & sholder
> 70 Flock Ewes /Kents/ mark'd on the rump only
> 10 Ewes for Erly Lambs mark'd head & Loin
> 10 Ewes for fat Lambs mark'd head & rump
> 9 Young Ewes left for late Lambs
>
> 1767 Novr 14th
> Ewes put to Ram and marked with Tiver as follows:
> 37 Dorsetshire Ewes - cross the Shoulder
> 73 Flock Ewes - down the Rump
> 37 Ewes were Drawn off /for later mating/ for Late Lambs & marked on the Head

The survival of this unusually detailed and careful record covering the years 1765-78 is witness to an enlightened and systematic breeding policy on the home farm at Waldershare. How far other sheep farmers

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[1] These are described variously as "own breed" or "old breed" as distinct from Dorset.

[2] The word tiver is a now almost-extinct dialect term for the colouring matter (originally red ochre) that is used by shepherds to mark sheep for record purposes. I have heard the term used in recent years, however, in conversation with an old Wealden countryman.

followed similar lines it is impossible to say, although it seems hardly likely that the Earl of Guildford's Kentish estate was unique in this respect. The records also provide valuable information about the weights of sheep killed for the household at Waldershare Park and throw some light on contemporary taste preferences. Between 9 October and 10 December 1769, for instance, eighteen fat sheep (ewes and wethers) were slaughtered for the house; their average deadweight was 52.2 lbs., and individual weights varied between 39 lbs. and 67 lbs.[1] The relatively low weights reflect small compact joints characteristically produced by West Country sheep and their crosses which Ellis claims were so much favoured by butchers and private households. A similar type and weight of sheep is suggested in a letter written by Henry Purefoy of Shalstone (Bucks.) to James Gibbs in 1751:

> 17 April 1751
> My mother /Elizabeth Purefoy/ desires you will buy her twelve Ewes & lambs; they must be Horned Western Sheep, & to weigh 15 or 16 pounds a quarter /i.e. about 60 lbs. deadweight/, & they must be young ones because we spend the mutton ourselves ...[2]

The Romney Marsh, and other large breeds, produced a carcase twice this size. Ellis describes the Kent breed as "of a large sort, some weighing thirty pounds a quarter". It seems quite clear that while the Romney Marsh breed produced "sweet mutton to great reputation" there was a marked preference in southern England, on the part of many butchers and consumers, for sheep which produced small, compact joints of mutton.[3] We have seen that some farmers who had flocks of Kent sheep crossed them with other breeds in order to obtain a carcase more palatable to local tastes. It has too often been assumed that the greatest demand in the

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[1] KAO U471 E2.

[2] Purefoy Letters, op. cit., I, 162.

[3] Ellis, Shepherd's Guide, op. cit., 49.

eighteenth century was for large sheep of which Bakewell's New Leicester was the prototype. The Kentish evidence does not support this view. The over-fat "coal-heaver's mutton" produced by the Leicester and reputedly favoured by Midland working-class families probably never found a place in middle-class southern households.[1]

Once domestic needs had been met farmers marketed sheep surplus to requirements. Lean stores and breeding stock were sold to other farmers in the neighbourhood, fatstock to local butchers. Nineteen fat wethers and eleven fat ewes were "killed for ye House" at Waldershare Park in 1765 and five lean ewes and wethers were sold to Ambrose Rose, a local farmer. In 1770 the record shows "Fating Sheep this year killed and sold" which included eighteen "old ewes sold fat", fifteen "old weathers sold fat" and "sixteen killed for the family"; in addition there were "twenty nine fat lambs sold this year". The entries for subsequent years are similar and in some seasons the numbers rose considerably. Thus, in 1773 a total of 114 fat sheep and 49 fat lambs were produced on this farm. Unfortunately the records tell us little about the buyers. However, in 1776 "ten fat ewes and three fat weathers" were sold to Richard Pepper a butcher at Deal and a further "ten weathers fat sold to Richard Meadows" a local butcher. The "10 lean ewes sold to Mrs Finch" in the following year probably went to a neighbouring farm.[2]

The local butcher was the key figure in the marketing situation. "The butchers", wrote Campbell, "generally require more skill to learn their trade than any other of the victualling branches ... they must not

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[1] Kentish farmers were scornful of the improved Leicester breed. Arthur Young cites a Romney Marsh farmer who challenged: "I should like to see how Mr Bakewell's sheep would pass a winter on our Marsh". By implication the same farmer, who was also a butcher, was critical of the Leicester's conformation; he defined "fine eating meat" as "that which is marled flesh and spread well - and by no means the flesh of such animals as carry the fat chiefly on the loin and back". - Young, Annals, op. cit., XX, 265-6.

[2] KAO U471 E2.

only know how to kill, cut up, and dress their meat to advantage, but how to buy a bullock, sheep, or calf standing. They must judge of his weight and fatness by the eye, and without long experience are liable to be deceived in both". The butcher's trade "requires great strength and a disposition no ways inclinable to a coward".[1]

Butchers' inventories show that they usually possessed, in addition to well-equipped slaughtering facilities, their own farms and livestock. When Nicholas Williams, a butcher of St. Andrew's parish in Canterbury, died in 1681 he possessed several head of cattle and thirty-eight "sheepe in the marsh" and left altogether a modest personal estate of £71. Stephen Philpot of Newington was described as a butcher in 1702. His personal estate was said to be worth £417 and his farm shows a considerable mixed enterprise which included 175 sown acres, twenty-two horses, eighty cattle, and no less than 885 sheep of various ages. Mr James Edmeds who lived in the neighbouring parish of Hartlip was described as "Bucher & Farmer" at the time of his death in 1754. Like Philpot of Newington, Edmeds farmed extensively: he possessed 91 sown acres together with a hop ground, herds of cattle and pigs, and a flock of 125 sheep. His slaughter house displays the usual range of cleavers, hooks, blocks and ropes, scales, beam and weights, and the indispensable pole-axe. John Tripple of Minster (Sheppey) was described as a yeoman in 1706 although his farming activities extended no further than grazing small numbers of cattle and sheep on local marshes. However, goods "in the shopp" and "in the slaughter house", scheduled in the minutest detail down to the last "scuer", show that Tripple had conducted an important butcher's business on the Island during his lifetime.[2]

Farmers' inventories sometimes include local sales of fatstock.

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[1] Campbell, op. cit., 281.

[2] KAO PRC 11/45/216, 11/63/123, 11/83/151, 27/37/127. For other useful butchers' inventories see 11/71/164, 11/76/237, 11/79/146, 27/37/62.

The appraisers of Ann Martin's inventory recorded in 1683 the sum of £2 18s. for "sheep sold to the butcher", probably a local tradesman in Ash. When Thomas Lake of Newington died in 1692 he had £6 "due from John Curtis, butcher" and when Thomas Scott, a Reculver yeoman, died in 1705 he had a large number of wethers fattening "in Chislett marshes" and a recent deal involving "10 weathers sold to the butcher" had returned £7 to his estate. Edward Blaxland lived at Graveney Court where he farmed extensively until his death in 1739. In addition to interests in arable farming and hop growing, Blaxland grazed large numbers of cattle and sheep on local marshes. The appraisers of his inventory carefully recorded £42 "due from Mr Samuel Sharpe of the City of Canterbury, Butcher" and £6 2s. "due from Nathaniel Lord of Borden, Butcher, for goods sold by the testator".[1]

Farm records shed a valuable light on the pattern of livestock marketing. In general, farmers' accounts corroborate and extend the scattered evidence of the probate records. The key role of the country butcher is apparent. The steward of the Delaune estate at Sharsted Court, Doddington recorded in 1704 the sum of £4 5s. "received of ye Butcher for 9 Ews & 1 weather att 8s. 6d. a peece". The records relating to Lord Teynham's estate at Linsted and Teynham are a little more informative. In November 1680 the steward at Linsted Lodge sold 25 barren ewes to "Wills ye Butcher". Edward Philpot, another local butcher, rented a small messuage - "Cooke's Croft" - as well as 16 acres of marsh land from Lord Teynham in the 1680's. Philpot also frequently bought cattle and sheep from the estate in these years as numerous recorded sums "received of Phillpott ye Butcher" testify. By the second decade of the following century the family butcher's business had been transferred to John Philpot, probably Edward's son, who continued to buy fatstock from Lord Teynham's estate. Thus on 2 June 1712 the steward recorded £10 "received of John

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[1] Ibid., 27/30/46, 11/56/40, 27/36/128, 27/43/80.

Phillpot, Butcher, in part of 12 li. for 13 sheep"; the balance was paid five weeks later. It was not unusual for well-to-do farmers to allow small country butchers short-term credit. It is tempting, and perhaps not unreasonable, to conclude that this butcher was the same tradesman who bought stock from Richard Tylden who farmed in the neighbouring parish of Milstead. Tylden, like many downland farmers, was primarily an arable specialist and his livestock transactions, although numerous, were always of modest extent. Nevertheless, the meticulous nature of the records which span more than half a century, is adequate compensation for the small size of individual entries. In 1716 Tylden recorded:

	£	s.	d.
11 June Receed of Butcher Philpot in earnest /i.e. on account/ of lambs y^{t} he bought of me. 13 lambs at 5s. 6d. each	1	1	6
18 July Receed by ye hands of my man, of Butcher Philpot for my lambs	2	10	0

Tylden subsequently sold fatstock to Henry (Harry) Lyndsey, a Milstead butcher:

	£	s.	d.
28 Oct. 1726 Receed of Harry Lyndsey for two fat sheep	1	2	0
31 July 1745 Receed of Henry Linsey for 4 old sheep	1	5	0
2 June 1752 Receed of Henry Linsey for 25 lambs at 8s. each which I sold him ye 9 of March 1752	10	0	0

The fat sheep which Lyndsey purchased from Hogshaw Farm were of small size, comparable with those noted at Waldershare Park. Thus, in December 1725 Tylden recorded: "The sheep that I sold Harry Lyndsey weighed 45 pounds". Lyndsey, in turn, supplied meat to the household at Milsted Manor. In September 1743, for instance, Tylden received payment from

Lyndsey "for 9 baskets of lime, in meat 3s.". It was quite usual in the countryside for goods sold to be balanced against purchases and, after a period, a balance drawn. Lyndsey purchased lime from Tylden's kiln in order to improve his holding for, like the majority of rural butchers, he was also engaged in farming. In fact Lyndsey describes himself, not unusually, as "yeoman" in his Will and names "my two kinsmen John Harrod of Faversham ... Butcher and Henry Popplewell of Sittingbourne ... Butcher" as his executors; the butchery trade was very much a family business which stretched over several parishes in the district.[1]

From time to time Tylden sent small consignments of stock to local markets which were held regularly at Greenstreet in Teynham and at Newnham near Doddington:

	£	s.	d.
3 March 1724 Receđ of John Croyden /Tylden's wagoner/ for 8 weather tegs y^t^ he sold for me at Grinsted /Greenstreet/ market	2	4	0
2 March 1726 Receđ of John Croyden for stock he sold at Greenstreet market	8	12	6
30 June 1737 Receđ for 11 lambs at Newnham fair at 4s. 9d. each	2	13	3

There are numerous references to sales of Milstead stock at Harrietsham Fair (near Maidstone) held annually in June:

	£	s.	d.
26 June 1718 Receđ for my sheep & lambs I sent to Harrietsham fair 8 lambs & 2 sheep	2	9	0

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[1] KAO U145 A7, U498 A2 and A3, U593 A2 and A3, PRC 17/99.

	£	s.	d.
25 June 1721 Receed of[t] John Croyden for 10 lambs & two sheep y[t] he sold at Harrisham for	3	0	0
24 June 1735 Sold 13 lambs at Harrysham fair at 4s. 9d. each 2s. pd charges	2	19	9

The small numbers of livestock bred and fatted at Hogshaw Farm found ready sales to local butchers and to the dealers who regularly attended the fairs and markets of the neighbourhood. This policy stands in marked contrast to the method used for marketing arable crops and hops which were consigned in large quantities to Milton hoymen for shipment to London. Wheat, barley, beans and hops were the staple export products of the region, meat products of secondary importance.[1]

Probably few sheep left north-east Kent for distant markets, unlike the situation in Romney Marsh from where huge droves were sent each year to Smithfield. The only reference concerning the droving trade from north-east Kent relates to Thomas Barker, the Kentish drover who each autumn brought large numbers of West Country sheep into the county. According to his statement in 1743 Barker seems to have operated a reciprocal trade from the Faversham district:

> This is to give notice that Thomas Barker, drover, sets out from The Red Lyon at Ospringe for Smithfield Market every Wednesday morning at five o'clock, and will be at Key Street the same day by four o'clock in the afternoon. All gentlemen that haye stock to send may depend on due care in driving them.[2]

The fellmonger provided the pivot around which revolved the local wool trade, the counterpart of the country butcher in the meat trade. "Fellmongers" says Campbell, "are those who buy skins of all sorts, with

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[1] KAO U593 A2.

[2] Kentish Post 18 June 1743.

the wool on, from the country people, which they take off, and sell the skins dressed to the glovers &c. and the wool to the wool staplers". Fells were, of course, taken off the hands of butchers and collected from farmhouses where sheep and lambs had been killed for the households. Charles Johnson, a fellmonger of Lewisham, employed William Green as his journeyman; in 1756 Green was said to have "made a journey from Gravesend where he had been for sheep skins and whereof the horse on which he then rode was loaded". However, it is abundantly clear that by the early eighteenth century country fellmongers had moved into the wool-dealing business, purchasing regular supplies of wool direct from local farms, a process of horizontal integration that almost certainly had its origins in the seventeenth century. Moreover, fellmongers also integrated their businesses vertically as they moved into the glover's craft. During the second decade of the eighteenth century Tylden sold his small annual clip of wool to Robert Laham of Sittingbourne:

	£	s.	d.
5 August 1717 Receđ of Laham ye Glover for wooll	1	13	3
7 July 1719 Receđ of Robert Laham for 89 lb of wool at 7d. per lb.	2	10	9

It is perhaps significant that Laham described himself in his Will as a "fellmonger".[1]

The Viney family were probably the leading fellmongers in the Sittingbourne district during the first half of the eighteenth century with businesses established at Milton and Doddington. Tylden sold his wool clip to both branches of the family at various times throughout the period although the quantities remained small since a flock of no more

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[1] Campbell, op. cit., 222; KAO Q/SB 1756, U593 A2, PRC 17/85.

than fifty or sixty sheep was kept at Hogshaw Farm.[1] There are numerous references in the accounts to cash receipts "for my wool of Mr Viney of Dodington". For example:

> 6 July 1732
> Receed of Tho. Viney for my wooll at
> 5½d. per lb. £1 2s. 0½d.

Thomas Viney described himself as "yeoman" in his Will of 1755 which also evidences his possession of three properties at Doddington, two of which he leased to local men. But the small farm he occupied included "a Fellmonger's Yard" which was no doubt the centre of his business activities.[2]

There were two fellmongers known as John Viney at Milton, father and son. John the elder, described as "fellmonger" died in 1711. He possessed in "the wool chamber" large quantities of "head combed wooll", "bay wooll", "middle wool", "coarse wooll" and "head lambs' wooll"; in his yard were hides and skins of varied descriptions - "lambs' skins in the wool" as well as "calves' skins" and "raw horse hides". The manufactured goods "in the shopp" included dressed leathers, buckskin breeches, leather jackets, and a variety of gloves and mittens, altogether the typical stock-in-trade of a provincial glover. The inventory of his son, a "felmunger" who died in 1740, shows a similar combination of wool, skins and manufactured goods. The following year Viney's Milton property was advertised for sale and described as: "An accustomed Glover's Shop and Fellmonger's Yard". John Viney the younger was the dealer who, in many seasons, bought Tylden's wool clip. For example:

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[1] Sheep numbers at Hogshaw Farm are not stated in the records. However, there is sufficient evidence to show that a sheep produced, on average, at this time 1½ or 2 lbs. of wool annually. (See PRO E134 3 Wm. & Mary/ East. 9 and 1 Geo.I/Mich. 5). The full clip of Milstead wool is usually 80 or 90 pounds suggesting a flock of no more than sixty head.

[2] KAO U593 A2, PRC 17/95.

27 June 1718
Reced of John Viney for 80 lbs. of wooll
at 7½d. per lb. £2 9s. 5¼d.

In some seasons during the 1750's wool from Hogshaw Farm was consigned to John Page, the Milton hoyman who transported Tylden's crops to London:

28 Sept. 1754
Reced of Page for my wooll at 4½d. per lb. £2 2s.

Another local fellmonger appears in Milstead records when, in 1756, Tylden received £2 15s. 10d. from Mr Lake of Milton. One of Tylden's last entries before his death records:

1 Dec. 1762
Reced of Mr Lake of Milton for two years
wooll at 5d. per lb. £3 16s. 3d.[1]

Unlike the butchers' monopoly of the fatstock business, the fellmonger's role in the wool trade did not go unchallenged. Weavers and drapers at Canterbury and Sandwich bought their wool supplies direct from local farmers. The Solly family, for example, were Sandwich drapers who frequently advertised their willingness "to buy fleece wooll", John Troward and Solomon Ferrier, drapers of the same town, similarly. Henry Sims who had a drapery business in the Butter Market at Canterbury offered "present money at the market price for fleece wooll, lambs' wooll, and locks". A firm of hat makers in Canterbury offered "a good price for lambs' wool". William Flower of Canterbury was described as "woolstapler" when he died in 1717, and his inventory shows various quantities of graded wool stored on his premises. A similar picture emerges from accounts relating to the estate of Philip Tempreman, a Canterbury wool

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[1] KAO PRC 11/70/205, 11/81/244; Kentish Post 11 July 1741; KAO U593 A2. For excellent fellmongers' inventories see KAO PRC 11/62/169, 11/67/49, 11/68/130, 11/82/196, 11/83/39, 27/32/104. For the advertisement of a Dover fellmonger's business with glover's shop see Kentish Post 24 February 1731.

merchant who died in 1734.[1]

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the wool output of Kent was estimated at 5,500 packs.[2] Kent ranked second among all English counties, producing more wool per unit area than any other maritime county except Dorset. Romney Marsh, Sheppey and Thanet together with the coastal marshes of north-east Kent were the chief areas of production.[3]

The statistics produced by Andrews showing coastwise exports of wool from Kent and Sussex are undoubtedly the best available.[4] The information relating to north-east Kent is tabulated below.

TABLE 27

WOOL: AVERAGE ANNUAL COASTWISE EXPORTS (BAGS)

	1652-88	1689-1714	1715-34	1735-50
Faversham	668.4	1,930.4	1,806.2	1,642.3
Milton	163.9	240.3	323.1	188.7
Queenborough[5]	-	-	-	238.6
Sandwich & Thanet	20.8	47.8	259.7	364.9

Raw wool was one of the most important commodities in the coastal trade of north-east Kent. The trade remained considerable throughout the period and there was a notable increase in the late seventeenth century. Faversham, with an average annual export of almost 2,000 bags around 1700 became the chief wool-exporting port of England. London

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[1] Ibid., 29 May 1731, 17 and 20 May 1732, 1 July 1741, 19 June and 28 July 1742, 21 March and 16 May 1761; KAO PRC 11/73/148, 19/6/80.

[2] D. Defoe, A Plan of the English Commerce (2nd Ed., 1730), 159; a pack of wool weighed 240 pounds.

[3] J.H. Andrews, Geographical Aspects of the Maritime Trade of Kent and Sussex, 1650-1750, University of London Ph.D. Thesis (1954), 203-4.

[4] Ibid., 205.

[5] Queenborough is included with Milton until 1735.

took more than eighty per cent of Faversham's legitimate wool exports; the remainder went chiefly to Colchester until 1729 after which Exeter began to take more than 12 per cent. Faversham sent wool to Leigh (Essex) at the turn of the century and to Ipswich in the middle of the eighteenth century. The trade of Milton, Queenborough, Sandwich and the Thanet ports was almost entirely with London.

After about 1715 Faversham's wool trade first stagnated then went into decline, and by the 1730's the English wool trade was dominated by the Sussex port of Rye. It has been suggested that "this shift in the centre of the legitimate wool trade corresponded with an opposite movement in the overseas 'owling' of wool". After 1715 the authorities apparently had greater success in suppressing the smuggling trade of Romney Marsh "but along the coast between the Swale and the North Foreland illegal trade was still on the increase and in 1718 the most notorious of the wool smugglers was a resident of Herne Bay".[1]

Exchequer and Chancery Court papers now enable us to establish with certainty the broad pattern of organization which prevailed in the eighteenth-century wool trade from Kent to London. The key figure in this business was the London wool stapler, his metropolitan base Southwark, Bermondsey, or Whitechapel. William Miller was a London wool stapler who had premises "at the Christopher Inn in Barnaby Street Southwark" during the second decade of the century. He explained that, during 1716-7, he went into Kent four or five times each year to buy wool, touring the Ashford and Faversham districts as well as the Isle of Sheppey. Miller reckoned that these journeys involved him in expenses of "a crown a day at least besides horse-hire" and calculated the unit overhead costs of wool-buying as "about four shillings per pack horse-hire included". In 1716 Miller purchased sixty-five packs of wool during his Kentish

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[1] J.H. Andrews, 'The Trade of the Port of Faversham, 1650-1750', Archaeologia Cantiana, LXIX (1956), 129; Maritime Trade, op. cit., 207, 209.

travels at an average "prime cost" of £7 or £7 10s. per pack; the corresponding price paid for Essex wool at this time was £6.[1] Subsequent to agreements of sale the farmers in Kent arranged for their wool clips to be shipped by hoy from Faversham, Milton and Queenborough to London. Once on the stapler's premises the wool was sorted or, as we should say today "classed" - at least a dozen grades are mentioned - and sold to clothiers. The "common price /piece-rate/ for sorting wool" was 3s. 6d. per pack. Frequently the graded wool was sold to metropolitan clothiers, for example Joseph Hardacre of George's Alley in Southwark and Jonathan Wyatt "of Crutchett Fryers London" who gave their promissory notes "due in months".

Richard Merryman of St. Mary Magdalen's parish in Bermondsey was another substantial wool stapler at this time. He, too, travelled regularly into Kent each year in order to buy wool direct from local producers. In 1716-7 he bought several packs of lambs' wool - "Kentish Shore Lamb Wooll" - for £4 and £5 a pack, and larger quantities of ungraded fleece wool in the Isle of Sheppey for prices which varied between £7 10s. and £8 a pack; the farmers received only £2 or £3 a pack for the coarsest, low-grade wool known as "locks". Miller and Merryman were wool dealers of the wealthier sort - "persons of fortune" - whose practice it was to travel the Kentish countryside with their apprentices each year, buying wool for future delivery. Their journeys occupied from one to three weeks, according to the distance travelled. They stayed at local inns or lodged in farmhouses during this itinerant period.[2]

William Cordwell of Barnaby Street in Southwark was described variously as "wool stapler", "wool merchant", and "fellmonger & woolstapler". He was a well-to-do dealer who, during the 1720's, bought

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[1] The price per pound of wool received by the farmer was thus 7d. or 7½d. in Kent, 6d. in Essex.

[2] PRO E134 5 & 6 Geo.I/Trin. 5.

large quantities of Kentish wool most of which was shipped from Faversham to his Thameside warehouses. He made regular visits to Maidstone, lodging at The Star inn, to the Ashford district, and to Romney Marsh. One of his main suppliers was Mr George Quested, a flockmaster who farmed extensively at Willesborough near Ashford. Cordwell's accounts show that during the years 1725-8 he bought nearly two hundred packs of wool from Quested in this period for which he paid some £700. Numerous cash payments through third parties are recorded and it is clear that bills of exchange featured prominently in these transactions. Transport charges were apparently met by the buyer, including costs of road carriage to Faversham, the port of embarkation for all consignments. Thus, in the statement returned to Quested on 20 November 1726 the wool stapler noted: "To carriage of 20 packs of wooll to feversham I paid for you £2". Each transaction was the subject of a written contract drafted by Cordwell and forwarded to Quested for his approval and signature. A number of these papers - each designated "Quested's Agreem^{t}" - have survived in Chancery. Examples taken from 1726 and 1728 are typical, the very low current prices for wool significant:

> Willsborough Aug$_{t}$ 12 1726
> Quested's Agreem^{t} 1726
> Sold to Wm Cordwell all my small fleece wooll at five pounds two shillings and six pence per pack and all my shore Lamb wooll at three Pounds three shillings per pack and all my Locks at one pound three shillings per Pack and all my bay wooll at two Pounds ten shillings p pk and all my midle at one pound ten shill^{s} p Pack and$_{r}$ my Courle [sic] wooll throwd In. but I am to give over to Mr Quested's child a silver Currill and his wife a guinea over, and all the said woolls to be delivered to Feversham as Witness my hand
>
> [signed] Geo Quested

> Quested agreement Feb 1 1728
> Then sould to Mr William Cordwell all my com[bed] wooll at 6^{li} 7s. 6d. per pack and hed wooll at 5^{li} 7s. 6d. per pack & middle at 2 pounds per$_{li}$ pack & Shor lamwooll at 3^{li} 7s. 6d. per pack and Locks at 1^{li} 17s. 6d. per pack all delivered at ffevershame and ffleece wooll at 6 pounds per pack took away at y^{e} scale
>
> [signed] Geo. Quested

A contract arranged between Cordwell and a London clothier couched in similar terms, provides vivid confirmation of the system of short-credit which operated in the wool trade at this time - one third payment down, another third after two months, and the final balance after four months:

> Mackrill's agreem^{t} 1725
> Bought of Mr Wm Cordweld All his Old Large Kentish & Sussex Head Shipp Wooll & Combe Wooll y^{t} he have in his hows & All y^{t} he ave To Come in This yeare at 6^{li} 5s. p. pack & All his Shore Lambe y^{t} is Cleane & Dry To be Delivered at My howes @ 3^{li} 15s. p. pk.
> As Witness My hand This 15 Octr 1725
> /signed/ Thos Mackrill
>
> To pay one Third Down ye other Do /due/ in 2 M^{o} ye other Do in 4 M^{o}.[1]

Finally, the survival of a fire insurance policy relating to Cordwell's London property illustrates the nature and extent of a London wool stapler's premises as well as the apparent necessity to take adequate precautions against fairly high risks, for which Cordwell paid an annual premium of two pounds:

> 10 April 1728
> Royal Exchange Assurance Policy No. 11417
> William Cordwell of Barnaby Street Southwark, Wool Stapler, for the Assurance of Two Hundred pounds on Household Goods and Eight hundred pounds on Goods in Trade in his Dwelling House & Warehouses belonging or adjoining, being Timber built situate near Stone Bridge in Barnaby Street aforesaid.

By the early eighteenth century interlopers, lacking capital and professional training, had infiltrated the wool dealing business in London. It is apparent that such men were looked upon with disdain by the wealthier wool staplers who had served their regular apprenticeships in

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[1] PRO C108/298. We are left to conjecture whether all the Kentish wool reached London or, whether having arrived at its Thameside destination was quickly shipped to a clandestine market. Tucked away in the Cordwell papers is a section of a contemporary map of French manufacture giving details of the coastline from Dunkirk to Ostend. This cryptic fragment surely tells its own story!

the trade. Michael Howard and Anthony Smoult were described as "partners in buying and selling of wooll" in the early years of the century. To the prosperous wool staplers of Southwark - men like Richard Everett, William Miller and Richard Merryman - they were "look'd upon to be of a very meane substance and fortune". Howard, it would seem, had acquired a knowledge of the wool trade and when the partnership was formed, sometime before 1716, it was agreed that he should "buy and sell" while Smoult "was to advance & lay out what money was to be laid out in buying of wooll for stock" since he possessed "neither skill nor knowledge therein being by trade a distiller and a sweetmaker". At Southwark the partners "farm'd a warehouse to lay their wooll in" and their method of trading followed a pattern similar to that of the regular wool staplers. When Miller was travelling in the Faversham district and around Sheppey in 1716-7 he was informed by "the country people in Kent" that Howard and Smoult had passed along the same route.

Howard who was said to be a dealer of "little or no substance" and "esteemed to be very poor", probably kept his expenses to 3s. a day when wool-buying in Kent. Merryman declared scornfully that if the meaner woolmongers "go only to the Isle of Sheppey they need not be out above tenn days or a fortnight at most tho' they buy at severall places. And if they go down in a hoy as persons of /Howard's/ ability often or usually do it costs them little if anything at all for their passage, and if they do not go in a hoy it is not above a day's journey to go down to the place proper to buy wooll at". Furthermore, "the farmers or persons of whom woole is bought usually find and provide meat and drink and lodging for the persons so buying and also meat for their horses". Merryman was equally scathing in his remarks about the unethical methods employed by Howard and his wife when sorting and grading their wool. He declared, for instance, that he had seen Mrs Howard "cutting the pitch markes of the wool which is a meane worke and never done by persons of any substance

or fortune". Altogether, the evidence points to a dilution of the customary structure of the wool trade by the early eighteenth century, an incipient process deplored by the old-established wool staplers. But the wool producers, confronted by ever-falling prices, no doubt gained a little comfort from the sharpening competition between the buyers.[1]

We cannot leave the wool trade without reference to the illegal export of wool from north-east Kent. Clandestine shipments must have reached immense proportions, low wool prices in England providing the main incentive. John Smith, writing in 1747, reckoned that: "Since the Revolution we don't find that English wool in England has ever sold quite so dear as 28s. per tod /28 lb./". In 1660 wool fetched perhaps 1s. 4d. or 1s. 6d. a pound, by 1740 only 6d.[2] The evidence already cited in this chapter shows that during the early eighteenth century Kentish producers were fortunate if they obtained 6d. or 7d. a pound for their wool; by the 1720's they often received only half this amount.

The prohibition on the export of all English raw wool in the early seventeenth century continued for nearly two-hundred years, on the ground that England's wealth depended upon the sale of cloth abroad. Towards the end of the reign of James I bills were introduced prohibiting all exportation of wool, and this legislation was constantly reinforced by a series of proclamations and ordinances. An Act of 1660 again entirely prohibited the export of wool and in 1662 the illicit trade was made felony. The severity of the laws failed to discourage active spirits in the south-east and in 1698 more stringent conditions were imposed upon the collection and exportation of wool. A law was enacted by which no person living within fifteen miles of the sea in the counties of Kent and Sussex should buy any wool before he entered into an undertaking in a

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[1] PRO E134 5 & 6 Geo.I/Trin. 5.

[2] John Smith, Memoirs of Wool (2 Vols. 1747), II, 514-5.

legal bond, with sureties, that none of the wool he might buy should be sold by him to any persons within fifteen miles of the sea. Furthermore, wool producers in Kent and Sussex were obliged, within three days of shearing, to account for the number of fleeces shorn, and to state where they were stored.[1]

Robert Sutton, an Ashford sheep farmer, had this legislation very much in mind when he wrote a hasty note to William Cordwell, the London wool stapler, in December 1726:

> ... theare has beened a scandallous report att Ashford y^t yor wooll was stop^ed att Feversham but I have stifeled it ... they say ye wooll came from East Kent or Canterbury.[2]

Practical anti-smuggling measures reinforced the legislation. In 1698 three sloops were appointed to guard the coast from the North Foreland to the Isle of Wight. Numbers of Riding Surveyors and other mounted officers, an inadequate force, were appointed to protect the coast by land. In 1700 two-thirds of all the Riding Officers in England and Wales were stationed in Kent and Sussex, counties which harboured "the most formidable of all 'free-traders' in England, and who were not easily suppressed". Finally, the government called upon the army to put down the smuggling trade. From the 1660's a troop of horse-guards was stationed at Canterbury for this purpose and from the 1690's increasing numbers of dragoons were stationed in Thanet and Romney Marsh.[3] The preventive officers were no match for the smugglers who operated in large, well-organized gangs and terrorized whole neighbourhoods. The annals of wool smuggling are full

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[1] 9 & 10 Wm.III c.40. For excellent discussions of the legislation, and vivid portrayals of the wool smuggling trade along the south-east coast see W.D. Cooper, 'Smuggling in Sussex', Sussex Arch. Soc. Coll., X (1838), 69-84, and Lord Teignmouth & Charles G. Harper, The Smugglers (2 Vols. 1923).

[2] PRO C108/298.

[3] Andrews, Maritime Trade, op. cit.; Teignmouth & Harper, op. cit., 50.

of violence, and attacks by smugglers on customs officials were frequent and battles bloody. Despite the severity of the punishments "there were plenty of hardened fellows all along the south-east coast who risked their necks for a shilling a day".[1]

Huge supplies of coarse, long-staple wool, ideal for combing were produced in Kent. This was the product which was smuggled abroad, especially to France, where it was much sought-after by the drugget (worsted) makers. The chief area of production was Romney Marsh and it was the "owlers" of this neighbourhood who were the most notorious smugglers in England during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. It was reported in 1671 that at Romney Marsh "the greatest part of rough wooll is exported from England, put aboard French shallops by night, ten or twenty men well armed to guard it". In 1694 it was reckoned that "of 30,000 packs of long wool that grows annually in Romney Marsh, it is credibly believed that 20,000 are carried into France". It was also well-known that the wool smugglers spared no efforts or expense "to ingratiate themselves with persons of authority, to destroy all such as discover their fraudulent dealings or else by bribes to stop their mouths". Among those indicted in 1699 for their involvements in wool smuggling was Mr Frank Gibbon of Hall Park at Rolvenden, a justice of the peace, and Mr William Mantle, the Bailiff of Romney Marsh.[2]

The smuggling trade in Kent affected a large part of the county as a report from Canterbury in 1737 testifies:

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[1] See for example W. Carter, The Proceedings of William Carter against Transportation of Wooll 1667-88 (1694); Teignmouth & Harper, op. cit., 50-91; E. Melling, 'Crime and Punishment', Kentish Sources, VI (Maidstone 1969), 66-7; Kentish Post 1 April 1747; N. Williams, Contraband Cargoes (1959), 74, which is the most comprehensive and authoritative work on smuggling.

[2] W. Carter, England's Interest by Trade Asserted (1671), 16; Smith, op. cit., I, 250-2, 390; PRO PC2/77/382.

> A party of dragoons of Major-General Camel's Scots Group came to this City on Friday last, and set out again the next morning for the following places, where we hear they are to be distributed to look after the smuglers viz. Sittingbourne, Faversham, Sandwich, Ramsgate, Deal, Dover, Folkestone, Lydd, Dymnchurch, Elham, Wye, Ashford, Tenterden, Goudhurst, and Tunbridge Wells.[1]

A large group of men indicted for smuggling in July 1749 came from an equally wide area and included many residents in north-east Kent; yeomen, labourers, victuallers, butchers and other tradesmen are represented in the list including "Daniel Bruce, commonly called or known by the name of Great Daniel of or near Sittingbourn ... labourer" and "Robert Bunce, commonly called or known by the name Half Coat Robin" also a Sittingbourne labourer. Defoe claimed that by the 1720's the owling trade "seem'd to be transposed from Rumney Marsh" to the north-east coast where it was "carry'd on between the mouth of the East Swale and the North Foreland". One of the notorious black spots was the stretch of coast between Whitstable and Ramsgate. Canterbury was the centre of this illicit trade and many a pack of combed Canterbury wool left the City, well-guarded under cover of darkness, for lonely spots along the coast where small French vessels waited off-shore to ship the clandestine cargoes to Calais, Dunkirk, Boulogne or Dieppe. A government paper of 1669 reported: "The troops of horse are of little or no use as quartered about Canterbury nor indeed anywhere else unless they were divided into small parties in every village along the coast and kept constant watch and patrols every night". "New gangs of smugglers were being formed in Canterbury each month", says Neville Williams, "some of them composed entirely of Frenchmen - all sturdy young fellows - who lodged with the Walloon weavers who had left the Continent to escape religious persecution". At the turn of the century it was noted in the official records of Canterbury that "the keeping of horses & saddles in the private stables of the

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[1] Kentish Post 6 July 1737.

small alehouse keepers and other poor persons for hire in the lanes and private places of the City and suburbs is prejudicial to the City and a great cause of the secret conveying away of wool for transportation". The coast north of Canterbury between Whitstable and Reculver was entirely unguarded "which lies so well for those gangs at Canterbury that drive on this trade". Apparently the sole official at Whitstable was a local boatman, a known supporter of the smugglers; the bribes he received over the years enabled him to build a fine brick house surrounded by landscaped gardens. Further along the coast between Margate and Broadstairs were many "private gates cut down through the cliffs, that strike up the fields directly to some of the villages or great farm houses, not a mile from the sea". Sacks of wool galore were transported along these secret passages down to the beach and freighted in the waiting shallops. Incoming cargoes of spirits, tea and silks were returned quickly by the same routes and concealed in numerous inns and farmhouses throughout the district.[1]

We shall probably never know the time extent of this clandestine market for wool in north-east Kent. But as early as 1661 it was estimated that Canterbury woolcombers "cannot send away less than a hundred thousand pounds worth in a year" and during a five-week period in 1661 it was reckoned that "467 bayles of keambed wooll, each bayle of 100 pounds weight, worth some £5,000" were "conveyed by night from Canterbury to be exported beyond the seas".[2]

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[1] KAO Q/SB 1729; Defoe, op. cit., I, 112; Joan Thirsk & J.P. Cooper, ed., Seventeenth Century Economic Documents, 529; BM Egerton MS. 2985 ff. 67-83; Williams, op. cit., 80; City of Canterbury MS. Bunce's Abridgement of the Court of Burghmote 1542-1793, presented by Alderman Cyprian Rondeau Bunce to the Court of Burghmote at the Guildhall, City of Canterbury on 20 May 1794, 248-9.

[2] BM Egerton MS. 2985 ff. 69, 74.

E Cattle

Cattle have always been important on Kentish farms. Over much of the county, especially south of the Downs, oxen were the traditional work animals. On Romney Marsh, in the Isle of Sheppey, and throughout the alluvial marshes of north-east Kent large numbers of beasts were fattened for the butcher. And for the small Wealden farmer the breeding and fattening of cattle was his chief means of livelihood. Although dairy herds remained small, they were nevertheless numerous and widespread. These facts have received all too little attention. It has often been assumed that the absence of a local breed reflected an indifference to cattle farming. "This not being a dairy or grazing county for cattle", wrote John Boys, the Kentish historian, "we have no particular breed that may be allowed the appellation of Kentish cattle". The view was repeated in the nineteenth century when Loudon described Kent as "neither a dairying nor grazing county" and noted that "little attention /was/ paid to the breed of cattle". However, as Boys, Banister and other writers were quick to point out, the county provided an excellent market for animals bred elsewhere, in neighbouring Sussex, in Yorkshire, Staffordshire, and Scotland, but above all in Wales. Kent farmers were not pedigree cattle breeders, neither did they possess vast commercial enterprises of the type found in the Midland and northern counties where, in many places, the traditional economy could be traced back to the vaccaries and ranches of medieval times. Nevertheless, as an early eighteenth-century agriculturalist pointed out, Kent was one of the counties where "great numbers of cattle are fed".[1]

In north-east Kent almost every farm had its cattle. Even the smallest husbandman had his dairy of milch cows usually with several other beasts fatting in nearby pastures; the larger arable farmers frequently

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[1] Boys, op. cit., 147; Loudon, op. cit., 1086; Banister, op. cit., 326-7; S. Trowell, A New Treatise of Husbandry (1739), 47.

possessed herds of commercial proportions. Table 26 shows that the average (median) herd-size in the region increased from six in 1680 to nine by the 1740's and '50's. Marked intra-regional differences are apparent. Thus, not unexpectedly, Sheppey farmers possessed the largest enterprises which averaged as many as twelve head of stock in the period 1711-60. It is worth noting that the official "average number of cows per keeper" recorded on English dairy farms in 1954 was only fourteen.[1] The Faversham district, possessing an abundance of local pastures, also shows a heavy concentration of cattle and so, too, does the large parish of Ash, rich in riparian grazings. At Sheppey and Faversham keepers of large herds of cattle were invariably also large-scale sheep graziers. At Chislet herds were of more modest size but the inventories of smaller farmers rarely fail to show cattle. The larger herds grazing on Chislet marshes belonged to wealthy upland farmers. Not surprisingly, few large herds are found along the drier Downland margin, although most of the farmers of this district kept cattle.

As in the case of sheep husbandry many upland farmers rented coastal fresh marshes and saltings for their cattle. James Tylden of Rainham had a herd of twenty-seven cattle on the home farm in 1705; in partnership with his brother Matthew he farmed at Barksore in Halstow where a large herd of cattle grazed on local marshes; Tylden also had "stock in Chetney" which included twenty-four cattle as well as 418 sheep. His son John continued to farm on similar lines until his death in 1725, keeping his dairy herd at Rainham and the fatting stock "att Halstoe" and "in Chetney". John Banister, gentleman-farmer of Sittingbourne, occupied marshland in Sheppey; in 1718 his "stock in Emly /Elmley marshes/" included thirty runts and nine "fatt runts" as well as several hundred sheep. Edward Turner, a Sittingbourne butcher, was a large-scale grazier. In 1689 Turner occupied stretches of marshland "att Luddenham"

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[1] Britton, op. cit., 6.

near Faversham where he kept eighteen bullocks, and "att Iwade" where he had sixteen fatting beasts; he also rented feeding grounds "in Sheppey" for his young store cattle.

Sheppey farmers often possessed huge herds. The two largest sheep-graziers at Minster in the early eighteenth century also had the greatest numbers of cattle: Thomas Mitchell possessed a flock of 1,065 sheep and a herd of ninety-one cattle in 1702, Richard Austin 1,267 sheep and fifty-seven cattle - including "6 Welsh runts in Harty" - in 1730. Thomas Man, a wealthy Eastchurch yeoman, farmed extensively on the arable and was also an important sheep and cattle grazier. His beef stock in 1685 included four "Welsh runts", seven "country steers", and two heifers while the dairy herd comprised twelve cows, eleven calves and a stock bull; he possessed a well-equipped milkhouse containing a wide range of vessels - "milk pales" and "milk boals", a "chayrne" and a "butter basket", as well as a pair of butter scales. William Burgess who rented Abbey Farm at Minster until 1709 was a large-scale wheat and bean grower, sheep grazier, pig keeper and cattle farmer. He possessed three milch cows valued altogether at £12 but had rather greater investments in beef stock: nineteen runts priced at £3 a head, two fatting heifers at £3 10s. and three younger animals ("buds") said to be worth £1 10s. apiece. These figures are fairly typical of current prices during the period. In 1713 John Randall of Harty who possessed a huge flock of 1,742 sheep had twenty-two runts valued at £90, as well as thirty-five other fatting cattle of various ages, and a dairy herd of seven cows. An analysis of Sheppey inventories for the early eighteenth century shows that almost 70 per cent of the farmers possessed more than five head of cattle apiece; a third of the farmers had more than twenty beasts.[1]

Along the north coast beyond Faversham local farmers had ample graz-

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[1]KAO PRC 27/36/212, 27/45/25, 27/40/111, 27/32/78, 27/36/40, 11/79/14, 11/49/139, 11/69/13, 11/71/9.

ing facilities close at hand. John Stains occupied a mixed farm at Herne until 1681. His enterprise included a small dairy herd of six cows, seven "dry cattle", and three calves. In the milkhouse were "wooden milk vessels" and "earthen crocks" as well as a churn, cheese-stock, butter scales, and a butter basket; eleven pounds of butter and twenty-two pounds of hog's seam stood on the shelves. The contents of this milkhouse are typical of those found in similar rooms on farms throughout the region. In fact scarcely a farm in north-east Kent was without a milkhouse. James Brett of Herne had cattle and sheep "in Chislett marsh" and "in Seasalter marsh" in 1701. Edward Blaxland who farmed at Graveney Court until 1739 had a dairy herd of six cows and over forty head of beef stock grazing on the home farm as well as fifty-two bullocks "in Seasalter lands".[1]

Thanet, primarily an arable district, was also, as we have seen, an important sheep producing area. Cattle, too, were a feature on numerous Thanet farms although the herds were usually of modest size. In 1682 Thomas George of Monkton owned eleven cows, three heifers, a bull, and sixteen steers; this farm was exceptional in possessing ten oxen. Michael Wood of Sarre had a dairy herd of ten milch cows and half a dozen followers, as well as four fatting beasts. Like many farmers in the district he possessed "cattle racks" for winter feeding; in addition to the customary milkhouse Wood had a cheesehouse in which twenty-six cheeses were maturing. Augustine Gore who farmed in St. Nicholas' parish until 1704 possessed a herd of six milch cattle valued at £18, and "fatting cattel in the marsh" (four steers and four heifers) worth £28 5s. In 1710 Richard Taddy of St. Lawrence had "eight runts in the marsh" worth altogether £36; his two cows which had already calved were probably kept for domestic purposes. Robert Kennett of Minster (Thanet) was known as a grazier. When he died in 1720 he had, besides a flock of sheep, four-

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[1] Ibid., 27/29/176, 27/35/107, 27/43/80.

teen fat bullocks "in the marsh called the ten acres", six lean beasts "in the eighteen acres", and five heifers, three steers and a bull "in the Bridge Marsh". Kennett's small dairy herd comprised four milch cows "in the Cow Marsh" together with four heifers "in the three acres". This farm, which also included growing crops "in the sowing marsh" and "in the upland", possessed a wide range of fields adapted to a variety of uses.[1]

A detailed analysis of the forty-five farming inventories which have survived for the period 1740-60 enables us to demonstrate the essential character of cattle enterprises in the region at the end of our period. Only one farmer in the group possessed no cattle and he was primarily a hop specialist; another hop grower possessed only one house-cow, and nine farmers two or three cows apiece. The remaining thirty-four herds, with a size-range of six to forty-one, can reasonably be considered commercial undertakings; a herd of eight was the most common size (six farmers) although four farmers had herds of thirteen apiece; the average (median) size of herd for all farms was eleven. The region was thus characterized by numerous small-scale commercial enterprises.

Edith Whetham has recently evolved a method of inferring types of cattle enterprise from numbers of dairy cows and heifers, and cattle over and under two years of age on various farms.[2] Using detailed nineteenth- and early twentieth-century agricultural returns Miss Whetham has produced a table which "gives the ratio of the numbers of cattle aged over and under two years of age per 100 cows and heifers in milk and calf for each county of England and Wales". These ratios, calculated for 1870, 1890 and 1910 were "grouped into the classes into which they naturally

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[1] Ibid., 27/29/235, 27/35/38, 27/36/93, 11/70/126, 11/75/170.

[2] Edith H. Whetham, 'The Changing Cattle Enterprises of England and Wales, 1870-1910', Essays in Agrarian History, ed. W.E. Minchinton (2 Vols. 1968), II, 213-5.

fell". Altogether, six classes were distinguished covering, between them, the main types of cattle enterprise - rearing, fattening, and dairying. Miss Whetham explains: "The ratios distinguished sharply between those counties which, in 1870, were importers of cattle aged two years and over for fattening into beef; those which were exporters, with a lower ratio of the older cattle; and those devoted to dairying, which kept a low proportion of non-dairying animals".[1] The section of Miss Whetham's table which relates to 1870 is reproduced below with the corresponding figures calculated for north-east Kent included.

TABLE 28

CATTLE ENTERPRISES IN ENGLAND AND WALES (1870) AND NORTH-EAST KENT (1740-60)

	No. of Counties	Per 100 cows and heifers in milk and calf	
		Cattle 2 years and over	Cattle under 2 years
1. Fattening on arable and leys	10	98	104
2. Fattening on grass	5	171	136
3. Mixed enterprises with some dairying on grass	5	61	77
4. Lowland rearing with some fattening	7	69	95
5. Hill rearing (England)	5	57	92
6. Primarily dairying	10	27	51
England and Wales	-	62	83
North-east Kent		55	46

The information contained in eighteenth-century inventories, of widely varying quality, is of course far more difficult to interpret and classify than the standard statistics in official agricultural returns of the nineteenth century. However, it proved possible, for the present

[1] Ibid., 213.

purpose, to employ forty-one of the inventories for 1740-60. The method adopted was firstly to aggregate the cows and cows in milk (229) on the farms represented. The remaining cattle were then classified according to age, using the two-year rule for purposes of segregation; the resultant totals were each expressed as a ratio per 100 cows, as shown in the table below.

TABLE 29

CATTLE (OTHER THAN COWS AND COWS IN MILK): 41 HERDS IN NORTH-EAST KENT, 1740-60

	Barrens	Heifers	Young cattle	Calves	Bulls	Steers and Bullocks	Total	per 100 cows
2 years and over	11	54	-	-	17	44	126	55.0
under 2 years	-	21	26	56	2	-	105	45.9

The figures for Kent do not fit easily into any single group devised by Miss Whetham. However, there is a striking resemblance to Group 2 in one important respect: this is the only group in the series which displays a higher ratio of older cattle than younger, indicating counties which were importers of store cattle aged two years and over for fattening purposes. However, the actual ratio of 55 is relatively low and corresponds most closely to that stated for Group 3 (Group 5 obviously has no application in the present case). When we consider the ratio of young cattle for north-east Kent (46) we find the closest correspondence with the figure recorded by Miss Whetham for Group 6 (51). However, we can safely dismiss this specialized group from the possibilities available. Moreover it is possible that if the raw data for eighteenth-century Kent were of better quality this ratio would prove to be higher. A weakness of this analysis lies in the number of cows shown in the probate records which it has been assumed were dairy cows; some of these may in fact have

been beef cattle. One effect of reducing the number of cows (and adding these to the older fattening beasts) would be to increase the size of the ratio of young cattle nearer to that shown for Group 3; the other effect, of course, would be to raise the ratio of older cattle by an ever greater margin, thus confirming the significance of imported stock. To take a hypothetical but probably not unrealistic instance, if a third of the cows, say 77, were in fact beef stock this would produce totals of 152 (299 less 77) cows, 203 (126 plus 77) cattle of 2 years and over, and 105 cattle under 2 years. The ratios of older and younger cattle per 100 cows would then become 134 and 69 respectively, giving even greater credence to the inference that the types of cattle enterprise in north-east Kent were an amalgam of Groups 2 and 3. In short, the region was characterized by small-scale mixed enterprises, with some dairying as well as fattening on permanent grass, and a heavy reliance on imported stock.

Descriptions of cattle breeds in the inventories are usually imprecise, frequently lacking altogether. Black, brown, and red cows are sometimes encountered. Local cattle, probably Sussex and Sussex crosses, are described as "country" cattle.[1] Even the term "runt" was "by many people indiscriminately applied to Welch and Scotch cattle, whether cows or gelt bullocks".[2] Descriptions in the local press are no more helpful, and stray cattle are frequently described as "black norn heifer", "brandy cow", or "fat red steer".[3]

Nevertheless some inventories provide valuable descriptions. Welsh cattle appear quite frequently and many others described simply as "runts"

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[1] See for example KAO PRC 27/28/255, 11/62/121, 11/68/75.

[2] Banister, op. cit., 329.

[3] Kentish Post 23 October 1728, 9 January 1748, 7 December 1751. The terms brandy and norn are frequently encountered. A brandy cow was brindled or streaked in colour; a nawn (norn) beast was one of small size.

were undoubtedly of Welsh origin. Sir Thomas Harfleete of Chequer Court at Ash had "Welch steares" on his estate in 1617. John Tadhunter of Nackington near Canterbury possessed "10 Irish steeres /and/ 10 Welsh steeres in the marsh" in 1680. In 1721 Thomas Knowler had "20 Welsh runts", worth almost £100, on his marshland farm at Graveney. "The sort bought in by graziers to be fattened for sale in the marshes of East Kent" wrote Boys, "are from North and South Wales, which are brought by the Welch drovers to Canterbury and other markets, and the chief part of the dairy cows are selected from those droves". It has recently been pointed out that Welsh Black cattle "thrive on poor uplands" but that "their rate of development is much more rapid when moved to better land". The basic characteristics of this dual-purpose breed have changed little since the eighteenth century when they were the most important of all the cattle brought into Kent.[1]

Cattle bred in the north of England were also purchased by Kentish farmers. George Vallence of Hernehill possessed ten "small Northerne heifers" in 1686 and William Poole of Selling "four Northerne steeres" in 1691. Henry Eve of Mersham had as many as twenty "Northen Stears" worth altogether £85 in 1728. Scottish cattle appear infrequently. Nicholas Toke of Godinton in Great Chart near Ashford was chiefly a livestock farmer and during his long career he bought Welsh, Northern and Scottish as well as local "country" cattle. Sir Brooke Bridges of Goodnestone near Wingham bought "3 Scotch Bullocks" from Sir Thomas Hales in 1728. Richard Wellard of Canterbury possessed two "Lanchester cows" in 1704, and one of a group of cattle that had strayed from Dover in 1751 was described as a "brandy red Staffordshire heifer". These were dairy breeds "which being of the largest size, yield great store of milk, when

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[1] PRO Prerogative Court of Canterbury: inventory of Sir Thomas Harfleete; KAO PRC 11/43/171, 11/76/139; Boys, loc. cit.; B. Platt, Farming in the South East (1967), 79. For a more detailed discussion of the Welsh droving trade to Kent see infra Ch. 8 passim.

turned on pasture where the grass is in sufficient abundance". A dairy cow that had strayed from Petham near Canterbury was described in 1761 as "a little Alderney with very short horns /and/ of a dark brown colour". Boys, writing in the 1790's, said a few Alderneys and Guernseys had recently been imported into Kent "for the use of the dairies of gentlemen's families".[1]

Mortimer, writing at the beginning of the eighteenth century, said "the best sort of cows for the pail, only they are tender and need very good keeping, are the long-legged, short-horn'd cow of the Dutch breed which is to be had in some places of Lincolnshire but most used in Kent; many of these cows will give two gallons of milk at a meal". The importation of Dutch cattle by Kent farmers was remarked upon by other eighteenth-century writers, and modern authorities have given credence to this view. One of a number of cattle that strayed from Dover in 1751, described as "short-horn'd", may have been a dairy cow of Dutch descent.[2]

Low described the "short-horned breed" in 1842 as "chiefly imported from Holland, the cows of which country were the most celebrated of all others in the north of Europe for the abundance of their milk and the uses of the dairy". But he warned that "of the precise extent of these early importations we are imperfectly informed", a situation that has remained unchanged to the present day. Thaer mentions the Dutch breed known variously as the Friesland, Oldenburg, or Bremen breed and says: "In England the same breed is known by the name of the short-horned or

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[1]KAO PRC 27/31/194, 11/55/55, 11/79/86; E.C. Lodge, The Account Book of a Kentish Estate, 1616-1704, Records of the Social and Economic History of England and Wales (1927), VI, 2-3, 49, 366; KAO U373 E10, PRC 11/65/149; Kentish Post 7 December 1751; Banister, op. cit., 340; Kentish Post 21 October 1761; Boys, op. cit., 148.

[2]Mortimer, op. cit., I, 167; T. Hale, Compleat Body of Husbandry (3 Vols. 1758-9), III, 35; Brown, op. cit., 19; Trow-Smith, op. cit., II, 15, 28; G.E. Fussell, 'Science and Practice in Eighteenth-Century British Agriculture', Agricultural History, XLIII, no. 1 (1969), 13; Kentish Post 7 December 1751.

Holderness breed and is thought to have been originally introduced from the Netherlands". However Thaïer offers no further evidence.[1]

The pattern of marketing in the cattle trade was similar to that noted for sheep. The country butcher was the central figure in the meat business although his metropolitan counterpart was also active in the buying of stock fattened on the marshes of north-east Kent. Numerous private transactions characterized the trade and there was also a brisk business done at the local cattle fairs and markets held at Maidstone, Canterbury and Ashford, as well as at a number of important rural centres - Badlesmere, Challock, Charing, Chilham, Harrietsham and Teynham (Greenstreet). Beyond the county stores were purchased by Kentish farmers at Brentwood Fair in Essex, Barnet Fair, and St. Bartholomew's Fair in London.[2]

Occasionally an inventory records local purchases and sales of cattle. In 1691, for instance, the personal estate of Robert Osborne a Milton butcher included: "the halfe of two Cowes, three Cuntry Steeres & ten weathers bought betweene the deced & Richard Tilbee £15 3s. 6d.".

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[1] Low, Breeds, op. cit., I, 49; Thaïer, op. cit., II, 671. I have made numerous enquiries and undertaken fairly exhaustive searches in Holland but attempts to uncover the trade have proved unsuccessful. Dr J.A. Faber of the Landbouwhogeschool at Wageningen informs: "Documentary evidence of Dutch cattle exports to England during the 17th and 18th centuries, as well as of Dutch influence on the agriculture of Kent, is almost completely lacking in this country ... I have never found any evidence of cattle exports to England" (correspondence 6 March 1970). I subsequently visited Wageningen and discussed the problem with Dr J.M.G. van der Poel and wish to acknowledge his kindness in arranging my visits to the archives at Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and for making further enquiries on my behalf in numerous municipal archives including Hindeloppen, Makkum, Workum and Harlingen. I am also indebted to Dr S. Hart, Archivist at Amsterdam and Dr R.A.D. Renting, Archivist at Rotterdam, for their kind assistance in my searches. However, the Port Books proved unhelpful and the only slight reference to emerge from these abortive investigations is contained in a report of the Dutch Congress in Rural Economy held in 1878 which comments on the export of Dutch cattle to England c. 1700. - Verslag van het verhandelde op het XXXI-ste Nederlandsch Landhuishoudkundig congres (1878), Bijlage I, 2.

[2] Chalklin, op. cit., 99; Banister, op. cit., 327; KAO PRC 11/82/11, 27/37/229, 27/41/27, U593 A2.

At Stourmouth in 1701 the appraisers of John Stoddard's goods accounted "5 hafers & 3 steers sold to Caleb Palmer for £28" and a further £4 2s. 6d. for "a fat halfer sold to Caleb Palmer"; they also reported that "Will Evans the Bucher oweth £10".[1]

Farm and estate records include entries relating to sales of fat-stock to butchers whose businesses lay in the neighbourhood. The general farmer found it convenient to sell small consignments in this way. Lord Teynham's steward sold stock from the estate to two local firms, the Streets and the Philpots. In 1679, for example, James Street paid £4 "for 2 bull steears & a heyfer sold him that came from Ham /Teynham/". In 1681 the records show that a similar sum was received "from Philpott ye Butcher ... for a cowe /that/ came from /Teyn/ham fatted upon ye 16 acre". Numerous individual sums "received of Jon Philpot, Butcher, for a runt" are recorded in 1710; the term "runt" was used in these instances for fatstock which averaged £4 9s. per head. Occasionally the sale of a beast was negotiated at the local inn and in September 1714 Lord Teynham's steward allowed 1s. 6d. (probably to the innkeeper) "for expencis at the black Lyon of selling ye bullack". The Delaunes of Sharsted Court in the neighbouring parish of Doddington similarly sold to local tradesmen. In March 1705, for instance, £12 18s. was "received of ye Butcher for 3 cows sold to him" and later that year he paid a further £8 10s. "for a Runt & an old Cow". At Milstead Manor stock from the home farm was sold to various butchers. In February 1717 Tylden received 16s. from "Philpot ye Butcher for a calf", in May 1742 Henry Lyndsey the Milstead butcher paid £9 15s. "for two bullocks and some lambs", while Barnabas Short, a butcher who rented premises at Sittingbourne from Tylden, bought fat calves from him in 1745.[2]

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[1] Ibid., 11/56/27, 11/62/179.

[2] KAO U498 A2, A3, U145 A7, U593 A2.

In addition to the business conducted in their shops many country butchers rented market stalls in local towns. Shambles were a regular feature of the market-place in centres like Faversham and Milton while at Canterbury in the early years of the eighteenth century the Common Council adopted a policy of encouraging country butchers to the City on market days. On 13 March 1704 "for the better Encouragement of Country Butchers to serve the City with Flesh it is ordained that they shall be at Liberty on Saturdays weekly during the year to come & bring their Flesh into the Flesh Shambles there to be sold & to continue there from 7 in the morning until 7 in the Evening, for the time to come". On 23 September 1707 it was recorded that "Thomas Burton of Selling, Butcher, on Market Days is to have the Use of one of the Stalls in the Shambles paying weekly the accustomed due of 12d. for the same".[1]

It is impossible to say how many fat beasts were taken from north-east Kent to London during these years. The inventory of a Kentish drover is a rare find indeed.[2] As already mentioned Thomas Barker of Ashford regularly drove sheep and cattle from Kent to Smithfield Market, setting out from The Red Lion at Ospringe every Wednesday morning. He reached Key Street near Sittingbourne later in the day and increased the size of his drove en route.[3] Drovers travelling from Kent to London appear to have used the main Watling Street route; there is no evidence that special drove roads were ever in use. In north-west Kent, between Bromley and Woolwich, extensive heaths provided convenient halting places where men and beasts regained their strength for the final stages of the

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[1]City of Canterbury MS. Bunce's Abridgement, op. cit., 262. For examples of advertisements of butchers' premises see Kentish Post 18 November 1738, 22 April 1741, 3 August 1743, 28 May 1760.

[2]One such example is the inventory of Henry Austen, a Warehorne drover - KAO PRC 11/80/2.

[3]Kentish Post 18 June 1743.

journey to metropolitan markets. Documentation of drovers' inns in Kent is sparse indeed. Some parts of the country are well supplied with evidence of drovers' roads and appropriately named inns along the old routes, but not so in Kent where the only surviving example of a drovers' inn stands along the Old Kent Road (SE. 1). The Kentish Drovers was purchased by the Truman Brewery in 1898 but unfortunately nothing is known about its origins and early history. The inn was used regularly by drovers bound from Kent for markets at Smithfield and Caledonian Road. There was also a local cattle market opposite The Kentish Drovers where some of the beasts were sold. This pattern remained unchanged until the First World War.[1]

In London, in addition to the "free" butchers - members of The Butchers' Company of London - there were in the seventeenth century many "foreign" or country butchers who had served no formal apprenticeship and who were beginning to assert themselves in the City. This development naturally gave rise to a great deal of rivalry in the trade. Country butchers found greater scope in the old City markets as well as in many of the new ones that had grown up in the suburbs, and by the early eighteenth century their encroachments in the metropolis had probably reached considerable proportions.[2]

A Canterbury butcher of some local standing decided in 1747 to extend his business activities to London. The announcement of his decision seems to indicate a considerable degree of interest in London markets on the part of Kent's livestock producers:

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[1] I am grateful to Messrs. Truman Hanbury Ltd. for undertaking searches in their records on my behalf and to Mrs Banks, the oldest local inhabitant (who in 1971 was in her nineties) for providing oral evidence of the droving trade which she remembered from her childhood.

[2] P.V. McGrath, The Marketing of Food, Fodder and Livestock in the London Area in the Seventeenth Century, University of London M.A. Thesis, 172.

> To all Gentlemen-Graziers in the County of Kent and Sussex. Whereas there is great want of a salesman at Smithfield Market, in the room of one that has lately absconded; this is to give notice that John Horn, butcher of this City, having consulted several gentlemen-graziers and others thereupon and having their promise of being employ'd by them in the sale of their stock, has induced him to make this publick application for their custom. And, as all his dealings in general have been agreeable to his dealers in the capacity of a butcher, he will endeavour to merit their favour as a salesman. Proper attendance will be given to receive all stock which shall be sent him at the Halfway House /sic/ where all salesmen meet the drovers.
>
> John Horn
>
> N.B. The first of my beginning to receive stock will be Saturday the 28th of this instant November. I shall continue my butchering as usual.[1]

The tanning trade was "generally performed in the country" from where large quantities of tanned hides were sent to London to be bought by the leather sellers at Leadenhall Market. The hides and skins processed by tanners and leather dressers were obtained from butchers and farmers. "In north-east Kent", says Clarkson, "leather was produced for the London market and raw hides were brought from London for tanning". It seems likely that these hides, which supplemented local supplies, were tanned in the Faversham district and the possibility exists that "London tanners were putting work out to the tanners of north-east Kent on a commission basis". Faversham was an important centre of the tanning industry in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and the leather craftsmen had their premises along the lower part of the town still known today as Tanners Street. William Gilbert was a well-to-do tanner (he was also a hop specialist) who rented a tan yard and pits at Faversham from the Earl of Rockingham during the 1740's and '50's and purchased bark (tan) from the Earl's Waldershare estate. Canterbury appears to

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[1] Kentish Post 21 November 1747. The Smithfield venture appears to have been successful. In 1748 Horn took as his partner "in the business of selling stock" Edward Ward, another Canterbury butcher. However, the partnership was dissolved "by mutual consent" a few months later after which Ward traded in London on his own account. - Kentish Post 4, 21 May and 17 September 1748.

have been an important provincial centre for the sale of leather. The City records contain frequent references to leather sellers whose activities the authorities attempted to control. Thus, in September 1697: "For the Convenience of Farmers, Cordwainers & Leather sellers the Market Day for buying and selling leather in the Bullstake Market is altered from Wednesday to Thursday which in future is to be the Market Day". But the growth of private marketing meant that the City authorities had constantly to remind local leather sellers to bring their wares to the official marts. On 7 December 1703, for instance, it was recorded in the ancient Court of Burghmote: "The Leather sellers and Tanners in & abt the City are to have Notice to bring their Leather to the Market to be searched and sealed".[1]

Information relating to the sale of dairy products is extremely limited. Judging from the many small dairy herds and the numerous quantities of butter and cheese recorded in farmers' inventories there must have been a high level of self sufficiency in dairy produce throughout the countryside. "So far as liquid milk was concerned", says Fussell, "that trade was ... local, the poor and slow means of transport available not permitting milk to be carried any long distance if it was to arrive fresh ... the product was rarely brought from a greater distance than ten miles". There is no reason to believe that the milk-trade in north-east Kent was other than local with the greatest activity in the vicinity of urban centres, especially Canterbury and the growing Thanet ports. It was "rare and extraordinary" for English-bred dairy cows to give as much as two gallons at a milking, "Welch and Scotch cattle being expected to give only four quarts a day". The three milch

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[1] Campbell, op. cit., 216; L.A. Clarkson, 'The Leather Crafts in Tudor and Stuart England', Agricultural History Review, XIV, pt. 1 (1966), 26, 36; KAO U471 A2; PRO C12 2310/16; MS. Bunce, op. cit., 260-1. For valuable inventories relating to tanners see KAO PRC 11/44/178, 11/70/73, 11/71/107, 11/74/151, 11/83/111. For leather sellers' inventories see 11/64/21 and 27/40/200. For other information relating to the local leather trade see Kentish Post 12 March 1740, 25 September 1742.

cows of Robert Sprakeling of Chilham each averaged about two gallons a day in 1715, according to his milkmaid who milked twice daily at 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. Nearly all cows calved in the spring and achieved maximum milk production by early summer. Edward Blaxland died at Graveney Court in February or March 1739. The appraisers of his inventory recorded "6 Milshed Cows five of which were with calf at Mr Blaxland's death" and no doubt calved within the following month or so. Tylden's cows at Hogshaw Farm in Milstead normally calved in April or May with rare exceptions when calvings occurred during the summer. There was very little milk available during the winter months. The appraisers of Richard Filmer's goods recorded "a winter milk cow" on his farm at Bobbing in 1680, an unusual asset worthy of special mention.[1]

Many inventories show cheeses stored in the milkhouse or cellars and a few farmers were fortunate enough to possess a cheesehouse.[2] However, there is no indication of a wide market for Kentish cheese which has been described by Fussell as "the very worst" although "the Suffolk must have run it very close". Butter, too, was never produced in north-east Kent on a large commercial scale and crocks of farmhouse butter - frequent enough in the inventories - were intended mainly for domestic consumption or sale locally. Vast quantities of butter and cheese were sent to London from Warwickshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, and of course Cheshire, to name but the most important areas of commercial production. It was reckoned in 1751 that "the counties of Essex, Hertford, part of Sussex, and part of Kent, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire are supplied with cheese and salt butter from

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[1] G.E. Fussell, 'The Eighteenth-Century Traffic in Milk Products', Economic History III (1937), 380; G. Markham, The English Housewife (1683), 141; Fussell, Village Life, op. cit., 63; PRO E134 4 Geo.I/ Mich. 4; KAO PRC 27/43/80, U593 A3 ff. iv-12, PRC 11/44/38.

[2] For farmers' inventories which record large stocks of cheese see KAO PRC 11/70/170, 11/73/96, 11/74/207, 27/34/158; for cheesehouses see 11/56/205, 27/32/201, 27/39/216.

London to the amount in the whole, of 2,000 tons and upwards annually".[1] This vast trade in butter and cheese seems to have been "chiefly in the hands of the cheesemongers of London" and there is ample evidence to show their importance in the distribution of these products to shopkeepers in north-east Kent, as well as their regular attendance at fairs in Canterbury, Faversham, and other market towns.[2]

F Asses

During the early eighteenth century "milch-asses went their daily rounds" in London where it was said the milk "brings a very large price", commonly 3s. 6d. a quart. It was considered "the she-ass has ... a particular value on account of her milk" which was "prescrib'd by physicians for many disorders". Mortimer said that asses' milk was "an excellent restorative in consumptions and other weaknesses".[3]

Asses were kept for dairy purposes by genteel families both in London and the provinces. Elizabeth Purefoy, writing from her Buckinghamshire home to Thomas Robotham, an old family servant who then kept The King's Head at Islington, praised the restorative qualities of asses' milk:

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[1] G.E. Fussell, The English Dairy Farmer 1500-1900 (1966), 223; Journal of the House of Commons XXVI (1750-4), 274.

[2] Fussell, 'Traffic in Milk Products', op. cit., 383. The London cheesemongers receive mention in McGrath, The Marketing of Food, Fodder and Livestock, op. cit., 28, and there are some useful comments concerning the role of the cheesemonger in Campbell, op. cit., 281. For London cheesemongers at Faversham Fair see KAO Fa/ZBI, 257-60: 'Cases and Opinions Concerning the Fairs'. Shipments of butter and cheese to Kent are discussed in Andrews, Maritime Trade, op. cit., 218. For Kentish grocers' inventories which record stocks of named cheeses see KAO PRC 11/52/59, 11/56/145, 11/67/105, 11/70/2, 11/75/13, 11/79/185, 27/38/88. Valuable evidence relating to London cheesemongers and their sales of butter and cheese in Kent can be found in local advertisements: Kentish Post 6 February 1740, 26 January 1745, 1 August 1747, 10 February 1748, 9 March 1751, 20 February, 12 and 26 April 1760, 27 February and 7 August 1762, 21 February 1767.

[3] John Ashton, Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne (1904), 148; Hale, op. cit., III, 26; Mortimer, op. cit., pt. 1, 164.

Shalstone
Dec 24th 1746

> ... The asses milk has done mee a great deall of good both for my sicknesse & faintnesse wch made mee think it might do you good, & that you might have an opportunity of keeping it in the Close behind your yard, & shutting the little ass in your yard a nights, you will have milk enough next morning to serve 3 or 4 folks. Then, by putting up the young ass at 10 a clock, you will have milk enough at 4 or 5 in the afternoon ...[1]

Asses, newly-foaled, were frequently hired out by breeders. At Linsted, Lord Teynham's steward paid £3 10s. "to John Cullon for the hire of a milch ass 2 months" in 1710; he also paid a shilling "to Will French for going with ye ass to Mr Pettit's" at the end of the period of hire. Some owners were more generous, at least where friends were concerned. Thomas Robotham was informed by Elizabeth Purefoy: "... you are very welcome to have one of my asses & ye foal; if you will accept it I will make a present of it, if you can contrive how to have it to London".[2] Two years later Henry Purefoy, Elizabeth's son, wrote to a neighbour:

> My mother has a She ass & foall about 2 months old; if you or Mrs Wentworth have a mind to drink the milk my mother will lend it you as long as you have occasion for it, if you please send a servant over for it.[3]

There is evidence that a number of farmers in north-east Kent bred asses for their own use as well as for sale or hire to others. It was reckoned that "the best age to breed on them is from three years old, and you should let the young ass suck two years ...". Elizabeth Greenstreet of Ospringe had "one shee asse" in 1682, similarly George Christian, a

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[1] Purefoy Letters, op. cit., II, 229: EP to Thomas Robotham.

[2] KAO U498 A3; Purefoy Letters, op. cit., I, 161: EP to Thomas Robotham, 26 November 1746.

[3] Ibid., 386: Henry Purefoy to John Wentworth Cresswell at Lillington Lovell, 22 October 1748.

wealthy Minster (Thanet) yeoman in 1699. Peter Harnett had "a jack-ass" worth £1 7s. on his farm at St. Lawrence in 1720. Robert Gore who farmed at St. Nicholas bred from a male and two female asses until 1728. John Pack, a Chartham miller, kept a small farm which included "two asses and two foals" in 1743. Ann Read had two jennies and their foals on her large mixed farm at Bapchild in 1757.[1]

In London "many were the advertisements of milch-asses for sale". The same was true in prosperous provincial towns like Canterbury where local breeders found a ready market. "A large milch ass with a she foal about five or six weeks old" was advertised "to be sold or lett" in 1726; clients were told to "enquire at the Printing Office" in Canterbury. Two years later Henry Gibbons of Doddington advertised "a new milch ass with her foal about five days old" for sale or hire; clients were directed to enquire at The George in Newnham, an inn which was the local exchange for dealings in livestock. In 1742 Mr Hooker, a breeder at Great Chart near Ashford advertised "to be sold very cheap, a very good milch ass with a she-colt by her side, with or without two more shee-asses that will drop a colt very soon". Thomas Bridges of St. Nicholas' parish in Thanet wished to hire out "a good milch ass with a foal about a fortnight old" in 1748, while three years later Stephen Smith of Littlebourne near Canterbury had "a very good milch ass with a foal about five days old" which was available for hire or purchase.[2]

The trade in milch asses remained a small-scale speciality of the region. Asses were inexpensive to keep and each spring, after the birth of the foals, local breeders were able to reap a prompt cash return on sales and hirings.

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[1]Mortimer, loc. cit.; KAO PRC 11/46/15, 11/61/31, 11/75/164, 11/82/164, 11/84/65.

[2]Ashton, loc. cit.; Kentish Post 29 October 1726, 28 June 1728, 1 May 1742, 13 April 1748, 18 May 1751.

G Conclusion

A detailed investigation of livestock husbandry in a region renowned primarily for its arable products is perhaps unusual. Hitherto, historians have generally related studies of livestock farming to the more specialized districts within the "highland" zone of England and Wales. The present survey helps to redress the balance and attempts to demonstrate that livestock production in north-east Kent was important in its own right while, at the same time, it made a valuable contribution to the arable sector. The precise role of livestock in the regional economy varied, of course, according to the particular type of animal considered.

The high level of investment in horses relates directly to expanding arable production and the virtual disappearance of draught oxen. Nearly every farmer possessed valuable work-horses and on some farms, notably in Thanet, horse-breeding skills were highly developed. Nevertheless, despite significant progress towards self sufficiency by the breeding of farmhorse replacements, north-east Kent remained a deficit area and large numbers of young horses of every type were imported from the Midland counties and the north.

The ubiquitous pig fared well on Kentish farms and, once fattened by intensive feeding methods, provided an indispensable, all-year-round supply of pork and lard for the farmer and his household. Surplus hogs sold to neighbours, local butchers and the navy resulted in valuable cash returns. Kentish farmers were well-known for their prowess in preserving vast quantities of pig meat in tubs of salt, while the brawn-making specialists of Canterbury established an industry which soon acquired an enviable nationwide reputation.

Poultry found a place on most farms although numbers and total values remained slight. Despite evidence of turkey breeding near Faversham as early as the 1550's and some measure of specialization in the rearing of

geese and fowls in Sheppey and east Kent, local farmers seldom developed their poultry enterprises on the scale associated with certain other counties, for example neighbouring Sussex.

The most important sheep farmers of the region grazed their flocks extensively along the coastal marshes from Rainham to Faversham or beyond, and in orchards throughout the north Kent fruit belt, or else - as in Thanet - managed their flocks on an intensive folding system using the new fodder crops. Sheep farming, thus characterized by a variety of management techniques, was an activity usually undertaken by arable farmers. Even large-scale Sheppey graziers usually cultivated considerable acreages of wheat, oats and beans locally, while other marshland flocks belonged to farmers whose main arable enterprises lay some distance away, on the higher ground south of Watling Street. On the light soils of Thanet a closer integration of sheep with crop husbandry is evident: leys of sainfoin, trefoil and clover fattened folded stock, the dung from which raised the yields of the cereal courses. The local Kent breed was well adapted to management in marsh and orchard, the West Country breeds (and their crosses) more suited to the intensive fold system. Marketing outlets for lamb and mutton were numerous in local towns and at London; the business of butchering boomed. The legitimate wool trade suffered from atrociously low price levels and large numbers of wool producers were obliged or persuaded to seek higher returns in a risky but profitable clandestine trade that reached large proportions during this period.

The region was characterized by numerous, small-scale mixed cattle enterprises, with some dairying as well as fattening on permanent grassland, and a marked dependence on stock imported from beyond the county. Milk production was therefore widespread although sales of liquid milk remained extremely localized; there was probably a tendency towards some degree of concentration around Canterbury and other large towns. The

more fastidious customer could purchase asses' milk or, better still, might buy or hire a newly-foaled ass from a local breeder. Much liquid milk was manufactured on the farm into cheese (and to some extent butter), largely for domestic use, occasionally for local sale. Large numbers of animals were produced for the local and London beef trades, lush coastal grazings being particularly well suited to this type of activity. Hides were a valuable by-product and an important local tanning industry had existed in the Faversham district from at least the sixteenth century. The dung from yarded cattle was another esteemed by-product; mixens of rotting farmyard manure were a familiar feature of many arable fields. A deficiency of country-bred cattle was met by the importation of large numbers of Welsh, Scottish and northern beasts. This inward traffic of livestock is admirably illustrated by the Welsh droving trade, the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER 8

DROVERS AND CATTLE PLAGUE

The annual migration of cattle from the rearing regions of Wales to the fattening pastures of England, and the life of the drovers who led them, is a well known epic of agrarian history.

The long journey from north Wales to Kent, over 250 miles and occupying some three weeks droving time, was undertaken as early as the sixteenth century.[1] The ancient borough and county town of Maidstone acquired, during the reign of James I, a reputation as the chief mart for Welsh store cattle. These were sold at the Michaelmas or Runt Fair held each year on 6 and 7 October.[2] Reared on the mountains of Merioneth and Caernarvonshire, and the maritime pastures of Anglesey, entrusted to drovers at the late summer fairs, and herded across the breadth of England into the heart of Kent, some thousands of black dual-purpose runts were purchased avidly by farmers from all parts of the county during the seventeenth century. The origins and habitat of the breed have recently been described by the secretary of the Welsh Black Cattle Society:

> The Welsh Black breed is still predominant in many parts of the Principality, especially in Merionethshire, North Cardiganshire, and parts of Caernarvonshire, Denbighshire and Montgomeryshire. These cattle are amongst the oldest in Britain, being the descendants of the cattle which the ancient Britons took with them to their mountain fastness as they retreated from the invading Saxons. The Welsh Blacks have been bred on Welsh hill farms for hundreds of years, under very cold and wet climatic conditions, and therefore they have inherited a toughness which makes them well known for their hardiness and thriftiness.[3]

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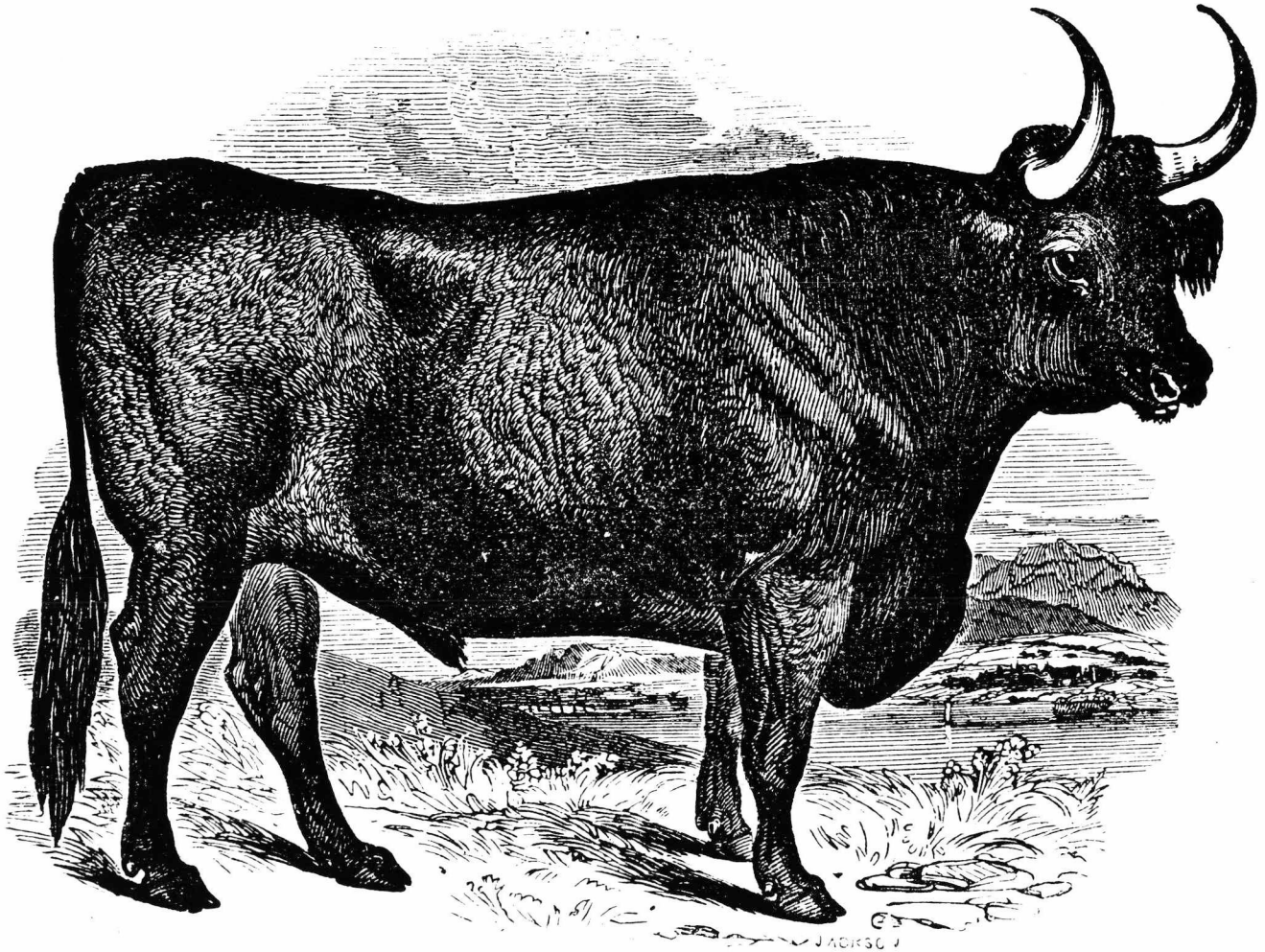
[1] See my article 'Welsh Drovers in Kent', Cantium, V, no. 1 (1973), where I discuss in more detail the evidence relating to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

[2] J. Russell, The History of Maidstone (Maidstone 1881), 311.

[3] G. Williams Edwards, 'Welsh Black', Cattle of Britain (HMSO 1963).

Plate 8

The Anglesey ox from William Youatt, Cattle: their breeds, management and diseases (1860).



[*The Anglesey Ox.*]

Large numbers of Welsh cattle were sent each year to entrepôts in Shropshire where experienced dealers found it convenient to assemble droves intended for Kentish marts. Richard Gough described this trade and the personnel involved during the first half of the seventeenth century:

> Robert Mather was a stranger in this country /Shropshire/ ... Hee was a person very expert in buying and selling of Catle, and had a comission to be one of the King's purveyors, which was an office to buy fatt beasts for the King's houshould. Some of these Officers did wrong the Country very much, for the Purveyor would come to a fayre or Markett with his long Goad in his hand, and when he saw a paire of oxen that were for his purpose, hee would lay his Goad upon them, and if they were unsold, would mark them for the King's use, unlesse the owner gave him silver persuasions to forbeare; but if the oxen were once marked, the owner durst not sell them to any other, and the purveyor would take care not to give too much. These purveyors were likewise drovyers, who bought catle in this country, and brought them into Kent to sell again.[1]

A marked improvement in English living standards in the early eighteenth century was accompanied by a growing demand for beef which resulted in a great expansion of the cattle trade, redounding to the benefit of livestock farmers and drovers alike.[2] In Kent, urban prosperity grew apace: leading market centres (Canterbury, Maidstone), fashionable resorts (Tunbridge Wells, Margate), and burgeoning naval stations (Chatham, Dover, Deal), vied with each other - and all of them with London - for the county's yearly output of grain, fruit, meat and dairy produce. Local farming changes demonstrated, above all else, the relevance and profitability of keeping larger numbers of livestock on permanent pastures of Weald and Marsh, as well as in mixed enterprises elsewhere.

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[1] Richard Gough, History of Myddle (1968), 74. Gough's work was written between 1700 and 1706. I owe this reference to the kindness of Dr David Hey.

[2] J.D. Chambers and G.E. Mingay, The Agricultural Revolution 1750-1880 (1966), 42.

From the late seventeenth century, the rate of growth of cattle trading in the eastern half of Kent was almost certainly greater than elsewhere in the county: it became increasingly profitable for drovers to take their herds, year after year, from the northern rearing counties of Wales to markets as far away as Charing, Chilham, Canterbury and Wingham. Northern steers were the main attraction at the autumn fairs of Charing (5½ miles NW of Ashford) and Chilham (5 miles SW of Canterbury) throughout the seventeenth century.[1] Subsequently the situation changed when, during the first half of the eighteenth century, these centres became important marts for Welsh runts.[2] Each year, on 18 October, "many droves of Welch cattle" arrived at Charing for sale to local farmers. Chilham Fair (28-29 October) had achieved a considerable reputation by the mid-eighteenth century, as the premier Kentish market for the sale of Welsh store cattle. The final stage of the journey - from fair to farm - was not, however, without its problems. Finding themselves alongside strange companions, and goaded by unfamiliar farm servants, bullocks would sometimes stray from the newly-assembled herd. One such instance occurred "coming from Charing Fair" in 1728, when a 26-stone black runt was presumed "lost". Sometimes, on the contrary, a homeward-bound herd would, unwittingly, gather size:

> ... on the 28th of October last, Mr Daniel Kelly of Eastry and Josiah Foart of St. Bartholomew's near Sandwich, had a drove of Welsh beasts driving home the first day of Chilham Fair, and loosing sight of their servants two other Welsh steers came into the drove more than our own ...[3]

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[1] E.D. Lodge, The Account Book of a Kentish Estate 1616-1704, Records of the Social and Economic History of England and Wales, VI (1927), 2, 34, 47, 62.

[2] Maidstone remained the chief centre in west Kent for the sale of Welsh cattle. Unfortunately evidence is lacking for Kentish markets other than those discussed in this chapter.

[3] Kentish Post 23 October, 7 December 1728.

Identification was difficult of course, unless brand marks were clearly visible, leaving ownership beyond dispute:

> Lost in coming from Maidstone Fair, a twelve-monthing Welch heifer, marked with a notch just above the huckle-bone and the Welchman's mark just below it. Whoever will bring it or give an account of it to John Gurney of Cottington shall be satisfied for their trouble.[1]

During the 1680's Canterbury entered upon a long period of unprecedented prosperity which was due largely to the City's dual role as a centre of conspicuous consumption and the chief commercial and marketing centre for east Kent.[2] Improved market facilities, lower tolls, and eventually free trade in livestock, were the result of an enlightened policy on the part of the Corporation, designed to encourage outsiders to bring their business to the City. As early as 1682 it was ordered that "six substantial penns" should be built "for the benefit of the /Cattle/ Market" whose trade was rapidly expanding; further "new penns for cattle" were erected in 1690. Special encouragement was given to Welsh drovers. On 25 January 1686 it was enacted:

> The Clark of the Fairs and Cattle Market from henceforth is to take for toll but twenty pence the score for Welsh bullocks brought for Sale.[3]

Although the toll for local cattle was reduced to a reasonable level it was nevertheless twice the rate levied on Welsh beasts:

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[1] Ibid., 20 October 1733.

[2] D. Baker, 'The Marketing of Corn in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century: North-east Kent', Agricultural History Review, XVIII (1970) pt. 2, 127.

[3] City of Canterbury MS. Bunce's Abridgement of the Court of Burghmote 1542-1793, presented by Alderman Cyprian Rondeau Bunce to the Court of Burghmote at the Guildhall, City of Canterbury on 20 May 1794, 258.

> 24 July 1688 The Clerk of the Fair and Cattle Market from henceforth is to take but 2d a head for the toll of Kentish beasts.[1]

When toll charges were revised a few years later the policy of Welsh preference was prolonged and the differential widened:

> 16 November 1691 It is ordered that for all beasts sold in the Beast Market without St. George's Gate the seller thereof shall pay the rates foll^{g} vizt.
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Horses mares or geldings per head | 4d |
> | Country bulls stears oxen & kine per head | 4d |
> | Country calves per head | 1d |
> | Welch bulls kine oxen & stears per head | 1d |
> | Sheep & weaned lambs per score | 6d |
> | Hogs & weaned pigs per head | 1d |

Finally, it was decided in 1693, that:

> The Cattle Market without St. George's Gate from henceforth is to be a free market so that all persons may have access & bring their cattle there to be sold without being compelled to pay any toll or duty ...

The employment of attendants "to take care of the penns" was a measure specially designed "for encouraging this market".[2]

The Cattle Market in Canterbury quickly achieved recognition as a leading Kentish centre for the sale and distribution of Welsh stock, a role it retained until beyond the middle of the nineteenth century.[3] Lord Harley, second Earl of Oxford, was travelling through Kent in August 1723. He was accompanied by his Welsh chaplain who recorded his pleasure at meeting, on the road to Canterbury, two of his own countrymen "driving some Welsh cattle from Bartholomew Fair". The drovers, who were almost certainly bound for Canterbury Market, "were highly delighted

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[1] Ibid., 259.

[2] Ibid., 260.

[3] W. Youatt, Cattle: their Breeds, Management and Diseases (1860), 47.

as well as myself with my addressing them in their own language, though I dare say they were much better pleased with my Lord's taking notice of them in plain English after he had observed our conversation, and bidding them take up a piece of white money which he threw to them to drink their friend's health, which I presume they did very heartily in the first tavern they got to".[1]

In a recent work on the droving trade K.J. Bonser includes a map showing drovers' routes across England from the Welsh border.[2] Unfortunately there are no details of the roads followed through Kent. The map suggests, however, that cattle from South Wales entered Kent by two routes, both of which passed south of London. Some droves apparently reached Kent via Goring (Oxon.), Maidenhead (Berks.), and Hounslow, presumably crossing the Thames at Richmond and following a south-circular route to Lewisham or thereabouts, from whence main roads to either Maidstone (present-day A 20) or Chatham (A 2) could be followed. The second route pursued a south-easterly direction from Reading to Guildford, part of an ancient track way which continued as far as Dorking; thereafter main thoroughfares would enable the drovers to reach either Maidstone or Tonbridge via Sevenoaks. However, since most of the Welsh cattle sold in Kent came from North Wales, it must be questioned whether these routes were ever of great significance.

As Bonser's map shows, cattle from North Wales followed the ancient and important "Welsh Road" which approached London from the north west. Kent-bound droves from North Wales either passed through London (where some of the heavier animals might be sold) or they were ferried across

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[1] 'Journeys in England by Lord Harley', Historical Manuscripts Commission, 16th Rep. Portland, VI, 78; the Welshmen were coming "from Bartholomew Fair" at Smithfield because, presumably, some of their drove had been sold in that market, while the remainder were intended for sale in east Kent.

[2] K.J. Bonser, The Drovers: Who they were and how they went; an epic of the English countryside (1970), 186-7.

the Thames from the Essex shore. South east of London, between Bromley and Woolwich, were a number of large heaths which provided adequate temporary grazing facilities for the Welsh stores. No ancient drove roads per se have been found in Kent and there is every indication that the Welshmen used main roads the most important of which was undoubtedly Watling Street (A 2). It seems virtually certain that most Welsh drovers in Kent used this main thoroughfare which crosses the Medway at Rochester and provides the most direct route to Canterbury and east Kent. Cattle intended for Maidstone deviated southwards from Chatham for seven or eight miles and these droves no doubt included beasts bound for Charing Fair.[1] Droves heading for the marts at Challock and Chilham probably travelled along Watling Street as far as Faversham, thereafter following a southerly route (A 251). Many drovers, of course, continued as far as Canterbury to sell their beasts, some to Wingham.

There is no evidence that Welshmen ventured into the Kentish Weald which probably helps to explain the significance of cattle fairs at Charing and Chilham, situated at important crossroads and which provided easy access not only for those who farmed on the Sandstone Ridge but also for Wealden farmers to the south. Of special importance to north-east Kent were the marts at Canterbury and Wingham, the latter providing an attractive centre for farmers in Thanet and the Sandwich district.

Some idea of the financial organization relating to the Welsh cattle trade can be gained from an examination of Exchequer Depositions. During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries trading activities became the subject of litigation and two cases throw considerable light on the financing of the Welsh droving business. In particular "they indicate the hardly suspected existence of a pact of mutual advantage between the taxes administration of the period and those engaged in

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[1] Some drovers would have used the alternative route from London to Maidstone which passes through Lewisham, Sidcup and Wrotham (A 20).

trade".[1]

It appears that Welsh drovers were enabled to purchase for ready money large numbers of cattle during the summer months using funds borrowed from government tax collectors. In 1693, for instance, sums which varied between £60 and £250 were advanced to dealer-drovers in Denbighshire by the local agents of the Receiver-General for Wales. These loans were paid out of receipts for taxes and were secured by bonds. The debts were later discharged in London after the drovers had sold their beasts. In 1693 Edward Jones, Evan Roberts, Henry Lloyd, and other Denbigh dealers engaged in the long-distance droving trade from Wales to England borrowed, between them, several hundred pounds from Edward Fox, a local tax agent. Sometimes loans were advanced to individual drovers, on other occasions to groups of drovers who had formed temporary partnerships for the season. Repayment of these short-term[2] advances was made at London through the services of Smithfield innkeepers. Thus, for example, in August 1693 Edward Jones of Graige Ddu co. Denbigh paid £60 to Hugh Jones of The Bell Inn at Smithfield on behalf of Evan Roberts and Henry Lloyd, in order to discharge a bond which they had entered into with Edward Fox earlier that year. Similarly, in the autumn 1693, William Jones paid to the Smithfield innkeeper a further £82 on behalf of Roberts and Lloyd to discharge a debt incurred in Wales. It is clear from the evidence that the dealers did not always discharge their debts in person but often entrusted the task to fellow dealers, partners, or head drovers employed by them at the time. This evidence is undoubtedly reliable since the deponents had had long experience in the cattle business and one of them was explicit that he had been driving

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[1] O. Parry, 'The Financing of the Welsh Cattle Trade in the Eighteenth Century', Bulletin of Celtic Studies, VIII, pt. 1 (Nov. 1935), 45-61; PRO E134 12 & 13 Wm.III/Hil. 11, 18 Geo.II/East. 8.

[2] Loans were granted for from one month to seven or eight months.

cattle "upon the London Roade this 30 years for one body or another".[1]

During the 1730's and '40's drovers in Radnorshire borrowed, on the security of bonds, sizeable sums from Robert Clayton, Receiver-General of the King's land tax in the county of Hereford. It was reported that Clayton was "accustomed to lend His Majesty's money to drovers for his own advantage". Evan Bowen of the parish of Llanyre co. Radnor was "a common drover buying sheep and cattle in Hereford and Radnor and adjacent parts and selling them at several fairs and markets in and abt. ye City of London and elsewhere". Bowen frequently borrowed from Clayton and always paid twenty-five shillings "as a premium or gratuity for lending every £100 advanced for a month only".[2]

It was stated at the time that "the usual manner he /Clayton/ returned his money to London was to lend money to Drovers and buyers and sellers of Cattle and they to pay the sd. money into ye Bank of England for and on ye accot of ... Clayton and to bring him a Bank receipt for the same ...". On one occasion Evan Bowen paid £200 on Clayton's account into the Bank of England and brought him a Bank receipt. At the same time Bowen asked for a further £200 "to carry on the business of drover of cattle" leaving the first bond in Clayton's hand as security; Clayton accepted this arrangement.[3]

David Williams, another local drover of long experience, stated that he had frequently borrowed money from Clayton for which he had given bonds and that the Receiver-General had usually directed him to discharge his debts by making payments to the Bank of England. Williams affirmed

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[1] Parry, op. cit., 49-52.

[2] It was stated by another deponent that the premium (i.e. interest) usually paid by the drovers to Clayton "for lending and advancing such money was five Pounds for every hundred pounds for six, seven, or eight months or Twenty five shillings for every hundred pounds for a month or so in proportion for every lesser or greater sum". - Parry, op. cit., 56.

[3] Ibid., 54-5.

that this pattern of financial organization was widespread and had been in use many years. The advantages of the system for the drovers were clearly spelt out by Williams:

> And this deponent looked upon the method of remitting money to be easy and advantageous to him, for that the money which he received in the country of the said Mr Clayton enabled this deponent to buy cattle with ready money and consequently at a cheaper rate than if he bought them on credit, and for that the receiving at Hereford the money which this deponent paid at the Bank over and above what he actually owed Mr Clayton did save the expence of returning the same and prevent the danger of being robbed thereof.[1]

Unfortunately the available evidence relating to the financing of the Welsh cattle trade does not specifically mention Kentish markets.[2] But there is no reason to suppose that the drovers who travelled into Kent each year would not have taken advantage of a convenient system in general use at the time. The short-term borrowing of public funds would thus have enabled the drovers to effect favourable cash deals in Wales and would have obviated the need to carry large sums of money on the long and risky return journey from Kent.

Documentary evidence relating to individual drovers is scanty, earlier than the nineteenth century especially so. A rustic race of men, humble and unassuming, and their lives circumscribed by custom and oral tradition, drovers wrote sparingly - even when they were literate. Rarely they entered the limelight, occasionally they could not avoid it. One such unsolicited and prolonged episode occupied the morbid years of the mid-eighteenth century. Of all the hazards encountered by drovers and their herds, none was more dreaded or devastating than the disease known as distemper or cattle plague, more modernly rinderpest. Cattle plague is an acute, virulent and highly infectious disease which causes

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[1] Ibid., 59.

[2] There is, however, a reference to Welsh beasts sold in Sussex.

diptheritic inflammation of the mucous membranes, especially in the intestines. The onset was rapid, there was no known cure, and frequently entire herds perished.[1] By far the worst outbreak of cattle plague in these islands was in 1745, when it spread from the Continent to London and Essex. Despite stringent government policy the plague persisted for thirteen years: at least half a million animals perished, the agricultural economy was disrupted, and farmers, graziers and drovers suffered crippling losses. Physicians, farmers and laymen suggested remedies but, in the event, medical knowledge proved mistaken, veterinary practice immature, and folklore prescriptions downright harmful. The government's response, however, was immediate, and where local authorities co-operated some amelioration resulted.[2] General statutes in 1746 and 1747[3] provided the authority for subsequent Orders of the Privy Council: livestock movements at fairs and markets were restricted; infected beasts were slaughtered, their burials regulated, compensation was paid to owners; salaried inspectors were appointed to enforce the Orders. Anticipating the modern form by nearly two hundred years, these exceptional government measures consistently reflected the most enlightened opinion of the day.[4]

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[1]The chairman of the Veterinary History Society recently put the matter succinctly when he explained that while foot and mouth disease spreads quickly but does not kill, and pleuro-pneumonia spreads slowly but proves fatal, rinderpest is both rapid in its spread and is a certain killer. - S.A. Hall, 'Statutory Control of Animal Diseases', paper presented at the Conference of the British Agricultural History Society, 30 November 1974.

[2]C.F. Mullett, 'The Cattle Distemper in Mid-Eighteenth-Century England', Agricultural History, XX, no. 3 (1946), 144-65.

[3]19 Geo.II c5; 20 Geo.II c4. Government legislation relating to cattle plague was widely publicised and justices of the peace took care to see that copies of the new law were displayed locally. Richard Tylden, for example, recorded on 24 January 1747 the sum of one shilling he had "receed of ye Churchwarden of Milsted for ye Act about ye cattle".

[4]See Journals of the House of Commons, XXV (1745-50), for example 15, 17, 21, 22 January and 13 February 1746, and 8 March 1750.

The drovers from Wales continued to make their annual trek into Kent during the 1740's and 1750's but inevitably found themselves caught up in the catastrophe: their beasts dropped dead by the dozen and markets were closed against the survivors. In Kent, at least, the situation appears to have been most critical in the years 1747-8 and 1753-5. Following Privy Council Orders[1] "for the more effectual preventing the spreading of the distemper which now rages among the horned cattle in this kingdom", the justices in Quarter Sessions at Canterbury required "persons /in East Kent/ who belong to any droves of lean Welch cattle remaining now unsold" to report with their herds at ten o'clock on 17 October 1747 in the precincts of the old Castle so that their cattle might be examined for symptoms of disease. The local justices were enjoined to make "a speedy return" of their findings to Whitehall. Either drovers failed to show up or justices neglected their duty, for the return was still awaited in London some weeks later:

> 21 November 1747 I am commanded by the Lords of His Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council to desire you to transmit to me with all convenient speed the present state of the health of the cattle in your county that their Lordships may be informed whether the said distemper encreases or decreases at this time.[2]

James Colebrook, local landowner and J.P., publicised his resolve to co-operate with the central government in halting the spread of cattle plague. But the burden of his decision fell heavily on Welsh drovers already in the neighbourhood that autumn:

> Whereas by His Majesty's Order of the 8th day of September last past, all persons are forbid ... to send, drive, or remove ... any lean ox, bull, cow, calf, steer or heifer, or offer the same to sale in any fair, market, parish or place, for the space of three kalendar months.

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[1] Privy Council Orders, 8 September, 1 October 1747.

[2] KAO Q/SB 1747: letter from "Whitehall Council Chamber" signed by W. Sharp, to "Clerk of the Peace Kent".

> And whereas at the fair usually kept at Chilham on the 28th Oct, it is apprehended that several dealers and drovers of Welch beasts design to expose to sale great numbers of lean horned cattle: notice is hereby given ... that no lean horned cattle will be permitted to be brought into the said fair. And in order to prevent the same, he is resolved not to lett or hire out any of his land; and insists, that none of his neighbours or tenants within the Manor of Chilham, do hire out or lett any land for that purpose.
>
> James Colebrook.[1]

The following autumn, cattle plague was again rife throughout Kent, as elsewhere.[2] Once again Chilham Fair was cancelled. This time, however, cattle already in the area were quarantined in the grounds of a local peer and advertised for sale as healthy stock:

> Whereas some infected cattle have been brought into and have died in the county of Kent, it has been thought expedient to cry down Chilham Fair this year; and as it is probable the same precaution will be taken in other places, this is to advertise all gentlemen, farmers and graziers, that there is now in Eastwell Park upwards of seven hundred Welch runts belonging to the several Welch gentlemen underwritten, viz.

Oct 4	Mr Rice Price brought in	30
Oct 8	Mr Elles Owen	24
Oct 16	Mr William Rowland	84
Oct 17	Mr Price	62
Oct 20	Mr John Morris	162
Oct 21	Mr Griffith Owen	81
Oct 21	Mr Ames	150
Oct 23	Mr Will. Williams	123
		716

> which said runts have been pastur'd in Eastwell Park ... and have continued perfectly well and free from contagion or distemper whatsoever, so that all gentlemen, farmers and graziers may depend upon being accommodated in the said park with sound and healthy cattle, whenever they please. And the Earl of Winchelsea has given positive orders to admit of no fresh cattle being brought into the said park until these Welsh gentlemen have disposed of their stock. Signed by order of the Earl of Winchelsea Eastwell-Park 27th October 1748.

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[1] Kentish Post 28 October 1747.

[2] There appears to have been a seasonal pattern: the plague was usually at its worst during the period from September to February.

Unfortunately-- and perhaps, in the circumstances, hardly surprisingly - we have no record of any previous depletions suffered by these herds. The stated totals are obviously net figures: some of the droves must have been considerably larger when they left Wales. Some animals, of course, would have been sold en route, possibly at Smithfield or, maybe, in west Kent. But many, undoubtedly, must have fallen victims of the plague. Particularly so when we remember that "the distemper which now rages amongst the horned cattle has broke out amongst the Welch beasts at or near Charing" - only a few miles away. There was an outbreak also at Wingham Fair, and a week later, the disease had spread as far as New Romney, where four "Welch Beasts" - the property of Robert Vaughan - had just died.[1]

One Welsh drover, at least, received recompense at Canterbury in 1748: three infected bullocks belonging to William Lewis were valued at £4 each when they were slaughtered; he received the maximum compensation of forty shillings for each animal. Three years later, when Lewis was again in Canterbury, he was granted certificates entitling him to £10 compensation from the government.[2] Among the Cattle Disease Papers in the Kent Quarter Sessions Records are some duplicate "Certificates for the Recompense for Distempered Horned Cattle ...". Twenty-three certificates have survived, twenty covering a short period from January to April 1754, one issued on 13 February 1755, and two dated 22 April 1757.[3] It was required, at the time, that each certificate should bear the date of issue, the amount allowed in compensation and "the Name and Place of Residence of the Person to whom Granted". Not surprisingly, most of the recipients were local farmers, but four were Welsh drovers who received,

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[1] Kentish Post 22, 29 October, 5 November 1748.

[2] KAO Q/SB 1748-9, 1751.

[3] Ibid., 1754-7.

between them, eight certificates. Three of these men we have encountered already: William Rowland and Ellis Owen, who were among the drovers quarantined with their herds in Eastwell Park in 1748, and William Lewis, who was unfortunate enough to incur losses in both 1748 and 1750.

On 15 January 1754, at the Quarter Sessions adjournment meeting held at Wingham,[1] Sir George Oxenden and John Hugessen Esquire approved a grant of £12 to "William Rowland of TanyBwlch in Merionetshire" in compensation for losses of cattle due to plague. On the same day, a meeting by adjournment held "in Christchurch Yard" /Canterbury/ allowed three certificates to "Ellis Owen of Yuncynhaiern /sic/ in Carnarvon", amounting to £29 15s. and three certificates to "William Lewis of Aberdaron in Carnarvonshire" for sums of £50, £20 and £18 respectively. Finally, at the Quarter Sessions adjournment meeting held at The Mitre inn, Maidstone on 7 February, a certificate for £36 was issued to "William Jones of the Parish of Lanavyd /Llanefydd/ in the County of Denbigh in North Wales". In all, the Welshmen received £165 15s. for their diseased livestock slaughtered in Kent during the autumn and winter months 1753-4, representing some three quarters of the total compensation paid out on the extant certificates for that year. Put another way, the four Welsh drovers lost, altogether, three times as many cattle as did eleven local farmers during the same period. William Lewis of Aberdaron Co. Caernarvonshire, sustained the greatest losses with upwards of 40 beasts slaughtered - more than six times as many as the most heavily compensated Kentish farmer.

There is good reason for thinking that this local evidence is a fairly true reflection of the plight of drovers in general: their herds were highly vulnerable to disease-attack and, during the worst outbreaks

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[1] Wingham is an extensive village, lying six miles from Canterbury, on the road to Sandwich; Wingham Cattle Fair (12 November) was visited regularly by Welsh drovers.

of cattle plague, they sustained losses perhaps nine or ten times greater than farmers. Clearly, if a drove of over a hundred - perhaps even two hundred beasts - were travelling and feeding across varied terrain for long distances when distemper was endemic, the chances of contagion were extremely high. Especially so when infected farms and market areas were encountered. Once contracted, the continuous close proximity of animals in the drove, ensured a rapid spread of the disease. Segregation of a suspect, the wise farmer's precaution, was out of the question on the drove-road. Even in normal times, "the local farmers hastily moved their own cattle to a safe distance when it was rumoured that a Welsh drove was on the way".[1] In the plague years, something like an unofficial state of emergency was declared. Time out of number drovers were blamed for spreading the distemper. It seems that their animals may well have been the chief carriers.

A livestock movement prohibition order, issued in General Quarter Sessions at Maidstone in January 1751, was prefaced by the observation:

> ... the said distemper hath spread itself in divers places in this county by the bringing of Welsh and other cattle into the same.[2]

During the autumn of 1753 a report in the Kentish Post described the catastrophic effects of the cattle plague across the northern highway of Kent:

> The distemper amongst the horned cattle hath lately appeared in the parish of Beckenham in Kent. We hear that no cattle will be admitted at Chilham Fair tomorrow without proper & satisfactory certificates of health.
>
> In a letter from a gentleman at Chatham dated Nov. 3 there is the following sad account viz. that the contagious distemper amongst the cattle is now broke out at that place & places adjacent, by means of several droves of Welsh

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[1] Chambers & Mingay, op. cit., 30.

[2] KAO Q/SO E7/216.

> cattle which are infected; and those that survive are now gone forward towards Canterbury & the eastern part of Kent, and there are no less than 97 now dead in the roads between Chatham & Canterbury & others dying every hour in the woods and fields near the roads ... Mr Munn had 2 died last night & 4 shot. Mr Groombridge has lost 6 & the remainder are all sick. Another farmer there is likely to lose all. These were all bought out of the Welsh droves and several of the cows about Chatham appear to be infected.[1]

On the 7 November 1753, it was reported from Minster (Isle of Sheppey) that "the distemper is broke out in our parish amongst some Welch beasts". Two weeks later, a local official from the eastern extremity of the county, reported a similar occurrence:

> Nov. 22 1753 This is to give you notis that the contages dystemper has appeared among the Welch horned cattell of Edward Emington of the parrish of Saltwood nex Hyth ... weare of one is keld and bured ...

An inspector in the Ashford district reported on 17 December 1753:

> ... the distemper has been amongst the Welch beasts in the parish of Boughton Aluph upwards of a month and continues raging there still ... I have shot 45 and buried them together with 5 or 6 that died of such distemper, having first slash'd their hides according to law.[2]

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[1] Kentish Post 7 November 1753.

[2] It was made illegal for farmers to sell the hides of infected cattle. Moreover, tanners were under a legal obligation to ensure that they purchased hides only from healthy sources. This requirement was made clear in a letter issued by the London Excise Office in 1749: "Whereas it is apprehended that the distemper which still rages amongst the horned cattle, has been greatly spread and increased by tanners and others buying the hides and skins of infected beasts, and carrying the same secretly to their tan yards wherefore for preventing the same for the future, be it enacted ... that every tanner, tawer or dresser of hides or skins, shall before he bring any raw hide or skin of any bull, cow, ox, calf, steer or heifer into his tan yard, workhouse, warehouse or place used for dressing or manufacturing of hides or skins give notice to the Officer of Excise of the district in which such tan yard or dressing place is situated, and ... produce to the said officer a certificate under the hand and seal, or hands and seals, of one or more Justice or Justices of the Peace or Commissioners of ye Land Tax, specifying the colour of such hide or skin and that ... the beast from which such hide or skin was taken was sound". Customs Library, Canterbury Collection 1718-84: General Letter (Order) No. 76 (July 1749).

At a special hearing in Chatham on 14 January 1754, after listening carefully to the inspector's evidence, local justices George Hinde and William Parry believed they had established the source of the current outbreak:

> its apprehended the said distemper was brought into the county of Kent by Welch cattle which were drove thro' the county of Essex to the opposite shore in Kent and which if not prevented may be the cause of bringing the same distemper again into the said county of Kent.[1]

There was probably a great deal of truth in this assertion and there is evidence that the final warning was taken seriously. The astute and diligent William Russell of Sydenham had been appointed "Inspector of the Horned Cattle for the Western Division of the County" in 1748. He rode many miles around the county each year, especially within the large, densely populated Hundred of Blackheath, vetting every drove of cattle which came his way, paying particular attention to those entering and leaving fairs and markets. He was careful to keep a record of his outlay in execution of his duties - Expences Self and Horse Attending the Cattle Service - accounting for each occasion on which he examined a batch of animals. On 4 September 1755, for instance, Russell inspected "cattle coming from a Welch fair and Smithfield" which involved him in 3s. expenditure. His most expensive single undertaking during the whole of that year - it cost him 10s. - came a few days later:

> Ninth of September at night and tenth all day a journey and attendance at Greenhive /Greenhithe/ to prevent cattle coming over the Thames in the ferry boat from Harlow Bush Fair without producing certificates of their health as by order of the justices at Greenwich the distemper now raging

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[1] KAO Q/SB 1753-4.

> amongst the Welch horned cattle in Essex and have so done for sometime past.[1]

The Minutes of the Admiralty Victualling Board show that during the late 1740's and early '50's the heavy incidence of cattle plague in Kent created difficult problems for the Navy. Some of the solutions may have helped to spread the distemper. One of the contractors for Chatham, the Nore and Sheerness, through his skirmishes with the Navy Board, provides us with evidence that he was meeting the contract by shipping across from Leigh in Essex. Probably the cattle had been driven from Wales or the north but the mention of Aveley and Orsett (both on the London - Leigh route) seems to indicate that Slapp bought his droves at Smithfield and used the south Essex route to deliver. The evidence also reveals that the situation reached a critical point in 1747-8 with regard to the distemper, such that mutton had to be substituted for beef. Attempts to find alternative sources of distemper-free cattle also reveal that the Navy, for Chatham at least, did not buy its cattle in Kent where, it was claimed, prices were much higher than elsewhere. The persistence of the plague in north Kent is confirmed in the records for 1750-5: tenders for mutton only were called for at Chatham but beef at all other ports.[2]

As both victims and agents of disease, Welsh cattle were highly

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[1] Ibid., 1755. Quarter Sessions records suggest that during the 1740's and '50's inspectors of cattle in the home counties were on constant alert for signs of plague in their districts. In Surrey, for example, Thomas Rowsell (inspector of horned cattle for the western division of the Hundred of Brixton), and Thomas King and Thomas Stacey (inspectors for the Hundred of Wallington) reported numerous outbreaks of "the contagious distemper" during the years 1746-50 at Battersea, Brixton, Camberwell, Croydon, Deptford, Merton, Mitcham, Putney, Sutton and other parishes. They carefully recorded numbers and descriptions of infected beasts which had died or had been slaughtered ("knocked down") and which were eligible for compensation. Sworn statements were supplied certifying that the cattle "were all buried in my sight & the hides cut & slashed on both sides". SRO Surrey QS bundles: Mich. 1748 nos. 19, 20, 21; Epiph. 1748 no. 24; Mich. 1749 no. 4; Epiph. 1749 no. 54; East. 1750 nos. 14, 56; Epiph. 1750 nos. 4, 13, 28, 33.

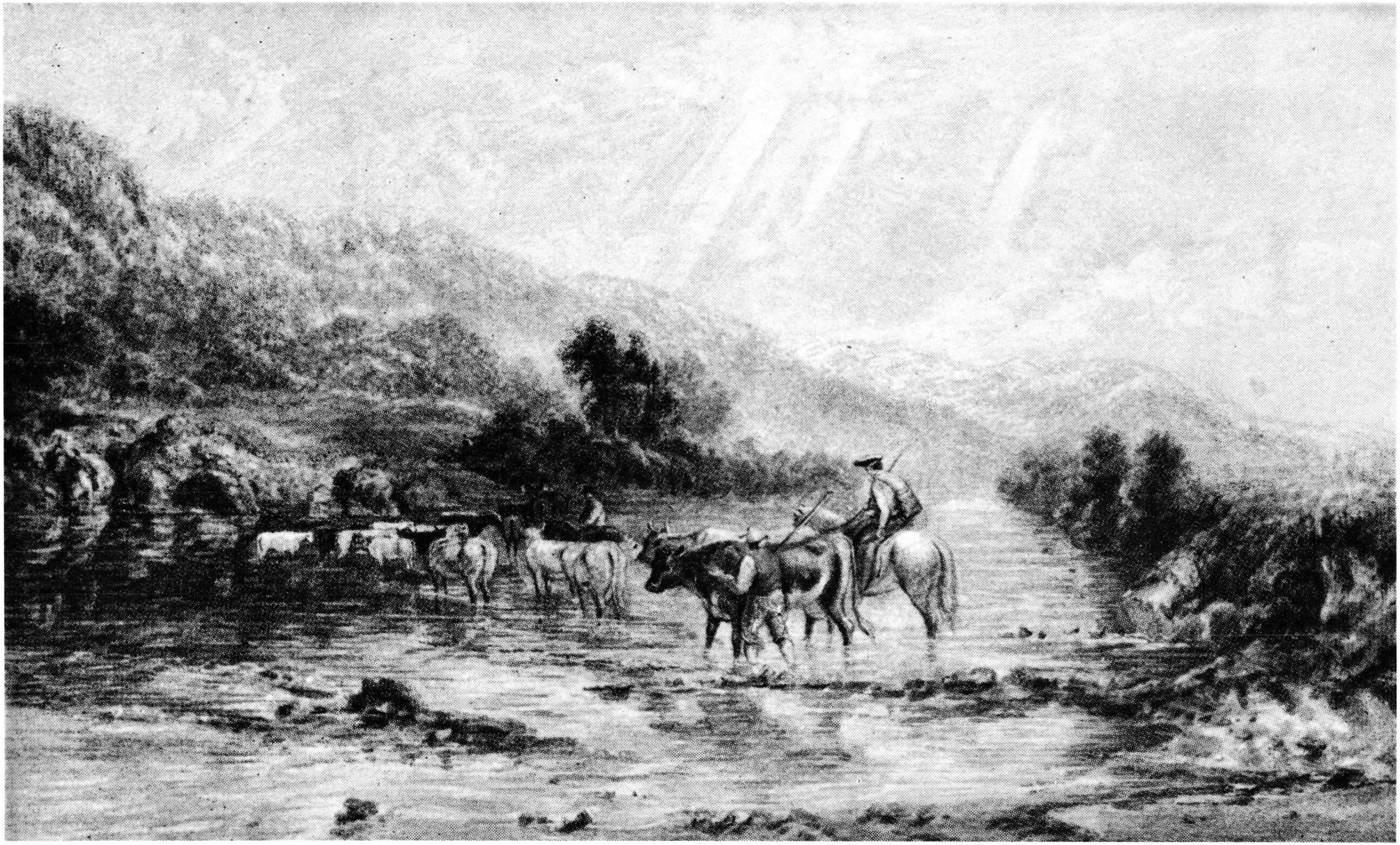
[2] PRO Adm 111/34, 40-2.

suspect in England during the plague years, and consequently government restrictions bore heavily on the drovers. Often they were unable to sell or move their cattle, even when sound; when the fairs and markets re-opened there might be no cattle to sell. However, the available evidence shows that drovers received fair treatment, at least in Kent where local justices readily granted them compensation. Not that these awards were really adequate to cover all their losses: to receive forty shillings for a dead beast which, alive, would have fetched £4, or as much as £7 in a good market, must have seemed less than just. Drovers' actions were circumscribed in other ways too. It was generally known that unscrupulous farmers would surreptitiously kill the "old dry and lean cows by a knock on the head at night" in order to claim compensation at the maximum rate. It was said at the time that more cattle died this way than fell victims of the plague! But for drovers, with herds of valuable prime store cattle, such stealth was pointless and unprofitable.

Remarkably many, perhaps most, drovers survived the disaster, recovered their fortunes and continued in the droving business. William Rowland, William Lewis and Ellis Owen followed their old routes from north Wales to east Kent throughout the 1750's, even in years when the risks were unusually great. Rice Price was another drover who arrived in Kent each year with herds of Welsh cattle. In November 1753 he brought "127 Welch bullocks", described as "very sound", to Eastwell Park. The following spring he arrived at the same venue with "a drove of Welsh bullocks of different sizes, very sound and in good order". Price continued to make his annual trek from Wales to Kent long after the distemper had subsided. In November 1760, for instance, in partnership with William Griffith, he sold Welsh cattle at Eastwell Park as well as at the Mote in Canterbury. The following month Price lodged at The Ship in Fordwich and during this period sold "Welch steers and spaid heifers" in

Plate 9

Welsh drovers from a nineteenth-century painting by H. Tennant, first reproduced in P.G. Hughes, Wales and the Drovers (1943).



nearby Canterbury.[1] Droving was clearly a profitable profession and drovers an indomitable breed of men.[2]

One of the reasons why it was possible for the cattle trade to continue during these years was the fact that the breeding areas were hardly affected by the plague. "The numbers of cattle on those cragged mountains", noted an English traveller in Merionethshire, "are almost incredible". The same observer recorded "great herds of cattle" in Caernarvonshire, and listed "black cattle" as a principal export of Denbighshire. At the time of his writing, English herds were decimated. These were incentives enough: abnormally high rewards - scarcity prices - awaited every drover who managed to get his beasts to the day of sale unscathed, or at least undetected. In any case, half a herd lost with market prices doubled for the survivors, left the equation of net profitability unaltered. And compensation payments tipped the balance. Droving became more of a gamble than usual.

In addition to an undiminished supply of cattle in Wales, and the promise of windfall-gains in England, a further circumstance helps to explain the resilience of the droving business during the years of high risk in the mid-eighteenth century. Droving was a part-time economic activity, a seasonal by-employment which provided a valuable but fluctuating income for innkeepers, farmers, even hard-up landowners; there is no indication that a critical minimum level of profitability prevailed. This side of the droving story has received little attention, probably because information about individual drovers is scarce. It seems that hard-pressed farmers in the northern uplands had greatest need of a by-

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[1] Kentish Post 17 November 1753, 27 April 1754, 19 November and 10 December 1760.

[2] See also: R.C. Reid, 'Some Letters of Thomas Bell, Drover 1746', Trans. Dumfriesshire and Galloway Nat. Hist. and Antiq. Soc., 3rd series, XXII. Benjamin Bell, a Scottish drover, suffered incredible losses of stock during the mid-eighteenth century cattle plague, yet he was comparatively wealthy when he died at the age of eighty-two.

employment and scores of them took to making "Welsh cottons" in order to eke out a livelihood.[1] For others there was the droving business.

At least one of the Welsh drovers who visited the east Kent fairs each autumn during the years of pestilence was an innkeeper: William Rowland of Tan-y-bwlch in the parish of Maentwrog, Co. Merioneth.[2] He was possibly a small farmer as well. It was customary, by the middle of the eighteenth century, for the Merioneth Court of Quarter Sessions "to appoint certain specific days and places for meetings by adjournment for the following three months" where business affecting local interests was discussed. In 1762, the Michaelmas Quarter Sessions was adjourned "to the shire hall at Dolegelley on Monday the 18th October, and from then to the dwelling house of William Rowland of Tanybwlch, innkeeper, on Monday the 25th of the same month". The Easter Quarter Sessions in 1764 was adjourned to Bala on 22 May, Dolgellau on the 25th, and on Wednesday 30 May "to William Rowland's house at Tanybwlch".[3] Two justices attended the adjournment in 1764, which was held at Rowland's inn: David Morris and Hugh Anwyl Esquire of Dolfriog; this appears to have been the only meeting by adjournment that either of them attended during their years on the bench.[4] David Morris was Rector of Ffestiniog cum Maentwrog, 1729-82, and Llangwyfan, 1753-77. He was a landowner, but how substantial it is impossible to say. Certainly the properties of David Morris were widespread, being scattered over six parishes in the counties of Merioneth,

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[1] F. Emery, 'The Farming Regions of Wales', The Agrarian History of England and Wales 1500-1640, IV (Cambridge 1967), 139, 157.

[2] D. Baker, 'An Eighteenth-Century Drover: William Rowland of Tan-y-Bwlch', Journal of the Merioneth Historical and Record Society, VI, no. 4 (1972), 368-71.

[3] K. Williams-Jones, ed., A Calendar of the Merioneth Quarter Sessions Rolls, 1733-65, I, (Merioneth County Council 1965), xlv, 223, 255.

[4] Ibid., 302, 304.

Caernarvon and Denbigh.[1] Hugh Anwyl (1737-1826) came from the ranks of the smaller gentry. As a young man he was fairly active in local affairs. The 1,000-acre Dolfriog estate extended across the parishes of Trawsfynydd, Llandecwyn and Gwyddelwern in Merionethshire, and Beddgelert in county Caernarvon. However, Anwyl was apparently forced by circumstances to sell the estate in 1769. He died, at the age of eighty-nine, in poverty. It is quite certain that William Rowland, a dealer or "topsman" drover of considerable standing, was well known to Hugh Anwyl, the local squire. The Dolfriog lands, especially those pastures which lay in the large parish of Trawsfynydd, and in Llandecwyn, adjoining Maentwrog, were admirably situated for those occasions when Rowland supervised the marshalling of local cattle for eventual droving to England. Quite likely, too, it was Anwyl who sponsored the grant of Rowland's licence to practise "the art and mystery of a drover". Naturally, the local squire and J.P. who entrusted valuable livestock to Rowland, and arranged the renewal of his licence, favoured a court adjournment to the inn which he knew well as a patron, intending to be present himself at the meeting. At least, that is how it would seem; we cannot, for lack of evidence, be sure. There are, in fact, a number of interesting questions which defy answering at present. Did Rowland, for instance, pay rent to the Dolfriog estate for his inn and adjacent fields? Had he retired from the cattle business by 1762, in order to make innkeeping his full-time concern? Or was he still droving to Kent each year? The firm juxtaposition of these two employments at Tan-y-bwlch must, at any rate, render less tentative the suggestion, made a few years ago, that John Williams, an eighteenth-century drover, who resided at Drws-y-nant in Rhyd-y-main, Merionethshire, was the same John Williams who kept an alehouse at Drws-y-nant in the 1770's.[2]

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[1] Ibid., 307.

[2] K. Williams-Jones, 'A Drover's Account', Journal of the Merioneth Historical and Record Society, II (1953-6), 311.

Why was Hugh Anwyl forced to sell the family estate in 1769? No doubt, like many of the small squires in the county, he was "finding it difficult to keep up appearances at a time when ostentatious living was becoming increasingly fashionable".[1] Was it a conspicuous mode of living, which he could ill-afford, that hastened the young landowner's ruin? In his reduced state, did he, like other Merioneth J.P.'s, take out a drover's licence for himself?[2] These are strong possibilities. The dominance of wealthy landowners who stood prepared to invest in their estates, the enclosure of commons and waste, and a widespread awareness of market opportunities, resulted in a marked increase in agricultural - especially livestock - production in north Wales during the second half of the eighteenth century. The long term process which was reducing old-fashioned squires like Anwyl to freeholder status was, at the same time, providing job-opportunities on the marketing (droving) side for the displaced landowners. "Cattle dealing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries", says Haldane, "was considered a trade in no way unsuited to a gentleman, and during this period the records of the droving industry show how deeply concerned in it were not only the humble folk but some of the highest in the land".[3]

Possibly as many as 30,000 black cattle entered England, annually, from Wales during the seventeenth century.[4] By the end of the eighteenth century, some 7,000 young beasts left the Lleyn Peninsular each year, and 20,000 were said to be sold to drovers at the cattle fair at

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[1] Williams-Jones, Calendar, op. cit., lxiii.

[2] Ibid., 290 (n3), xlv (n3). William Price of Dolgamedd, a Merioneth justice, found himself in somewhat reduced circumstances in 1739, and subsequently became a drover. John Lloyd of Dolyglesyn, another J.P., applied for a drover's licence in 1771.

[3] A.R.B. Haldane, The Drove Roads of Scotland (1952), 22.

[4] H.R. Rankin, 'Cattle Droving from Wales to England', Agriculture, LXII, no. 5 (1955), 218.

Cardigan alone.[1] The total number of beasts leaving all parts of Wales for England cannot have been less than 60,000. It is impossible to say precisely how many of these runts were brought as far as Kent each year. The 716 Welsh cattle in Eastwell Park in October 1748 were the survivors of eight droves in one of the worst seasons of plague. If we assume a mortality rate of the order of 50 per cent - which was quite common at the time - the original eight droves comprised some 1,500 animals; this is an average of rather less than 200 beasts in each drove, which would have been considered a manageable number.[2] And, of course, there must have been cattle quarantined in other fields and parks of east Kent at the time, so that 1,500 is a minimum figure for this part of the county. More than likely, the same number of runts came to west Kent, including the important Maidstone district, and perhaps 1,000 or more to the heavily stocked Romney Marsh grazings. It seems reasonable to conclude, that upwards of 4,000 store cattle reached Kent annually from Wales - mainly the northern rearing districts - in the mid-eighteenth century, perhaps ten or fifteen per cent of the total export to England. This is not so surprising as it might seem. Kent had, and still has, no native breed of cattle, although the Sussex - a noted beef animal - is frequently looked upon as a "local" breed, especially in the Weald. Nevertheless, lacking a breed of its own, Kent was certainly not deficient in cattle, for the county provided a superb market for animals bred elsewhere, especially in Wales; Welsh breeders, and the drovers who handled their business, were not slow to exploit the opportunities. And once in Kent, the animals proved good doers, whether for the dairy or as beeves.

William Punnett possessed ten "small Welsh heifers" on his farm at

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[1] G.E. Fussell and Constance Goodman, 'Eighteenth-Century Traffic in Livestock', Economic History, III (1936), 218.

[2] Bonser, op. cit., 45.

Rodmersham in 1688. Adam Seager, a Minster (Sheppey) yeoman, possessed six Welsh runts in 1689, which fed alongside twenty-two country-bred beasts. The "9 Welch heifers" recorded in the inventory of Thomas Denn of Chislet in 1694 were valued at £19. Twenty Welsh runts belonging to Thomas Knowler of Graveney were grazing in local marshes during the spring of 1721. They were considered to be worth, altogether, nearly £100. Until he died in 1739, William Fryer farmed some of the low-lying lands in the parish of Appledore, abutting Romney Marsh. He was a grazier who specialized in Welsh cattle. Welsh Blacks thrived in these premier Kentish grazings, producing first-rate butchers' beasts and beautifully marbled beef. A bunch of half a dozen Welsh heifers belonging to Thomas Maxted of Faversham were housed and fed alongside his nine milch cows in 1691; before long, no doubt, they too would take their places at the pail. Mr Ingraham Marshall, an eighteenth-century gentleman farmer, possessed a dairy herd on his farm in the small parish of Monks Horton near Hythe. During the spring and summer months of 1758, his cows produced milk enough for the making of sixty-seven cheeses, which were ripening in the milkhouse that autumn; among the followers being reared for the dairy herd were Welsh calves, probably born on the farm that summer. Welsh cattle had a propensity to fatten but they were also classed as "very fair milkers".[1]

Cattle were an essential part of the agricultural pattern in Kent in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; seldom has this fact been fully appreciated. Too often, it is assumed, quite wrongly, that cattle were unimportant in the county's rural economy and that Kentish farmers - renowned for their hops and fruit - were inept as graziers and dairymen. But William Marshall was aware of the true facts at the end of the eighteenth century, when he described the agricultural economy of the Maidstone

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[1]KAO PRC 11/53/125, 11/53/153, 11/59/262, 11/76/139, 11/81/172, 11/55/119, 11/84/67.

district:

> No district in the Island, perhaps, of equal extent and fertility, breeds fewer cattle ... Its entire stock may, with little licence, be said to be Welch, or of Welch origin; although it is situated at an extreme point of the Island, some hundred miles from the source of the breed.[1]

Marshall was careful to point out that there were few cattle of other breeds in this part of the county, but each year there was a further concentration of Welsh stock:

> The Welch cattle are mostly brought in, by drovers of Wales, while young; as one, two, or three years old. They are bred in different parts of the Principality. But the heifers, which are brought in for milk, are mostly of the Pembrokeshire mould. Many of them make handsome cows, which are said to milk well, and to fat quickly. Several thousands, of different descriptions, are annually brought into the country [i.e. county].

The Kentish markets for Welsh store cattle were widely dispersed:

> In the month of October the roads are everywhere full of them: some going to the upland districts, others to the marshes.[2]

"The cattle here are chiefly Welsh, black, and called runts", observed Cobbett, when he visited the Canterbury district in September 1823. "They are nice hardy cattle; and I am told, that this is the description of cattle that they fat all the way up on this north side of Kent". John Boys explained that cattle "bought in by graziers to be fattened for sale in the marshes of east Kent, are from North and South Wales", since the county had "no particular breed that may be allowed the appellation of Kentish cattle". Annually, herds were "brought by the Welch drovers

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[1] The distance stated is too low, even as a minimum estimate: Maidstone lies some 150 miles from the Welsh border, and cattle from the northern uplands of Wales travelled much further.

[2] W. Marshall, Rural Economy of the Southern Counties (2 Vols. 1798), I, 321-2.

to Canterbury and other markets". But graziers were not the only buyers competing in the markets for "the chief part of the dairy cows are selected from those droves". Some farmers possessed mixed dairy herds of Staffordshire, Sussex and Welsh cows. A few of the wealthier farmers were already investing, in the late eighteenth century, in cows of the Channel Islands breeds, Guernsey and Alderney. But for the small-scale farmer, who could afford to keep only a few animals, the ideal choice lay in a smallish, hardy dual-purpose breed which would thrive in less than perfect conditions; thus, "small dairies of three or four cows, have the Welch sort only".[1] The small, Welsh cows were particularly well suited to those areas where thin soils prevailed, or where permanent pasture was lacking:

> ... on poor soils, or where the arable land is in a larger proportion than the pasture, so the cows must depend in a great measure on the production of the sown grasses for their support; the small North Wales heifers will be found to answer every end desired from them, much better than those of a heavier weight.[2]

Notwithstanding this view, however, graziers who farmed the rich, permanent pastures of Romney Marsh were also keen to purchase cattle from Welsh drovers "who have good information of that circumstance and provide accordingly". Robert Tomlin, a wealthy Thanet farmer, writing to his son at Cheltenham in 1817, commented in some detail on the cattle fair which he had attended at Wingham two days previously (12 May) where there had been "a great deal of Welsh stock" put forward for sale. It was about this time that drovers who took cattle from Haverfordwest to Ashford were paid at the rate of three shillings a day plus a bonus of six shil-

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[1] William Cobbett, Rural Rides (2 Vols. 1853), I, 247; John Boys, A General View of the Agriculture of Kent (1796), 147-8.

[2] John Banister, Synopsis of Husbandry (1799), 350.

lings on reaching their destination.[1]

Large numbers of Welsh cattle continued to arrive each year in mid-Kent and the Weald; in 1838-9, drovers made numerous payments at toll-gates, and for grazing facilities, at Maidstone, Yalding, Staplehurst and Cranbrook.[2] Some twenty years later, Kentish farmers still found it more profitable to buy-in young stores, rather than breed all their own replacements:

> ... the Welsh are purchased at Canterbury, or other markets. The principal dairy cows are selected from them; the rest are kept in the farm-yard for the winter, and in the spring are placed among the sheep, where they fatten rapidly, and reach from twenty to twenty-two scores.

Using the same dual system - yarding in winter followed by spring and summer grazing for "finishing" - some livestock farmers aimed to produce a somewhat smaller butchers' beast:

> Some graziers buy Welsh calves in the autumn, and put them out to keep in the farm-yards for the winter; in the spring they place them among their sheep, where they get fat in a few months, and weigh from 18 to 22 scores.[3]

But by this time, the long-distance droving trade was dwindling: during the 1860's it rapidly gave way to railway transport. When cattle plague broke out again in 1865, "the government resorted to restrictions on the movement of cattle and paid compensation to the owners of those beasts slaughtered to check the spread of infection, thus reviving the

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[1] Thomas Pennant, A Journey from London to the Isle of Wight (2 Vols. 1801), II, 14; Letter of Robert Tomlin of East Northdown, to his son Robert Sackett Tomlin, 14 May 1817 - I owe this information to the kindness of Mr Peter Hills, St. John's College, York; C. Skeel, 'The Cattle Trade between Wales and England from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries', Trans. Royal Hist. Soc., 4th Series, IX (1926), 154.

[2] National Library of Wales, MS. 11706A.

[3] Youatt, loc. cit.

methods of dealing with cattle disease first tried during the cattle plague of the middle eighteenth century".[1] But this time no-one thought to blame the drovers.

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[1] Chambers & Mingay, op. cit., 179.

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