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**SIXTEENTH-CENTURY COURTSHIP IN THE DIOCESE OF  
CANTERBURY**

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**University of Kent at Canterbury**

**Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D in History**

**March 1995**

## LIST OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT		i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS		ii
ABBREVIATIONS, EXPLANATORY NOTES		iii
INTRODUCTION	I A Brief Historiography of Courtship in Early Modern England	1
	General Approaches	7
	The Legal Definition of Marriage and its Interpretation	10
	The Evidence	12
	II The Canterbury Diocese	17
CHAPTER 1	'RULED BY MY FRIENDS': FAMILY, KIN AND COMMUNITY IN THE MAKING OF MARRIAGE	27
	The Nature of Kinship and its Role in Courtship and Marriage	27
	Family and Community Constraints on the Marriage Process	32
	The Role of the Witness in the Marriage Process	41
	Involvement of the Wider Community	48
	Conclusion	56
CHAPTER 2	THE LANGUAGE OF TOKENS AND THE MAKING OF MARRIAGE	57
	The Case of <i>Divers v. Williams</i>	57
	The Cultural and Legal Context of Gift-Giving	61
	The Practice of Giving	68
	The Nature of the Gift	73
	Gifts As Language	80
	The Context of Giving	81
	The Strategies Explored: Some Case Studies	84
	The Meaning of Gifts	88
	Conclusion	97
	Appendix: Types of Gifts and Tokens	98
CHAPTER 3	'IF EVER THOWE WILTE DO FOR ME, DO FOR ME NOW...': 'MOVERS', 'SUTORS', 'SPEAKERS' AND 'BROKERS' OF MARRIAGE: THE ROLE OF GO-BETWEENS AS A 'MEANS' OF COURTSHIP	102
	I	102
	II	106
	III	112
CHAPTER 4	COURTSHIP HORIZONS IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY: 'I WILL GO WITH THEE TO ANY PLACE YF IT WERE TO THE WORLDES END'	125
	I	125
	II	130
	III	134

	IV	148
CHAPTER 5	THE TIMING OF MARRIAGE: CONSTRAINTS AND EXPECTATIONS	166
	I	166
	II	173
	III	178
	IV	183
	V	199
CHAPTER 6	PROVIDING FOR MARRIAGE: SOME ASPECTS OF DOWRY CONSIDERED	202
	I	202
	II	211
	III	239
	IV	254
CONCLUSION		256
APPENDIX 1		259
APPENDIX 2		268
BIBLIOGRAPHY	MANUSCRIPT SOURCES	282
	PRINTED PRIMARY SOURCES	329
	PRINTED SECONDARY SOURCES	329
	UNPUBLISHED WORK	339
LISTS OF FIGURES		
Figure 1.1A	Tenterden Parish Register, Baptisms only, 1544-1640	20
Figure 1.1B	Tenterden Parish Register, Burials only, 1544-1640	21
Figure 1.2A	Wye Baptisms, 1538-1601	22
Figure 1.2B	Wye Burials, 1538-1601	22
Figure 1.3A	Chislet Baptisms, 1538-1640	24
Figure 1.3B	Chislet Burials, 1538-1640	24
Figure 1.4A	Whitstable Baptisms, 1556-1640	25
Figure 1.4B	Whitstable Burials, 1556-1640	26
Figure 4.1	Fifteen-Year Moving Average Showing Endogamous Courtships	136
Figure 4.2	Courtship Horizons of Kent Parishes	141
Figure 4.3	Courtship Horizons: Urban Centres and Market Towns	145
Figure 4.4	Courtship Horizons: High Weald and Wealden Vales	145
Figure 4.5	Courtship Horizons: Romney Marsh, North Kent Coast, North Down and Isle of Thanet	146
Figure 5.1	Number of Wills in Kentish Parishes	187
Figure 5.2	Total Number of Wills Giving Ages in all Five Parishes	188
Figure 5.3	Percentage of Wills Giving Ages in all Five Parishes	189
Figure 6.1	Distribution of Dowry Values, Non Daughters	215

Figure 6.2	Distribution of Dowry Values for all Non Daughters	216
Figure 6.3	Distribution of Dowries, Daughters Only, all Parishes, Omitting Dowries of 3000s.+	226
Figure 6.4	Distribution of Dowry Values, 1449-1599, all Parishes, Daughters Only	226
Figure 6.5	Mean Dowries Over Time, Daughters Only, Omitting 3000s.+	228
Figure 6.6a	Distribution of Dowry Values, 1449-74, Daughters Only, all Dowries and Parishes Included	230
Figure 6.6b	Distribution of Dowry Values, 1475-99, Daughters Only	230
Figure 6.6c	Distribution of Dowry Values, 1500-24, Daughters Only.	230
Figure 6.6d	Distribution of Dowry Values, 1525-49, Daughters Only.	231
Figure 6.6e	Distribution of Dowry Values, 1550-74, Daughters Only.	231
Figure 6.6f	Distribution of Dowry Values, 1575-99, Daughters Only.	231
Figure 6.7	Indexed Portions, Kentish Dowries Compared to those of Peerage, where 1475-1500=100	234
Figure 6.8	Dowry Indexed to Base 1449-74 and PBH	235
Figure 6.9	Average Dowry Provision for Non Daughters	236
Figure A1.1	Total Number of Cases Styled 'Causa Matrimonialis' & 'Sive Sponsalia' & 'et Divorcii'	267

#### LIST OF MAPS

Map I.1	Kent Parishes	17/18
Map I.2	Population Density of Canterbury Diocese, 1563	19/20
Map 4.1	Frequency Distribution of Data, 1474-1601	134/5
Map 4.2	Canterbury's Marriage Horizons, 1474-1601 (Frequency of Marriage Connections)	143/4
Map 4.3	Canterbury's Marriage Horizons, 1474-1601 (Marriage Connections by Gender)	143/4
Map 5.1	Geographical Distribution of 501 Wills, 1503-9	185/6
Map 5.2	Geographical Distribution of Wills Which Mention Ages, 1503-9	185/6

#### LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Categories and Numbers of Gifts and Tokens by Decade	75
Table 2.2	Percentage of Gifts and Tokens by Category by Decade, 1542-1600	78
Table 2.3	Total Face Value of Monetary Gifts and Tokens by Decade, 1542-1600	80
Table 2.4	Kinds of Gifts and Tokens Given on Specific Occasions, 1542-1602	89

Table 2.5	Kinds of Gifts and Tokens Given According to Specific Strategies	90
Table 4.1	Distance between Domiciles of Matrimonial Litigants Measured Over Time, 1475-1599	135/6
Table 4.2	Fifteen-Year Moving Averages of Courtship Distances	136
Table 4.3	Extra County and Extra-Diocesan Links (by Place and Mileage)	140
Table 4.4	Canterbury's Courtship Horizons, 1474-1599 (Percentage)	144
Table 4.5	The Courtship Horizons of Different Areas and Communities (Percentage)	144
Table 5.1	Percentage Distribution of Ages Specified in Wills for all Men and Women	194
Table 5.2a	Percentage Distribution of Ages, all Five Parishes (Men)	195
Table 5.2b	Percentage Distribution of Ages, all Five Parishes (Women)	196
Table 6.1	Mean Dowries Over Time, Omitting those of 3000 Shillings or More	223
Table 6.2	Kentish Dowries Compared to those of the Peerage	233
Table A1.1	The Ecclesiastical Court Act Books	259
Table A1.2	Types of Matrimonial Cases as Styled in the Act Books	262
Table A2.1	Frequency Distribution of Data, 1474-1601	268
Table A2.2	Courtship Horizons by Parish	271
Table A2.3	Courtship Horizons by Settlement Type and Region	277

## ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to re-examine the nature of courtship in the sixteenth century, using church court and probate material for the diocese of Canterbury. Challenging the hitherto established views regarding the freedom and personal initiative exercised by courting couples, it explores important topics neglected in most previous studies. Essentially it revives the notion that courtship in the past possessed far more structure and coherence than has been granted recently, and argues that the decision to marry was a momentous one, conducted against a backdrop of constraints and expectations which did much to determine and shape individual choice. Some constraints were external to the principle actors. Chapter 1 argues that parents, kin and community played a number of decisive roles in the making of marriage and Chapter 2 shows how courtship was structured by the giving and receiving of gifts, each invested with their own symbolic meaning. Go-betweens, as Chapter 3 demonstrates, played an important role in mediating between couples, transmitting gifts and messages, and helping in the vital property negotiations. Chapter 4 reveals a great deal more about the constraints of locality and distance over courtship behaviour. Couples possessed relatively restricted geographical horizons which delineated the parameters of their choices and they courted at particular times and in special places. Those intent on marriage, as argued in Chapter 5, also carried a range of internalized assumptions, which, together with legal and social rules may have helped to determine the time thought appropriate to marry. Finally, in Chapter 6, the crucial importance of financial matters in the process of courtship is examined. It demonstrates that even for the relatively humble, the sixteenth century was one of rapid dowry inflation, something that further determined prospects in the matrimonial market. Few marriages took place without negotiations or calculations about future financial prospects and the present value of the bride's contribution to the union.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## ABBREVIATIONS

All bibliographical references are given first in full, then in abbreviated form. For convenience the following archives are represented thus:

C.C.A.L.	Canterbury Cathedral Archives and Library
C.K.S.	Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone (formerly Kent Archives Office)

Abbreviations used in wills can be found below in the Manuscript bibliography, p. 323.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

Place names are given their modern spelling. No attempt has been made to standardize the contemporary spelling of personal names or to modernize the spelling used in court cases. Words extended in quotations are italicised.

## INTRODUCTION

### I

#### **A Brief Historiography of Courtship in Early Modern England**

In his ambitious and monumental interpretation of English family history in the early modern period, Lawrence Stone succeeded in provoking over a decade of controversy and stimulating further research into the emotional and behavioural aspects of the family and, principally, the characteristics of courtship, selection of marriage partners, and marital relations.<sup>1</sup> His evolutionary schema of progressive family models which sought to chart the growth of 'affective individualism' and the eventual emergence of the modern 'closed domesticated nuclear family', portrays the sixteenth century as a period wherein the 'open lineage family' which was dominant in the early Tudor era, gave way to the 'restricted patriarchal nuclear family' after the Reformation. It was thus a time when the impersonality of family relations and the wider collective interests of kin, community, and lordship, overlapped with the increasing enhancement of the nuclear core and the concomitant strengthening of patriarchalism. According to Stone, the new-found emphasis upon domestic and patriarchal values, ensured the authoritarian control over marriage selection, the internalization of filial duty, and the 'pragmatic calculation of family interest' rather than personal choice as the accepted viewpoint. During the course of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the changes in the affective relations and familial functions of the English propertied classes, included an uneasy transition in the pattern of marriage 'between one set of values based on kin interest and marriage arranged by others with a view to financial advantage, and another set based on allowing children a right of veto in order to provide a better chance of marital harmony'.<sup>2</sup>

In his characterization of English family types, Stone may be criticized generally for being over-schematic, for over-emphasizing structural change and in so doing, creating problems in his chronology, for largely unqualified and exclusive definitions of the family and of romantic love, and particularly for basing his interpretation upon the familial behaviour and sentiments of the upper

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1 L. Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (1977, abridged edn., Harmondsworth, 1979), pp. 69-299.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 127-36.

classes alone.<sup>3</sup> By his own admission, 'any generalization on those complex and obscure subjects inevitably runs into the objection that any behavioural model of change over time imposes an artificial schematisation on a chaotic and ambiguous reality'.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, he acknowledged his ignorance where the lower social levels were concerned, suggesting that, 'because the key to the system of controlled marriage was the exchange of property, it theoretically follows that children lower down the economic scale would enjoy greater freedom of choice. Whether this is so is not at present known for certain'.<sup>5</sup> Opening thus one major avenue of further enquiry regarding the scope for personal choice and mating arrangements, the actual role and meaning of sentiment in matrimonial decisions compared to other kinds of criteria, also required elaboration. As Outhwaite intimated, 'love is a very inexact term and without careful definition its use must be more of a handicap than a help. People can be chosen for very different qualities, and attempting to discern and categorize the bases of such choices must be one of the priorities for future research'.<sup>6</sup>

At that time of writing, other historians of the family professed some uncertainty in discerning the pattern and basis of partner selection among more ordinary folk. Ingram claimed that 'it is uncertain how far attitudes varied at different social levels', and 'nor is it clear how much depended on the age of the individuals contemplating matrimony'. As far as the external influences of family, relations and friends are concerned, both 'the precise dimensions of these interest groups are somewhat unclear', and 'the precise standing and role of individuals referred to as "friends" ... is uncertain'.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, some speculation premised on the simple demographic features of parental mortality, geographical mobility, and the opportunities afforded by service and apprenticeship, as well as the lesser economic leverage attributed to parents among the lower orders, seemed to indicate greater fluidity, informality, and a relative lack of supervision over courtship. In the English village of Terling,

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3 See, for example, for reviews of Stone's book, M. MacDonald, *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 10, 2 (1979), 122-3; R. T. Vann, *Journal of Family History* 4, 3(1979), 308-15.

4 Cited in R. A. Houlbrooke, *The English Family, 1450-1700* (London and New York, 1984), p. 15.

5 Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, p. 134.

6 R. B. Outhwaite, 'Introduction', in R. B. Outhwaite ed., *Marriage and Society. Studies in the Social History of Marriage* (London, 1981), pp. 1-16 (p. 16).

7 M. Ingram, 'Spousals litigation in the English Ecclesiastical Courts, c. 1350-1640', in Outhwaite ed., *Marriage and Society*, pp. 35-57 (pp. 48-9); K. Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (London, 1982), p. 77.

marriage choices 'based upon personal compatibility, even upon romantic love', were considered most likely.<sup>8</sup>

It is, however, probable that few historians would now accept the extreme theoretical position adopted by Alan Macfarlane, whose theme of intense individualism in English society even in the medieval period, may be seen to represent an exaggerated stereotype contrary to Stone's characterization.<sup>9</sup> Examining marriage as the critical institution in the development of English capitalism, he argued for the early existence of a Malthusian marriage system, dependent upon assumptions of largely individual choice, very limited constraint, and the calculated costs of marriage and procreation. Individual initiative and the strong emphasis on freedom, familiarity, and emotional and sexual compatibility, were the highlighted features of English courtship. The essentially love-based system Macfarlane described, the long, permissive, courtship pattern, the basically private and contractual nature of the wedding, and the exclusivity of married life, effectively polarizes the individual and the family. By constructing 'a timeless model', however, the cultural, social and moral contexts within which individuals manoeuvred, and the complexities of pressures, conventions and controls brought to bear on marriage decisions and behaviour, tend to be ignored in his work.<sup>10</sup>

In between the two interpretative extremes of English family life, a general consensus of opinion can be found among historians who steer a cautious, middle-of-the-road, approach. Looking at courtship behaviour among different social groups, Wrightson argued 'that interpretations based upon the conventional dichotomies of arranged as against free matches, and parental choice against self-determination by the child do less than justice to the complexities of reality', for, 'there was no single 'English' norm... but rather a persisting variety of coexisting practices, a range of experience broad enough to call into question the validity of any single evolutionary schema'.<sup>11</sup> In a similar

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8 K. Wrightson and D. Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525-1700* (New York and London, 1979), p. 131. See also, Wrightson, *English Society*, p. 74. Those preconditions for greater freedom in courtship are also mentioned in later works, see, for example: M. Ingram, 'The reform of popular culture? Sex and marriage in early modern England', in B. Reay ed., *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (London, 1985), pp. 129-65 (pp. 133-4); Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, p. 72; R. A. Houlbrooke, 'The making of marriage in mid-Tudor England: evidence from the records of matrimonial contract litigation', *Journal of Family History* 10 (1985), 339-52.

9 A. Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England. Modes of Reproduction 1300-1840* (Oxford, 1986).

10 For further thoughts along these lines, see, D. O'Hara, 'Review of *Marriage and Love*', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 40, 1 (1987), 113-14.

11 Wrightson, *English Society*, pp. 78-9.

vein, Houlbrooke maintained that 'in practice, matches ranged across a wide spectrum which ran from the arranged at one end to the completely free at the other',<sup>12</sup> and Ingram too concluded that attitudes to marriage formation exhibited 'complexity and flexibility. Instead of any clear-cut pattern of "arranged" or "free" marriages, a more subtle system prevailed in which love had a part to play in combination with prudential considerations, the pressures of community values and (at middling and upper-class levels) the interests of parents and sometimes other family members'.<sup>13</sup>

The emphasis in their work would seem to suggest *continuity* in marital norms and courtship practice between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries rather than any significant transition.<sup>14</sup> In seeking to qualify the extent of parental authority in marriage formation, it was said that 'while the patriarchal ideal certainly influenced the nature of marriage in this period, it was much modified in practice by the strength of personal choice in marriage formation and by flexibility and reciprocity in husband/wife relationships within marriage. Among the mass of the population this flexible pattern appears to have persisted unchanged at least through the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and had probably existed since the later middle ages'.<sup>15</sup> Whether in prescriptive or actual behaviour, in the nature of relationships, or the criteria of marriage choice, (especially lower down the social scale but even among the élite), what was also stressed was 'flexibility', 'ambivalence', 'complexity', 'variation' and 'lack of uniformity'.<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless, within this *variable* framework, the freedom and initiative in courtship taken by young people, and the role of romantic love in marriage choice, appeared to characterize the pattern of match-making among the middling and, particularly, the ordinary ranks. Such initiative did not, of course, imply absolute freedom of choice, since the degree of freedom and the significance of external pressures, sanctions and advice, depended upon wealth, sex, birth order, and economic, social and personal circumstances. It was recognized that the actual realization of individual marriage plans and romantic inclinations were subject to financial prospects, filial obligation, conventional requirements,

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12 Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, p. 69.

13 M. Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570-1640* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 142. Contemporary literature too explored the spectrum of perspectives, conflicts, and possibilities, and the role of love. See A. J. Cook, *Making a Match. Courtship in Shakespeare and his Society* (Princeton, 1991), pp. 69-103.

14 Wrightson, *English Society*, pp. 71, 74, 79; Ingram, *Church Courts*, p. 138.

15 Ingram, 'The reform of popular culture?', p. 137.

16 See, for example, Wrightson, *English Society*, pp. 72-4.

practical considerations, and the influence of parents, kin, friends, peers, masters, neighbours and even of parish authorities.<sup>17</sup> But although that freedom was tempered and 'variable', the established conclusion would appear to be 'that in the final analysis agreement to marry was very much a matter for the couple themselves, for the match had little direct bearing on anyone else... It seems reasonable to conclude that among the greater part of the common people marriage partners were freely chosen..'<sup>18</sup>

If such was the predominant position taken concerning the selection of partners, of the various criteria informing marriage choice, the bias towards love and affection has also been affirmed strongly.<sup>19</sup> While material considerations in the promotion of individuals and their family were considered important, and the ideals of parity in wealth, rank, and age, together with personal reputation and religion, were conventionally held to judge the suitability of a match, the existence of love and mutual attraction were regarded as *essential*. It has been said that 'there were variations in the relative weight placed upon particular factors', that 'it would be unwise .. to argue too rigid a distinction between material, social and emotional factors in matchmaking', since such elements were 'in practice hopelessly intermingled', and that the various criteria were indeed compatible.<sup>20</sup> Despite this cautionary ambivalence, however, the contrasts in courtship behaviour and relationships between different social classes, and the increasing significance of love and romantic expectations as one descended the social scale, have been brought to the fore. The decisiveness of such sentiments in marriage choice, and its widely-held expression through the exchange of gifts and tokens have been asserted, and church court cases have been seen to reveal 'that passionate attachment was a common experience further down the social scale and suggest that the ideal of romantic love was deeply rooted in popular culture'.<sup>21</sup>

Subsequent to those findings, Rushton's brief but important study of matrimonial cases before the Durham consistory courts in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries has sought to redress the reactionary emphasis upon romantic love and freedom in courtship, by attempting to 'estimate the limits to

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17 *Ibid.*, pp. 74-9; Ingram, 'Spousals litigation', pp. 49-50; Ingram, 'The reform of popular culture?', pp. 134-5; Ingram, *Church Courts*, pp. 139-40; Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, pp. 69-72; Houlbrooke, 'The Making of marriage', *passim*.

18 Wrightson, *English Society*, pp. 77-8.

19 For the criteria of choice, see *ibid.*, pp. 79-86; Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, pp. 73-8; Ingram, *Church Courts*, pp. 140-1.

20 Wrightson, *English Society*, pp. 86-7; Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, p. 88.

21 Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, pp. 72-3, 78.

freedom', and examining the much neglected topics of power relationships, the fragility of marriage formation, and the coercive processes at work from family, household, and 'friends'.<sup>22</sup> Intimating at the 'social process' leading to marriage, and focusing primarily upon the negative exercise of power, Rushton maintained that 'while consent was the formal doctrine, matrimonial cases reveal both direct manipulation of marriage and the collective organization of kin and friends'. In identifying forms of constraint and power, he concluded that 'the cumulative effect of these different relationships and the unequal distribution of power combined to set limits to individual freedom'. Hence, 'significant areas of personal life were heavily circumscribed', and crucially, 'marriage and all personal affairs were still too important to others to be left entirely to the individual couple'.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, and more recently, Carlson suggests that still 'we know little about what courtship meant to the less exalted inhabitants in sixteenth-century villages and towns', since the courtship models presented by historians so far, have not concentrated solely upon behaviour in the sixteenth century, but instead 'reads back from much later material, producing serious distortions of early modern practice'.<sup>24</sup> He proposed a model of courtship as an 'extremely fluid' and 'experimental venture', 'monopolized' by the young. At the same time, however, he maintained that the law did not 'foster individualism', since parents' rights were not thwarted, that popular knowledge of the law was widespread, and its practical implementation in the making of matrimonial agreements neither 'entirely chaotic' nor 'insensitive to form'. Claiming furthermore that courtship gifts and tokens did not present any element of controversy, and that 'popular belief in the indissolubility of betrothal was universal and unshakeable', he was arguing principally for the successful integration of popular practice, and the marriage law, which thus required no major reforms in the sixteenth century.<sup>25</sup>

The historiography of courtship in early modern England outlined above, reveals then particular themes which have in previous years generated so much interest, and exposes areas of research which have been undervalued or

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22 P. Rushton, 'Property, power and family networks: the problem of disputed marriages in early modern England', *Journal of Family History* 11 (1986), 205-19.

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 208, 216.

24 E. J. Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation* (Oxford, 1994), p. 105.

25 For Carlson's own model of marriage formation in the diocese of Ely, see *ibid.*, pp. 105-41. Cf. J. R. Gillis, *For Better For Worse. British Marriages 1600 to the Present* (Oxford and New York, 1985), p. 51 for the 'liminality of betrothal', and Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, pp. 78-80, for the variety in observed formalities, the confusion regarding legal contracts, and the practice of mutual termination of agreements.

neglected. This thesis aims to rescue sixteenth-century courtship from its relative neglect. In so doing it will deploy new techniques of analysis and take new perspectives on courtship practices to further our understanding of that 'complex and important business'.<sup>26</sup>

## General Approaches

In approaching those topics which have hitherto been overlooked by historians, this thesis essentially revives the notion that courtship in the past possessed far more structure and coherence than has been granted recently, and that marriage decisions were conducted against a backdrop of constraints and expectations which did much to determine and shape individual choice. Exploring the constant underlying pressures, the plethora of relations, and the ritual structure which helped set the parameters of marriage choice, it provides a systematic examination of those courtship processes which might have preceded the final stage of solemnized unions. The focus of the thesis, therefore, is not upon the demographic statistics of marriage behaviour as revealed through parish registers, but upon a further understanding of the strategies, circumstances, and influences, which potentially informed the final outcome. It is hoped that the descriptive and analytical detail provided in this approach, partly through close textual reading of church court records, will contribute more to our conceptualizations of marriage formation in the past.

As previously indicated, several historians have used church court material to study aspects of courtship, marriage, and sexual reputation in early modern England. Such studies have centred particularly on dioceses in the north and west of England, East Anglia and Essex, but to date, no scholar has attempted an in-depth analysis of sixteenth-century courtship from the exceptionally rich material which survives for the diocese of Canterbury.<sup>27</sup> Nor

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<sup>26</sup> E. J. Carlson, 'Courtship in Tudor England', *History Today* (1993), 23-9 (p. 29).

<sup>27</sup> In addition to the works previously cited, see also, P. Rushton, 'The testament of gifts: marriage tokens and disputed contracts in north-east England, 1560-1630', *FolkLife* 24 (1985-6), 25-31; M. Ingram, 'Ecclesiastical justice in Wiltshire, 1600-1640, with special reference to cases concerning sex and marriage' (University of Oxford D. Phil. thesis, 1976); R. A. Houlbrooke, *Church Courts and the People During the English Reformation, 1520-1570* (Oxford, 1979); G. R. Quaipe, *Wanton Wenches and Wayward Wives: Peasants and Illicit Sex in Early Seventeenth-Century England* (London, 1979); J. A. Sharpe, 'Defamation and sexual slander in early modern England: the church courts at York', *Borthwick Papers* 58 (1980), 1-36; J. A. Sharpe, 'Litigation and human relations in early modern England: ecclesiastical defamation suits at York', in J. Bossy et al. eds., *Law and Human Relations* (Past and Present Conference Papers, 1980), pp. 6-17; L. Gowing, 'Gender and the language of insult in early



have most of the studies so far, really focused exclusively on the subject of courtship alone. This thesis, therefore, offers not only a distinctive regional comparison, but also a more concentrated treatment of the subject. At the same time, moreover, it makes some use of depositions taken from a wider range of litigation than matrimonial causes. Statements of witnesses in 'divorce', defamation and testamentary cases have all been consulted, in the belief that the information they contain provides extra, if sometimes oblique, insights into the complex web of relationships, expectations and matters of personal reputation within which marriages were made.<sup>28</sup>

Matrimonial suits arising within the Canterbury diocese came under the jurisdiction of the archbishop's Consistory Court,<sup>29</sup> although, despite its apparent jurisdictional irrelevance, depositions from the lower Archdeaconry Court occasionally yielded information too. Throughout the thesis some use is made of miscellaneous court papers touching upon other aspects of legal procedure, and Chapter four is based partly on an analysis of all surviving Consistory Court Act Books. However, the real bulk of the ecclesiastical court material used in this thesis comes from those testimonies given in marriage contract disputes. These sources themselves are copious, but it should be remembered that such material forms only part of the total documentation generated by the complex legal processes of the church courts.<sup>30</sup>

While the methodology used here often relies on close textual analysis of the depositions, this is combined with a quantitative approach where the sources allow. In particular, the analysis of the Act Books and wills undertaken in the second half of the thesis will be seen to yield statistics which throw important

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modern London', *History Workshop Journal* 35 (1993), 1-21; C. A. Haigh, 'Slander and the church courts in the sixteenth century', *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society* 78(1975), 1-13; F. G. Emmison, *Elizabethan Life: Morals and the Church Courts* (Chelmsford, 1973); J. Addy, *Sin and Society in the Seventeenth Century* (London and New York, 1989). For the use of church court material in the study of medieval marriage practices, see, for example, R. H. Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1974); P. J. P. Goldberg, 'Marriage, migration, servanthood and life-cycle in Yorkshire towns of the later Middle Ages: some York cause paper evidence', *Continuity and Change* 1 (1986), 141-69. Further citations can be found in the thesis Bibliography.

28 I have consulted *all* such cases in the deposition volumes to gain the fullest possible sense of the contemporary context of sixteenth century society. Most of the actual evidence cited in this thesis, however, is drawn from the matrimonial cases only.

29 The separate jurisdiction exercised by the Consistory and Archdeaconry Court can be found in B. L. Woodcock, *Medieval Ecclesiastical Courts in the Diocese of Canterbury* (London, 1952), especially pp. 25-8, 82-3.

30 Further discussion of the sources will follow below. See also, for a detailed listing, the manuscript bibliography.

new light on courtship behaviour in sixteenth-century England, as environmental, customary and economic determinants underlying marriage choice are examined. Both of these latter sources are different from those normally used by historians to study courtship and marriage horizons and ages at marriage. They thus allow innovatory approaches to the calculation of the normative parameters of courtship and the mobility experience of potential partners, perceptions of the timing of property transfer and marriage, and the significance of dowry provision in marriage formation. Furthermore, the large number of wills used, drawn from a number of different Kentish parishes, avoids the idiosyncrasies and possible atypicality of a single community study. Although the use of quantifiable evidence dating from the mid-fifteenth century provides some important chronological perspectives on courtship and marriage, the prime focus of the thesis, especially in the first half, chapters 1-3, is on the structural aspects of courtship. It borrows from long-standing anthropological thinking on family, reputation, ritual and exchange, and occasionally illustrates arguments with literary evidence.

Finally, in discussing the general approaches adopted, certain points should be emphasized. This thesis is not concerned directly with any impact that political or religious change may have had on sixteenth-century courtship nor is any attempt made to locate particular cases in the context of a detailed community study. The perspective taken here, too, does not concern itself unduly with matters of marriage law, numbers and types of cases heard or sentences ultimately passed.

Instead, the prime concern is to focus on the social and cultural phenomenon represented by English courtship. The thesis intends to offer a structural analysis of what was often a long drawn out process. Courtship is depicted in what follows as a period of intense negotiation, structured by rituals and mediated by a host of intermediaries. The thesis analyses how family, kin and neighbourhood were involved in this process, and considers how choices depended upon a range of customary norms, upon opportunities, particular strategies adopted and the constraints imposed by geography, personal finances and the conventional expectations as to age, standing and reputation. It seeks to argue that the process of choosing a marriage partner was experimental, transitional and always vulnerable to many external influences. The final choice of partner, while it may indeed often have incorporated personal liking or love, was linked indissolubly to questions of family, credit, economic worth and the successful handling of both courtship ritual and the sensitive negotiations that accompanied them.

Ultimately, then, this thesis argues that the official, legal definition of marriage current in the sixteenth century, with its implicit emphasis on free choice, and the paramount defining event of a mutual verbal contract is a poor guide to what popular courtship actually entailed in the sixteenth century. It focuses on those features of courtship and marriage which may have carried little weight in establishing the legal validity of a union, but which represented more closely the true popular perception and social practice of marriage formation. The exchange of gifts and tokens, the external influences of family and friends, the formalities and procedures of courtship, the constraints of location and distance, conventional assumptions about appropriate timing and the importance of successful dowry negotiations were, it is argued, the real essence of courtship in Tudor England.

### **The Legal Definition Of Marriage And Its Interpretation**

It has been shown that the prime concern in most matrimonial cases lay in enforcing an alleged contract. It was inevitably the 'clandestine', unsolemnized marriages which were most vulnerable and disposed to contention: a phenomenon accounted for by the survival of traditional, secular practices, and 'difficulties of proof and interpretation'. Such characteristic suits apparently experienced a long-term decline between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, with the trend more rapidly manifested in Northern France. One interpretation of this noted decline is that the laity were coming to accept the need for solemnization of marriages, and were less ready to enter into formal, binding, contracts,<sup>31</sup> but just how widespread the rituals of hand-fasting, and the contract ceremonies of whatever degree of formality were, has yet to be established satisfactorily.<sup>32</sup>

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31 Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 25-6, 29-34, 166-8; Houlbrooke, *Church Courts*, pp. 55-7, 66; Houlbrooke, 'The making of marriage', pp. 339-40, 351; Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, pp. 78-80; Ingram, *Church Courts*, pp. 189, 192-6, 206; C. Donahue Jr., 'The policy of Alexander the Third's consent theory of marriage', in S. Kuttner ed., *Proceedings of the Fourth International Congress of Medieval Canon Law* (Rome, 1976), pp. 260-1; C. Donahue Jr., 'The canon law on the formation of marriage and social practice in the later middle ages', *Journal of Family History* 8(1983), 144-58. The early sixteenth century may, however, have been exceptional. Matrimonial suits tended to increase again after 1500 in the diocese of Canterbury, see Woodcock, *Medieval Ecclesiastical Courts*, pp. 82-5, 109-10.

32 Rushton stresses that informal need not mean haphazard, 'Property, power and family networks', p. 206, and 'The testament of gifts', pp. 27-8. Ingram, 'Ecclesiastical justice in Wiltshire', ch. on matrimonial causes, points out that formal contracts were not universal. He questions just how common handfastings

Historians have also emphasized the complexities of the social and regional base beneath the idealized level of religious uniformity.<sup>33</sup> They have indicated too, the paradox which is to be found in the theologians' concept of marriage. Gratian's *Decretum c. 1140*, and Lombard's *Libris IV Sententiarum*, were said to have had a profound influence on the history of matrimonial law. The theory of marital consent adopted and adapted by Pope Alexander III (1159-81), which focused on the couple, distinguished between present and future consent, but in recognizing the act of consent alone as valid, it effectively marginalized any kind of public solemnity.<sup>34</sup> Despite the evolution of doctrine, canonists themselves could not always reconcile their opinions. The lack of universal consensus, local variations, and differences in interpretation, were mirrored in the apparently widespread confusion at the popular, practical level of understanding and implementation.<sup>35</sup> Lovers were not only uncertain of the types of contract discussed, they were imprecise in their wording and probably impulsive in their speech and actions.<sup>36</sup> Canonists debated the various procedures and ceremonies which were seen as fitting for publicity and decorum. Local customs such as the use of gifts and rings, and other formalities which involved familial agreement, betrothal among witnesses, the calling of banns and the church ceremony, were insisted upon, but ultimately were *not* essential for legal

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were and how they were regarded in, 'The reform of popular culture?', pp. 141-3. Similarly, see, Ingram, 'Spousals litigation', pp. 54-5.

33 See, M. M. Sheehan, 'Choice of marriage partner in the middle ages: the development and mode of application of a theory of practice', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* n.s.1 (1978), 3-33 (p. 4), on the underlying diversity of family patterns in medieval Europe.

34 For a full discussion of marriage theory, see Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 25-73, especially pp. 26-31; Sheehan, 'Choice of marriage partner', *passim*; M. M. Sheehan, 'The formation and stability of marriage in fourteenth-century England: evidence from an Ely register', *Medieval Studies* 33 (1971), 228-63 (especially pp. 229-30, 253, 263); M. M. Sheehan, 'Marriage theory and practice in the conciliar legislation and diocesan statutes of medieval England', *Medieval Studies* 40 (1978), 408-60; M. M. Sheehan, 'The European family and canon law', *Continuity and Change* 6, 3(1991), 347-60 (esp. pp. 355-6); J. T. Noonan Jr, 'Power to choose', *Viator. Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 4 (1973), 419-34; Donahue, 'Policy of Alexander III', pp. 251-6; Donahue, 'The canon law', pp. 144-7, 155-7; Houlbrooke, *Church Courts*, pp. 56-60; Ingram, 'Spousals litigation', pp. 37-42. The most complete digest of types of contract is, of course, found in, H. Swinburne, *Treatise of Spousals or Matrimonial Contracts* (London, 1686, repr. New York and London, 1978).

35 Swinburne's account demonstrates the internal contradictions. See also, B. Gottlieb, 'The meaning of clandestine marriage' in R. Wheaton and T. K. Hareven eds., *Family and Sexuality in French History* (Philadelphia, 1980), pp. 49-53; Houlbrooke, 'The making of marriage', p. 351.

36 Donahue, 'Policy of Alexander III', pp. 252-3 cites F. W. Maitland's remark that lovers were the least likely to distinguish between past and future tenses.

validity.<sup>37</sup> That was the crucial paradox. Arguably the theory of consent provided scope for regarding marriage as essentially a personal matter which was the private, contractual affair of individuals, and it is the implications for marriage choice which need to be considered. Canon law theory contained within it then, the potential for a more individualistic interpretation of marriage, and this can be seen to be reflected in the contemporary phrase, that particular persons contracted of their 'own freewill and motion'.<sup>38</sup> But at the same time, the evidence generated by contract cases focuses our attention on the more complex family, social, cultural and economic reality, behind the making of marriage choices.

## The Evidence

In addressing some of the general problems presented by the evidence, it should be emphasized just how voluminous the source material is. Not only is this thesis based on very extensive series of ecclesiastical court records, it also uses over two thousand probate records pertaining specifically to five chosen parishes from the Canterbury diocese.<sup>39</sup> While the problems inherent in the use of probate evidence are well-known, and are discussed briefly in chapter 5, the difficulties encountered in the study of Canterbury's church court records require some attention here.

The testimonies given by deponents in ecclesiastical court proceedings have been valued elsewhere for their richness and vividness of social detail, and for the light thrown upon the circumstances and conventions surrounding courtship. The informative quality of the evidence may reflect the efficiency of the court and, more generally, changes in administrative practice, with the frequent use of English recorded on paper in the sixteenth century, probably making for better documentation and fuller, more graphic narratives<sup>40</sup> than those made earlier, in Latin, on parchment. Nonetheless, accounts of individual cases, still vary significantly, from the single, fragmentary case to the massively well-documented hearing involving over seventy deponents.<sup>41</sup>

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37 Sheehan, 'Marriage theory and practice', pp. 422-6, 459; J. A. Brundage, 'Concubinage and marriage in medieval canon law', *Journal of Medieval History* 1 (1975), 1-17 (p. 8); Gottlieb, 'Clandestine marriage', pp. 49-53.

38 See, for example, C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, ff. 180v.-1v., *Wattle v. Dunnye and Kennet*(1570).

39 For the sources used, and their coverage, see the manuscript bibliography.

40 Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 130-1, 181-2; Houlbrooke, 'The making of marriage', p. 340.

41 It was theoretically considered desirable to limit the use of umpteenth witnesses, and this was usually implemented in practice: Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, p. 128. Although most matrimony cases involved a small number of witnesses, that case involving more than seventy witnesses was an extreme

Capitalizing on the strength of these records is, however, less than straightforward. A study of disputed cases is itself problematic, for being ostensibly records of the essential failure of marriage communications, they may be considered somewhat exceptional, and they represent only a small proportion of actual marriages, whether 'informal' or duly solemnized and completed. It is difficult to assess with certainty the typicality of the relationships or marriage behaviour displayed. The meaning and relevance of the attitudes and customs revealed in church court cases are, of course, open to a number of different interpretations, and presupposing that the issues discussed in the depositions somehow reflect ordinary life is inevitably debatable.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, the real value of the evidence should not be underestimated, and it is preferable to argue from the evidence available rather than from silence. One cannot know, for example, whether, in the majority of marriages, the ideal of 'multi-lateral consent' was really practised to the satisfaction of all parties and interest groups.<sup>43</sup> Elsewhere it has been said that these litigations do not represent marriages which were 'unusually formed', but that what was unusual was only the interruption in the process as a consequence of altered circumstances, personal and social dilemmas. Indeed it can be argued that the responses evoked and the pressures expressed in the court cases were believed to have been normal. Moreover, the general conclusion concerning the status profile of litigants in matrimonial court cases would suggest that 'most ranks of society were represented... except for the

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example of the complex ramifications of what was, apparently, a typical contract suit. The matrimonial cause of *Coppyn v. Richards*, escalated into a tortuous investigation into the reputation, and thus the credibility, of the witness and midwife Agnes Butterwick, who died during the course of the proceedings. See, C.C.A.L., MSS. X/10/7-X/10/8, *passim*; X/10/9, ff. 3-4; A. F. Butcher, 'The honest and the lewd in sixteenth-century Canterbury: the case of Mrs. Butterwick', unpublished paper delivered at the graduate research seminar, dept. of history, University of Kent (19 October 1983). The prominence of midwives in English communities, and the respectability of their practice, as opposed to the stereotype of the midwife-witch, is discussed in D. Harley, 'Historians as demonologists: the myth of the midwife-witch', *Social History of Medicine* (1990), 1-26.

42 On the more general question of the typicality of records, see for example, M. Chaytor, 'Household and kinship: Ryton in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries', *History Workshop Journal* 10 (1980), 25-60 (pp. 50-1); Houlbrooke, 'The making of marriage', p. 350; Rushton, 'The testament of gifts', p. 29; Rushton, 'Property, power and family networks', pp. 206-7, 215-16; Gottlieb, 'Clandestine marriage', p. 54; Donahue, 'Policy of Alexander III', p. 267; Sheehan, 'Formation and stability', p. 231. Macfarlane warns that surviving records, in general, exaggerate tensions. See, *Marriage and Love*, p. 137.

43 Martin Ingram emphasizes the abnormality of conflict, and claims that the dominant social ideal was 'multilateral consent'. See, 'The reform of popular culture?', pp. 135-6, and 'Ecclesiastical justice in Wiltshire', ch. on matrimonial causes.

very rich and the desperately poor', although different social groups were probably disproportionately represented.<sup>44</sup>

Basic methodological problems are posed by positivist approaches in the treatment of depositions and by source-mining for qualitative evidence. The deposition should ideally be regarded as a particular type of discourse. As a legal document and an historical dramatic text, it is loaded with a language which reflects legal principles, literary influences, and traditional ideologically derived images and speech. In defamation cases, it has been shown that witnesses manipulated recognizable images, metaphors, and stories from a range of popular sources, to construct their own deposition narratives.<sup>45</sup> More generally, disputed cases may be interpreted, at one level, as dramatic conflicts seeking resolution; the events, language and emotions are structured by legal argument, and by the call upon dramatic climax and foci which seem to create a theatrical representation of issues. Furthermore, the testimonies are framed by a specific set of interrogatories, prepared by the parties or proctors, which delimit the nature of the evidence, encouraging particular responses and making it difficult to discriminate between social and legal interpretation, fact and fiction.<sup>46</sup>

It may also be said that the historical value of deposition evidence can only be properly understood when considered, not only within its wider social and community context, but also within its administrative and judicial framework.<sup>47</sup> As previously indicated, the taking of testimonies did not constitute the entire procedural process, and a more complete study of matrimonial causes would incorporate other kinds of court records relevant to the case.<sup>48</sup> In

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44 For evidence of the social status of those involved in ecclesiastical court suits, see Ingram, 'Spousals litigation', pp. 44-5; Ingram, *Church Courts*, pp. 194-5; Rushton, 'Property, power and family networks', pp. 215-16; Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 160-1; Woodcock, *Medieval Ecclesiastical Courts*, pp. 104-6; Sheehan, 'Formation and stability', p. 234; Houlbrooke, *Church Courts and the People*, p. 75; Houlbrooke, 'The making of marriage', pp. 341-2; Sharpe, 'Defamation and sexual slander', p. 17.

45 Gowing, 'Gender and the language of insult', pp. 1-21. On the popularity and accessibility of ballad literature, see, E. Foyster, 'A laughing matter? Marital discord and gender control in seventeenth-century England', *Rural History* 4, 1(1993), 5-21.

46 The procedure for producing and examining witnesses is given in, H. Conset, *The Practice of the Spiritual or Ecclesiastical Courts* (First edn. 1681; 3rd edn., London, 1708), pp. 140-6. See also, Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 17-20, 112-13, 127-34; Houlbrooke, *Church Courts*, pp. 40-2; Ingram, *Church Courts*, pp. 20, 48-9, 198-9; Woodcock, *Medieval Ecclesiastical Courts*, pp. 55-8.

47 Woodcock, *Medieval Ecclesiastical Courts*, p. 4.

48 Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 6-24, provides an excellent discussion of the sources, and pp. 112-40, of the general rules of procedure. Also Houlbrooke, *Church Courts*, pp. 38-54; Woodcock, *Medieval Ecclesiastical Courts*, pp. 50-62; Ingram, 'Spousals litigation', p. 36. See above, n. 30.

Canterbury's diocesan courts, the full proceedings of litigation are seldom easily identifiable among the confused arrangement of the court records.<sup>49</sup> The often indeterminable nature of the disputes, and the associated problem of having incomplete accounts, can more generally lead to a misrepresentation of the facts and circumstances of individual cases.<sup>50</sup> Where sentences survive, they have been said to be generally uninformative.<sup>51</sup>

Alternative actions help explain the apparently inconclusive state of cases in the archives; compensation being possibly sought later on by common law action for breach of promise, or through unofficial compositions, arbitration or agreement.<sup>52</sup> In the case of *Stokes v. Swanton*, some attempt to have the dispute 'put to arbitrament by her friends' seems to have occurred, although Mark Swanton may earlier have sought other means of resolving his predicament, while also threatening legal action. In a letter dated 14 May 1596 addressed to Thomas Cullen (a rival suitor for Cecily Stokes's hand in marriage), Swanton claimed that he was already contracted to her, that he 'kold write diveres thinges which ar tokens that shee is my wiffe..' that Cullen was thereby committing 'adultry', and that if Cullen should marry with her, he would 'devorse' them again. Further professing to prove the truth of his claim, Swanton challenged him to meet secretly at an appointed place and time with a rapier and dagger, in order to end the strife.<sup>53</sup>

Incitement to a duel may have occurred during court proceedings, but it would probably have been an exceptional option in out-of-court settlements.<sup>54</sup> It was more likely that cases would be terminated by other means. It would appear, however, that the abandonment of contract suits became increasingly common practice, corresponding with a decline in confirmatory sentences passed, between the late fourteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>55</sup> Perhaps this partly represents the

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49 Woodcock, *Medieval Ecclesiastical Courts*, pp. 4, 139-40.

50 Ingram, 'Spousals litigation', p. 36; Donahue, 'Policy of Alexander III', p. 261.

51 Ingram, 'Spousals litigation', pp. 40-2; Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 20-2.

52 Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 135-8; Houlbrooke, *Church Courts*, p. 67; Ingram, 'Spousals litigation', p. 51; Ingram, *Church Courts*, pp. 207-8.

53 C.C.A.L., MSS. Y/3/15, f. 270v.; X/11/5, f. 186; J/J2 139.

54 Duelling was generally infrequent and informal in sixteenth-century English society, although statistical evidence from Kent suggests that the decades 1570-1620 experienced a peak in the incidence of sword-fights compared to any time thereafter. The evidence also suggests that the more sophisticated bladed weapons were used by the upper classes and by foreigners. See, J. S. Cockburn, 'Patterns of violence in English Society: Homicide in Kent 1560-1985', *Past and Present* 130 (1991), 70-106 (esp. pp. 83-4).

55 Houlbrooke, 'The making of marriage', pp. 348-9; Houlbrooke, *Church Courts*, pp. 83-4; Ingram, 'Spousals litigation', p. 52; Ingram, *Church Courts*, pp. 208-9; Woodcock, *Medieval Ecclesiastical Courts*, pp. 59-60.



dilemma of judges evaluating cases. Certainly the lack of definitive sentences would frustrate any expectation of recovering complete records.<sup>56</sup>

Such interruptions in proceedings create obvious difficulties of interpretation, which are complicated further by another kind of partiality existing in the records. Some witnesses either could not or would not remember the facts.<sup>57</sup> Others were described as 'friends' or 'enemies' of the parties, favouring a cause and telling tales, or being 'not of sharp wit', perhaps 'beguiled'. They testified in the cause, they said, because they were either legally constrained, morally obliged, requested to do so, or bound 'to declare a troth'. The motives underlying their testimonies were entangled with a diversity of other circumstances, such as indebtedness, suggesting perhaps that the function of the courts touched upon a wider range of issues tangential to the apparent concerns of formal regulation. It would have been difficult enough for the judge to assess the reliability of the evidence, without having to distinguish the truth from perjured testimonies.<sup>58</sup> Some collusion inevitably occurred, with gifts offered as bribes.<sup>59</sup> Again, discriminating between a gift and a bribe as morally separable 'sets of reciprocities' is, too, often difficult. Interpreting when gifts are tolerable and acceptable, or when they are legitimate rewards, can be as problematic as evaluating the testimonies themselves.<sup>60</sup>

The use of depositions as historical records is thus a difficult task, given the complex nature of the source. The diversity of motives and circumstances, the often partial, perjured giving of testimonies and the fragmentary, inconclusive disputes, add to the elusiveness of the truth. Without the broader social, community, and legal contexts, our understanding of the events described, themselves far from straightforward, is inevitably flawed. In using the evidence in this thesis, because of the necessarily conflicting accounts, and the variety of narratives and interpretation, the same cases can easily recur in different chapters, according to their different capacities, contexts and discussions. The representation of contradictory elements within cases is inevitable given the

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56 Donahue, 'Policy of Alexander III', p. 261, considers the problem of historical interpretation where the records are incomplete, assuming a possible disparity between legal principles and social conditions. Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 128-9, concluded, however, that court procedure was such that the medieval judge was probably no more enlightened than the modern historian.

57 See also, Ingram, *Church Courts*, p. 183.

58 Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 154-9.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 162.

60 The question of when a gift is a bribe is discussed by J. T. Noonan Jr., *Bribes* (New York, 1984), *passim*. He isolates the importance of intention, form, the context of reciprocity, and the 'relational aspects', in identifying the moral differences.

nature of the disputed testimonies, and should be regarded as a genuine attempt to explore the limits of plausibility and the ambiguity of interpretation.

While the deposition material is difficult to quantify, the series of ecclesiastical court Act books used in chapter 4 lends itself more easily to such enquiry. The Act books which are examined from the mid-fifteenth century to the end of the sixteenth century are massive in number, but the arrangement of the records (as shown in Appendix 1, Table A1.1) is often inconsistent and chronologically confused. Various kinds of marriage causes were heard by the court, although most of the petitory actions were indeed brought for the enforcement of marriage contracts, and might include suits involving a third party.<sup>61</sup> The classification of cases given in the books is presented annually in Table A1.2. Any effort to examine the incidence of types of marriage litigation would require yet further qualification, since the terms used should not necessarily be regarded as definitive or informative, and might in fact at times obscure the complex nature of individual actions. Figure A1.1 which illustrates the changing distribution of contract suits introduced into the Consistory Court, may not therefore adequately represent absolute numbers, as only three of the categories which most likely dealt with allegations of spousals were considered. But since the objective in this thesis is not to approach the data with a view to identifying legal trends to marriage, no attempt has consequently been made to interpret fluctuations in the number of cases. As chapter 4 will demonstrate, analysis of the Act books will be restricted to a specific examination of courtship horizons within the diocese.

## II

### The Canterbury Diocese

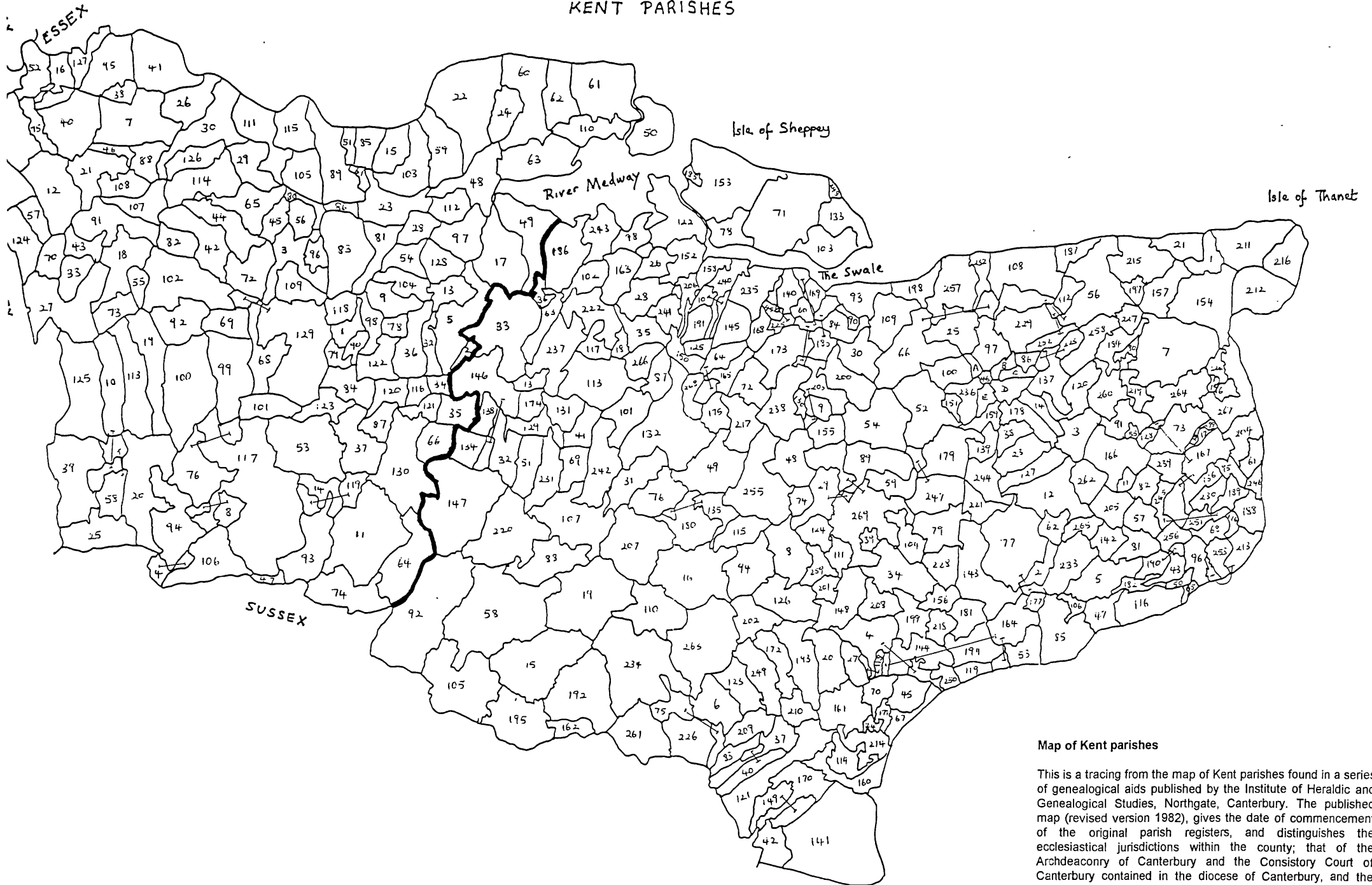
The actual reaches of the diocese of Canterbury as shown in Map I.1, covered only the eastern side of the county of Kent, but it embraced a variety of landscapes and a patchwork of parishes of diverse size, population density, and economic and administrative bases. That there was, clearly, no such thing as the 'typical' English parish has been reiterated recently by Carlson in his study of sixteenth-century marriage, where he attempted to portray some of the different experiences of Tudor Cambridgeshire villages and suggested, in so doing, that the degree of intervention by ecclesiastical courts, and their role in regulating interpersonal affairs in the diocese of Ely, depended partly on the nature of the demographic and self-governmental regime of individual localities, and their

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<sup>61</sup> See Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 57-111, for a comprehensive discussion of the types of marriage suits, and especially, pp. 57-9, 107-8, for multi-party causes.

MAP I. I

KENT PARISHES



Map of Kent parishes

This is a tracing from the map of Kent parishes found in a series of genealogical aids published by the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies, Northgate, Canterbury. The published map (revised version 1982), gives the date of commencement of the original parish registers, and distinguishes the ecclesiastical jurisdictions within the county; that of the Archdeaconry of Canterbury and the Consistory Court of Canterbury contained in the diocese of Canterbury, and the Archdeaconry of Rochester, the Exempt Deanery of Shoreham, and the Peculiar of the Rector of Cliffe in the west of Kent.

Key to Map: parish numbers

1	Acol	St. Mary Magdalen	91	Goodnestone iux	148	Mersham	196	St. Mary	244	Upper Hardres	31	Deptford	85	Milton
2	Acnse	St. Mildred		Wingham	149	Midley	(cont)	St. Peter	245	Waldershare		St Nicholas	86	Murstled
3	Adisham	St. Peter	92	Goudhurst	150	Milsted		St. Clement	246	Walmer		St Pau	87	Nestested
4	Aldington	A St. Dunstan	93	Graveney	151	Milton (near		Sare	247	Waltham	32	Drton	88	Northray
5	Alkham	B St. Mary, Northgate	94	Great Chart		Canterbury)	197	Seasalter	248	Warden	33	Downe	89	Nymbleet
6	Appledore	C St. Martin	95	Great Mongeham	152	Milton iux	198	Sealidge	249	Warehorne	34	East Barm ng	90	Orham
7	Ash	D St. Paul	96	Guston		Sittingbourne	199	Se ng	250	West Hythe	35	East Farleigh	91	Orpington
8	Ashford	E St. Mary Bredin	97	Hackington	153	Minster, Sheppey	200	Sevington	251	West Langdon	36	East Ma ng	92	Orford
9	Badlesmere	47 Capel le Ferne	98	Halstow	154	Minster, Thanet	201	Shadoxhurst	252	Westbere	37	East Peckham	93	Pembury
10	Bapchild	48 Challock	99	Ham	155	Molash	202	She dwich	253	Westcliffe	38	East Wocham	94	Penshurst
11	Barfrestone	49 Charing	100	Harbledown	158	Monks Horton	203	Sholden	254	Westenhanger	39	Edenbridge	95	Purmstead
12	Barham	50 Chariton	101	Hametsham	157	Monkton	204	Siberswold	255	Westwell	40	Eltham	96	Roley
13	Bearsted	51 Chart Sutton	102	Hartip	158	Murston	205	Sittingbourne	256	Whitfeld	41	Erith	97	Rochester
14	Bekesbourne	52 Chartham	103	Harty	159	Nackington	206	Smeeth	257	Whitstable	42	Eynsford		St Margaret
15	Benenden	53 Cheriton	104	Hastingleigh	160	New Romney	207	Snargate	258	Wickhambreux	43	Famborough		St Nicholas
16	Bethersden	54 Chilham	105	Hawkhurst	161	Newchurch	208	Snave	259	W esborough	44	Farningham		Cathedral
17	Betteshanger	55 Chillenden	106	Hawkinge	162	Newenden	209	St John the	260	Wingham	45	Fawkhams		Ryhall
18	Bicknor	56 Chislet	107	Headcorn	163	Newington iux	210	Bapst, Thanet	261	Wittersham	46	Footscray	98	Seas
19	Biddenden	57 Coldred	108	Heme		Sittingbourne	211	(Margate)	262	Womenswold	47	Fant	100	Sevenoaks
20	Bilsington	58 Cranbrook	109	Hemehill	164	Newington iux		Woodchurch	263	Woodnesborough	48	Finosbury	101	Uppoleme
21	Birchington	59 Crundale	110	High Halden		Hythe	212	Woodnesborough	264	Wootton	49	G ngham	102	Urdensham
22	Bircholt	60 Davington	111	Hinshill	165	Newnham		Wormesh	265	Worth	50	Gra ne	103	Urdensham
23	Bishopsbourne	61 Deal	112	Hoath	166	Nonington	213	Worth	266	Wych ng	51	Gravesend	104	Sussex
24	Blackmanstone	62 Denton	113	Hollingbourne	167	Northbourne		Wye	267	Wye	52	G eenwich	105	Swale
25	Blean	63 Detting	114	Hope	168	Norton	214	Wye	268	Wye	53	Hadow	106	Swale
26	Bobbing	64 Doddington	115	Hothfield	169	Oare		West	269	Wye	54	Hadding	107	Swale
27	Bonnington	65 Dover	116	Hougham	170	Old Romney		(Diocese of		West	55	Hasted	108	Swale
28	Borden	St. Mary in the	117	Hucking	171	Oganswick	215	West	1	West	56	Hartley	109	Swale
29	Boughton Aluph	Castle	118	Hurst	172	Orlestone		West	2	West	57	Hayes	110	Swale
30	Boughton under	St. James	119	Hythe	173	Ospnng	216	West	3	West	58	Haver	111	Swale
	Blean	St. Mary	120	Ickham	174	Otham		West	4	West	59	Higham	112	Swale
31	Boughton Malherbe	86 Dunkirk, extra	121	Iychurch	175	Otterden		West	5	West	60	High Hasted	113	Swale
32	Boughton	parochial	122	Iwade		Oxenden (incl. with	218	West	6	West	61	Hoo A halows	114	Swale
	Monchelsea	67 Dymchurch	123	Kenardington		Wingham)	219	West	7	West	62	Hoo St Mary	115	Swale
33	Boxley	68 East Langdon	124	Kennington	176	Oxney		West	8	West	63	Hoo St Andrew	116	Swale
34	Braboume	69 East Sutton	125	Kingsdown		Oxney is e of	220	West	9	West	64	Horsmonden	117	Swale
35	Bredgar	70 Eastbridge	126	Kingsnorth	177	Padd esworth		West	10	West	65	Horton Kirby	118	Swale
36	Bredhurst	71 Eastchurch	127	Kingston	178	Patrboume	221	West	11	West	66	Hunton	119	Swale
37	Brenzett	72 Eastling	128	Knowlton	179	Petham		West	12	West	67	Husted	120	Swale
38	Bridge	73 Easty	129	Langley	180	Pluckley	222	West	13	West	68	Hythe	121	Swale
39	Brook	74 Eastwell	130	Leaveland	181	Posting		West	14	West	69	Kemsing	122	Swale
40	Brookland	75 Ebony	131	Leeds	182	Poulton	223	West	15	West	70	Keston	123	Swale
41	Broomfield	76 Egerton	132	Lenham	183	Preston iux		West	16	West	71	Kidbrook extra	124	Swale
42	Broomhill	77 Elham	133	Leysdown		Faversham	224	West	17	West	72	Kidbrook extra	125	Swale
43	Buckland (near	78 Elmley	134	Linton	184	Preston iux		West	18	West	73	Kidbrook extra	126	Swale
	Dover)	79 Elmstead	135	Little Chart		Wingham	225	West	19	West	74	Kidbrook extra	127	Swale
44	Buckland (near	80 Elmstone	136	Little Mongeham	185	Queenborough		West	20	West	75	Kidbrook extra	128	Swale
	Faversham)	81 Ewell	137	Littlebourne	186	Rainham	226	West	21	West	76	Kidbrook extra	129	Swale
45	Burmarsh	82 Eytham	138	Loose	187	Reculver		West	22	West	77	Kidbrook extra	130	Swale
46	Canterbury	83 Fairfield	139	Lower Hardres	188	Ringwold	227	West	23	West	78	Kidbrook extra	131	Swale
	All Saints	84 Faversham	140	Luddenham	189	Ripple		West	24	West	79	Kidbrook extra	132	Swale
	Cathedral	85 Folkestone	141	Lydd	190	River	228	West	25	West	80	Kidbrook extra	133	Swale
	Holy Cross	86 Fordwich	142	Lydden	191	Rodmersham		West	26	West	81	Kidbrook extra	134	Swale
	St. Alphege	87 Frinsted	143	Lyminge	192	Rotenden	229	West	27	West	82	Kidbrook extra	135	Swale
	St. Andrew	88 Frittenden	144	Lympne	193	Ruckinge		West	28	West	83	Kidbrook extra	136	Swale
	St. George	89 Godmersham	145	Lynsted	194	Saltwood	230	West	29	West	84	Kidbrook extra	137	Swale
	St. Margaret	90 Goodnestone iux	146	Maidstone	195	Sandhurst		West	30	West	85	Kidbrook extra	138	Swale
	St. Mary Bredman	Faversham	147	Marden	196	Sandwich	231	West		West				

physical and practical cohesiveness.<sup>62</sup> In the diocese of Canterbury, likewise, the peculiarities of particular places might have partly determined the extent of church court litigation, and if the character of individual parishes was, in some measure, fashioned by the physical environment, the contrasting features of the Kent landscape offered sufficient diversity of experience.

From the salt marshland region of mixed farming on Kent's northern coast, and the area of marsh and ploughland on the Isle of Thanet, the diocese encompassed the fertile loams of Northern Kent, and the variegated soils of the North Downland belt, with their emphasis on arable husbandry and generally larger wheat and barley farms.<sup>63</sup> With the main exception of Blean Forest, woodland in this region was scarce, and some unenclosed arable land could be found on the eastern district. By contrast, the southern half of the Canterbury diocese, which extended from the Wealden Vales and High Weald to the grazing lands of Romney Marsh, covered areas whose agriculture were principally pastoral. The southern coastal marshes provided additional resources in fish and fowl, and although there was also some arable for fodder crops and corn grown for domestic consumption, the land was devoted largely to the fattening of mutton and beef, Romney Marsh being the prime sheep-grazing region of Kent county. In the Wealden Vales, where common meadows and pasture were extensive, and where the soils enabled agriculture to be more mixed than in the cattle-rearing High Weald, the farming of both livestock and corn were practised, although the economy was still predominantly pastoral-based. Typical of the Wealden landscape and agriculture were woodlands, the enclosed farms, the abundance of small estates, and small holders who grew wheat and oats, carried out some domestic dairying, kept some sheep, but focused on cattle farming. Here too was an area particularly characterized by the kind of gavelkind tenure theoretically prevalent in Kent, by weak manorial control, and by the essential raw materials which encouraged its growing proto-industrialisation in the

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62 Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, pp. 156-80.

63 The paragraph which follows is based on the identification of farming regions and Kentish agriculture and industry given by J. Thirsk, 'The farming regions of England', in J. Thirsk ed., *Agrarian History of England and Wales, 1500-1640*, IV (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 1-112, (pp. 2-15, 55-64); A. Everitt, 'The community of Kent in 1640', in A. Everitt, *The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion 1640-60* (Leicester, 1966, 1973 edn), pp. 20-55; P. Clark, *English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution: Religion, Politics and Society in Kent 1500-1640* (Hassocks, 1977), ch. 1 and esp. p. 5; C. W. Chalklin, *Seventeenth-Century Kent. A Social and Economic History* (London, 1965), esp. pp. 7-26, 45-109; *Victoria County History of Kent*, III; F. W. Jessup, *Kent History Illustrated* (Maidstone, 1973 edn.). For a study of an East Kent area, see, E. J. Andrewes, 'Land, family and community in Wingham and its environs. An economic and social history of rural society in east Kent from c. 1450-1640', (Unpublished University of Kent Ph. D thesis, 1991).

sixteenth century, promoting the general importance of by-employments especially in the renowned rural-textile industry but also, to a lesser extent, in the iron and leather industries.<sup>64</sup>

As the diocese contained within its boundaries such identifiably different physical sub-regions, it incorporated, no less, a heterogeneity of parish sizes and population densities. Map I.2 based on the household figures derived from the Canterbury diocesan survey of communicants in 1563, illustrates the degree of variation.<sup>65</sup> As is to be expected, the important city of Canterbury along with the traditional provincial centres of Hythe, Dover, Sandwich and Faversham were the most densely populated. To some extent, the urban hierarchy, market towns, and centres of rural manufacturing, as opposed to predominantly rural parishes, are also reflected.<sup>66</sup> The Kent Weald was that region where parishes were generally large, while still recording relatively high population densities. Although it is usually regarded as a particularly populous area on account of its

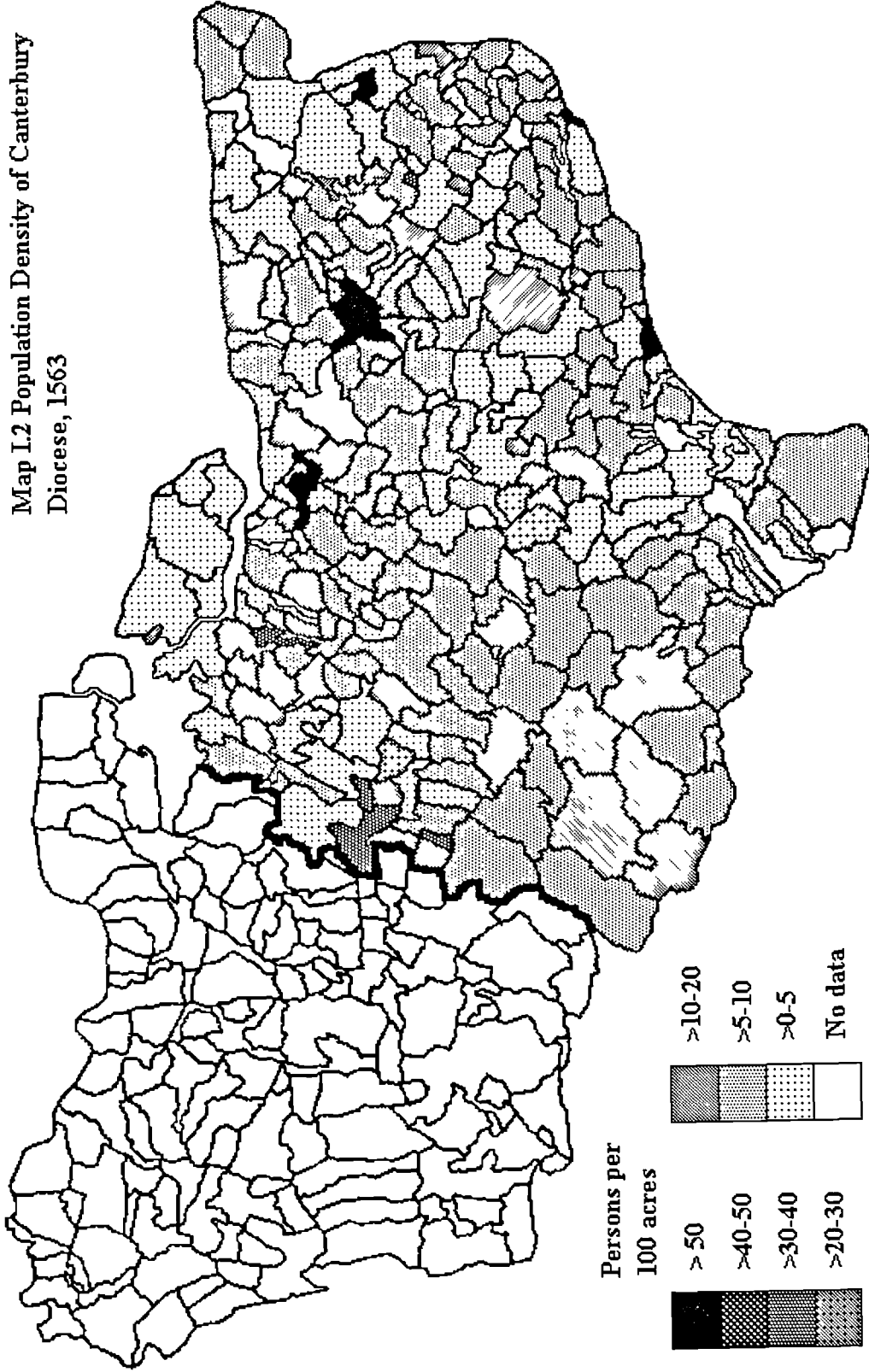
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64 For a detailed study of the Kent Weald, see, M. Zell, *Industry in the Countryside. Wealden Society in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1994), esp. pp. 1-9, 88-112. The general influence of partible inheritance is also mentioned in Thirsk, 'Farming regions', pp. 11, 59; Chalklin, *Seventeenth-Century Kent*, pp. 55-6; Everitt, 'Community of Kent', pp. 46-7; Andrewes, 'Wingham and its environs', pp. 124-8.

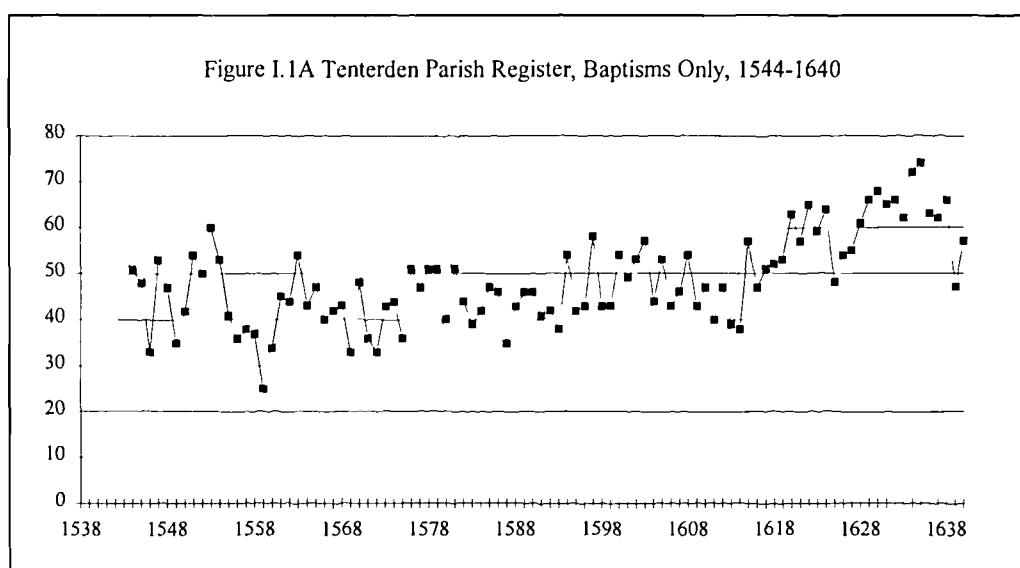
65 I am very grateful to Professor David Palliser for providing me with a copy of his transcript of these returns, B. L. Harl. MS. 594, ff. 63-84. To estimate the population size from the 1563 returns it has been assumed that the average household size was 4.75, following P. Laslett, 'Mean household size in England since the sixteenth century', in P. Laslett and R. Wall eds., *Household and Family in Past Time* (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 125-58. For calculations of population density, the parish acreages are those given in the *Census Returns of 1851*. According to Zell, *Industry in the Countryside*, p. 54, the B. L. text of the 1563 returns is inferior to the Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS. 122 version. The 1560s population figures given by Zell for sample Weald parishes are significantly higher than these 1563-based estimates would suggest (see Table 3.12, p. 86). Yet higher population figures as shown below, can be derived using the parish register evidence, and assuming a crude birth rate of 35 per thousand, see E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871. A Reconstruction* (First publ. London, 1981, ppbk. edn., 1989), p. 531, Table A3.3. In general, therefore, although the 1563 returns used here may not be a reliable guide to population figures, since they could understate the size of populations to a significant degree, the census does still allow us to make consistent comparisons of parish size and density.

66 For the population sizes of specific towns or parishes see below, ch. 4 and notes to Appendix 2, Table A2.3. The late sixteenth and early seventeenth century rise in population has been observed for the Wingham area, and for Dover, see Andrewes, 'Wingham and its environs', p. 241; M. Dixon, 'Economy and Society in Dover 1509-1640', (Unpublished University of Kent Ph. D. thesis, submitted 1992), pp. 359-75. Seventeenth-century population figures are given in Chalklin, *Seventeenth-Century Kent*, pp. 27-41. Estimates of the county population from the mid-sixteenth century can be found in, Cockburn, 'Patterns of violence', p. 78, and M. Zell, 'Suicide in pre-industrial England', *Social History* 11, 3(1986), 303-17 (p. 309).

Map I.2 Population Density of Canterbury  
Diocese, 1563

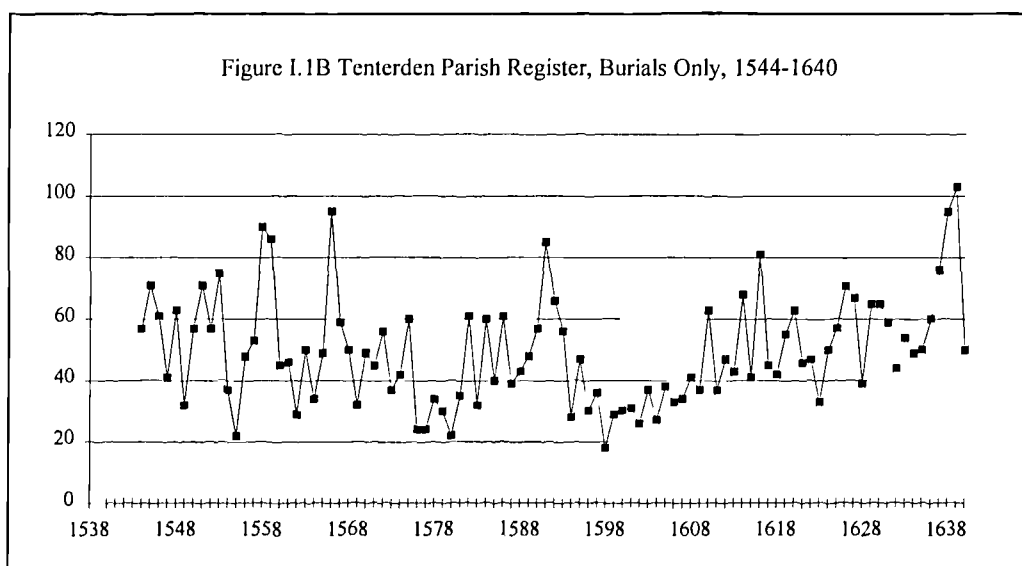


marked rural industry, even there, the demographic experience differed. In the central Wealden cloth-making parishes, population density was high, with the population expansion, which probably began from the end of the fifteenth century, increasing rapidly in the second half of the sixteenth century to reach saturation point. In the eastern Weald, however, outside of rural manufacturing centres, the agrarian-based parishes which also comprised marshland areas, were generally possessed of under-average population densities, and rather than population growth, experienced 'demographic stagnation' in the sixteenth century.<sup>67</sup>



<sup>67</sup> Zell, *Industry in the Countryside*, pp. 32, 52-87, esp. pp. 58-65. The only serious mortality crises in the Weald were the influenza outbreaks of 1557-9. Higher mortality was also recorded in some parts of the Weald in 1565-7, and in the early 1590s. Other crisis years in the second half of the sixteenth century in Kent generally, whether on account of harvest failures, disease, economic distress and popular disturbance, or increasing poverty, are cited in T. J. Tronrud, 'Dispelling the gloom. The extent of poverty in Tudor and early Stuart towns: some Kentish evidence', *Canadian Journal of History* 20 (1985), 1-21; T. J. Tronrud, 'The reponse to poverty in three English towns, 1560-1640: a comparative approach', *Histoire Sociale* XVIII, 35 (1985), 9-27; P. Clark, 'Popular protest and disturbance in Kent, 1558-1640', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 29, 3 (1976), 365-82.





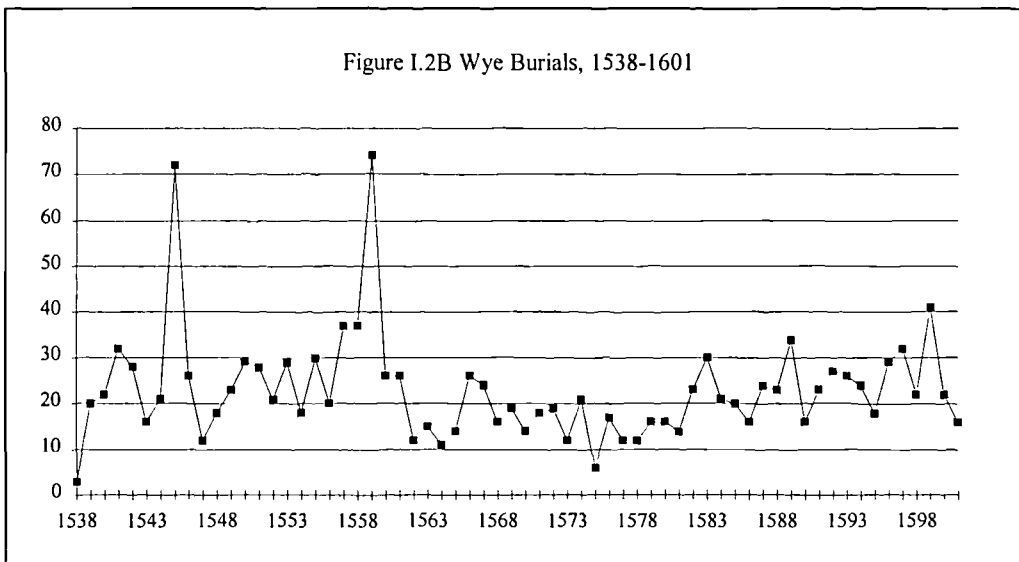
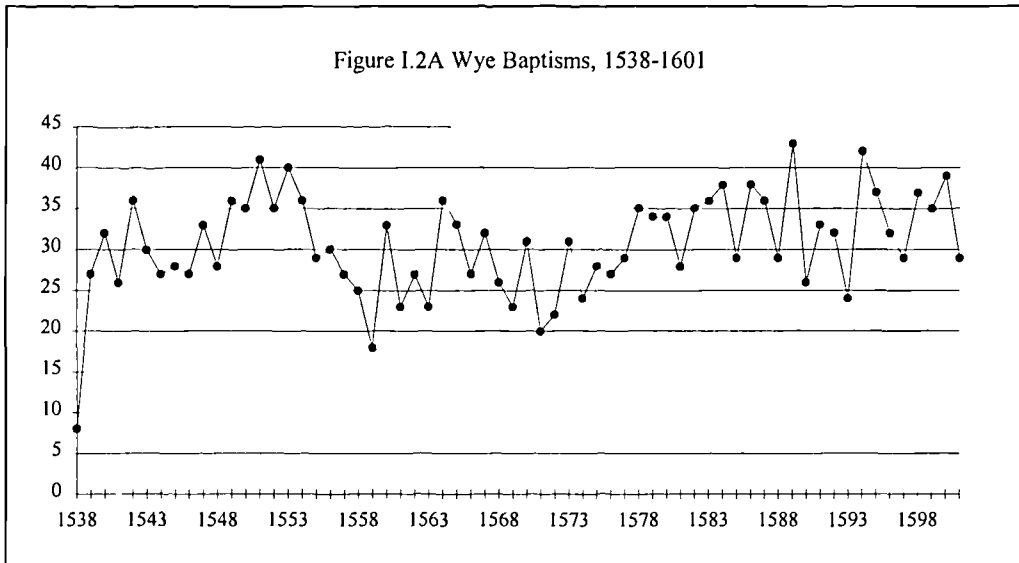
The parish of Tenterden, one of the five sample parishes chosen for specific studies in chapters 5 and 6, lay within that east Wealden district identified by Zell. Its demographic experience as shown in Figures I.1A and I.1B illustrates the absence of any discernible population growth in the sixteenth century,<sup>68</sup> although it was an unusually populous and prosperous place compared to its neighbours. With an estimated population of over 1300 in the 1560s,<sup>69</sup> the parish extended over 8300 acres to include several hamlets and Tenterden borough, of privileged status as a limb of the Cinque Ports. While farming remained the most common occupation there, with the wealthiest among those inventoried engaged in livestock rearing and fattening, semi-urban Tenterden also functioned as a commercial and agricultural market centre, with trading links, and a diversity of goods, trades and services to offer. As the inventories suggest, the woodworking, textile, building, food and drink, and leather trades were all represented, along with the services of smiths and shopkeepers.<sup>70</sup> Likewise, the occupational status of testators revealed the predominance of

68 C. K. S. P 364/1/1, (parish register of Tenterden).

69 This figure is derived from an average of 47 baptisms per year between 1561 and 1565, assuming a crude birth rate of 35 per thousand. Cf. Zell's figure of 1200 persons, *Industry in the Countryside*, p. 86. The 1563 returns enumerate only 200 households.

70 For the demographic experience of Tenterden, and its occupational structure and wealth, see, Zell, *Industry in the Countryside*, pp. 57-9, 61-2, 116-21, 148-50, 154. For commercial links with Romney, see, A. F. Butcher, 'The origins of Romney freemen, 1433-1523', *Economic History Review*, 2nd. ser., 27, (1974), 16-27. For the established heretical tradition in Tenterden and other parts of the Kentish Weald, see, P. Collinson, 'Cranbrook and the Fletchers: popular and unpopular religion in the Kentish Weald', in P. N. Brooks ed., *Reformation Principle and Practice: Essays in Honour of A. G. Dickens* (London, 1980), pp. 171-202 (p. 176).

yeomen and husbandmen, but included several clothiers, tanners, and shipwrights, as well as the individual carpenter, mason, cooper, woodsetter, whitesmith, shoemaker, glover, mercer and professional.<sup>71</sup> Among the grooms who married by licence in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and their bondsmen, a further variety of crafts and services was manifested, with a range of textile workers, building workers, butcher, baker, grocer, carrier, barber, Chandler, plumber and gardener.<sup>72</sup>



71 See the Manuscript Bibliography for wills and inventories used in this brief survey.

72 J. M. Cowper ed., *Canterbury Marriage Licences, 1568-1618, passim*.

Of the other four sample parishes selected, that of Wye most closely approximated to Tenterden's size, stretching over roughly 7300 acres on the downland region, but with only about 800 inhabitants in the 1560s, it was far less densely populated.<sup>73</sup> Its parish register suggests that the number of recorded baptisms suffered a modest slump in the late 1550s and 1570s which, together with the mortality crises of 1545 and 1559, may have inhibited any real increase in its overall population after the middle of the century (see Figures I.2A and I.2B).<sup>74</sup> Although Wye was clearly a market town in the sixteenth century, it ranked lower in the urban hierarchy than even Tenterden, and the evidence culled from probate material and marriage licence data indicates that the parish, in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, was based upon an agricultural economy, while maintaining a small leather industry represented by tanners, shoemakers, and glovers, and some involvement in a clothing industry. Otherwise, a range of craftsmen served the needs of an agricultural community such as the blacksmith, carpenter, tilemaker, joiner, fletcher and cooper, with a number of others in the food and drink trade, notably butchers, bakers, a cook, vintner and maltman. The ruling élite of knight, esquire and gentlemen, along with professional men, were further represented.<sup>75</sup>

Sturry parish on the outskirts of Canterbury, and the nearby parish of Chislet, were also selected for comparative analysis. The former, being the smallest of the five parishes (c. 3100 acres), was less than half the size of Chislet (c. 6800 acres), but was nonetheless more densely populated. The 1563 returns list 42 households for Sturry and 60 for Chislet, indicating populations of about 200 and 285 persons respectively. In the course of the sixteenth century, the population may have increased in Sturry, but the extent and timing of that increase is problematic.<sup>76</sup> The registered baptisms in Chislet, on the other hand,

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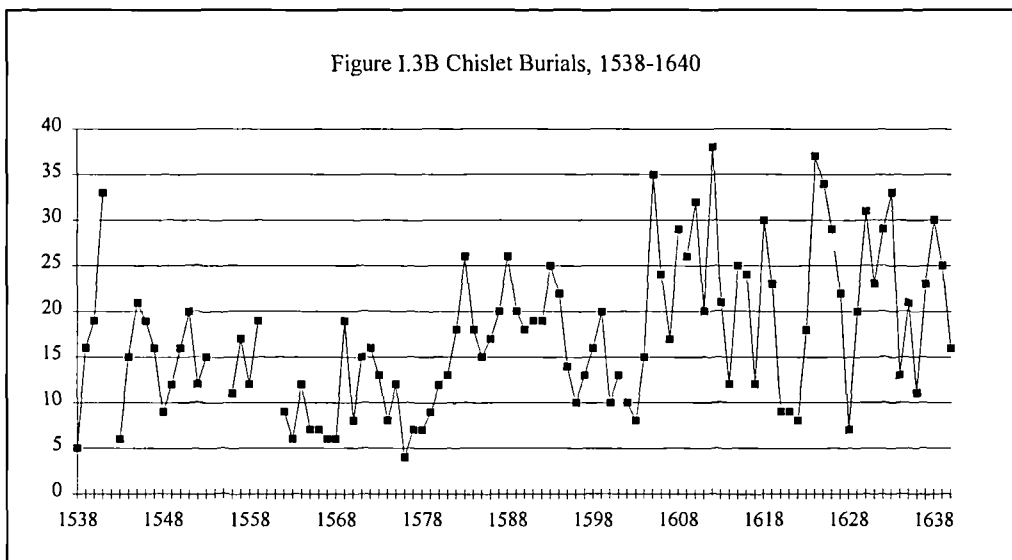
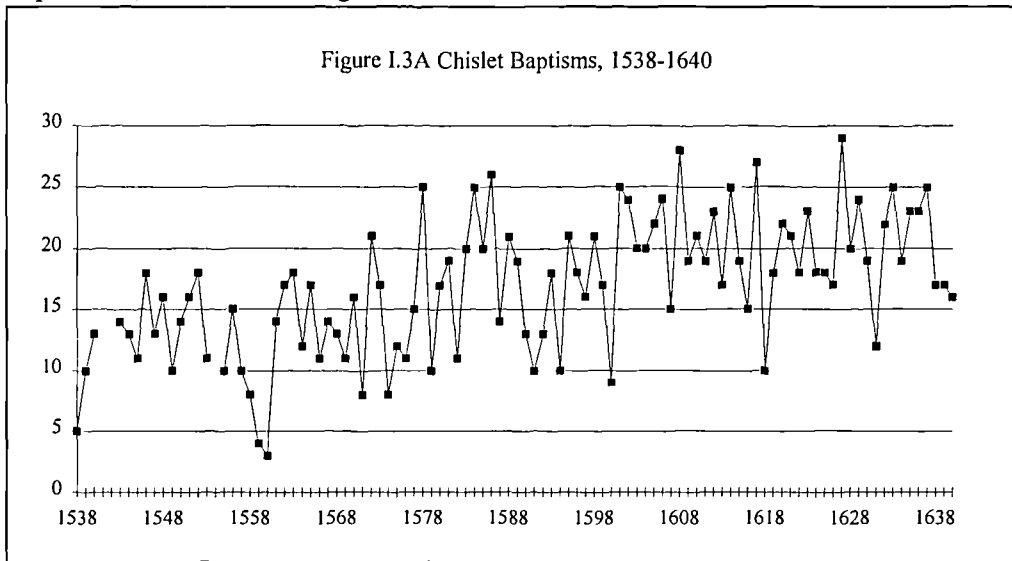
73 The 1563 returns however, list only 72 households, and thus an estimated population of just 342 persons.

74 Wye parish formed part of the Cambridge Group's original sixteenth-century sample, see, Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History*, p. 487. The annual figures of registered baptisms supplied by them, however, are significantly different from my own aggregation from the parish register, see C.C.A.L., U3/174/1/A1, U3/174/1/A2, (parish register of Wye).

75 *V.C.H. Kent*, iii, indicates brickmaking at Wye. For the parish's involvement in popular disturbances in the 1590s, see, Clark, 'Popular protest and disturbance', pp. 368, 382.

76 See C.C.A.L., U3/55/1/A1, U3/55/1/A2 (parish register of Chislet); U3/48/1/i (parish register of Sturry). Calculations based on the average number of baptisms between 1561 and 1565 would give a population of 554 in Sturry, and 446 in Chislet. The Sturry register is, however, not very reliable, see note 77 below.

display a definitive population increase, despite the slumps which checked expansion, as shown in Figures I.3A and I.3B.<sup>77</sup>

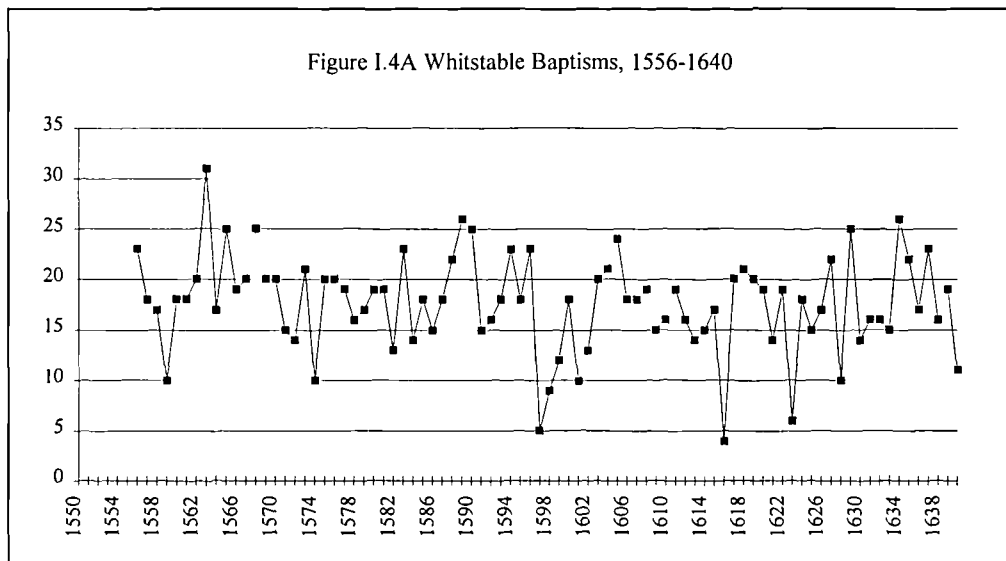


In the agricultural marshlands of Chislet, bequests of livestock to sons were commonly found, and so too in Sturry where testators left sheep and cattle to their beneficiaries with unusual frequency. While farming was the economic backbone of both parishes, Sturry did not apparently possess the same exclusive predominance of yeomen and husbandmen. Its topographical convenience, proximity to roads and its river crossing, its location close to the diocesan city of Canterbury, and its partly wooded character may all have contributed to its more varied economic basis, as the parish also evidently accommodated tanners,

<sup>77</sup> The Sturry parish register is a copied register of dubious accuracy, with a great deal of muddle and some gaps. It is not presented therefore in graph form.

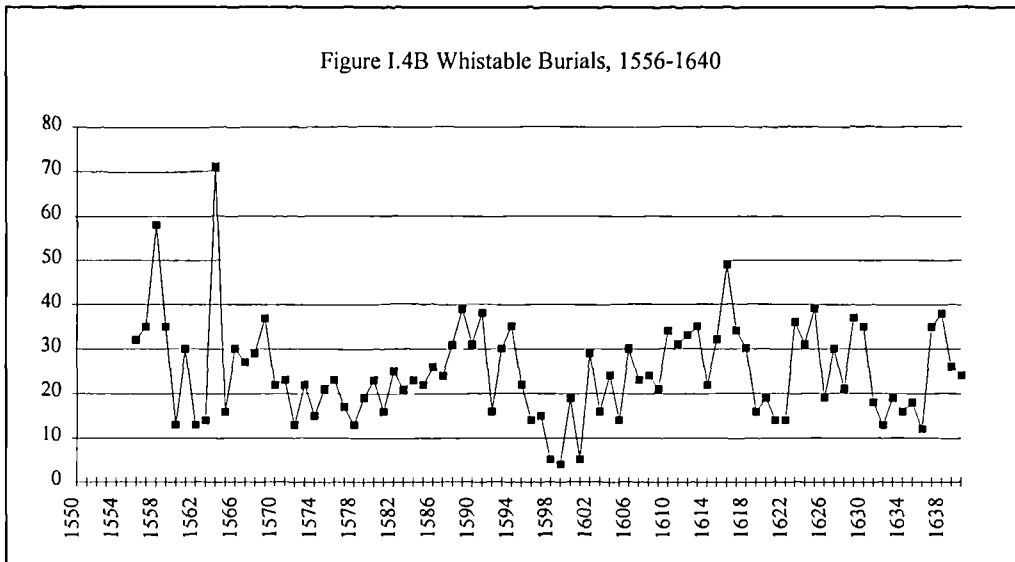
shoemakers, glovers, tailors, a clothworker, weaver, blacksmith, carpenter, glazier, ropemaker and butcher.<sup>78</sup>

Finally, on the northern Kent coast, lies the parish of Whitstable, with its mixed economy in the sixteenth century of corn-growing pastoral farming and grazing, dairying, baking, and brewing for local consumption, basic small crafts and provisioning, and its particular emphasis on fishing, copperas-making, and the sea. Together with the farming community, mariners, sailors, and shipwrights were to be found among the probated population, and bequests included mention of weirs, boats, nets and other such occupational artefacts as well as livestock, reflecting the broad-based economy of the community. Whitstable would appear to have shared in the mortality crisis of 1558, and recorded 71 deaths in the plague of 1564, suffering relatively high mortality too, in the period 1589-94. Although the 4100-acre parish was quite populous, with at least 70 households, and possibly as many as 630 inhabitants in the early 1560s, its demographic experience suggests a stagnant population (see Figures I.4A and I.4B).<sup>79</sup>



<sup>78</sup> See also, K. H. McIntosh ed., *Sturry. The Changing Scene* (Ramsgate, 1972).

<sup>79</sup> The 1563 returns would thus indicate a population only half the size of that calculated from the parish register. For the parish register of Whitstable, see, C.C.A.L., U3/131/1/1.



The experience of all five Kent parishes illustrate something of the diversity which is to be found among individual parishes in the sixteenth century, in their demographic trends, their economies, and physical characteristics. Although they were chosen in the knowledge that they had good surviving probate material and early parochial registration, the intention in this thesis as already stated is *not* to undertake any kind of community reconstruction, but simply to represent that local and regional variation within the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the diocese of Canterbury, in which courtship and the making of marriage took place.

Chapter one shall begin by examining the general meaning and role of family and friends, and the wider collective context of the social and moral community, which provided the framework for the structuring and restructuring of relationships, the negotiations of courtship, and the making and breaking of marriage decisions.

## CHAPTER 1

### 'RULED BY MY FRIENDS': FAMILY, KIN AND COMMUNITY IN THE MAKING OF MARRIAGE<sup>1</sup>

#### The Nature Of Kinship And Its Role In Courtship And Marriage

As a life crisis, marriage is surrounded by values, conventions and rituals which encode and symbolically demonstrate a multi-level involvement in the marriage process. This chapter seeks to explore how decision-making in that process was influenced by a wide range of groups and community pressures. In attempting to define more closely the nature of kinship and social constraints over courtship and marriage in sixteenth-century England, however, the importance of kin-like or 'fictive' kin groups must also be considered.<sup>2</sup>

While the study of marriage and kinship has long been of central importance to the work of anthropologists, social and economic historians, in search of a methodology and a theoretical framework for their own more recent investigations in this area, have resorted to traditional anthropological studies and measured their evidence against them. The process of accommodation has, however, been slow and often hesitant. The problems of markedly different sources of evidence, the length of the periods under consideration, and the difficulties of comparison across time and between widely varying cultures, have meant that the frameworks of analysis adopted by English historians, may already have been superseded or considerably modified, by the work of contemporary anthropologists.<sup>3</sup>

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1 An earlier version of this chapter was published as, "'Ruled by my friends": aspects of marriage in the diocese of Canterbury, c. 1540-1570', *Continuity and Change* 6 (1991), 9-41.

2 See also, Ingram, 'Ecclesiastical justice in Wiltshire', ch. on matrimonial causes; A. Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (London, 1977); M. Gluckman, 'Les rites of passage', in M. Gluckman ed., *Essays on the Ritual of Social Relations* (Manchester, 1975), pp. 1-52; J. Bossy, 'Blood and baptism: kinship, community and Christianity in Western Europe from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries', in D. Baker ed., *Sanctity and Secularity: the Church and the World* (Oxford, 1973), pp. 129-43 (pp. 130-2).

3 Much has been written about the advantages and disadvantages of combining the two disciplines, e.g. K. Thomas, 'History and anthropology', *Past and Present* 24 (1963), 3-24. For a more critical treatment of method, see E. P. Thompson 'Anthropology and the discipline of historical context', *Midland History* 3 (1972), 41-55. The contribution which each subject makes to the other is summarized by D. I. Kertzer, 'Anthropology and family history', *Journal of Family History* 9 (1984), 201-16. For historical approaches to the study of marriage and the family, M. Anderson's, *Approaches to the History of the Western Family, 1500-1914* (London and Basingstoke, 1980), is a useful

It is now acknowledged that there was some variation in the character of kin relations and in the intensity with which they were maintained, and there is an admitted ignorance concerning the quality of such relations as did exist.<sup>4</sup> While maintaining that the English family system in the early modern period displayed a 'broad homogeneity of structure', and normative 'conventions of behaviour', it was also said to have been 'characterized above all by its flexibility and adaptability'.<sup>5</sup> Such conclusions as have been made, however, have turned upon the notion of the nuclear household and the importance of nuclear ties.<sup>6</sup> One

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thematic guide and, in a recently published article, David Cressy reviews the literature on kinship, and provides an extensive bibliography. See 'Kinship and kin interaction in early modern England', *Past and Present* 113 (1986), 38-69.

4 See K. Wrightson, 'Kinship in an English village: Terling, Essex, 1550-1700', in R. M. Smith ed., *Land, Kinship and Life-Cycle* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 313-32; and Wrightson and Levine, *Poverty and Piety*, pp. 82-94. Also, for the determinants of kinship strength, see Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, pp. 50-4. V. B. Elliott, 'Mobility and marriage in pre-industrial England: a demographic and social structural analysis of geographical and social mobility and aspects of marriage, 1570-1690, with particular reference to London and general reference to Middlesex, Kent, Essex and Hertfordshire', (University of Cambridge, Ph. D. thesis, 1979), pt. ii, ch. ii, throws interesting light on the characteristics of migrants to London in the early seventeenth century, by comparing their social origins and the range of their kin relations. R. M. Smith, 'Kin and neighbours in a thirteenth-century Suffolk community', *Journal of Family History* 4 (1979), 219-56, notes that 'the most important feature to emerge from this study is the actual variations in the frequency and character of relations with close kin over the whole spectrum of landlords', (p. 244). R. T. Vann, 'Wills and the family in an English town: Banbury, 1550-1800', *Journal of Family History* 4(1979), 346-67, explores further the question of kinship recognition, and finds that there are differences by social status.

As far as the quality of existing relationships is concerned, Wrightson says of Peter Laslett's work that he 'is less able to examine kinship links between households on the basis of listings alone. Nor is he able to explore the nature and quality of kinship relations either within or between households, though ultimately these issues may prove of more significance in the process of social change than the preliminary problem of household structure', see *Poverty and Piety*, pp. 83-4, and 'Kinship in an English village', p. 314. Wrightson's own method of assessing the social significance of kinship is, in turn, criticized by Chaytor, in 'Household and kinship', pp. 28-9. She voices regret that the study of household size and structures with its 'emphasis on incidence and structure has left the content of social relations, both within households and between them, largely unexplored' (p. 26).

5 K. Wrightson, 'Household and kinship in sixteenth-century England', *History Workshop Journal* 12 (1981), 151-8 (p. 154).

6 Laslett, 'Mean household size', *passim*. Wrightson is confident that households in the English context were 'predominantly nuclear family households', *Poverty and Piety*, p. 85. Also, *English Society*, pp. 44-51; 'Household and kinship', pp. 154-7; and 'Kinship in an English village', *passim*. This importance is seen in A. Macfarlane, *The Family Life of Ralph Josselin. A Seventeenth-Century Clergyman. An Essay in Historical Anthropology* (Cambridge, 1970, New York, 1977), chs. 7-10, and the notion of nuclearity is developed in A. Macfarlane, *The Origins of English Individualism: the Family, Property and Social Transition* (Oxford, 1978); A. Macfarlane, 'The myth of the peasantry: family and economy in a northern parish', in R. M. Smith ed., *Land*,



of the prime attributes of village communities is held to be the absence of corporate groups. 'Isolated' households, 'loose' networks of kin, flexible, 'narrow and shallow' recognition of kin and only an 'optional' and 'selective use' of such ties were said to characterize relationships with kindred. Kinship, the argument ran, was not a 'dominant principle', and it was rarely 'of over riding significance'. What was stressed instead was the changing shape of kin relations - 'fluid' structures, 'individualistic', 'personal and impermanent' forms, and an essentially 'flexible and permissive kin system'.<sup>7</sup>

The resort to the axiom that everything is *flexible* and the emphasis upon continuity in structures over time would seem to have become the prevailing orthodoxy. This very idea of flexibility implicitly denies the centrality of kin, but in reaching this conclusion the determining emphasis has been very much upon household organization and almost exclusively upon purely biological kinship. Recent anthropological discussion, however, suggests a more complex and perhaps more subtle definition of the concepts of kindred and kinship which may have much to offer too for the understanding of sixteenth-century English society.

The treatment of kinship by the earlier generation of anthropologists is now criticized for its almost exclusive concern with descent groups and the tendency to impose a concept of corporateness which had little meaning for those

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*Kinship and Life-Cycle*, pp. 333-49; and Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*. David Cressy acknowledges that the quantitative evidence re-emphasizes 'the familiar point that immediate lineal descendants and members of the primary nuclear family were the principal beneficiaries of wills', although his argument is aimed at restoring the importance of kinship despite the statistical evidence. See 'Kinship and kin interaction', p. 59.

Concentration upon the nuclear household has, therefore, not gone unchallenged: see Chaytor, 'Household and kinship', and the debate which this article has stimulated, with the critique by Wrightson, 'Household and kinship'; a note by C. Hill, 'Household and kinship', *Past and Present* 88 (1980), 142; O. Harris, 'Households and their boundaries', *History Workshop Journal* 13(1982), 143-52; and R. Houston and R. Smith, 'A new approach to family history?', *History Workshop Journal* 14 (1982), 120-31. Vann, 'Wills and the family', p. 363, allows for greater recognition of kin in Banbury than in the wills collected from Terling; and Bossy, 'Blood and baptism', takes a largely theoretical line which emphasizes the significance of extended kin ties, though how far this applies to the post-medieval period is unclear. More recently, the importance of kinship and of lateral ties in the community has been re-evaluated in C. Oestmann, *Lordship and Community. The Lestrange Family and the Village of Hunstanton, Norfolk, in the First Half of the Sixteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 1994), pp. 185-215.

<sup>7</sup> Wrightson, *Poverty and Piety*, pp. 82-103 *passim*; Wrightson, 'Household and kinship', pp.154-6 *passim*; Wrightson, *English Society*, pp.44-51 *passim*; Wrightson, 'Kinship in an English village', pp. 318, 320-1, 324, 330, and 332; and Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, pp.39-62 *passim*.

being studied, and which was essentially a theoretical construct.<sup>8</sup> Many anthropologists would now reject this tradition of corporate group models and would regard the social system as necessarily more flexible, manipulable, and combined with other principles of social organization, while, at the same time, concentrating still on the importance of kinship as a crucial element in the structuring of social relations. Too great an emphasis on corporate models has resulted in the development of a descriptive vocabulary (for some societies at least) which is now considered inappropriate and misleading. Words such as 'loose', 'shapeless', 'unstructured', 'fluid', 'amorphous' and 'individualistic' are key words in this rejected vocabulary. Stress is now placed instead upon the wide range of meanings implicit within particular kin terminologies and within particular systems of kinship. What emerges from the investigation of the range and importance of kin ties is the recognition that kinship is variously articulated and is not to be defined simply in genealogical or biological terms. The recent discussion of kinship is one of an 'ideological and moral system', characterized by 'generalized reciprocity' and 'long-term moral bonds'.<sup>9</sup> Anthropological analysis has shown how the vocabulary of kinship is extended to embrace biological non-kin, affines, and neighbours, in order to express either the existing quality of relationships or to create obligations. Such a metaphorical use of kinship, it is argued, promotes stability and reciprocity in social relations and allows relationships to be transformed and located in a 'context of trust'. The extension of the vocabulary of kinship blurs distinctions between 'real' and

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8 For what follows, see A. Barnard and A. Good, *Research Practices in the Study of Kinship. Research Methods in Social Anthropology* (London, 1984). This provides a review of the major anthropological discussions of kinship, esp. ch. 5, pp. 67-87 and ch. 8, pp. 161-89. For new work on south-east Asia, see the collection of papers issued as *Seminar on Cognitive Forms of Social Organisation in South-East Asia* (Amsterdam, 6-8 January 1983), and especially the paper by J. Kemp, 'Processes of kinship and community in north central Thailand', pp. 352-72. Also by J. Kemp, 'The manipulation of personal relations: from kinship to patron-clientage', in H. T. Brummelhuis and J. Kemp eds., *Strategies and Structures in Thai Society* (Amsterdam, 1984), pp. 55-71; and J. Kemp, 'Kinship and the management of personal relations: kin terminologies and the "axiom of amity"', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-Land-en Volkenkunde*, 139(1983), 81-99.

9 M. Bloch, 'The long-term and the short-term: the economic and political significance of the morality of kinship', in J. Goody ed., *The Character of Kinship* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 75-89. Cressy, 'Kinship and kin interaction', also has a bearing on the argument since he emphasizes the mutual obligation, value and versatility of kinship, and the potential for seemingly latent connections to be transformed into effective ties as the situation demanded. He undermines the distinction previously made between 'effective' and 'non-effective' kin, and between close and peripheral kin, but confines his argument for situational flexibility to ties of genealogical connection. For an alternative discussion on the issue of kinship language and morality, see O. Harris, 'Households and their boundaries', pp. 145-51.

'fictive' kin and makes adaptation possible in circumstances of rapid social change, as a variety of relations entailing different terms and degrees of commitment or morality are manipulated. It becomes critical therefore, to understand the vital role of this vocabulary of kinship and the importance of kinship as a structuring ideology, rather than focusing merely on kinship as an aspect of a biological relationship.

The implications of these arguments for historians may indeed seem to be far-reaching, for it may be that current views of kinship in pre-industrial England are still too narrow. To understand further the true nature of kinship as an organizing principle, it may in fact be necessary to look beyond simply biological notions of kinship and to examine the vocabulary of kinship and its application, since only by the analysis of the use of such language may the structures of kinship be determined. Terminology is of considerable importance, and the much-noted ambiguity and looseness of the terms used in the sixteenth century may be seen, in the context of this argument, as the source of manipulable potential within a wider ranging kinship system.<sup>10</sup> To the criticism of the conceptualization of household and family and nuclearity, therefore, might be added criticism of the idea of a kinship as just a flexible system. To speak of a system as flexible is, arguably, not enough and it certainly does not imply that it was individualized. Even if most historians would now reject Macfarlane's view of too simple a dichotomy between kinship on the one hand and individualism on the other, this basic polarization nevertheless continues to inform discussion of marriage and kinship in sixteenth-century England.<sup>11</sup>

It is suggested here, that an understanding of behaviour and social relations in the sixteenth century could be greatly enhanced by attempts to examine more subtly the social context, through a wider definition of kinship and the delineation of the variety of social groups, networks, and social pressures which existed. The study of courtship and marriage must inevitably concern itself

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10 On the simplicity of terminology, see e.g. Cressy, 'Kinship and kin interaction', pp. 65-7; Macfarlane, *Origins of English Individualism*, pp. 146-7; Wrightson, 'Household and kinship', p. 155; Wrightson, *English Society*, p. 46; and Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, p. 40.

11 See above, Intro. p. 3. Also Macfarlane, *Origins of English Individualism*; 'Modes of reproduction', *Journal of Development Studies* 14 (1978), 100-20, and 'The myth of the peasantry' *passim*. For critical reviews of this, see the discussion by S. D. White and R. T. Vann, 'The invention of English individualism: Alan Macfarlane and the modernization of pre-modern England', *Social History* 8 (1983), 345-63; D. Herlihy, 'Origins of English individualism', *Journal of Family History* 5 (1980), 235-6; and K. Tribe, 'Origins of English individualism', *Social History* 4 (1979), 520-2. Also, L. Stone 'Illusions of a changeless family', *The Times Literary Supplement* (16 May 1986).

with the demarcation of the social and moral community and the location of the individual within them, and thus demands a close consideration of the several roles of those participants and influences which served to regulate individual behaviour and the formation of alliances.

### **Family And Community Constraints On The Marriage Process**

The exercising of parental control, and the complex way in which it functioned to modify individual action is crucial to an understanding of the various constraints upon marriage choice. More widely, the influence of family and kin as expressed in the nature of their participation in marriage ritual and witnessing, is a subject which will be discussed below. Indeed, the very concept of their 'goodwill' which is frequently expressed and the need for sanctions implied, should, it is argued, be seen within a context of restructuring of relationships within the kin system and one of conflict and reconciliation.<sup>12</sup> It is, of course, to be expected that the degree of parental control found within a society is linked to certain structural features such as social groups, inheritance systems, mobility, age of marriage, and mortality.<sup>13</sup> Economic dependence may have been one critical factor, and testamentary evidence sometimes reveals that parental strategies might order the distribution of property to ensure that children complied.<sup>14</sup> One Kentish deposition indicated that Agnes Filcott, at Thornham, made her promise of marriage to Henry Mundell conditional upon the goodwill

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12 For important comparative discussions of these issues of constraint, parental control, the wider influence of kin, and 'goodwill', see Ingram, 'Ecclesiastical justice in Wiltshire', ch. on matrimonial causes; Ingram, 'Spousals litigation'; Ingram, 'The reform of popular culture?'; Houlbrooke, *Church Courts*, pp. 56-64; Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, ch. 4; Houlbrooke, 'The making of marriage'; and Wrightson, *English Society*, pp. 70-88. The ambivalence of the patriarchal role, and of parental consent, in the law and practice of courtship is further explored in Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, esp. pp. 74-7, 92-101, 108-9, 117-23, 138-40; and Carlson, 'Courtship in Tudor England', pp. 27-9, in which he concludes: 'This brief survey has been peppered with words like 'some', 'many', and 'usually' because there was no one standard form of courtship in sixteenth-century England. The role of parents is one such case'. Also, see above, Intro. on the historiography of courtship. For a European example, see L. Roper, "'Going to church and street": weddings in Reformation Augsburg', *Past and Present* 106 (1985), 62-101 and esp. pp. 93-8.

13 See, e.g. Elliott, 'Mobility and marriage', pt. iii.

14 It was not just parents who made conditional bequests governing the marriages of young people. The will of William a Bere of Ripple, for example, specified legacies of £3 6s. 8d. to each of the three daughters of John Pettit, 'upon condicion that they be rewelled and married by the gode cowncell of myn exectour and of ther father and mother and ther gode frendes', (6 Oct. 1505, prob. 22 Nov. 1505). PRC 17/10/43v.-4v.

of her father, mother, and friends. 'Wherapon Mundell answered that he did not passe for the goodwill of her friends but only for the goodwill of (her), then (she) answered hym agayn and said that if he obteyned not the goodwill of her freendes she shuld not enioye at their handes the benefite of her fathers bequeithe in his last will and testament'.<sup>15</sup> The place of financial transactions within the making of a marriage (discussed in chapter 6 below) and the way in which marriage was presumably limited by a set of social and economic expectations and necessities, argues for the leverage which parents might have in matters of choice of partners and in the timing of marriages (see chapter 5 below). But at the same time, as this case seems to demonstrate, this aspect of control by parents is itself incorporated within a wider framework of influences and pressures.

The question of whether marriages were arranged by parents, or were the romantic concern of individuals embraces a wide range of issues. The concern here, is with the way in which the constraining pressures of family and kin may be seen to operate, both in terms of particular actions, and in the indirect form implied in the rhetoric and in the attitudes expressed. Arranged marriages need not be identical to the mode of arrangement found, for example, in classical peasant societies. One institutional feature of arranged marriages in such societies is the ritualized position of the go-between, but while the formally recognized, professional stereotype may not have been typical of sixteenth-century English marriage, there is a distinct suggestion of this to be found, in the activities of various intermediaries, whose forms and functions are considered in chapter 3 below. Although, as we shall see, their position was often ill-defined and informal, their actions may imply a measure of ritualized and structured activity. Clearly, love, choice and individual experience would have existed in the sixteenth century, but it is the bounds within which they existed that need to be understood. Arguably, the system in this period was one which accommodated both individual expression and family constraint within a comprehensive ideology of kinship. 'I must be ruled by my freends', said Elizabeth Fletcher of Canterbury, 'as well as by myself'.<sup>16</sup>

The words of Alice Morling's father, of Benenden, are telling, because they can be interpreted as expressing with negative implication the potential power within family hands. Upon discovering that she had betrothed herself, her

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15 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/12, f. 97, *Mundell v. Filcott* (1564).

16 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/12, f. 133v., *Bennet v. Fletcher* (1564). Such language was not only used in wills too, but in the literature of the day. In *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, Capulet tells Paris, 'I think she will *be ruled* In all respects by me', and in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Antonio says to Hero, 'Well, niece, I trust you will *be ruled* by your father'. See Cook, *Making a Match*, pp. 90, 101.

father said that 'he wold be a freend unto them, but he would be ne marriage maker ne marriage breaker'.<sup>17</sup> Clearly individuals were entering into secret and unsupervised liaisons. The resolve to keep to promises is couched, at times, in language that is dramatic and defiant. Rebecca Baker declared in respect of her betrothal at Lenham that 'she would stand to her promise though she shuld be torn with wild horses'.<sup>18</sup> That such promises could occasion reproof of a physical and dramatic kind is made apparent when Alice Jenkyne told those present in John Caseway's house in Folkestone. that she was beaten and driven out of her house for having bestowed herself on John Rolfe.<sup>19</sup>

It can be argued that individuals asserted their own emotional and sexual preferences in face of opposition. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that this was not without personal cost and repercussions. In the case of *Turner v. Hubbard*, Marian Hubbard, who was a servant in the parsonage house of Aldington, was questioned about the promise she had made to a fellow servant, Richard Turner. She answered, 'In deede, I cannot denye, but I have made (him) a promis, the which I meane faythefullye to performe, thoughe all my freendes be ageynste yt, and though manye troobles followed the same'.<sup>20</sup> With the ill will of 'freendes' incurred, the alternative for Isabelle Ladd of Chartham was to 'doo as well as I can and trust to godd that I shall lyve',<sup>21</sup> a prospect perhaps made easier because of the fact that the man to whom she was contracted had a good occupation to live by. No amount of pleading would move some kinsmen. Christine Marsh, widow of Ringwould, fell down on her knees before her brother George Coppyn, desiring him to be a good brother unto her and a friend also, for that he rebuked her and threatened her for having made a promise to George Gaunt.<sup>22</sup>

The argument for individualism needs to confront the evidence for constraint and pressure, even if it is only psychological. Under extreme circumstances, individualism in attitude and thought may be translated into action. The deposition of Thomas Marshall highlights the point, for not only does Marion Rogers demonstrate her individuality but, it seems, it is when forced under real psychological pressure that she does so. It said that she has been sick, that she is not allowed to go out of William Hoball's house in Tenterden, and that she has been 'charged by hyr parents not to come in the company of William Austen nor to talke with him'. She does, nevertheless, meet with him in the

17 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/6, f. 135, *Hartridge v. Morling* (1556).

18 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/9, f. 7, *Robinson v. Baker* (1562).

19 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/3, ff. 1-v., *Rolfe v. Jenkyne* (1545-8).

20 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, f. 231v. (1570).

21 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/10, ff. 71v. and 76, *Read v. Ladd* (1563).

22 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/8, ff. 205v.-6, *Gaunt v. Marsh* (1562).

garden and makes him a promise, but before plighting, pauses and says, 'I shall lease my frends goodwills in so doing, but yet notwithstanding I will marry for myself and not for my frends, for I know that they care not if I were dead so that they might have my goods for they have kept me in, (saying that I am madde) so longe, and wold not lett me go abroode to speake with him that I love so that it had almost cost me my lyffe'.<sup>23</sup>

There is always a danger of sentimentalizing this kind of evidence, and its problematic nature as discussed earlier in the introduction, makes it difficult to know which of the conflicting accounts in the depositions to believe. But, in the end, the actual truth, and whether or not we believe one deponent rather than another is, arguably, not crucial, since what is more relevant is not the facts of an individual experience but the structure within which it is incorporated. How are we to interpret the 'sickness' and 'madness' of Marion Rogers? Are they matters of personal psychology and emotional expression or are they rather responses to external pressure?

In the Canterbury case of *Coppyn v. Richards*, Katherine Richards is offered a pair of gloves by Richard Dennys on behalf of one Edmund Coppyn, which she refused. 'At the refusall therof (Dennys) declared unto her that she and Edmond should be suer together. And then she lamentted very sore howbeyt she wolde not declare any other cause of her lamentings saving that she said to (him) I pray you speake not for him for I will never have him nor I *cannot* love him'.<sup>24</sup> The emphasis is my own, but the rhetoric and distraught condition of Katherine suggests a tension arising from some prohibition other than personal affection. Perhaps then, it is to this area of ambiguous meaning that attention needs to be drawn, in order to understand the problems which individuals had in internalizing family and social norms, and the way in which personal desire was suppressed or, at least, constrained. The justification which respondents gave for the breakdown in their marriage promises should not be taken at face value. Rather we should look for more subtle approaches to interpret their position, and to such emotions as 'lamentation' which indicate that which is largely concealed beneath the surface.

It may be that Katherine's position as servant made her susceptible to Edmund and that, away from her immediate family context, sexual attraction might more easily be translated into a love contract. If so, then her position would not have been an unusual one. The position of servants, and the

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23 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, ff. 168v., 170-1v., *Austen v. Rogers* (1567). Stress and abuse might help account for the phenomenon of youthful suicides found in sixteenth-century Kent. See Zell, 'Suicide in pre-industrial England', p. 314.

24 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, f. 134v. (1560).

opportunities (as elaborated in chapter 4 below) which the institution of service provided, for meeting and entering into sexual relations, as well as for sexual exploitation need to be considered.<sup>25</sup> James Haffynden and Constance Austen were both servants in the household of Mr Robert Wyse of Woodchurch and, according to her account, she was constantly under pressure from him because he was persistent and, indeed, 'tedious' in his suit for marriage, so much so that she was unable to attend to her duties and one of them was forced to leave her master's service. The case is interesting because not only does it indicate the possibilities of this kind of pressure, but there is perhaps another means of interpreting the events. She was found by one Richard Wylls to be very sorrowful and weeping for, it seems, that Haffynden had made the rule that the goodwill of her 'friends', namely her three uncles, should be obtained. The refusal of her 'friends' to grant their goodwill may well have hindered the marriage and possibly it was by their action that she was recalled from her service. That the couple talked of 'love and familiarities', and that Haffynden feared the influence and counsel of her 'friends' was testified by Alice Bett, who claimed also to have seen them lying together in 'naked bed', and to have heard them discuss the need for elopement if goodwill was not forthcoming.<sup>26</sup>

Being carried away in secret can be seen as one form of individual action, but it was also used by family and kin for their own arrangements. In some of those cases where two persons claimed to be lawfully contracted to one party, and where one of these marriages had been formally solemnized, it seems possible to distinguish the love contracts and broken liaisons from those marriages which were properly completed and perhaps predominantly socially and economically determined. Conceivably, romantic and sexual inclinations and the expectations of marriage led to hasty promises, and these were broken under

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25 The importance of the institution of service and its demographic, social and economic consequences are well attested to. See e.g. Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, pp. 11, 82-7, 267-8, 276, 334; P. Laslett, *Family Life and Illicit Love in Earlier Generations: Essays in Historical Sociology* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 12-14, 34, 45-6, 61, 72-5, 163-5, 228; Houlbrooke, 'The making of marriage', p. 343. For service as a factor favouring freedom of choice in marriage partner, see above Intro., n. 8. Also, Goldberg, 'Marriage, migration, servanthood and life-cycle'. M. K. McIntosh, 'Servants and the household unit in an Elizabethan English community', *Journal of Family History* 9(1984), 3-23 (pp. 19-21), draws attention to the opportunity which service provided for positive relations between servants, and between servants and their masters. On the other hand, Chaytor, 'Household and kinship', pp. 47-8, considers that service may have been a bleak alternative to remaining at home for Ryton women, and Rushton, 'Property, power and family networks', pp. 212-15, argues that masters might also interfere in the marriage plans of servants and apprentices, particularly those of younger servants. See also Houlbrooke, *Church Courts*, p. 64.

26 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, ff. 165v.-166, 206v., 208v. 209v., *Haffynden v. Austen* (1567).



circumstances in which it was found that the individual was unsuitable, and where the reality of family, social and economic pressures forced different decisions to be taken. The case of *Tusten v. Allen* helps to illustrate such a distinction. It appears that Godlen Allen, a widow, received several marriage tokens from Richard Tusten, that their behaviour was seen to be 'very loving', and that they had in fact obtained the goodwill of Thomas Sprott, 'cosyn' to Godlen. Relations had proceeded in an orthodox way and included financial negotiations, but it seems that the turning point against Richard Tusten came 'for certaine unkynde woords that (he) should speake against the wife of John Sprott brother of Thomas'. The ill-will which this incurred probably made it impossible for the marriage to proceed. Godlen is alleged to have said that she would have married him if her cousin Sprott had not been against it, that out of fear of her cousin, she dared not have the banns asked at Wye in Tusten's absence, but wanted them to be asked at Otham where he dwelled to see if he was clear from marriage with another.<sup>27</sup>

The case is complicated by reference to this other party, but it does nevertheless illustrate the breaking of one liaison in favour of alternative arrangements. The solemnization of a marriage between Godlen Allen and Simon Ansell was likely to have been an abuse of solemnization since it proceeded to legalize what was theoretically an invalid marriage.<sup>28</sup> It seems that the marriage occurred after the apparitor had already declared to Thomas Sprott that he had a citation from Richard Tusten which contained within it an inhibition. On the day that the citation was declared, Godlen Allen was in hiding in her chamber, and afterwards suddenly went away with her 'cosyn' Simon Rolfe. It appears that they took horse, met with Simon Ansell, and rode away that night, and the writings made by Thomas Sprott between Ansell and Allen were made after the citation, and before the solemnization of the marriage. The deposition of one William Collyns is perhaps most revealing. In it he says that Godlen declared to him, 'weping, that she colde not tell what to do for that hyr cosyn Thomas Sprott had so earnestely moved and perswaded her to assure hirselfe to Ansell owte of hand, in so muche that she was afraid (as she said) that he wolde have done hyr some evell, for that she wolde not graunt to contracte herself with Ansell the day before, and therefore wished that Richard Tusten were comde home at that tyme from London. And also afterwards (William Collyns) dyd hear that Ansell and Allen were married together'. The marriage between Godlen Allen and Simon

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<sup>27</sup> C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, ff. 257v.-9, 260, 286-7, 292, 293v.-4v., 296v.-7, 298v.-9v., 300v., 302-v. (1567-8).

<sup>28</sup> See Sheehan, 'The formation and stability of marriage', pp. 240-3 on the abuse of solemnization.

Ansell can be seen, in this light as the consequence therefore of kin constraints, which acted against the personal wishes and inclinations of Godlen herself. The determination of the kin to make these arrangements at a time of crisis demonstrates their control of widow Godlen, and her consent to such a marriage should be interpreted within this context. Her personal decision was apparently subject to external pressures and her position as widow makes the argument for the influence of kinsmen all the more potent. While it may be argued that the greater economic independence of widows and their age might allow them more personal freedom of action, it is possible that through previous marriages, their actions and decisions involved a wider family and social network in which greater numbers of people had personal interests in a new marriage.<sup>29</sup>

*Rayner v. Chamber* is a case in point, of interest because of the kinds of arrangement implied, for the social detail which it provides and the information about those involved, as well as the focus placed on individual experience and collective pressures. It is clear that there had been several occasions on which there had been talk concerning a marriage between the widow Elizabeth Chamber of Charing and widower Mathew Rayner of Boughton-under-the-Blean. Such talk had occurred at her house and at his, as well as at the house of her father Henry Adye. Discussions had centred on financial matters and had involved the active participation of a range of kin, in negotiations and in entertainment. The emphasis, however, was on the meeting at Rayner's house, where matters were to be concluded, and where Elizabeth Chamber was welcomed and 'frendly chere' was provided for her entertainment. The company of 'kin', 'frends', and many other 'neighbours', in all up to sixteen or seventeen persons, dined together. Noticeably, though, within this grouping, a select few were singled out and more

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<sup>29</sup> The suggestion that widows might act more independently is also made by Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, pp. 211-15; Houlbrooke, 'The making of marriage in mid-Tudor England', p. 346; and Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, pp. 231-7. For widows' and women's property rights, see Macfarlane, *Origins of English Individualism*, pp. 80-4, 131-4. It is worth pointing out that, in England, rough music does not seem to have been concerned with ritual displeasure of widow remarriage, and was not, therefore, directly concerned with social control of remarriage. See M. Ingram, 'Ridings, rough music and the "reform of popular culture" in early modern England', *Past and Present* 105 (1984), 79-113; and M. Ingram, 'Ridings, rough music and mocking rhymes in early modern England', in Reay ed., *Popular Culture In Seventeenth-Century England*, pp. 166-98. Chaytor argues that though remarriage was not economically necessary for widows in Ryton, women were the object of transaction between kin, 'Household and kinship', pp. 43-4. Her views on remarriage are criticized by Houston and Smith, 'A new approach to family history?', pp. 123-6, who draw attention to the different circumstances in which widows found themselves, and the effect of underlying economic conditions on the marriage of widows. See e.g. J. Z. Titow, 'Some differences between manors and their effects on the conditions of the peasant in the thirteenth century', *Agricultural History Review* 10 (1962), 1-13.

directly involved in the marriage communications, and they included those who had participated in the earlier stages- goodman Adye who was the widow's father, Cyriak Petit who was Rayner's master, Thomas Hawkins (of kin, as he said, because Rayner's first wife was his sister's daughter), and Christopher Southonsand (also of kin, because Rayner's first wife was within the third or fourth degree of him). Also present was Robert Castelyn (kin to Rayner but to what degree he did not know), one Bunce, and Bernard Bonar, a temporary lodger in the house. Financial negotiations being concluded, Rayner named as his sureties his brother Bunce and his brother Andrew Rayner. That there was a sub-group within the company of persons present is indicated also in a physical separation, as the select core moved to a separate chamber to finalize matters, because it appeared that Elizabeth Chamber was unwilling to contract herself in the presence of so many, and, therefore, certain 'friends' were called forth.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps Elizabeth Chamber was both intimidated by the group, and by her father, and the negotiations and finalizing of the marriage were largely determined by kin. One account reads that Petit said to her, 'You have herd what you father hath doon for the preferment and advancement of yor marriage to whome you have put and did in tymes past your trust'. It seems that her father had 'marryed her twice afore', and that he trusted that 'she (would be) ruled by (him) as she hath been afore tymes'. Her silence when asked whether she was content with what her father and 'friends' had done is revealing, and so too is the private communication which her father had with her away from the company. In her own deposition, Elizabeth Chamber claimed, 'that they would have had her to have made (Rayner) promise with solemn contract and saith she hath twice been marryed and there was never contract desired of her so earnestly as at that tyme '. Furthermore she added, that 'she never consented in her heart to her father's sayings', although she allowed herself to be measured for wedding garments 'for fear of her father and mother's displeasure', indicating thereby her individual attitude but constrained action.

What the evidence suggests is the arrangement of a third marriage advanced by kinsmen, and particularly by the widow's father, with social and economic advantage in mind, as in times past. Thomas Hawkins's opinion on the desirability of the match may support such a view. He said to her, at her house, 'that thone of them did know eche other well and their parents and bringing up. Wherefore (he) thought it shuld be a good match that they be marryed'. And if, as it seems, Elizabeth Chamber was unwilling to proceed with the marriage, it helps to explain her desire that Mathew Rayner defer the date of solemnization. The

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30 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/8, ff. 115v.-16v., 118, 123, 124-8, 141-2 (1561).

stated reasons are, however, in themselves of interest - one reason being that her previous husband had died lately, and the second, that she could not consent to the time appointed 'for that she did marry her husbands alwaies about that tyme and did not long enioye them after but died'. Some of the essential features of marriage practice are illustrated here with the participation of various representatives of kin and community in the witnessing process, and with the importance of ritual. A consideration of these aspects in the marriage process adds a further and crucial dimension to an understanding of the operation of the system of social constraint and of the place of the individual within the community.

The fact that individuals entered into secret and sexual relations does not undermine the argument that family and community constraints nevertheless operated. It is clear that individuals made secret promises one to another, but with betrothal and publication through formal representative groups, such actions moved immediately from within the interpersonal to the institutional sphere. It is argued that the private promise must be seen as an aspect of a whole complex of processes involving kin and community. In arguing for various stages in the marriage process, one might speculate that there is a structure that moves outwards from the inter-personal, to small groupings, and then to the community at large, where there is acceptance at the community level after a marriage has been secularized and popularized. Perhaps there is a danger here of seeing the process as too systematic, but the essential point is that witnessing and the broadcasting of intention was an important stage in marriage practice. When Agnes Butterwick warned Edmund Coppyn and Katherine Richards to 'take hede what they did, for ther was nothing doon in secrete, but it wold come to light', she was expressing the fact that a betrothal had to be made public and had to have the social ritual.<sup>31</sup> In cases where there was a betrothal and yet no attempt to publicize this, then questions of deceit, and of secrecy out of fear, are reasons to be considered. An intimate exchange of promises might be made without there ever being an intention to make those promises public.

In the case cited above, what is implied is not only the need for a marriage to be publicized in order to give it status, but also the moral implications which attached to 'privy' as opposed to formalized, structured, lawfully contracted and open marriages, performed according to social conventions. In purely clandestine unions the element of dishonesty and secrecy implied in such conduct exposed the parties to criticism, and by implication extended to compromise the honesty of those involved. The honesty of the

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31 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, f. 17, *Coppyn v. Richards* (1560).

individual can therefore be seen as allied to the honesty of the transaction. When questioning the reputation of Mrs Butterwick the issue was whether or not she was of the honest and godly sort and therefore suitable as a witness to the betrothal of Edmund Coppyn and Katherine Richard. It seems, therefore, that alongside the need to broadcast a marriage through a witnessing ceremony, was the need to have a contract publicized formally and amongst significant individuals- family, kin, or honest neighbours. The participation of particular persons at various stages of the marriage process, and the nature of that participation, has to be understood not simply as a means to publication, but interpreted as an expression of kin and community control, and of marriage as a central activity within family and social relations. It has to be asked how those who were involved in matters of marriage ceremonial were affected by the marriage, and how such participation at the symbolic level of ritual demonstrates the importance of marriage as a personal, family and social event.

### **The Role Of The Witness In The Marriage Process**

A detailed knowledge of who the witnesses were cannot be obtained without close local study. The problem of a vague, inconsistent and limited terminology classifying a range of kin and social relations, makes it difficult to identify precisely what the relationships were. But it seems that those who participated in marriage processes and acted as witnesses in a passive or active capacity included members of the nuclear family and such persons as friends, kinsmen, kinswomen, cousins, uncles, and aunts, in-laws, neighbours, 'fellows' (associates), bed-fellows, gossips, the godmother of a kinsman, masters and mistresses. Connections appear to derive therefore from family and the surrogate family of masters, mistresses, and fellow servants, from biological kin, affines, and a range of what may loosely be termed fictive kin. In the case of *Handfeeld v. Franckwell*, there was in the company gathered together at Herryng's house in Canterbury, and talking of marriage, Richard Handfeeld's father and mother, his uncles, aunt, and two or three of his kinsfolk and, on Anne Franckwell's side, her mother. It was also added that the goodwill of her 'friend' Mr Collens had to be obtained.<sup>32</sup> To what degree kin members were involved cannot be ascertained here but in the case of *Rayner v. Chamber* cited earlier, there is some indication of how extended biological kin ties might be. How far marriages occurred between individuals who were already related in some way is also unknown, but a glimpse of it is seen in the contract made between Thomas Kennet and Bennet

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32 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/13, ff. 44-v. (1570).

Dunnye in his father's parish of Mersham. Those present included Bennet Kennet, Thomas Kennet's mother, and Thomas's brother Richard, as well as his natural aunt Elizabeth Davye and her husband William. It was also made clear that Elizabeth Davye was once the wife of Roger Luckas, natural uncle of Bennet Dunnye and therefore Dunnye's aunt by marriage.<sup>33</sup>

It is not my intention to argue for the presence of extended biological kin links. The evidence suggests, though, that those who were drawn upon for this formal occasion and its rituals were not restricted to the immediate family, but might include various categories of kin, even if there was no precisely definable range of kin present.<sup>34</sup> Further research on sixteenth-century terminology, and an analysis of residence patterns might suggest the extent of kin connections and the geographical range from which witnesses were drawn. It may be that the importance of biological kin at a symbolic level might be translated into areas of practical and more mundane significance. In terms of marriage ritual, they had a vital role to play and formed an essential and dominant element within the generally small and select groupings which crystallized at betrothal ceremonies. That their participation was an essential feature of marriage practice does not, of

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33 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, ff. 183-6, 187v.-9v., *Kennet v. Dunnye* (1570). In Earls Colne between 1560 and 1660, there was no significant rate of intermarriage between families already linked by marriage or blood, and incest cases as a proportion of other cases in the Essex courts were negligible. See, A. Macfarlane, 'The regulation of marital and sexual relationships in seventeenth-century England, with special reference to the county of Essex', (University of London, M. Phil. thesis, 1968), ch. 2-3; and A. Macfarlane, 'The informal social control of marriage in seventeenth-century England: some preliminary notes', in V. Fox and M. Quitt eds., *Loving, Parenting and Dying. The Family Cycle in England and America* (New York, 1980), pp. 110-21. Helmholz points out the absence of marriages involving impediments to marriage within the prohibited degrees, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 77-87, and Houlbrooke also indicates that there were few suits for annulment of marriage contracted within prohibited degrees, *Church Courts*, pp. 74-5. It is, however, worth suggesting, as Macfarlane has done, that it may be that groups based on some other criterion, had a high rate of intermarriage, 'The regulation of marital and sexual relationships', ch. 3. In any case, if kinship is to be redefined along the lines suggested in this chapter, the concept of intermarriage will also need modification, and folk ideas of what constituted endogamy and incest etc. will need consideration.

34 Ingram, 'Ecclesiastical justice in Wiltshire', p. 117, says that 'no definite range of kin were conventionally accepted as having an interest' in marriage processes. See also, Ingram, 'Spousals litigation', p. 48. Rushton, 'Property, power and family networks', pp. 211-12, concludes that, despite Bossy's suggestion of organized groupings in the late medieval period, there was no observable coherent group of kin, but rather, a loosely structured group. As regards the wedding, this was not attended by a specific category of persons, see Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England*, pp. 312-13. This is consistent with Lyndal Roper's findings for Augsburg that wedding ordinances supplied no consistent definition of the kin group, "' Going to church and street '", pp. 94-5. See also, Houlbrooke, 'The making of marriage in mid-Tudor England', pp. 342-3, for comparative evidence of who the witnesses were.

course, preclude the importance of other kinds of social relations. Indeed, it has been suggested that apart from the influence and role of biological kin, serious account has to be taken of a wider variety of influences and social groups. Those groups which congregated at such betrothal ceremonies, and which were by implication an integral part of the social system, were composed predominantly of biological and 'fictive' kin, and where larger groupings manifested themselves they might nevertheless form an identifiable sub-group. When Joanne Harewood from Mersham married into Folkestone, it was told that she arrived at Thomas Lambard's house with 'divers (of) her friends' and was met by 'divers of the towne...And some said that knew her not, whiche is she shalbe our neighbour.. Wherapon they drancke to her'. And the concern which she, in turn, voiced, was that of '(being) entertayned there as a neighbour among them'.<sup>35</sup> Here, the bonds of kinship were formally recognized by the community in an act of ritual acceptance.

Given that there are particular categories of persons involved as witnesses, the problem becomes one of trying to understand why this was so, and the means by which such persons invested in the making of a marriage, in terms of goodwill, economic payments, and participation in ritual. If marriage and its rituals are recognized to be an institutionalized expression of the need for an adaptation and adjustment of particular ties and associations then the involvement of various categories of persons as witnesses is an indication of the degree of investment in and control of marriage by family, kin and community.<sup>36</sup> The performance of particular rituals answers the needs of different interest groups, and repeated performances may at times be observed. The various stages of contracting, confession, acknowledgement, and recognition may appear blurred to us, but must, it seems, have been distinguished by contemporaries.<sup>37</sup> The repetition of vows which occurred in certain cases before new witnesses, and which were ideally accompanied by particular ritualized behaviour, suggests that the ceremony itself was not sufficient without particular witnesses. It suggests also that the performance of ritual acts such as stepping across the threshold, 'handfasting', kissing, drinking and the giving of tokens may have required the

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35 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/6, ff. 116v.-17, *Lambard v. Harewood* (1556).

36 See e.g. G. C. Homans, *English Villagers of the Thirteenth Century* (New York, 1970), pp. 175-6; L. Mair, *Marriage* (London, 1977), esp. ch. 7; Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, esp. ch. 7; Gluckman, 'Les rites of passage'; A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, 'Introduction', in A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and C. D. Forde eds., *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 43-60. Wedding rituals are also discussed in Roper, "'Going to church and street'", and M. Segalen, *Love and Power in the Peasant Family* (Oxford, 1983), ch. 1, pp. 11-37.

37 Sheehan, 'The formation and stability of marriage', pp. 248-9, suggests a variety of modes of publicity.

presence of those witnesses. John Davye, giving a token to Maria Wright, gave it to her in the presence of Edward Aucher of Eastchurch, saying 'here I do give her a pece of gold bycause you shall beare witness'.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, the witnesses too can be seen to demonstrate that their participation was closely tied to ritual processes. In the case of *Edmonds v. Witherden*, John Trott of Canterbury, a witness, kissing Silvestra Witherden, said that 'in witnes therof I will kisse you also'.<sup>39</sup> This close association between the act of witnessing and the performance of ritual may be regarded as one aspect of the enforcement of rules originating with the kin. If one seeks to view the marriage process from within the system of kinship, a study of the ceremonies which take place before the church wedding helps to identify influential social groups.

In view of the significance which marriage would have had for the structural reorganization of the community it is not surprising that it should have been experienced on both a personal and a collective level. Nor is it surprising that the circles most involved in the marriage process should have been composed of close members of family, kin and community. The kinds of restructuring which a marriage entailed affected not only the couple, but a range of people in varying degrees, and it is because of its intrinsic importance in this respect that it was also determined by collective values and was an activity which implicated various, and sometimes conflicting, interests. The rituals which occurred may be seen as an institutionalized means of entering into a marriage and, on a generalized level, as controlled by the codes and concepts of kin and community, and more specifically, by those persons with a direct concern in a particular marriage. How the rituals are to be interpreted is a related problem but it seems that they can best be understood as a way of facilitating harmony and the mutual protection of interests. That there was potential for conflict and tension and a polarizing of issues is neatly summarized in the case of *Rolf v. Whiter*, where problems over financial matters caused William Rolf to say to Joanne Whiter's 'cosyn', Simon Swanton of Seasalter, 'You are ever agaynste me and my heyvie friend. Than said the wydowe, thers that be my friends by yor fowes ever'.<sup>40</sup> When interpreted within a context of conflict and changing loyalties, commensality rituals (the feasting which occurred before and after the contract, and the ritual of drinking) express symbolically the need for social unity, especially in circumstances when negotiations might be protracted, when harmony broke down and when individuals and groups were forced to readjust. Notably, such rituals were not simply an integral part of the marriage process, but

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38 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/6, ff. 39-v., *Davye v. Wright* (1553-4).

39 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/8, f. 34 (1562).

40 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/4, f. 83v. (1549).



were performed in other contexts of social and domestic tension where there was need for reconciliation,<sup>41</sup> and upon other life-crisis occasions.<sup>42</sup>

If attention is focused on formal drinkings, what is observed is the means by which such rituals marked the process of forming alliances and, noticeably in the case below, were concerned with the formation of kin ties. When John and Thomas Austen, with their cousin Mark, were at Christine Burrett's house in Canterbury, having 'desired to drink a quarte of wine with her', John Austen said, 'Cousen, I will drink unto you upon condition that you will tell me whether I shall have a cousen of you or no, meanyng a marriage between her and (his) cousin'.<sup>43</sup> Such a ritual, though only one of a series alluded to earlier, expresses the contractual nature of such activity, the aspect of recognition, of witnessing and acceptance, parallels with religious symbolism, and the notion of a pledge. As such it is a useful example to choose for consideration because it does synthesize those aspects which are found in other rituals too, and because it demonstrates the levels of participation in social constraint through ritual. In the case of *Lambard v. Harewood* distinct phases can be seen. At Lambard's house in Folkestone the vicar, Richard Sherington, took the cup and drank to the parties. Lambard, also taking the cup, drank to the woman, and the whole company drank to their neighbour.<sup>44</sup> Similar phases can be observed in the contract between Joan Parker and William Munday which took place in her father's brew house in Sandwich. Gathered round the furnace hole, the parties contracted themselves. 'Then Munday desyred them that were present to bere witness and said further fecche a pot of bere let Joan and me drinke together, and (John Toose) fecched bere and then Munday dranke to Joan and then she dranke and after them all that were present'.<sup>45</sup> The drinking ceremony recognized the wider implications of a marriage for family, kin, and community and, as a pledge, it was immediately of significance because it implicated the reputation of those involved, and by extension perhaps, the reputation of family and kin generally. That there may have been a practice of kin pledging is shown in the marriage between Clement and Joanna Weldish of Kenardington where two sets of witnesses participated and met at Garratt's house in Appledore - the woman's 'kinsfolk' and the man's 'friends'. It was promised that Clement and his 'friends' would make Weldish

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41 See e.g. C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/2, ff. 112v.-13, 114-v., *Lye v. Wood* (1544).

42 The probate account of the inventoried goods of Alice Oven of Chislet, for example, referred to money 'paid for bread and beare, and an ewe which was kylled and spent upon her neighbours and kynsfolk that wer at her buryall'. PRC 21/5/233-6.

43 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/6, ff. 128-v., *Austen v. Burrett* (1556).

44 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/6, ff. 115, 116v. (1556).

45 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/3, ff. 19v. 20, 22-v., *Munday v. Parker* (1548).

worth twenty pounds and 'would be bounde in an obligacion'. When 'her said friends and his agreed that she shuld be made sure of XX li, therapon obligacion were made and two men sealed therunto'.<sup>46</sup> What is suggested, is that members of kin did pledge themselves and it may be that one can interpret the ritual of drinking in such a light. Certainly, there is evidence that it was performed as a pledge between the couple, regardless of whether or not it expressed the collective pledge of those participating. It can also be argued that the practice of pledging and the plighting of troths, as acts of honour, even if restricted in performance to the couple alone, nevertheless immediately had associations for family and kin.

The repercussions which a marriage might have for the social standing and honour of a family may help us to understand the nature of family and kin participation in matters of marriage choice. Perhaps the honour of the family was not a fundamental concept amongst the lower and more mobile element of society. There is some evidence that it was conceived as deriving partly from within a family and its previous standing. There is evidence too of sensitivity to defamation felt by family members, the fear of gossip and the wish to avoid 'all rumours and evill speches that might ensue',<sup>47</sup> and the show of protective or threatening actions by related members. But what is not certain is whether the honour implied is invested in the blood line. The concepts of honour and reputation are by no means unambiguous nor are they applied, it seems, in an undifferentiated way. It appears that the notion of defamation could only be applied to the honourable sort; the language of honour and reputation was qualitatively used to demarcate social groups and cultures and was not equally available to everyone.<sup>48</sup>

Leaving aside the problem of what honour actually meant for those contemporaries to whom it applied, and whether or not it was family honour or other kinds of honour that were crucial, what is clear is that collective sanctions and principles determined and were implicit in social relations. The reputation and name of an individual were considered important because, as part of a collective, he or she was subject to collective sanctions and public opinion. The

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46 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/4, f. 17, *Clement v. Weldish* (1549).

47 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/6, ff. 118v.-120, 126v., 131-v., *Chinting v. Besbiche* (1556).

48 For a discussion of concepts of honour and reputation, see Sharpe, 'Defamation and sexual slander'; Butcher, 'The honest and the lewd'; J. A. Pitt-Rivers, 'Honour and social status', in J. G. Peristiany ed., *Honour and Shame: the Values of Mediterranean Society* (London, 1965), pp. 19-77; J. Davis, *People of the Mediterranean: an Essay in Comparative Social Anthropology* (London, 1977), pp. 89-101; and F. G. Bailey ed., *Gifts and Poison: the Politics of Reputation* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 1-26.

force with which these sanctions operated can be observed in the repercussions which they had on personal health and individual psychology, in the sphere of economic and social relations and on domestic and marital life. Deponents frequently expressed that they were 'much greved', 'worse thought of', and 'misused', 'shamed for ever', given the 'hinderance and injury' to their name which resulted in their 'discredit' and their 'utter undoing'. With her name 'impaired', Elizabeth Hogdekin found herself separated from honest society, socially isolated, and no longer part of the reciprocal visits and social exchange, as 'many honest neighbours refraineth to resort to her house or to kepe her company as they accustomable have done'.<sup>49</sup> For one Stammer, the economic consequences were no less apparent, for men would 'shuve and avoyde to have do *with* him in buying or selling', and *in thus losing their estimation, 'his lyving (was) hindered therby'*.<sup>50</sup> On the domestic and psychological front, it was said that Bouche's wife, slandered by the words of one William Cadman, 'taketh yt heaveylve and verrye sick', and 'the verrye words ar odious and therefore her name must a little be diminished'. It was further deposed that the 'words were said to slander her because otherwise (she) would not have taken such a greef that she would be sick, and also because yt hath caused strif between her and her husband'.<sup>51</sup> What is suggested here therefore in these cases of defamation is the power of language as a coercive force, the psychological awareness of reputation and the ill consequences of a 'diminished' name.

At every level the pressures and controls of society and the values and concepts of community confront the individual. Because individual decisions and behaviour can be seen as representing an internalization of social norms and as having social repercussions, it becomes impossible to interpret behaviour without some sense of community, or indeed, to regard it as unconstrained. If we consider, for example, the passage of tokens between individuals as we shall do in the following chapter, it may be recognized that this was not just an intimate, private affair, but a regulated and ritualized means of entering into a marriage, and of forming ties between groups. Formalizing the entry into marriage, the gift

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49 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/17, f. 27v., *Hogdekin v. Corbet* (1573).

50 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, ff. 161-2v., *Stammer v. Ives* (1569). The importance of reputation, trust, and the 'moral language of people's credit and honesty', were considered integral to all kinds of marketing and economic relations too. See C. Muldrew, 'Interpreting the market: the ethics of credit and community relations in early modern England', *Social History* 18, 2(1993), 163-83.

51 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, ff. 262v.-4v., *Bouche v. Cadman* (1569-70).

of tokens can be seen to operate as a kind of pressurizing ritual, representing one further aspect of control by kin and community.<sup>52</sup>

### **Involvement Of The Wider Community**

The discussion has been essentially concerned with the marriage processes which preceded the church ceremony. It can, nevertheless, be argued that for both the secular and religious community, marriage has been shown to be a 'matter of family and community concern'.<sup>53</sup> The calling of banns and the wedding at the church which were presumably intended to be before the congregation, witnessed by the godly folk and under the eye of God, were the most corporate and public expression of control by the community at large. Even though the kin and sub-group element was not dominant at this final stage of marriage, it presumably formed a part of that congregation. The church ceremony sought to provide a summation of all elements, and may be seen as the religious celebration of the community focused in the parish church.<sup>54</sup> It was important too for publicizing the endowment, a matter to which collective values attached.<sup>55</sup> At both ceremonies, therefore, the involvement of kin and community was demonstrated, though in noticeably distinct ways. On the one hand was the secularized kin-controlled marriage, community constrained, but dominated it seems by private and special groups. On the other hand was the marriage controlled by ecclesiastical norms, a public event involving the community at large. And, at both occasions, the feasting and drinkings which occurred, the references to 'marriage dinners' and 'bridales', make it apparent that marriage was a social event.

It has been argued that 'however one defined "community" there was relatively little of it in the villages ... as far back as the sixteenth century',<sup>56</sup> While there are immediate problems of definition, it seems that, on the contrary, there is implicit in the evidence of the depositions particular concepts of a moral and

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52 See chapter 2 below for a full discussion of gifts and tokens.

53 Macfarlane, *Origins of English Individualism*, p. 29, cites this as a basic feature of peasant society.

54 See also Sheehan, 'Choice of marriage partner', pp. 7-8, 28 and 32-3. Ingram makes the point that emphasis on the openness of solemnization might bolster the influence of the wider, parochial community, as well as family influence. See 'Spousals litigation', pp. 55-6, and 'The reform of popular culture?'. On the calling of banns, see also Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, pp. 52-4.

55 Also Ingram, 'Ecclesiastical justice in Wiltshire', ch. on matrimonial causes, and Homans, *English Villagers*, pp. 170-2.

56 Macfarlane, *Origins of English Individualism*, p. 5.

social community which help to define social groups.<sup>57</sup> An analysis of the depositions suggests the ways in which a community defined itself, and expressed itself in terms of a set of codes and collective values, in its internal groupings and interactions, in its culture, attitudes, and more overt manifestations of collective action. When Joanne Harewood complained of the 'pitch and tar' in Thomas Lambard's parish of Folkestone, she was expressing her antipathy to the personal and physical characteristics of the environment as well as to the customs of another parish.<sup>58</sup> Such expressions provide somewhat crude distinctions, but are illuminating when treated in the context of changes in residence at marriage, and alongside notions of acceptance and acceptability.

Evidence of ritual acceptance of a neighbour which relates directly to this case has already been presented but collective action could just as well take on a negative form. Regarding the town of Sandwich, the neighbourhood demonstrated its involvement by speaking to the mayor for the reformation of one Tomlynson's house, where there was likely to have been manslaughter, complaining 'it is pity that yow shuld suffre horedom and bawdry kept without reformation and it is pitie that (she) shuld be suffred to dwell in the towne if she be so evyll as the report is'.<sup>59</sup>

Collective protest could lead to the threat of physical expulsion of individuals and to the carting of persons out of town. It was said that if one goodwife Ward of Canterbury was indeed a woman of suspicious life, 'yt ys pittie that she ... ys not carted out of the towne that all other may take example...'.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, in another case of defamation, Joane Clinton shouted to Joane Nowre: 'thow arte a whore... and *the* carte comithe for thee'.<sup>61</sup> In voicing such a punishment, even defamers were invoking institutional forms of collective censure associated with inappropriate conduct, while traditional images of charivari portrayed the popular rituals of community sanctions.<sup>62</sup> The slanderous

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57 See e.g. A. Macfarlane, S. Harrison and C. Jardine, *Reconstructing Historical Communities* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 1-25; A. Macfarlane, 'History, anthropology and the study of communities', *Social History* 2 (1977), 631-52; C. J. Calhoun, 'History, anthropology and the study of communities: some problems in Macfarlane's proposal', *Social History* 3 (1978), 363-73; and C. J. Calhoun, 'Community: toward a variable conceptualization for comparative research', *Social History* 5 (1980), 105-29.

58 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/6, f. 115v., *Lambard v. Harewood* (1556).

59 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/3, f. 32 (1546).

60 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/14, f. 6v. (1572).

61 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/1, ff. 159-61v., 164-v., *Nowre v. Clinton and Clinton* (1587).

62 See also, Gowing, 'Gender and the language of insult', pp. 17-18. For discussions of charivari, see above, n. 29. Also, E. P. Thompson, 'Rough music considered', *Folklore* 103, 1(1992), 3-26.

speech of Arthur Baker, for example, invoked the spectacle of Thomas Argar 'ryding upon a cow like a cuckold with his face towardes the cowes arse and the cowe taile shalbe his cape and the hornes shalbe his spurres'.<sup>63</sup>

While it is debatable how frequent the occurrence of charivaris were, among the various forms of rough music, ridings, libels and mocking rhymes, and their applicability to all kinds of purposes and incidents,<sup>64</sup> the bounds of permitted behaviour were nonetheless incorporated and collectively defined. Mocking rhymes and libels which may have been officially regarded as defamatory or illegal, could still represent a form of shaming, as they publicised real or alleged misdemeanours, or sought to influence the wider opinion.<sup>65</sup> The deposition evidence would seem to suggest that such rhymes were by no means uncommon. There are several references to bills 'wherein was shamefull matters wrytten' and read aloud,<sup>66</sup> and to bills displayed, as in the case of *Sprye v. Strowde*, on the post of Inckepett's gate, declaring that Sprye had been naughty with Inckepett's wife.<sup>67</sup> Other libels imputing ill-living, were cast abroad for everyone to see. Elizabeth Browne of Lydd devised a letter which she asked to have written for her, in order to disgrace Agnes Evernden, 'and she said she wold disperse and cast abroad into the stretes and houses in the town the same *lettre* and libell to the intent Everndens wife and (John) Patten should be made ashamed of ther ill living together'. It was commonly reported furthermore, that a former letter or rhyme against them had been written at her instruction in order to disgrace them.<sup>68</sup> Although the making of such libels inevitably involved mischief-makers and rhymes of dubious quality and accuracy,<sup>69</sup> their derisive and

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63 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/20, f. 191v.-5v., 245v.-68v., *Allenson v. Baker, and Edmundes v. Baker* (1582-3).

64 For example, a form of charivari might be used as a repressive measure to control vagrancy and suppress idleness, as was the case in sixteenth-century Sandwich. See Tronrud, 'The response to poverty', pp. 16-17.

65 Ingram, 'Ridings, rough music and mocking rhymes', *passim*.

66 E. g. C.C.A.L., MS. PRC 39/10/139v., *Webb v. Swanne* (1583).

67 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, ff. 123-4, 126v.-7 (1569).

68 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/19, ff. 1-2, 3v.-6, *Evernden v. Browne* (1583). See also the libel or rhyme invented by William Stedman against the wives of Smarden, and written by a jerkin-maker at this request to be 'cast abroad'. *Ibid.*, MS. X/10/19, f. 189v., *ar<sup>lis</sup> v. William Stedman* (1584-5).

69 Part of a rhyme concerning one Abigail Parbo and reputedly made by the libel-maker, William Harfleet of Sandwich, reads as follows:

'Herein do I write, as best I can Indite to my lover Abigall  
I dare saye for her parte, she loves me at the harte, she loves me veri well,  
Her comely cheare, biddes me draue nere, her bodie to embrace,  
I could behold her still, if I might have my will, she hath so sweete a face;  
Her gowne is full of lace, which make her have a grace, her

shaming purpose could nevertheless reflect community values, and antagonism towards the transgression of communal norms.

In the matrimony case of *Turner v. Hubbard*, wherein the life of one Alice Cheeseman of Aldington, a deponent, was reviewed, expulsion from the community was seen as an extreme form of moral sanction. The case is of particular interest because it was poised on the threshold between individual action and community controls, and because of what it suggests about community constraints and godly attitudes. The concern of the parishioners over Alice's choice of marriage partner was for reasons that they 'wished her to be preferred to a better marriage'. She could not have her will in the matter because 'the parishioners bearing her goodwill for her behaviour thought her worthy of a better marriage'. The deposition of Richard Coste was most informative, in which he said, 'that the parishioners bear her that goodwill and affection that when yt was reported she shuld be married to Cheeseman they were sore against yt, and stayed the asking of the banns and marriage, and many of the cheefest of the parish counselled her to leave him because the parishioners mislyked of Cheeseman. The which they would not have done without goodwill boorne to the woman for her good behaviour before that time ... (he) saith that although she did offend in carnallye knowing Cheseman before marriage notwithstanding she made as he thinketh in recompence in that she being persuaded to forsake him bye her freends, she ever said that she should have him and in respecte allso that she hath reconciled herself to god and the world by marrying of her husband'.<sup>70</sup>

To deny the existence of community controls, and the pressures which must have been brought to bear on a couple intending marriage, is to deny the evidence. The constraints were felt in the 'hinderance' of the marriage, and in the fact that Cheeseman was made to fetch a testimonial of his behaviour, and went to get it from his friends in Sussex, accompanied by Alice and one of her 'neighbours'.<sup>71</sup> They were felt when 'the parishioners threatened Alice to expell her out of the parish'. Effectively, in prolonging the marriage, and delaying the church ceremony, 'the child begotten could not be boorne in sufficient cumpas of tyme after marriage'. The delay of two months which was occasioned, coincided with her being pregnant about eight weeks before marriage. Bridal pregnancy in

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petticote is redd, I would bestowe some monye, so as she had a conye, to bigg with me in bedd'.

See C.C.A.L., MS. PRC 39/22, ff. 169v.-70v., *Harfleete v. Tenche* (1599).

70 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, ff. 275-80 (1570).

71 Testimonials might also be used to show that an individual was indeed fit to marry, and was neither pre-contracted nor indebted. See e.g. C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/1, ff. 3v.-4, *Keble v. Butler* (1585).

this case is seen as a direct consequence of community pressures, and may help to account for the degree of tolerance exhibited towards it. Even though theoretically, and by legal definition, pre-marital sex was seen as a 'vice', the standards applied to sexual behaviour were ambivalent.<sup>72</sup> It is recognized that the fault in the act was not so great 'in respect of the parishes said hinderance and her towardnes to the matter and in the end marriage'. In John Smith's opinion, in view of the responsibility assumed by the community in this matter, and the fact that the marriage did take place, 'he thinketh she ys not so much to be blamed but rather have done sufficiently to reconcile herself to god and the world for the same'.

What is, of course, revealing is Alice's decision to marry despite parochial opposition and pressure. Retrospectively, her individual decision was vindicated as an act of personal conscience and as a religious act, especially, as it seems, on account of her pregnant condition. There is the implication that the attempts to hinder the marriage were unlawful, and had to be justified on the grounds of goodwill and affection. The case, therefore, stands as an excellent example of the conflict between individual and collective interests, and the problems of reconciling contradictory elements. What it shows is that individuals might well act in defiance of social opinion and follow their own sexual and emotional inclinations. But what is equally apparent is the reality of family and community pressures, the importance of collective sanctions, and the very real attempt to control marriage choice.

It may be that we should think of irregular unions and illicit sexual activity as being partly also an index, and direct or indirect consequence, of community constraints. There were a variety of ways by which disapproval might

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72 I am suggesting here that parental, kin or community disapproval of choice of partner might conceivably result in delayed marriages and frustrated plans, and consequently might be regarded as *one* possible factor contributing to pre-nuptial pregnancies. It would, of course, be absurd to account for all pre-nuptial pregnancies in this way, given the high national figures for bridal pregnancy in this period. See P. E. H. Hair, 'Bridal pregnancy in rural England in earlier centuries', *Population Studies* 20 (1966), 233-43. Macfarlane finds that in Essex in the late sixteenth century, 10 to 20 per cent of brides were pregnant. See *Marriage and Love*, pp. 303-6. He stresses the tolerant attitude shown to bridal pregnancy, and the need for 'sexual conversation' between partners. See also Macfarlane, 'The regulation of marital and sexual relationships', ch. 4. Ingram also concludes that bridal pregnancy did not appear to involve much shame, and that intercourse between a betrothed couple probably went largely uncondemned by the community. He is, however, anxious to point out the ambivalence in attitude towards antenuptial fornication, and an intensification of control from the late sixteenth century. See 'Ecclesiastical justice in Wiltshire', ch. on sexual offences, and 'The reform of popular culture?'. Houlbrooke, however, finds that for the diocese of Norwich, there is little evidence of cohabitation before the church ceremony. See 'The making of marriage', pp. 344-6.



be expressed, one of which is implied in the deposition of Alice Kyngesnorth of Pluckley. It is known that William Howell and Richard Wood were both suitors to her during her widowhood, and that as soon as Wood ended his suit, Howell began his more earnestly, making her an unwitnessed promise of marriage, and from then on, lodging with her continually. She claimed that, being destitute of a servant, she kept him in her house, with every intention to marry him; she denied that they ever had intercourse, but 'saith she hath been suspected therof howbeit of mallice because she wold not take Wood to her husband'. She further told how John Richard of Ulcomb said 'that he marvailled whye she marryed not with Howell for that she being so bent to have him answered the parish geve us ill words but if we were so mynded to take that way though we could not wedd yet could wee bedd upon which words so by (her) uttered the parishioners have thought (her) and (Howell) to be evill lyvers and have made compleynt of them'.<sup>73</sup>

There is the suggestion here that Alice Kyngesnorth would be hindered from marrying with William Howell, and that in refusing to marry with Richard Wood, she was failing to meet with the expectations of some of the parishioners of Pluckley, and thereby incurred their ill-will. Whatever the truth of the circumstances, our interest lies in the potential which lay in the hands of the community for coercive action, for regulation of sexual and marital behaviour at least through moral, if not legal sanctioning. Indeed, it can be argued that the code of good behaviour, the ethic of reciprocity, and the norms of honour and reputation set the bounds of the moral community. Attitudes were complex and behaviour which was theoretically reprehensible might have been tolerated in practice. Certainly, in relation to sexual behaviour, there was scope for ambivalence and for different standards being applied according to particular circumstances. It seems, for example, that certain misdemeanours were tolerated provided that marriage was in view. Christopher Selherst, finding his brother lying in a chamber with Joanne Port of Whitstable was, 'examined whether he was myscontent that they had so companied together before they were married, he saith no for that he toke them together assured as man and wife'.<sup>74</sup> Exactly what range of sexual behaviour was tolerated is not clear,<sup>75</sup> nor is it apparent whether the criteria found in the depositions reflected legal attitudes and/or the attitudes of the community and the limits of its toleration. There was, it appears, a degree of flexibility, but it is difficult to gauge at what point the line divided

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73 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/12, ff. 268-70v. (1556).

74 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/6, ff. 234-v., *Selherst v. Porte* (1558-9).

75 Also Ingram, 'Ecclesiastical justice in Wiltshire', ch. on sexual offences.

between tolerance and disapprobation. It may be that there was tolerance up to the point of conflict and 'disordre'.<sup>76</sup>

But the fact that certain kinds of behaviour were tolerated at particular times, does not undermine the importance of collective values. The concepts of tolerance and control can be seen as two sides of the same coin, both operating within the sphere of informal as well as formal sanctions, and effectively limiting social relations. Furthermore, there is clear evidence of spying activities, incidents where neighbours would 'eavesdroke', would have 'broken a hole in the wall', or put their 'head in at a hole', and which, even if they did not lead to formal acts of prosecution, would have aroused gossip and 'folkstalk'.<sup>77</sup> It seems just as necessary to stress the role of gossip as a regulatory institution and the evidence for community controls, as to argue for tolerant attitudes. However strict or lax these controls were, they formed the bounds of what was acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in the community, and indicate that whatever the formal position in the church, there was a set of collective values and concepts which may have been ambiguous, and may have been changing, but which must have underpinned the reality of social relations.

My emphasis, therefore, is on the informal area of moral sanctions and the definition which it gave to community norms. The fact that parishioners assumed responsibility to arbitrate and reconcile where there was conflict, suggests the informal means by which the community (at times represented by the parish priest) sought to regulate affairs, in the interests of stability and harmony.<sup>78</sup> I would argue, that in this sense at least, in terms of the way in which inter-personal behaviour was limited by community norms, an individual must be seen as part of a collective, and that therefore it is too early to abandon notions of community control, or indeed, control by kin and other groupings.

The depositions suggest that individuals were defined in terms of their social interactions and the range of their connections, and that their reputation both reflected on, and was associated with, the social groups within which they were located.<sup>79</sup> It is important to be able to identify these groups and to determine the extent to which they function separately but it seems unlikely that their boundaries can be defined closely, because their character was likely to have been one of loose forms of amalgamation. Though individuals might associate

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76 See e.g. C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/9, ff. 21-2, *Tritton v. Saunder* (1563).

77 See e.g. C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/1, ff. 159-61v., 164-v., *Nowre v. Clinton and Clinton* (1587); *ibid.* MS. PRC 39/5/30-v., *Anderson v. Knoll*.

78 Sharpe, 'Litigation and human relations'.

79 Butcher, 'The honest and the lewd'.

with more than one group, however, that is not to diminish the importance of these groups as regulatory forces.

Marriage provides us with an ideal occasion for identifying groups, but it is as revealing to examine the other two life-crises, analysing those gatherings which formed at death-beds and the company which collected around women in labour. Where childbirth was concerned, the gathering of the company crystallized the existence of a female and gossip network which was a crucial and permanent structure of society.<sup>80</sup> In the defamation case of *Egglestone v. Cullembyne*, the incident took place at Elizabeth Browning's house at Burmarsh on a Sunday afternoon before Shrovetide. Joanne Rolf who was present at the time, deposed how it was that she happened to be there. She said that it 'fortuned her the goodwif Egglestone and Goodwif Cotterell went to one Brownings wif of Burromershe (she there lying in childbed) a gossopynge, and to make merry, whether after (she) and her other neighbours had come, and had entered the house, Hellenor Cullembyne and one Hawkes wif followed and came thother a gossoppinge also'.<sup>81</sup>

A company of gossips was not a purely female phenomenon, and men too formed their own alternative groupings, and seem to have had institutionalized meeting places. It was said that 'a certayn benche called pennylesse benche towards the waters side in dovor' was 'a place wheare many of that towne use to sitt and talk together', 'being a comon place of resort for men of the towne to meet together to be merry comon and talk'.<sup>82</sup> Arguably such gatherings provide one means of identifying social groups, but groupings could also manifest themselves in a range of specific and/or ritual activity, of which commensality might be one. A show of solidarity is also suggestive, and in the case of *Culpepper v. Mantle*, the departure from church of a group of kinsmen indicated kin solidarity. Taking place at the parish church of Hawkhurst, during morning service, the curate Mr Mantle declared and expounded the gospel in the pulpit,

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80 A recent discussion of childbirth rituals and the collective culture of women can be found in an essay by A. Wilson, 'The ceremony of childbirth and its interpretation', in V. Fildes ed., *Women as Mothers in Pre-Industrial England* (London, 1990), pp. 68-107. P. Crawford's work in that collection, on 'The construction and experience of maternity in seventeenth-century England', pp. 3-38, explores the female lore of that culture and women's exchange of support and advice during motherhood. At least up till the mid-seventeenth century childbirth attendants were usually exclusively female. Childbirth could also be an occasion wherein anxieties regarding witchcraft were generated. See Harley, 'Historians as demonologists', pp. 10, 13.

81 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/12, ff. 172-v., *Egglestone v. Cullembyne* (1565).

82 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, ff. 13v., 16-v., *Spritewell v. Howe* (1568). See also, Dixon, 'Economy and society in Dover', pp. 397-8, and for a fuller discussion of social and occupational groupings and kinship networks, pp. 376-451.

but digressed and complained 'how that riche men would get their maids with child and then with money marry them to another'. It was said that Mr Culpepper and 'certain other his bretherne' immediately left the church, and that Mr Mantle with his hands towards heaven exclaimed what a state it was that men could not bear to hear their faults.<sup>83</sup>

## Conclusion

It is clear that the language recorded in deposition evidence cannot, when studied in isolation, fully reveal the precise nature of relationships between specific deponents.<sup>84</sup> What the depositions do provide, however, is an invaluable insight into the socially determined character of marriage, and the social context within which individuals manoeuvred.

This chapter has sought to explore some of the kinds of pressures and influences brought to bear upon couples in their marriage decisions and, through a detailed exposition of particular cases, has introduced several themes for consideration in the chapters which follow. It is argued that much evidence exists of constraint coming from a variety of quarters prior to any formal, public control or bann calling and church wedding. In the concern to identify the range of those involved in marriage processes, it is hoped that the deposition cases presented here, have indicated the potentially extensive influence of biological kin, non-biological kin, neighbours and community over various stages in the marriage process. This influence, it is suggested, must have pervaded the whole range of social relations, in its moral and ideological, if not practical importance. Whatever the official doctrine of the church, it would seem that much, if not all, individual expression was subject to external influences and internalized values, while the making of marriage appears as a critical process in the adaptive operation of family, kin and community.

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83 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/12, ff. 185v.-7v., *Culpepper v. Mantle* (1565).

84 To achieve even a little more understanding of the meaning of the terms used would require extensive record linkage and detailed focus on particular communities. Even this time-consuming procedure, however, given the high levels of population mobility in early modern England, would probably only recover, at best, partial and shallow biological kin groupings and, moreover, only those elements of kin universes contained within a restricted boundary. Such an exercise, then, may misrepresent the range and quality of kin relationships available and the metaphorical usage of kin terminology.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE LANGUAGE OF TOKENS AND THE MAKING OF MARRIAGE <sup>1</sup>

In this chapter the customary significance of gifts and tokens in the making of marriage will be examined. Extensive use is again made of the ecclesiastical court depositions to uncover new evidence of crucial bearing on the nature of interpersonal relationships, gift exchange, symbolism and marriage practice in sixteenth-century Kent. It argues that, *regardless* of its legal status, the prevalence of such a practice of gift-giving indicates its social and symbolic importance in the traditional rituals of marriage, and in the process of marriage formation. In seeking to demonstrate how a range of gifts demarcated stages of courtship and the progression of personal relations, it focuses attention on the gifts and tokens as a form of articulation and communication in negotiating marriage. Exploring the nature of the gift and the circumstances of giving, it suggests that the gifts themselves, their symbolic and economic value, as well as the occasion, ceremonial, and intention of giving, might determine the meaning of particular transactions. As a language for conducting and defining relationships, its versatility was it seems, appropriate to the essential ambiguity of matrimonial negotiation. Among the deposition evidence presented here, the case of *Divers v. Williams* provides unusually detailed information about the ways in which gifts and tokens were used in courtship.

#### The Case Of *Divers v. Williams*

On 12 October 1596 Elizabeth Williams brought a case of 'jactitation of matrimony' against William Divers, then of Saints Cosmus and Damian at Blean, before the Consistory Court of Canterbury, in an attempt to clear herself from any unwarranted fame of marriage of which he, the defendant, boasted.<sup>2</sup> In

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1 An earlier version of this chapter appeared in *Rural History* 3,1 (1992), 1-40. The published article contains a large number of typographical errors for which the Journal bears full responsibility.

2 Causes of 'jactitation of matrimony', although less common, were often directly associated with the more familiar type of spousal suits which were contested; Ingram, *Church Courts*, p. 191. Matrimonial litigation was at times further complicated by the interests and claims of other relevant parties; in this case, Jerman Seliborne. See C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/3, ff. 18-20. The following account of the case of *Divers v. Williams* has been pieced together from the depositions, loose cause papers, and act books: C.C.A.L., MSS. X/11/5, ff. 223-5, 233v.-4, 248v.-9, 258-v.; J/J 3, 37 and 38; Y/3/15, f. 271v.; Y/3/2, f. 42.

November of the following year, the same William, resident of Canterbury, complained of her breach of promise, claiming that they were lawfully espoused and contracted in marriage. Like many other plaintiffs who came before the ecclesiastical court, he sought to find legal means for the enforcement of a marriage which was never publicly solemnised but which was, allegedly, sufficiently binding, and early in 1598 the testimonies of various witnesses were recorded. It would appear that for at least a year and a half, and possibly earlier, from March 1594 to November 1597, he had been a suitor to Elizabeth Williams, and had proceeded so far as to have the banns of marriage published in her home parish of St. Paul's, in the suburbs of Canterbury. William Walsall, clerk of St. Paul's, and Mr. Ralph Grove, a local gentleman, petitioned on his behalf, for Elizabeth's goodwill and that of her widowed mother, Agnes. The process of entreaty was repeatedly beset by changes of mind, so much so that consent given could just as quickly be withdrawn, on the grounds that William Divers 'was not worth so much as he was reported to be'. Some means of coercion may have been used, for although William Walsall would admit having worked only with honest persuasions, he was alleged to have said to Elizabeth that he would 'enchaunte' her if she would not take William Divers to her husband, and that 'if he could not do yt hym self he would procure them that should do yt'. The threats to Agnes were apparently no less insidious; 'viz if you meaning the sayd Williams will not geve your consent *that* William Divers shall have your daughter Elizabeth I will be the meanes and so deale wth you *that* your mynd shall never be quiet in the day tyme and in the night you shalbe trubled and vexed wth straunge sightes and noises *which* you shall se and heare'.

Whether or not Elizabeth Williams and William Divers were freely, and in conscience, bound to each other, cannot be easily resolved. The publication of the banns of marriage, and the common voice and fame in St. Paul's that they were man and wife before God and contracted in marriage, supported such a claim. So too did the fact that they 'always or very often kept ech other company', were 'continually conversant', and were seen together making a garden out of a piece of ground granted by Agnes Williams. The significance of gifts and tokens, of *dona sive donaria*, which passed between the couple, loaned, brought, or given, was a further subject of dispute. The case of *Divers v. Williams* was not at all unusual in that sense but what is exceptional is the accidental survival among the cause papers of a more detailed schedule of tokens given by the plaintiff, enhancing the quality of the evidence contained in the written depositions. It should be stressed that the survival of an exceptional document does not necessarily imply that the social circumstances themselves were unique. Indeed

the argument of this chapter will be to suggest the contrary. Furthermore, if depositions are regarded as incomplete summaries of social facts and conditions, it is equally possible to infer that the accounts in the fourth article of gifts exchanged, were likewise incomplete.

'In <i>primis</i> the said william dyvers bestowed and gave to the said Elizabeth Wyllyams at severall tymes five payer of gloves worth xiis, one payer wherof being to little for, she said that at her day of mariadg with the said dyvers, she would bestowe them one his syster or the like in effecte	xiis
Item he further bestowed on her the said Elizabeth Wyllyams two purses worth	iiiiis
Item a girdle worth	iiis
Item a payer of knyves worth	iiiiis <i>xd</i>
Item she hath in her keeping, of the goods of the said william dyvers viii handcarchers a candlesticke a chamber pott, in token of the said <i>matrimonie</i> betwene them, <i>which</i> severall things are worth	xs
Item the said wyllyam dyvers further bestowed uppon her the said Elizabeth wyllyams in token of goodwill, or left to her keeping, a pettecoate cloath worth xiiis <i>iiiiid</i> a sylver thimble worth iis <i>vid</i> , a scaffe worth xiis, & a peece of sylver being outlandyshe quoyne to the value of <i>xiid</i>	
Item the said wyllyam divers bestowed uppon her the said Elizabeth wyllyams a doosen & an halfe of silke poynts conditionallie to bestowe them at their marriadg, or at the lest, she tooke them & sayd she would bestowe them & distribute them at their maryadg, or <i>promised</i> so to do	
Item the said wyllyam dyvers in token of goodwill to the said Elizabeth wyllyams bestowed uppon her mother two payre of gloves, two loads of wood & an halfe, a payer of slippers, iii pounds of stirch, a dosen of	

temple candles, two temple potts, & a temple  
wyne pott

Item he bestowed upon the said Elizabeth wyllyams  
certayne satten & silke lace, *which* her mother  
tooke & sayd, daughter this I will keepe till yow  
two (meaning & speaking to the said wyllyam  
dyvers & Elizabeth wyllyams) have children  
together, for then yow will have more need  
of it, & that the said Elizabeth Wyllyams  
was then and there present & did approve &  
allowe thereof

Item in consyderacon of the *promisses* the mother  
of the said Elizabeth wyllyams *promised* to give  
him the said wyllyam dyvers & her said  
daughter a certayn peece of growne, *which*  
thereuppon they or the one of them digged,  
dunged & planted, & further more the mother  
of the said Elizabeth wyllyams acknowledged  
that she had gyven the said peece of growne  
to the said willyam dyvers & her said daughter  
Item dyvers other gifts bestowed upon the  
said Elizabeth wyllyams by the said william  
dyvers hereafter to be specyfyed to the value  
of

xls

Item the said Elizabeth willyams gratefullie  
accepted of the *premisses* or some of them  
as is deduced in the fowreth article  
aforesaid, & in token thereof replied  
like kyndnes unto him the said  
wyllyam dyvers'

The preceding schedule draws attention to the nature and value of gifts, the circumstances of giving, and the quality of reciprocity which existed not only between the principal parties, but also between William Divers and Agnes Williams. Courting Elizabeth proved a costly business, as William presented her with an assortment of gifts and offerings on different occasions, whether conditionally given, said to be left to her keeping, expressly given 'in token of goodwill', or allegedly 'in token of the said matrimonie betwene them'.



As it is the intention of this chapter to consider more closely the several circumstances, and variety of such objects given, it is argued that, in order to better appreciate the significance and meaning of those gifts and their giving, we need to adopt an anthropological perspective, and place the giving of tokens and artefacts in their proper cultural and legal context.

### **The Cultural and Legal Context Of Gift-Giving**

The subject of gifts and tokens in the making of marriage is one which demands an interdisciplinary approach. Often treated as an aspect of dowry and bridewealth, it is well-established as an anthropological field of enquiry.<sup>3</sup> The pioneering work of Mauss and Van Gennep drew attention to the complex interpretation of the rite of giving, and the transitional nature of gift exchange. In his examination of the gift and its function in primitive societies, Mauss considered it as a legal, economic and moral transaction, closely associated with such issues as honour, person, and domination. A multiplicity of rights, not least of a sexual nature, pertained to the donor, with the power of the gift embedded in concepts of magic, and in the essentially constraining, obligatory force of exchange. The discussion of the role of the gift in the politics of human relations, extended by Bourdieu, explored further the dialectical import of reciprocity as a means of provocation, equivocation, and communication through strategies of style, timing, and choice of occasion.<sup>4</sup>

From a different perspective, surviving artefacts have enriched our understanding of customary marriage practices, and of the economic, social, magical and religious potential of gifts in pre-industrial and modern European society. The long tradition of gift-giving across time and region as a permanent

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3 J. L. Comaroff ed., *The Meaning of Marriage Payments* (London, 1980), introduction and pp. 161-95; Mair, *Marriage*, ch. 4; Radcliffe-Brown, 'Introduction', pp. 44-54. For a discussion of the historical development of marriage gifts with its associated bundle of rights and obligations, see D. O. Hughes, 'From brideprice to dowry in Mediterranean Europe', *Journal of Family History* 3, 3(1978), 262-96.

4 M. Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. by I. Cunnison (first published London, 1954, repr. 1966, 1970, 1974, 1980); Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*; P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. by R. Nice (first published Switzerland, 1972; first English trans. Cambridge, 1977) pp. 5-8, 12-15, 191-5. For a recent discussion of approaches to reciprocity, see G. McCracken, 'The exchange of children in Tudor England: an anthropological phenomenon in historical context', *Journal of Family History* 8 (1983), 303-13 (esp. pp. 304-6).

feature of courtship is richly illustrated, with gifts bestowed also on matchmakers, peers, and wedding guests. Differences in ethnographic detail may be seen to reflect aspects of national and local culture; the production, use, and distribution of traditional forms of ornament and tokens having chronological, geographical and status associations. However varied the forms, they express a common rite and symbolic idiom.<sup>5</sup> Antiquarian concern, and later interest in folklore and matrimonial customs in England and America, has focused on identifying the types of object and their artistic and decorative value through motifs, mottoes and designs, and on their functional application as utilitarian, personal, magical or otherwise. The possible influence of cottage industries and crafts has also been observed. Material is abundant for the Victorian era, not least for the fashionable Valentine cards.<sup>6</sup> Above all else, the ring, as a token of great antiquity, has attracted attention. Varied in type but endless in its circular form, it is sometimes inscribed, and has long been imbued with sentimental, legal, religious, and magical connotations, and used from classical times in ceremonies of marriage and betrothal.<sup>7</sup>

The aforementioned litigation studies of dioceses in late medieval and early modern England, and investigations into the history of sentiments and

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5 *Aspects of Folk Life in Europe: Love and Marriage* (International European Exhibition organized by the Ministry of French Culture and the Ministry of Flemish Culture, Musée de la Vie Wallonne, Liège, July 4-October 5 1975). I am grateful to Richard Wall for bringing this book to my attention.

6 J. Brand, *Observations on Popular Antiquities: Chiefly Illustrating the Origin of our Vulgar Customs, Ceremonies, and Superstitions* (London, 1813, 2 vols. ), ii. 19-121; J. Strutt, *A Compleat View of the Manners, Customs, Arms, Habits and of the Inhabitants of England from the Arrival of the Saxons Till the Reign of Henry VIII* (London, 1775, 3 vols. ), i. 74-8, ii. 23-4, iii. 151-8; M. Baker, *Discovering the Folklore and Customs of Love and Marriage* (Aylesbury, 1974), pp. 15-18; C. Bloxham and M. Picken, *Love and Marriage* (Devon, 1990); S. Bury, *An Introduction to Sentimental Jewellery* (London, 1985), pp. 15-32; E. Porter, *Cambridgeshire Customs and Folklore* (London, 1969), pp. 37, 48; E. Bradford ed., *Roses are Red. Love and Scorn in Victorian Valentines* (London, 1986); *Love Spoons from Wales*, (Cardiff, 1973); *The Story of the Love Spoon*, (Cardiff, 1973); *Victorian Valentine Cards* (Temporary Exhibition at the Heritage Centre, Canterbury, February 1988); J. Jones and K. Ames, *Love Tokens* (Devon, 1992).

7 J. Evans, *English Posies and Posy Rings* (London, 1931); G. F. Kunz, *Rings for the Finger* (Philadelphia, 1917, republished New York, 1973), pp. 193-248; H. Newman, *An Illustrated Dictionary of Jewellery* (London, 1981); S. Bury, *An Introduction to Rings* (London, 1984), pp. 15-17; J. Cherry and M. Redknap, 'Medieval and Tudor finger rings found in Wales', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 140 (1991), 120-9.

culture, have indicated the customary usage of gifts as an aspect of intimate behaviour in the making of marriage.<sup>8</sup> A detailed study based upon a small number of depositions exists for the diocese of Durham in the years 1560-1630.<sup>9</sup> For nineteenth-century rural France, the codified exchange of objects served as an apparently speechless dialogue between courting couples.<sup>10</sup> The custom of offering gifts was evident in matrimonial promises made in the province of South Champagne at the end of the fifteenth century, under 'clandestine' circumstances,<sup>11</sup> and in the rituals of marriage in sixteenth-century Augsburg.<sup>12</sup> That this was regarded as a characteristic sign of spousals, is best expressed in the work of the lawyer, Henry Swinburne, whose contemporary treatise of spousals, although specifically applied to the diocese of York, has general relevance as an authoritative text of legal interpretation.<sup>13</sup>

Having already observed in the introduction above, some of the general problems involved in the use of litigation studies, the more specific issue concerning the legal probity of marriage needs to be addressed in this chapter. The testimonies of at least two witnesses, of suitable credibility, were legally necessary to prove a matrimonial contract.<sup>14</sup> The Romano-canonic system of witness proof, adopted in modified form by English church courts in the

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8 R. Chartier ed. *Passions of the Renaissance* (trans. by A. Goldhammer, Massachusetts, 1989), pp. 246-8, 258; Chaytor, 'Household and kinship', p. 42; J. R. Gillis, 'Peasant, plebeian, and proletarian marriage in Britain, 1600-1900', in D. Levine ed., *Proletarianization and Family History* (Orlando, 1984), p. 132; Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, pp. 31-4, 38, 51; Houlbrooke, *Church Courts*, pp. 60-2; Houlbrooke, 'The making of marriage', pp. 344-6, 350; Ingram, 'Spousals litigation', pp. 46-7; Ingram, *Church Courts*, pp. 196-8; Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, pp. 300-3; Sheehan, 'The formation and stability of marriage'; D. Woodward ed., *The Farming and Memorandum Books of Henry Best of Elmswell. 1642*, Records of Social and Economic History n. s. 8 (London, 1984), pp. 122-3. For more recent references to tokens and courtship gifts, see P. J. P. Goldberg, *Women, Work and Life-Cycle in a Medieval Economy. Women in York and Yorkshire c. 1300-1520* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 238-40; Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, pp. 111-12, 127, 136; Carlson, 'Courtship in Tudor England', pp. 24-5.

9 Rushton, 'The testament of gifts', *passim*; Rushton, 'Property, power and family networks', p. 205.

10 Segalen, *Love and Power*, pp. 18-19.

11 Gottlieb, 'The meaning of clandestine marriage', pp. 49-53, 70.

12 Roper, "'Going to the church and street'", pp. 81-3, 89, 96.

13 Swinburne, *Treatise of Spousals*, pp. 1, 21, 27, 31-3, 39-43, 203-12, 229-30; J. D. M. Derrett, 'Henry Swinburne (?1551-1624) civil lawyer of York', *Borthwick Papers* 44 (1973).

14 Conset, *The Practice of the Ecclesiastical Courts*, pp. 140, 268.

thirteenth century,<sup>15</sup> constituted the main tradition of legal proof, but proof by other means, such as public and private instruments like letters,<sup>16</sup> or circumstantial evidence touching on reputation, rumours, confession and status, were valid forms of proof which, some considered, should favour a cause even if but half-a-proof.<sup>17</sup> In the English medieval courts it would appear that there were no hard and fast rules of evidence, the matter being heavily dependent on the discerning power of the judge.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, it seems that the kinds of testimony evaluated became increasingly profuse, and carefully scrutinised in the sixteenth century.<sup>19</sup> Occasionally, defamers or those claiming a contract of marriage, were specifically asked by others, 'What profes hast of thereof?'<sup>20</sup> While some suitors might affirm 'that (they) cold make many proofes',<sup>21</sup> others showed their uncertainty regarding matrimonial matters depending in law, and deliberately sought legal opinion. William Turvyne, for example, alleged that he was precontracted to one Nethersole's late widow who subsequently married William Harrison. He informed the public notary of Canterbury, 'that he had no wytnesses of his contract to the woman nor other proof but hyr owne confession', and was warned that then 'he should spend his mony in vayne to go to lawe for hyr'.<sup>22</sup>

The problem of creating an adequate system of proof as regards legal marriage<sup>23</sup> was inherent in the concepts and contradictions of canon law, and in the essential vulnerability of the contract. If 'marital affection', mutually felt, was simply what constituted the essence of matrimony, proving its existence and evaluating the external expression of that mutual consent, was more complicated.

The giving of dowry was one of those formalities which canonists advanced, drawing as they did upon Roman legal tradition which regarded it as a

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15 C. Donahue Jr., 'Proof by witnesses in the church courts of medieval England: an imperfect reception of the learned law', in M. S. Arnold, T. A. Green, S. A. Scully, and S. D. White eds., *On the Laws and Customs of England* (North Carolina, 1981), pp. 127-58.

16 Conset, *The Practice of the Ecclesiastical Courts*, pp. 146-51.

17 R. Burn, *The Ecclesiastical Law* (London, 1824, 8th edn.), ii. 487.

18 Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 131-3.

19 Houlbrooke, *Church Courts*, p. 61. His own conclusion, is that circumstantial details probably did not affect the verdict, but he admits the impossibility of demonstrating the matter either way with any certainty.

20 C.C.A.L., MS X/10/21, ff. 97v., 107-8v., 126-7, 175-v., *Hardyman v. Savage* (1581).

21 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/4, ff. 144-5v., *Boycot v. Fleet* (1602).

22 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/3, ff. 71v.-2, *Turvyne v. Nethersole and Harrison* (1598).

23 Brundage, 'Concubinage and marriage', *passim*.

public act signifying and regularizing marriage.<sup>24</sup> Endowment at the church door, which was of greater significance in English common law, was also promoted by canonists bent upon publicity and propriety; the gift of 'a ring, and other tokens of spousage as gold or silver', representing that endowment within liturgical practice.<sup>25</sup>

The association of the ring with the fasting of hands was already established in early missals of the thirteenth century.<sup>26</sup> Although, in the sixteenth century, some reformers attacked the use of wedding rings in the marriage service, the ring itself remained as a token of exchanged promises, and its symbolism continued to be recognized.<sup>27</sup> By the seventeenth century, the symbolic importance of a ring was apparently less tied to status, or the quality of the metal, than to its essential circularity, signifying the continuous flow of love. Placing the ring on the fourth finger of the left hand, where love's vein was said to run, could denote the union of the couple.<sup>28</sup> Where gifts were concerned, the law allegedly regarded the giving and receiving of the ring as 'a sign above all others, and most usual in spousals and matrimonial contracts', to betoken or confirm marriage, but the manner of delivery and acceptance was considered crucial in distinguishing a goodwill gift or token, from a 'presumed contract' or 'earnest penny of spousals'.<sup>29</sup> According to the Book of Common Prayer, the ring was used as a 'subarration' in marriages celebrated in the face of the church. If speech was not used, it would appear that the solemnity of ring-giving alone might signify the mutual consent and contract of parties, where endorsed by local custom. Theoretically, it might also be used to resolve a *de futuro* contract into effective matrimony, although such a conclusion was said to be 'not very sound'.<sup>30</sup>

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24 Brundage, 'Concubinage and marriage', p. 6, describes the functions of the dotal gift as a 'legal mechanism' to 'exteriorize feelings'. Also, M. M. Sheehan, 'The influence of canon law on the property rights of married women in England', *Medieval Studies* 25 (1963), 109-24 (p. 109).

25 Sheehan, 'The influence of canon law', p. 114; Burn, *The Ecclesiastical Law*, p. 479.

26 Sheehan, 'Choice of marriage partner', pp. 31-2.

27 Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, pp. 44-7.

28 Swinburne, *Treatise of Spousals*, pp. 207-9; Roper, "'Going to church and street'", p. 81. Posies also alluded to the ring as 'round and hath no end'. See Evans, *English Posies*, pp. xxi, 98.

29 The discussion of ring-giving can be found in Swinburne, *Treatise of Spousals*, pp. 10, 39-43, 71, 209-10; Derrett, 'Henry Swinburne', p. 25.

30 See also Houlbrooke, *Church Courts*, pp. 60-2, and 'The making of marriage', pp. 344-6, who finds only one Norwich case of its conclusive effect.

It seems that there was no absolute unanimous agreement among canonists touching the evidential status of gifts and tokens. They were probably generally regarded as a lawful form of demonstrating sentiment at spousals, and expressing the continuance of mutual consent in circumstances where communications of marriage had formerly occurred. Some, however, rejected them along with other 'feeble conjectures' as kissing and embracing, as insufficiently 'evident' and 'urgent', interpreting the practice of giving and receiving gifts, and of ring-wearing, as purely amorous and flirtatious, while others were more inclined to presume a matrimonial rather than lustful intent.<sup>31</sup> In the eyes of the law, it was more commonly held that some speech was necessary in contracting spousals, since it constituted better proof of matrimony, but it was admitted that the dumb could contract with signs alone, and there were those who also acknowledged that the use of words might be understood to incorporate signs.<sup>32</sup>

If the formal position concerning gifts and tokens was somewhat confused, popular interpretation and practice added a greater contradictory dimension. For the dioceses of Norwich and Winchester in the sixteenth century, it was found that couples favoured the use of other tokens beside the ring in contracting spousals, delivering them, at times, in a less than solemn manner, and demonstrating the value which they, especially the male suitors, attached to such gifts.<sup>33</sup> In matrimony cases disputed in north-east England, plaintiffs seeking to establish a claim alleged that tokens had been given, most commonly in circumstances where the wording of the contract was vague, and where spousals were insufficiently formal. In those cases, 'the evidence of gifts may have been useful, perhaps crucial, additional testimony',<sup>34</sup> and was probably treated by judges in Wiltshire, as a means of gauging the public voice and fame.<sup>35</sup> The law acknowledged that such conduct might contribute to just cause for legal action, and made provision regarding the restitution of gifts, and payment of litigation costs.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, it would seem that, at least by the principles of law,

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31 Swinburne, *Treatise of Spousals*, pp. 6-7, 21, 31-3, 41, 209; Conset, *The Practice of the Ecclesiastical Courts*, p. 255.

32 Swinburne, *Treatise of Spousals*, pp. 203-5; Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 33-4.

33 Houlbrooke, *Church Courts*, pp. 60-2.

34 Rushton, 'The testament of gifts', p. 28.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 31, n. 23, citing Ingram.

36 Houlbrooke, *Church Courts*, pp. 60-2; Houlbrooke, 'The making of marriage', pp. 344-6; also Conset, *The Practice of the Ecclesiastical Courts*, p. 271.

testimonies of gifts and tokens constituted only 'supportive evidence',<sup>37</sup> and were seldom used as the sole, legitimate proof of a contract.<sup>38</sup> They have been described as 'a slippery form of evidence'.<sup>39</sup> Although 'pertinent', able to corroborate more formal contracts, and potentially capable of transforming feeble contracts into conclusive facts, the common opinion offered, is that they 'probably did not influence decisions', doing 'little to safeguard contracts', and 'rarely did *they* turn a weak contract into a strong one'.<sup>40</sup>

The principal concerns of this chapter are not, however, with the significance of such gifts and tokens for the legal probity of marriage, but rather with the social importance of those practices. As discussed earlier in the introduction above, since we cannot presume to know the full course of litigation procedure, this chapter does not, therefore, consider how legal interpretation of the tokens' evidential power worked in practice to determine the final resolution of matrimonial contract cases. Although the words of consent in the law of matrimonial contract would theoretically have been the principal subject of dispute in marriage cases, the depositions suggest that the gifts were themselves crucial foci of investigation when the validity of a marriage was debated. Whatever the canonical principles, the admission of such testimonies highlights the social relevance of those gifts and tokens even if not, strictly speaking, their legal relevance. It does not seem necessary, therefore, to treat the disputes regarding gifts and tokens as primarily legal controversies. The verdicts of such cases, where they exist, may appear to be legally critical, but do not alter our perception of the underlying nature of social practice in marriage formation. Contemporary literature and art, folksongs, poems, ballads, posies, (described as intended for rings, bracelets, handkerchiefs, gloves, scarves, and similar tokens),

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37 Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 45-7.

38 Rushton, 'The testament of gifts', p. 28.

39 Ingram, *Church Courts*, pp. 196-8.

40 *Ibid.*; Ingram, 'Spousals litigation', pp. 46-7; Houlbrooke, *Church Courts*, pp. 60-2; Houlbrooke, 'The making of marriage', p. 346. Further discussion of gifts as circumstantial evidence can be found in Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, pp. 127, 136. He is critical of Rushton, and argues instead that there was *no* uncertainty regarding the meaning of gifts in litigation. 'Ultimately, it was simply the responsibility of each individual to make intentions clear when giving and receiving gifts. People did not need the church courts to assist them in that. Litigation in church courts which involved gifts was not about gifts; it was about words'.

and the iconography of love, popularize the tradition of gift-giving, although they should not be valued uncritically as indicative of social practice.<sup>41</sup>

The purpose of what follows, therefore, is to explore the ways in which gifts and tokens were used to conduct and define personal and social relations. It will be suggested that the nature of those gifts and tokens, their symbolic and economic value, and the circumstances, intention, and occasion of giving, might all qualify that process of definition, and give meaning to the particular transaction. From the evidence of depositions, it would appear that gift-giving was a socially recognized, even psychologically binding custom in a pre-industrial society, often dependent upon non-literate forms of communication. As well as being a personal and private exchange, it was also a public matter, morally and socially obligatory, regardless of its legal status. Attitudes to giving and receiving, to refusing or returning gifts and tokens, demonstrate the constraints imposed, the repercussions experienced, and the implicit signifiatory force behind the practice. This social significance, it will thus be argued, was independent of the importance at law. While deposition evidence may not suggest that gift-giving was essential in terms of *legally* validating a marriage, it is the intention of this chapter to suggest that the giving of gifts and tokens was a *social* imperative which played a key role in the transacting of personal relationships within the marriage process.

### **The Practice Of Giving**

Within the diocese of Canterbury, for the period 1542-1602, just over half of the 301 matrimony cases (172, or 57%) drawn from towns and villages alike, discuss the giving of gifts and tokens.<sup>42</sup> This occurred at various stages in the

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41 Rushton, 'The testament of gifts', p. 25; *Love and Courtship in Renaissance Prints* (Temporary Exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, March -June 1989). For love posies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries see A. H. Bullen ed., *Some Shorter Elizabethan Poems. An English Garner* (Westminster, 1903), pp. 269-310; R. Thompson ed., *Samuel Pepys' Penny Merriments* (London, 1976), pp. 114-15; and for courtship gifts in small merry books, see M. Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories* (London, 1981), pp. 168-9. Numerous examples of gifts and tokens span the works of Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, George Herbert and John Donne, and later writers such as Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, and Thomas Hardy, to name a few.

42 The figure is approximate because of circumstances of multi-contract, and because matrimony can only be inferred in certain cases. Cf. Rushton, 'The testament of gifts', p. 25, where 29 out of 81 actual or inferred matrimony cases provided such testimonies, and Houlbrooke, 'The making of marriage', pp. 344-6,



development of a matrimonial contract and church wedding, and was not limited to the official, more structured occasion of formal betrothal before witnesses, or to the ceremony of religious celebration.<sup>43</sup> The making of marriage should be regarded as an extended, more complex, process of communication, signalled with gifts from beginning to end, wherein the language of tokens embodied an ambiguous interplay of emotions and behaviour (whose dialogue was usually successfully resolved). Its establishment, in practice, was not simply an individualized exchange of verbal consent, defined by a single event, but was rather a process which involved a complex series of formalities observed in varying degrees. The plighting of faith and troth and the rituals of feasting and drinking which took place at times of formal handfastings, mirrored a whole sequence of privy promises, repeated 'rehearsals' of promises, matrimonial negotiations and merriment which went on before, and which were accompanied, within their diverse circumstances, with symbols. Marriage should be seen not purely as a legal act, but as a 'social drama' where rituals and symbols, gifts and tokens, played a 'dynamic and creative' role in the making, and indeed the breaking, of marriage.<sup>44</sup> Marriage gifts, moreover, may be seen as a special case within a wider, more general context of gift-giving, and within a society which might seek to transact all kinds of relations by means of symbolic gestures and objects.

It was evidently customary for the male suitor to woo with gifts, sometimes referred to in an indiscriminate way as 'divers tokens' or 'small trifles'. Simon Aunsell was said to have bemoaned the fact that 'he had spent many a peny and many tymes hathe had a hevvy hart because that she [meaning Agnes Courte] wold not condescend to marry *with* him'.<sup>45</sup> The practice of giving, although predominantly a male ritual, was not exclusively so.<sup>46</sup> Those 'pretty tokens' sent to lovers were generally meant for women, but it would seem that women might also give in return.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, the unevenness of the exchange assigned to women the primarily passive role of recipient. The form of giving, while not strictly defined by gender, would probably have rendered overt female

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where references to gifts were found in 25% of the cases. The proportion of male:female plaintiffs, and the varied circumstances of cases, have not been considered.

43 *Ibid.*

44 Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, pp. 6-7, 17.

45 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/9, f. 64, *Aunsell v. Courte* (1563?).

46 Also Houlbrooke, 'The making of marriage', p. 344; Rushton, 'The testament of gifts', p. 26; Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, p. 111.

47 Bullen ed., *Some Shorter Elizabethan Poems*, pp. 279-306.

initiative sexually predatory. Widows were found to be more forthcoming,<sup>48</sup> but usually women acted in response to their suitors, either in returning tokens and, by implication, terminating negotiations, or in reciprocation, reassurance, and even positive encouragement. In *Lambard v. Harewood*, Thomas Lambard of Folkestone suspected the widow Joanne Harewood of 'fayning things' so as to refuse him. Discontented with her reply, he asked John Geoffrey to speak with her and reclaim all his tokens if she was not inclined to remarry. She insisted that if Lambard would come to her again he would be even more welcome than before, and upon Geoffrey's request for a token assuring him of that welcome, she delivered a crown of gold, praying that he might come again.<sup>49</sup> Similarly the new goat which George Bett carried to Henry Lyon at Challock, was sent as a token by Margaret Cole entreating him to come. The significance of the action was made plain. At that time, Bett said to her 'that he wold gladly goo for hym the said Henry Lyon so that he wold not dissemble with hym . . . unto whom Margaret answered that she wer a very beast if she wold dissemble *with* hym'. By Bett's deposition, Henry Lyon received the goat very thankfully, desiring him to recommend him to her again.<sup>50</sup>

The use of intermediaries, as we shall see in the following chapter, whether as messengers or as deliverers of gifts and tokens was commonly practised. It will be shown that they occupied an important position in the process of matrimonial negotiation and arrangements, and in the testing of emotional response.<sup>51</sup> Commendations from one party to another were frequently carried by them, with gifts possibly importing such conditional messages that the person receiving the gift 'should think so well of the giver as of the gift',<sup>52</sup> a phrase nearly identical to some contemporary love posies.<sup>53</sup> While intermediaries assumed representative roles, they might also initiate proceedings by inquiry, vindicate relationships, or even force the issue, as alleged in the case where Margaret Barnes (the intermediary) put a ring into Joanne Stupple's hand, telling her that George More had sent it for a token, and 'forsing' her to keep it until such time as she should see him again. It was said that on the previous day, she had 'also in lik order' delivered to her a silver and gilt enamelled button. Noticeably within three days after receiving the ring, the defendant admitted she had granted

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48 Houlbrooke, 'The making of marriage', p. 344.

49 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/6, ff. 115v.-16, *Lambard v. Harewood* (1556).

50 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, f. 102v., *Lyon v. Cole* (1560).

51 Also Houlbrooke, 'The making of marriage', p. 344.

52 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/5, f. 121, *Stringer v. Sturman* (1596); but in this case, Thomas Sturman delivered the gift himself.

53 E. g. Evans, *English Posies*, p. 85; 'Not the guift, but the giver' (1596).

her goodwill to him, but 'said that she could not tell wherunto she had granted her goodwill'.<sup>54</sup>

Gifts given or taken by force may not have been supported by law, but in practice it seems, such actions were not uncommon.<sup>55</sup> At times the act of giving accompanied the dialogue of marriage promises, but at others, its form served as a sexual affront, with gifts stuffed into a girl's bosom, thrust into her hand or pocket, or cast at her. Edward Culling of Upper Hardres claimed that Joan Essex 'said she wold interprete her body by the grace of god as she wold forsake all other men, and submyt herself to [him] to be his wif. And because she promised this, he tooke her a pece of Gould at that time valued 13s.4d. upon condition that she shold be his wif, *which* she upon that condition willingly received'. Joan, however, accused him of unjust boasting. By her account he put the gold into her hand '*which* she refused to receive and cast it agen after him on a table, and saith that he delivered to her an handkercher to wash wherin was an old grote, and a purse he gave her for a fayring, and the neckercher he thrust into her pockett which she took out and cast to him agen on the ground at Hithe (Hythe) fayer, and an old 6d. he gave her also'.<sup>56</sup>

Defendants might claim that gifts were concealed instead of being given openly. Alice Berry, for example, deposed that Serafyn Marketman had taken away one of her gloves and placed a gold ring and French crown inside it, which she received from Sibill Berry, and that, as she was putting on the glove, she felt the ring and crown in it, and kept them.<sup>57</sup> In the case of *Longley v. Marchant*, Joanne Marchant said that when Longley first began his suit, 'he forced [her] to take of him a token against her will, *which* she refused, and said she wold not take it, but he nevertheless did put it into [her] bosom being in a paper, *which* whan [she] went to bed fell from her, and she toke it up, not loking into the paper what it was'.<sup>58</sup> Although, at one level, her seeming lack of curiosity appears unconvincing, it may be assumed that in her eyes, the very act of revelation and making public was considered indiscreet. The public wearing of a gift might also transform the apparently personal, and initially private nature of giving. Bennet Dunnye allegedly confessed to having worn a pair of gloves given by Thomas

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54 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/18, ff. 154v.-5, *More v. Stupple* (1579).

55 Also Houlbrooke, *Church Courts*, p. 60, and 'The making of marriage', p. 344; Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, pp. 300-1.

56 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/16, f. 277-v., 283, *Essex v. Culling* (1577); also e.g. MSS. X/10/18, ff. 213v.-14v., *Balden v. Brokwell* (1580); X/10/17, ff. 88-96v., *Levet v. Willyams* (1574).

57 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/21, f. 81v., *Marketman v. Berry* (1581).

58 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/12, f. 287v., *Longley v. Marchant* (1566).

Kennet,<sup>59</sup> and in *Barrow v. Thomlyns*, the widow Thomlyns had a gown formerly belonging to Walter Barrow's first wife, which she altered and made for herself, wearing the same.<sup>60</sup>

The circumstances of giving, even in the undisguised context of personal confrontation were seldom unambiguous. The face to face encounter of Agnes Ramruche and William Ottringham proved critical in his relations with Katherine Grigge, occurring shortly before they were due to marry, when all three met in the town of Sandwich. Enquiring of Agnes whether or not she had heard the banns of marriage published between himself and Katherine, he added 'yt might have been yor day and yor wedd'. Her reply being, 'it is better as it is', he thanked god, then took an orange out of his pocket, saying to Agnes, 'yet for thold love that hath been between you and me, I geve you this orrenge, *which* she toke at his hands and went away . . . And herapon he cam to [Katherine] standing hard by and said to her after Agnes was goon / Com on Katherine, I had loved you well but Anne hathe myn hart'. Katherine, humiliated and perceiving his 'inconstancy and disemblacon', answered, 'yf she have yor hart I wold she had body and all'.<sup>61</sup> The case is rich in its implications, with an even more intriguing development, and it would be impossible to interpret accurately the subtleties and nuances of behaviour and sentiment, or recapture the expressions, tensions and tone, which qualify the meaning of the gift. Nevertheless, the incident was a psychological turning-point for Katherine, who was consequently determined 'to her great greef of hert', never to marry with him.

Attitudes expressed in the giving and receipt of gifts and tokens, on an individual level, and in the public face, affected the progress of relationships. The suitor's expectation was to elicit a response. In *Hennikre v. Sellar* it was said that Edward Hennikre gave Isadore Sellar two pieces of gold which he desired her to keep, 'and than he asked hyr whye she said nothings to the matter and she said she colde not tell what to saye. And Hennikre said than to her, you staye for your frends goodwyll do you, and she said yea that I do', thereby acknowledging that although the token in its own right might have effect, the influence of her 'frends' could override that efficacy.<sup>62</sup>

The practice of giving was further elaborated by the offer of gifts made to the girl's relatives as William Divers was seen to do when he bestowed certain

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59 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, f. 183v., *Kennet v. Dunnye* (1570).

60 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/9, f. 59, *Barrow v. Thomlyns* (1563?).

61 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/15, f. 161-v., *Ottringham v. Grigge* (1567); cf. Evans, *English Posies*, p. 30, 'Take hand take heart take body and all'.

62 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, f. 126, *Hennikre v. Sellar* (1569).

goods upon Agnes Williams.<sup>63</sup> Transacting relations between potential affines was also evident in the case of *Terrie v. Overie*. John Terrie received two pieces of gold wrapped in white paper and tied with silk thread from Margaret Taylor, with the message that they were sent by the widow Elizabeth Overie, who commended herself to him and welcomed him to the village of Littlebourne. He received the message and tokens thankfully, reciprocating with two other pieces of gold wrapped in the same paper, likewise commending himself to her and promising to be with her shortly. His father also sent Elizabeth a bowed goart for a token and his mother, a bowed 3*d.*, each with their commendations.<sup>64</sup>

Such then, were some of the contexts in which the courtship drama and ritual exchange were practised. Giving was more commonly a male activity, not dependent upon reciprocation in kind, but effectively seeking to advance personal and social relations, sometimes with the aid of intermediaries, other times in an open, direct, intimate form, but otherwise secretly, provocatively, even forcibly.

### The Nature Of The Gift

Deponents were not always specific about the kinds of objects which were given and received, but usually referred to them as tokens, gifts, or fairings. These terms were apparently distinctive, but seeking to understand the full range of their contemporary significance exposes their complexity and ambiguity.<sup>65</sup> Gifts might be considered 'fre gift', gratuitous, perhaps a fee for services rendered, or intended to bribe and seduce. The token, indicative of a fact, event or sentiment, had associations with particular rights and privileges, possibly interpreted as evidential, signficatory, or expressive, and potentially capable of being religiously, economically, and socially symbolic. Complimentary gifts, cakes and sweets sold at fairs, and presents given and bought from there, were described as fairings in contemporary parlance, but even they were subject to various interpretations. A coin, by definition may not have been a fairing, yet money could have been given for the purpose of buying fairings, as Nicholas King did, when he gave Elizabeth Otway '2*s.* to buy her a fayring' at Lammas fair,<sup>66</sup> and bridal clothes were likewise bought at fairs. The basic purpose of the fair for making commercial transactions, for purchasing, distributing, and

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63 See above the case of *Divers v. Williams*.

64 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/1, f. 2-v., *Terry v. Overie* (1585).

65 For sixteenth-and seventeenth-century usages, see *O. E. D.*

66 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/19, f. 264, *King v. Otway and Wood* (1584).

socializing, all within the context of a gathered community, gave it a special function in negotiating social relations, as shall be discussed in chapter 4 below.

Partners in marriage cases attached different degrees of significance and commitment to particular items exchanged between them. In *Frances v. Marshe*, Felicity Marshe said that sometime before their talk of marriage, Edward Frances gave her a kerchief for a fairing which she so accepted and not of any other intent. Another time, he offered her a piece of gold of ten shillings to keep, which she refused. Nevertheless, he persuaded her to 'take it and kepe it till she shuld see further cause, *which pece he said he wold take at any other tyme when she shuld redeliver it to hym viz. at Candlemas last past, and then also he required the kercher which he had not because she toke it for a fayring*'.<sup>67</sup>

The different shades of commitment and the meaning underlying the transfer of objects, either initially successfully communicated and revised, or genuinely miscalculated, created problems of interpretation for those involved, and for the courts evaluating the relevance of those objects as contractual marriage symbols, or merely normal, 'goodwill' presents.<sup>68</sup> The definition of a marriage token could not have been predicated solely on the nature of particular objects, whether in kind or value.

The cases demonstrate the wide range of goods allegedly given,<sup>69</sup> as shown in the appendix to this chapter. Despite the diversity in form, the gifts and tokens have been categorized by type for analytical purposes; the categories being of necessity somewhat arbitrary and simplified. The identification of particular objects was not always self-evident, and their nature depended partly upon their function as commemorative, decorative, sentimental or utilitarian. The orange given by William Ottringham, for example, may not have taken the form commonly assumed,<sup>70</sup> and knives might figure as metal trinkets especially if they

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67 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/8, ff. 68v.-9, *Frances v. Marshe* (1561?).

68 Houlbrooke, *Church Courts*, p. 60; Rushton, 'The testament of gifts', pp. 26-7.

69 Rushton, 'The testament of gifts', p. 26, concludes that there were no fixed rules regarding type, although rings were often given, and Houlbrooke, 'The making of marriage', pp. 344-6, similarly cites the frequency of rings associated with pledge, but also the popularity of coins, ornaments, and trinkets. For gifts such as flowers, mirrors, 'conceited toys and novelties' like whistles, lockets, thimbles, etc., see Goldberg, *Women, Work and Life-Cycle*, pp. 238-40; Carlson, 'Courtship in Tudor England', p. 24; Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, p. 111.

70 Cf. the 'orange' cited from eighteenth-century Belgium in the form of a heart, being a sweet-dish in orange peel covered with papier-mâché: *Aspects of Folk Life in Europe*, p. 121.

were inscribed with love posies according to the fashion described in popular literature, but they could also be used as bridal accessories, or household tools.<sup>71</sup>

With the exception of certain miscellaneous, and unspecific allusions to exchanges made, the cases provide evidence of 403 givings of different kinds of goods, although the number of occasions when gifts were given was noticeably fewer, since more than one item might be given at any one time (see table 2.1).<sup>72</sup>

**Table 2.1. Categories and Numbers of Gifts and Tokens by Decade**

Categories	1542-50	1551-50	1561-70	1571-80	1581-90	1591-00	1601-2	Total	%
Money	13	27(28)	32(40)	37(40)	27	21(25)	2(5)	159(178)	39.5
Clothing & Leather	8	24(28)	41(43)	28	13(19)	15(20)	0	129(146)	32.0
Metal & Trinkets	9	14(20)	26(28)	13	14(15)	7	1	84(93)	20.8
Written	0	0	(1)	2(3)	5(6)	6(7)	0	13(17)	3.2
Animals & Foodstuffs	2	2	3	2(3)	4	1	0	14(15)	3.5
Household	1	0	1	0	1(2)	1(3)	0	4(7)	1.0
Total	33	67(78)	103(116)	82(87)	64(73)	51(63)	3(6)	403(456)	100.0

Note: Total numbers given in the tables are subject to variation because of the difficulty of assigning deposition evidence to particular categories. The numbers in brackets are the maximum figures.

Monetary gifts were apparently the most popular type, and although individuals gave different amounts, ten shillings was frequently recorded (at least fifty-six times). One third of the gifts were articles of clothing, leather, and textiles, including all kinds of garments, but most commonly consisting of gloves (at least thirty-seven times) and, to a lesser extent, the choice of a purse or handkerchief. The dominance of rings among the next most popular category of metal objects is not surprising, given the symbolic status normally attributed to them. The rings took various forms, but were presumably considered a far more customary choice

<sup>71</sup> Bullen ed., *Some Shorter Elizabethan Poems*, pp. 291-306; Bloxham and Picken, *Love and Marriage*, pp. 76-82; Brand, *Observations on Popular Antiquities*, pp. 54-61.

<sup>72</sup> Wherever discrepancy exists, conservative estimates have been used throughout the analysis.

rural elite. The letters are an interesting aspect of pressure applied to particular social groups. Upon receiving a letter from John Mantle, sent from London, Parnell Mereweath declared, 'lettres and more troble yet'.<sup>76</sup> They also had the function of making assignations and meetings, furthering or clarifying relationships. By law, letters were admitted as a form of proof,<sup>77</sup> and a means of contracting spousals, if they contained words deemed appropriate for matrimony, were delivered by special messenger, and were willingly accepted by the other party. It was necessary for the person, upon receipt of the letter, to express mutual consent to the message imported, and for witnesses to prove that the letter was read and understood.<sup>78</sup> The defendant John Beeching of Sandwich, admitted that the letters which Alice Pynnocke had in her custody and did 'well accept', were written in his own hand, but he also claimed that there was something contained in the letter which was not true, even though he had written it, viz. the phrase: 'To reveale the love the *whiche* eche to other by the most sacred and suer knot of contraction ys now associated'. He furthermore alleged that he had merely lent her a prayer book.<sup>79</sup> The testimony of letters might also allude to a language of goodwill, but the cases provide no evidence to suggest that there were standard written forms of proposal or courtship, and it is not clear to what extent letters might represent a more formal dialogue of love and marriage. Model love letters were, however, said to be widespread from the sixteenth century.<sup>80</sup> While it is questionable whether or not letters should be regarded as tokens, they were still an aspect of exchange concerned with the same matters which tokens were intended to symbolize, and it is possible to consider the letter when fully developed, as replacing the need for ritual gift exchanges, and symbolic modes of communication. Popular literature suggests that love posies were to be found in letters, as well as objects,<sup>81</sup> and it was apparently customary in Renaissance Europe for letters and notes embodying words of love, to be worn or kept close to the heart, and to be depicted as associated with love,<sup>82</sup> although by the eighteenth century, what were described as love letters in Austria and

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76 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/18, f. 24-v., *Mantle v. Mereweath* (1577).

77 Conset, *The Practice of the Ecclesiastical Courts*, pp. 146-51.

78 Swinburne, *A Treatise of Spousals*, pp. 178-89.

79 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/14, f. 99-v., *Pynnocke v. Beeching* (1572).

80 Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, pp. 301-3.

81 Thompson ed., *Samuel Pepys' Penny Merriments*, pp. 114-15.

82 Chartier ed., *Passions of the Renaissance*, pp. 246-8; N. P. Meyjes, *Character and Beauty of Dutch Painting in the Seventeenth Century* (Netherlands, 1957, Eng.-Dutch edn.), no. 36/37; J. Vermeer's 'The Message' or 'The Love Letter'.



West Germany may have taken a different form.<sup>83</sup> The depositions show only a few individuals negotiating in the form of letters, or pious books, but the tendency to do so appears to have increased by the end of the sixteenth century, despite the corresponding decline in the number of matrimony cases studied.<sup>84</sup>

The choice of household goods as gifts was even less characteristic, for they were rarely bestowed in preference to other types of gift. Some time after the plighting of faith and troth, James Philpot gave two chests to Elizabeth Savye, among other things, in token of marriage,<sup>85</sup> and in *Smyth v. Gray*, on the very day that the parties joined hands, promised themselves to each other, embraced and drank, the widow Joan Gray delivered to Peter Smyth upon agreement of the contract, a flockbed and bedding which he carried away to his lodgings.<sup>86</sup>

The unequal distribution of all types of gift, considered together across the period shown in Table 2.1, directly reflects the number of matrimony cases analysed for particular decades. The highest total of gifts and tokens recorded in the 1560s corresponds with the maximum number of cases, while the reverse is true for the 1540s, partly due to the fact that the years 1543-7, as well as 1540-1, are not represented. Comparing the three main categories of gifts as percentages of the total number recorded within each decade, Table 2.2 confirms, with the exception of the 1560s, the sustained dominance of monetary gifts over the entire period, while also revealing fluctuations in gifts of clothing and metal.

**Table 2.2. Percentage of Gifts and Tokens by Category by Decade, 1542-1600**

	1542-50	1551-60	1561-70	1571-80	1581-90	1591-00
Money	39.4	40.3	31.1	45.1	42.2	41.2
Clothing	24.2	35.8	39.8	34.1	20.3	29.4
Metal	27.3	20.9	25.2	15.9	21.9	13.7
No. of cases mentioning gifts	16	34	44	35	18	24

83 *Aspects of Folk Life in Europe*, pp. 172, 177, 210. The later spate of Valentine cards, and postcards of matrimony maps, illustrate the communication of love by literate means. *Ibid.* pp. 149-50; Bloxham and Picken, *Love and Marriage*, pp. 22-3; Bradford ed., *Roses are Red*.

84 It is perhaps worth noting that book ownership and literacy generally were increasing in Kent in the later sixteenth century. See P. Clark, 'The ownership of books in England, 1560-1640: the example of some Kentish townfolk', in L. Stone ed., *Schooling and Society* (Baltimore, 1976), pp. 95-111.

85 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/2, f. 33, *Savye v. Philpott* (1542).

86 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/15, f. 209-v., *Smyth v. Grey* (1567).

Ascertaining their economic values over time was seldom possible where non-monetary gifts were concerned. Occasionally the value of various goods, particularly garments, was recorded, although sometimes only the total cost of presumably different items of apparel was stated.<sup>87</sup> As regards the value of monetary gifts, which was usually specified, the amount given ranged widely from pennies and groats at the lowest end of the scale, to the considerable sum offered by the widow Elizabeth Godfrey at the other extreme. Offering John Smyth a bag of gold containing approximately 100 marks, she poured out the contents and required him to take it, or as much of it as he would.<sup>88</sup>

It has been said that the giving and acceptance of a gift was more important than the value.<sup>89</sup> In some societies, the value of a gift might indicate the seriousness of intention, while in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Switzerland, the worth of a coin given as a love token was apparently insignificant, but its possession was recognized as proof of a promise.<sup>90</sup> To a certain extent, the importance of economic value was evidently a matter of context, dependent, not least, upon the wealth and status of the parties, and the occasion of giving. Often it was gold, rather than silver, which was given, most typically (as previously shown), worth ten shillings. Where more than one coin was given at any one time, the analysis relied upon the combined face value, or stated value, of the gift, since any kind of estimation was complicated by monetary factors and foreign currencies. Joanne Marchant openly professed her own ignorance in identifying particular coins. She deposed that at the time she contracted matrimony with Philip Joyce, he gave her a piece of gold, 'but wither it wer an angel or a royall she remembreth not saying she is not wel skyled in gold, and before that tyme, she received of him an angell also gladly'.<sup>91</sup>

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87 E. g. C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, ff. 85v.-6, *Lyon v. Cole* (1560); MS. X/10/16, f. 300, *Hannyng v. Knowler* (1577).

88 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/12, f. 44v., *Smyth v. Godfrey* (1564).

89 Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, p. 31.

90 *Aspects of Folk Life in Europe*, p. 185.

91 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/12, f. 286v., *Joyce v. Marchant* (1566).

**Table 2.3. Total Face Value (in Shillings) of Monetary Gifts and Tokens by Decade 1542-1600, Minima and (Maxima)**

	1542-50	1551-60	1561-70	1571-80	1581-90	1591-00
0-1	3	5	4	9	3	2
1-5	2	3	1	2(3)	6(7)	3
5-10	3	6	2(4)	3(5)	3(4)	2
10+	4	10(11)	15(21)	18	11	9

The changing distribution in the value of monetary gifts shown in table 2.3, illustrates the increase of money payments at the top end of the scale, perhaps indicating some attempt to keep pace with monetary inflation, whilst the survival of gifts valued at less than a shilling, might suggest the increasingly symbolic nature of some payments.

The results of the analysis suggest some sensitivity in the process of marriage, even at the level of symbolic representation through the giving of gifts and tokens, to economic change. Arguably, in some cases, inflation increased the self-consciousness of gift-giving and, by implication, of matrimonial negotiation. The concept of a 'better gift' is really only meaningful in context, but the case of *Launsfeld v. Austen*<sup>92</sup> illustrates how individuals might reconsider the nature and value of their gifts according to a variety of circumstances. Robert Launsfeld sought the goodwill of Anne Austen's parents, and after Anne's own refusal, he said to her, 'yf yow cannot so doo let me have such things as yow have of mine and god spede yow well'. Followed closely by her mother and her two sisters she thereupon went to fetch the handkerchief or napkin which she had of his. Her mother, meanwhile, counselled her to have him, for he was an honest man, saying further, 'thou mayest well have a rytcher but never a more gentler fellow'. Returning into the kitchen, she told her husband that Anne could find it in her heart to keep the handkerchief for longer. He warned that marriage was not for a day or two but forever, and bade her to advise her well. Hearing what was said, Robert Launsfeld added that 'yf she could keep totche, she should have a better gift', and taking a piece of gold of ten shillings from his purse, he took Anne about the neck and kissed her, saying that he gave her that piece of gold in the way of marriage, which 'she gentilly receyved *without* any aunswer'.

### Gifts As Language

92 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/12, ff. 151-2, *Launsfeld v. Austen* (1565).

The versatility in the nature of the gift indicates that the gift or token alone was not the only vehicle of meaning. Interpretation was complex, and was coloured by the timing and ceremonial of giving, the intention, and understanding of both parties. It has been claimed that strong feelings were believed to have exceptional powers; that the intention of the giver could affect the binding force of the gift.<sup>93</sup> Elsewhere it is carefully stated that 'a token required an agreement that a gift at a particular point would signify part of a binding marriage contract. It is therefore in the context of the careful establishment of a contract that gifts became tokens'.<sup>94</sup> Not only then, was the gift itself to be considered, but the *occasions* or stages in the marriage transaction might determine its significance, this in turn being modified by the nature of the short-term *strategy* employed by the giver or the receiver. Just as marriage itself was a complex transaction with a multiplicity of economic, social, and political implications, so the giving of gifts and tokens reflected that complexity. As the marriage progressed along a line from courtship to church wedding, passing through various more or less clearly defined stages, so gifts and tokens marked that progression or served to confirm, accelerate, or terminate the developing relationship. They provided a language to express the actual or desired condition of negotiations which, at the same time, indicated to family, kin, and community, that crucial stages in the economic, social and political transaction had been reached. But as well as being expressive they might also be constraining, acting progressively to limit the freedom of action of the partners. The language of gifts and tokens was, however, not a simple, direct, symbolic language but was capable of some subtlety, existing alongside a language of gestures, since even the manner in which giving and receiving was done might alter the significance of the gift, and might be further clarified by some accompanying speech. Such a language possessed a highly versatile or flexible symbolism, whose versatility and flexibility, may arguably be seen to be ideally suited to the essential ambiguity of the negotiations.

### **The Context Of Giving**

In the case *Packenam v. Johnson alias Gybs*, Anne Johnson alias Gybs confessed to having made a conditional contract with Arthur Packenam, and to having received a purse and a pair of gloves from him, giving him a handkerchief in return. She maintained however, that 'all was given and received before the

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93 Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, p. 33; albeit unsubstantiated.

94 Rushton, 'The testament of gifts', pp. 26-7.

words aforesaid and therefore not in the way of marriage'.<sup>95</sup> Such statements implicitly recognize that gift-giving articulated phases in the development of marriage, weighted appropriately with different emotional connotations. Disputes could arise where the parties disagreed in their perception of how far the matrimonial communications had progressed. Attempting to identify the stages reached in the establishment of a marriage is evidently problematic, not least because of the wide range of formality and expression in the occasion of betrothal. While it would be impossible to demarcate the stages and timing precisely, it may be assumed that there was an underlying procedural pattern (however vague, or loosely interpreted) as the stages of courtship, exemplified in the seventeenth-century account of Henry Best of Elmswell might also suggest.<sup>96</sup>

In this chapter, the *occasion* within which gifts and tokens were given, is defined as the socially identified structure which progresses from a stage of early courtship, to one of pre-betrothal communications of love and marriage, through to a stage of more formal betrothal, and finally to a post-contractual period. The progression towards the church wedding, (performed before the public congregation and also accompanied by tokens and symbols), is regarded as a development through a number of stages which often shade imperceptibly into one another. What the giving of gifts and tokens may be seen to do, is conduct the parties through these vulnerable times. All the occasions might be initiated or confirmed by the giving of objects. Complimentary 'fire gifts', and 'fayrings', and the making of certain kinds of exchanges, loans, and reparations, suggest relationships located in the preliminary stage of generalized sympathy. Ralph Ryeley's suit for marriage, on the other hand, had allegedly progressed further. He and Jone Pitcher were asked by her brother John to repeat the contract which they had made. Seeing the gold angel which Ryeley had formerly delivered to her, he said to his sister, 'let us all see you deliver it'. She consequently delivered it back to him, they promised themselves to each other and kissed, and Ryeley once again gave her the coin.<sup>97</sup> Clearly, the token had passed between them on a previous occasion. Although early promises of marriage are not easily distinguishable from the stage of betrothal, the contractual nature involved in the giving of the token was, at times, made explicit. Upon the conclusion of the contract, John Wanderton gave Agnes Wyld a ring, saying, 'take this as a token

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95 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, ff. 255v. 6 (1569?).

96 Woodward ed., *Henry Best*, pp. 122-3. The later, nineteenth-century maps of matrimony would also seem to illustrate the course of love, betrothal, and marriage, representing the process pictorially as a narrative. E.g. *Aspects of Folklife in Europe*, p. 158; Bradford ed., *Roses are Red*.

97 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/18, ff. 276v.-8, *Ryeley v. Pitcher* (1580).

that you have confessed and I the like to you, you to be my wife and I to be your husband if god permytt us life. She received it thankfully. They kissed eache the other and drank each to the other', Wanderton asking those present to bear witness.<sup>98</sup> In a similar fashion, at the making of a contract between John Atkinson and Helen Wilbore, he gave her 'apon this promise or contract a pece of gold, for shutting up of the bargayn as he said', which was given 'in token of the contract'.<sup>99</sup> Deponents testified also to gifts being given after the establishment of a contract, but did not necessarily indicate the interval. John Alderstone saw Nicholas Fookes give a service book, articles of clothing, and other things to Mary Lowes, which were given a 'good space after' the occasion when they had contracted themselves and acknowledged that contract made between them.<sup>100</sup>

While the meaning of a gift or token can be identified in some measure by reference to occasion, it can also be interpreted in a variety of ways according to the nature of the short-term *strategy* employed by the parties. It is clear from the matrimony cases that gift-giving was important at all kinds of levels. Although at one level it may have been seen and claimed to be non-matrimonial, the circumstances could be exploited, transformed, or retrospectively defined. The cases reveal that the act of giving was a crucial rite of marriage, enacted at various stages, which would progressively have become more clearly defined in meaning, and sexual-matrimonial obligation. As the matrimonial context became established, and more structured by occasion, the ambiguity was likely to decrease, and the problematic notion of 'fre gift' less possible to sustain, although defendants might insist that a contract had been involuntarily entered into, and that the gift subsequently received remained purely a 'mere gift', and not binding in conscience. Hence, Alice Cotton admitted that 'she had a payer of hose of Thomas Baxter worth 12*d.* and a payer of shoes worth 10*d.* being pumpes, which she received after the pretenced contract was made but not in waie of marriage, but of mere gifte'.<sup>101</sup>

In seeking to examine the variety of circumstances in which gift-giving occurred, all the possible alternatives to a matrimonial strategy were considered, whether stated, or implied. The analysis, therefore, explores the range of alleged intention and of plausible symbolic strategies. Even in cases where the intention was undeclared, or where conflicting claims do not survive, it was possible to interpret the meaning of unspoken actions such as putting the ring on the finger,

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98 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/20, f. 176, *Wanderton v. Wyld* (1583).

99 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/9, ff. 50, 51v., 53, *Wilbore v. Atkinson?* (1563?).

100 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/1, f. 215-v., *Fookes v. Lowes* (1588).

101 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/17, f. 152v., *Baxter v. Cotton* (1574).

or the intimate exchange of gifts, and similarly, to consider the plausibility of individual, undisputed statements. Some partners provided reasons for bestowing gifts which were presumably, not intended to be matrimonial. In *Badcock v. Saunders*, William Saunders deposed that 'he gave her (Jane Badcock) a pair of gloves and some other small trifles upon good will to her as he had to all others',<sup>102</sup> and Juliane Marden maintained that the silver ring which Tusnothe sent to her at New Year time, was sent simply as a New Year gift.<sup>103</sup> A distinction also needs to be made between strategies which were designed to promote the development of a relationship towards a *specific* occasion, or which were tied to a specific occasion (meaning those which were propositional, promising, contractual, nuptial, implicitly matrimonial, sexual-matrimonial, or involving the use of intermediaries) and those which, when accompanied by certain words and ceremonial, might also take on the character of having a specific occasional purpose, but which might also occur at *all* occasions and stages, for the *promotion, development, maintenance, and termination* of a relationship.

### The Strategies Explored: Some Case Studies

The giving of gifts and tokens for the purpose of developing a relationship is evident in *Marche v. Cobbe*. Agnes Cobbe reported how Henry Marche came to see her in the parish of Saltwood, and calling her to the door, he put into her hand an old gold royal which she kept until he came again with his three 'frindes'. She delivered back the piece of gold, which he did 'throwe downe in thentrye', and an old woman who was present picked it up and brought it to her again. About a fortnight later, at a time when he was 'very desyerouse and much comoned *with* hir to have hir to consent to marry', he forced her to take two old royals of old gold, and a fortnight after, he came to her again, and she offered him his said three pieces of gold and 'told him that she wold not have him nor anie of his gold'.<sup>104</sup>

The case suggests a structured pattern to Henry Marche's courtship, his apparent frustration, and the active solicitation for marriage by an act of challenge to force the issue. His attempt to promote his suit, and the proposition he makes are rejected, with the return of the coins conveying her answer that the relationship should be ended.

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102 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/12, f. 297 (1566).

103 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/12, f. 182-v., *Tusnothe v. Marden* (1565).

104 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/12, ff. 103v.-4 (1564).

The immediate refusal to accept an offer of gifts, or the subsequent return of gifts, whether considered or provoked, are features commonly shared with several other cases.<sup>105</sup> Clearly, the decision may be made due to various pressures, returned simply upon further reflection, or in order to break from one another. Alice Fryer, having received an angel noble sent from Richard Rolf by goodman Weston, claimed that at such time when they 'had further *communication* of mariage and there brake of because (she) cold not as she saith fynd in her hart to love hym', she gave the angel back to him, saying 'that she was not mynded to have hym'.<sup>106</sup> It was also reported that sundry tokens had passed between Helen Throwley and Thomas Mayhewe, such as sixpenny pieces, a little silver crucifix and a 'jeomey of silver', and that 'apon some falling out between them, the tokens of each were restored'.<sup>107</sup> The cases illustrate the implicit conditionality often attached to gifts and tokens, and the obligation to return the gifts of undesirable partners. It was said that Jane Bedford, under a citation, was required to take an oath that she was clear from Oliver Symons, for 'the discharge of their conscience'. Her father, Simon Gold of Sittingbourne answered, 'she shall not appear, for it is a naughty corte', but was told that her appearance before the spiritual judge was mandatory, she having certain tokens of Oliver's, namely 'a bracelet, a gold ring and other things which she must restore'.<sup>108</sup> Obligation and the return of the gift are here intimately tied to matters of conscience. The public nature of the request dramatizes the way in which the token is bound up with aspects of common fame and reputation. Legal provision was made for the recovery of gifts, and the plaintiff might also be free of costs.<sup>109</sup> According to Swinburne, the civil laws of England recognized that, if a marriage did not proceed, whatever was received 'in consideration of future marriage', was to be either wholly restored or wholly retained, 'according to the variety of the covenants and conditions concluded upon between the parties'.<sup>110</sup> In allowing this, the law tacitly acknowledged the negotiable potential of gifts and tokens in the making, and breaking of marriage. Returning gifts may have been the most honourable and guarded policy, but the question of how long they might be kept

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105 See also Rushton, 'The testament of gifts', p. 28; Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, pp. 32-3.

106 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/9, f. 28, *Rolf v. Fryer* (1563).

107 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/12, ff. 173, 175-6, *Mayhewe v. Throwley* (1565).

108 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/6, ff. 200v.-1, *Symons v. Bedford* (1558).

109 Houlbrooke, *Church Courts*, p. 60.

110 Swinburne, *Treatise of Spousals*, pp. 229-31.



before being returned, was presumably of significance too, since the timing of the action might effectively transform its apparently reversible nature.<sup>111</sup>

The strategic use of gifts in breaking relations is further suggested, albeit under different circumstances, in Marcia Mace's deposition.<sup>112</sup> The day after Valentine fair, Joan Swift paid Marcia fourpence in order to bring Thomas Wood to Faversham. When he came, they were 'eache frendlie and mutuallie conferring', but, after his departure, Swift said she had a sow and pigs 'which she wold give to (him) condiconallie that he wold forsake her. This deponent saying to her that she was light of love to sell hym awaie so. Swift saying agen that she might have a better then he'. The case is distinctly different from those where gifts received were offered back, given back, or demanded back, since there is nothing to indicate that the livestock originally belonged to Thomas Wood. Nevertheless, Joan's conditional offer of a female pig, (with its procreative associations), was apparently intended to compensate for her change of mind, due perhaps to pressure of circumstances (since they were allegedly unable to secure the goodwill of friends) or to the desire for 'worldly gayne' with some other suitor, and what may have been perceived as a bribe, may have been experienced by her as an attempt to repair her 'conscience'.

Some gifts were ostensibly given unconditionally, or were otherwise bestowed for purposes of remembrance, goodwill, or reciprocation, serving to maintain a relationship and confirm positive sentiments. The short-term strategy of reassurance was employed at all stages in matrimonial development. As a conciliatory device, gift-giving regulated other aspects of social and marital relations too, and in a case of divorce or separation from board and bed instigated by Mary Gawnte alias Tresse of Canterbury against her husband, Walter, the sending of a token was interpreted as just such a gesture of reconciliation.<sup>113</sup> Several witnesses deposed that the husband Walter Tresse was reputed to be a violent, incontinent, 'very lewd malicious frayle quarellinge and inconstant fellowe even a mad man in conditions', while his wife was taken to be 'honest and chaste', and 'did behave herselfe lovingely toward him as a woman ought to doo unto her husband'. She was seen by some to be 'soe beaten about the face', and it was believed that he had wounded her with a dagger, and poisoned her. Their neighbour Jane Newton heard him say many times since he got out of prison 'that he would cut his wives throt and that he would slyt her nose and

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11 Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, pp. 5-8.

112 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/16, ff. 56-8, *Wood v. Swift* (1575).

113 C.C.A.L., MS. Y/3/14, f. 47v. ; X/11/6, ff. 198v.-201, 215-17, 220v.-1v., 223-4, 227v.-8, 229v.-30, *Tresse v. Tresse* (1593-4).

marke her for a whore and when he was toward any trouble he would comonly say that he would be avenged upon his wifes blood', threatening 'that he would kill his said wife and that he would not be contented with her life alone without the losse and damnation of her soul'. Jane's husband Thomas disclosed similar threats, and was told by Mary Tresse 'that she hath bene afrayd at night when she hath gone to bed that she would not live untill morning for she hath said that he . . . hath hanged a sword by his bedside which she hath feared he would have killed her withall'. The marriage had evidently deteriorated since the period of Walter's imprisonment in Canterbury castle, but at the time, it was reported that he sent her 'a portigue for a token' (being a gold coin from Portugal), with protestations of 'great kindnes unto her', 'very earnestly requesting' her to go to him. As a conciliatory strategy, the sending of the token served its function. Although Mary appeared to Thomas Newton 'to be very fearefull', she was finally persuaded to go there accompanied, only, it seems, to find herself verbally and physically abused. Walter Tresse moreover was reputed to have seduced the wife of Furner, the keeper of the castle. On one occasion, after showing Thomas Newton Furner's wife's wedding ring, he declared that Newton 'had spoiled his sporte in coming to him at that time', and several other times he praised her as 'a good lustye wench'. In these circumstances the ring symbolized Tresse's control over Furner's wife, as he boasted his intention to seduce and his sexual prowess.

It would be possible, but unnecessary, to illustrate each of the strategies individually. What is more important is the general impression of the range of options and motives, and the limits of plausibility. The complexity of interpretation meant that other kinds of social and economic relations could be transformed and exploited within a matrimonial context. Acceptance of a gift, in the widest possible sense, might place a constraint on the person receiving it, and create a relationship of indebtedness of a moral, emotional, or economic kind. Although the development of matrimony possessed the latency of an increasing sense of obligation, the precise nature of that obligation could constantly be qualified. The aforementioned case of *Ottringham v. Grigge* may be seen to demonstrate, in an exaggerated way, the possible coexistence of different degrees of obligation. The form of coercion shown here must surely be accounted an extraordinary one, but while Katherine Grigge's deposition, which is the only surviving evidence, describes exceptional circumstances, and cannot easily be generalized to infer how economic relations underlay others, it does nevertheless illustrate the ambiguity in the interpretation of the gift whether as a monetary transaction, purchase, loan, pledge or whatever. It also suggests the coercive consequences of any such transaction, dependent upon timing, manner, and

intention. Katherine, aggrieved at William Ottringham's inconstancy at the giving of an orange to another maid, 'shaked hym of', but he continued to bestow gifts on her. Furthermore he found means to have her arrested and put under the custody of the keeper of Westgate in Canterbury, presumably threatening a charge of debt. Katherine alleged that it was for a flemish angel which he would have given to her, and which she had refused to take. He had said that if she would not have it, that then her father should, and upon delivering it to her, she in turn delivered it to her father. While he was with her, he said that 'she shuld lye till she did rott enforceng her to make promise of marriage unto hym and compelling her to swere . . . that she shuld never marry never *with* none but hym. And (she) fearing and doubting her imprisonment ther and thinconvenience that might follow therof and saying that she wold put her will to godds will and his and that she shuld not be the first that shuld be cast away, she contracted herself to him'.<sup>114</sup>

### **The Meaning Of Gifts**

The conclusion to be drawn from the cases cited seems to be that the meaning of the gift, and its significance, must be located in the circumstances of giving, and in the intention, whether stated or implied, and in the measures taken. Two complementary sets of analyses were therefore carried out, to consider the *occasion* and *strategy* within each case where gifts and tokens were mentioned (see Tables 2.4 and 2.5). Some degree of clustering was shown, with gifts of clothing and leather dominant in the preliminary stages, and associated with strategies of early courting and friendship. They were also prominent when wedding preparations were being made, and the relationship had moved beyond that of promise and betrothal. More significant were those stages immediately prior to, and focused upon, betrothal, where the element of contract is evident. With few exceptions which involved the giving of rings, it was customary, at least within the diocese of Canterbury, to give money. The tolerance and flexibility in the ritual would appear to be least marked at such times, as if the progression through the stages of marriage is a movement from personal gifts to financial arrangement, with the money token imitating the economic aspect, and resembling the token payments and exchanges of business transactions.<sup>115</sup> However, within that critical threshold midway between social and personal

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114 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/15, ff. 161v.-2v.

115 For earnest money in the North Riding, see Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, p. 29.

familiarity, and promises of marriage, all kinds of exchanges were made, and with various gifts and tokens bestowed directly, or sent from one party to another. Perhaps the most interesting conclusion of all reflects the ambiguity of indeterminate negotiation, for individual items were never exclusively concerned with any specific occasion or strategy, but were disposed instead throughout all stages leading to marriage, and the entire range of strategies employed.

**Table 2.4. Kinds of Gifts and Tokens Given on Specific Occasions, 1542-1602**

Occasion	Money	Clothing	Metal	Written	Animals	Household
Stage 1: Early	9	19	6	1	1	1
Stage 1 2:	53	37	36	5	5	3
Stage 2: Pre-betrothal	45	28	26	4	4	0
Stage 2 3	19	4	7	0	1	1
Stage 3: Betrothal	18	0	1	0	0	0
Stage 3 4	1	0	0	0	0	0
Stage 4: Post-betrothal	6	17	9	1	0	0

**Table 2.5. Kinds of Gifts and Tokens Given According to Specific Strategies**

Strategy	Money	Clothing	Metal	Written	Animals	Household
courtship	16	22	14	1	0	3
proxy	26	13	17	3	4	0
goodwill to marriage	9	7	2	1	0	0
proposition to marriage	4	1	0	0	0	0
promise of marriage	27	8	11	0	2	0
matrimony/ contractual	21	1	4	0	0	0
preparing wedding	0	10	5	0	0	1
post-contract	6	12	7	1	2	1
implied matrimony	35	20	26	3	1	3
sexual/ matrimony	6	2	3	1	0	0
sexual	3	1	2	0	0	0
complimentary	6	17	5	0	0	0
borrow lend	3	1	0	1	0	1
end/forsake	0	2	0	1	1	0
other	1	2	0	0	1	0
end defensively	0	0	1	0	0	0
competing	0	0	1	0	0	0
goodwill	5	2	3	1	0	0
make good damage	0	0	1	0	0	0
servant solidarity	0	1	1	0	0	0
friendship						
without condition	0	1	1	0	0	0
personal keepsake to remember	6	2	3	0	0	0
to buy something	1	0	0	0	0	0

Note: The number of instances cited as occasions and strategies has been restricted to those where identification of motive was possible.

It also seems to be the case that the manner of giving and receiving further elaborated the complexity. Honest, or surreptitious conduct, the use of intermediaries, the behaviour of the giver, and the emotional response of the person receiving the gift, even a simple blush, might alter the significance. There are several cases of gifts which were allegedly snatched, 'plucked', deliberately left behind, or taken under pressure of family and kin. Lucy Newenden, alias Terenden, deposed that, when Michael Small was at her house in Smarden, the gentleman from London who accompanied him:

'By force tooke (her) wedding rynge of gold worth 24 shillings or thereabouts from her fynger, sayenge he wold see the posy, and when he had it he gave it to Mychaell Small, and Small kept that rynge, and thereupon the gentleman tooke of two small rynges from Mychaell Smalls fyngers and cast them uppon the table, the one with a white stone

in it worth 8 shillings and not above, and the other a litle hope rynge of gold worth 2 shillings and not above *which* said two rings for that Mychaell Small wold not let her have her own ring again, she took from the table sayeng she wold keep them until she had her owne ringes to quytt the said Mychaell Small taking away of her ringe, and not in token of any mariage. And as for the other things mentioned in the schedule, she saith that Mychaell Small left them in her house whether she wold or no'.<sup>116</sup>

The ceremonial of giving and the form of words which might accompany such acts, could elucidate the meaning of particular transactions. Certain phrases were repeatedly used: in token of contract, or marriage, in sign of matrimony, by way of marriage, in token of goodwill for marriage, in consideration of marriage, upon that promise, in token of goodwill, by freegift, for a fayring, freely, or for the love that hath been between you and me. In the unusual case of *Young v. Woolcomber*, the handing over of Michael Woolcomber's thirteen-year-old daughter to Alice Young was done with a kind of conceit which echoed the language of token giving. About Maytide, Alice and her mother Magdalene of Northgate, Canterbury, were among those invited to dinner at his home in Whitstable. It was said that he bade Alice's guests welcome, and drank to her, calling her the goodwife of the house, and Magdalene 'mother'. Although Alice was perhaps cautious in her initial reply, saying 'No not soe to hastie fire will spill the malte', it seems that, after lodging there, they gave each other their hands, their faith and troth, and in the presence of the witnesses, he delivered his daughter to her using the words, 'here I deliver you my childe as francke and free as god gave her to me'.<sup>117</sup>

Other forms of conduct were capable of altering the meaning of the gift. A treatise published early in the eighteenth century maintained that if a man had a kiss from his betrothed, he could recover at most half of his gifts to her, but 'the female is more favored, for whatsoever she gave, were there kissing or no kissing in the case, she may demand and have all again'.<sup>118</sup> Swinburne, however, established that the rules concerning kissing and the recovery of gifts applied only to Italians and Spaniards who regarded kissing as tantamount to loss of virginity, and that in England, as in France, civil law apparently took no account

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116 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/2, ff. 160v.-1, *Small v. Newenden and Terenden* (1586-7).

117 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/ 6, ff. 167-9v. (1593).

118 Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, p. 51; Strutt, *Manners, Customs, Arms, Habits*, iii. pp. 151-8.

of kissing.<sup>119</sup> But whatever its legal status, such conduct could be interpreted in the eyes of the participants as some kind of pledge.

While it has been argued that occasion, strategy, and the manner of giving and receiving, might determine or modify the significance of gift and token, they would seem nonetheless to possess an individual symbolic dimension. On the one hand, gifts could have recognized symbolic value, but they could also be transformed within particular contexts to take on specific meanings, and the form of symbols themselves was also capable of adaptation. The problem is that of trying to ascertain the degree of self-consciousness and symbolic awareness which people had, and the extent to which particular gifts were selected to suit the event, the circumstances, and character of those involved. It is likely that a host of superstitions surrounded such gifts, and their properties, considering the evidence for belief in the efficacy, and mechanistic nature of magic, and the role of village wizards and peddlers who distributed love magic and other popular products.<sup>120</sup> Indeed, the quasi-magical dimension of gift-giving cannot be ignored, since the giving of objects arguably served to symbolize and effect stages in marriage. The potential exists for gifts and tokens to take on the character of charms,<sup>121</sup> with superstitions known particularly to have been associated with the ring. Its connotations of pledge, and the seeming constraint imposed by its circularity, gave it a powerful symbolic content,<sup>122</sup> and more specifically, the possible symbolism of the gemstone, of gimmel rings symbolically shared, and of posy rings, enhanced the significance.<sup>123</sup> In token of marriage, Mary Porredge of Ospringe sent John Colyer 'a weddinge ring with this pousy in yt viz yow have my harte till deathe departe'.<sup>124</sup> The sentimental and superstitious quality of such inscriptions found elsewhere, suggests that posy rings might be bequeathed later on, but were otherwise usually intended to be

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119 Swinburne, *Treatise of Spousals*, pp. 229-31.

120 K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century England* (first pub. 1971, ppbk. edn., Harmondsworth, 1973, repr. 1980), pp. 277-9; Thompson ed., *Samuel Pepys' Penny Merriments*, pp. 130-1; *Aspects of Folk Life in Europe*, pp. 19-23, 245, and *passim*.

121 E.g. Baker, *Love and Marriage*, pp. 15-18; Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, p. 33.

122 Swinburne, *Treatise of Spousals*, pp. 207-8; Burn, *The Ecclesiastical Law*, ii. 479; Van Gennep, *Rites of Passage*, p. 134; Roper, "Going to church and street", p. 81. For sexual symbolism in the rite of bestowing the ring, see Segalen, *Love and Power*, p. 27.

123 Bloxham and Picken, *Love and Marriage*, pp. 60-5; Evans, *English Posies*, *passim*; Bury, *Introduction to Rings*, pp. 16, 33.

124 C.C.A.L., MS. J/J2 18, *Colyer v. Porredge* (1596-7).

kept and worn, whether perhaps as a pledge, or as a token of remembrance, as in the following messages: 'I am a love token: do not give me away', 'A gadge to love, not to remove', and 'Weare this for a remembrance'.<sup>125</sup> The evidence from wills indicates that some wedding rings were bequeathed by women to their daughters or other relatives. The widow Johane Alarde of Wye, for example, left her 'hoop of gold' which was her wedding ring to her sister.<sup>126</sup>

Inscriptions, love motifs, symbolic designs and imagery could identify the meaning of the gift, so that even utilitarian objects possessed a symbolic repertoire.<sup>127</sup> In Europe, engraving initials on a coin, sticking a coin on to a ring, or decorating caskets, bonnet boxes, money boxes and bags, with traditional motifs,<sup>128</sup> were ways of transforming the role of the gift from a practical to amatory level, suggesting also its reliquary function. It is impossible to know how common the practice was of personally crafting gifts. Joan Parker admitted that William Monday 'delivered her tenne pens to by napkins wherwith she bought him two napkins and market them and delivered them to him'.<sup>129</sup> She claimed it was 'not in tokyn or favour of any matrimonie', but her action would presumably have been interpreted as indicative of intimacy. In another case it was deposed that, contained within the letter sent by Thomasyn Lee of Canterbury to Thomas Sething at Sandwich, was 'a litill handkercher wrought *with* black works, and he sent to hir agayn a silk lace or point *with* a true love knot...'<sup>130</sup>

Expressions of intimacy and sexuality might also be found in particular items of clothing such as the garters and hose, with their associative colours,<sup>131</sup> and an entire array of clothing might suggest the change of identity with marriage. The giving of gloves, perhaps an embodiment of handfast or the challenge of the gauntlet, and the gift of knives, which possibly evoked the sexual symbolism of cutting and rupturing or that of domestic labour, were among those objects which also had a decorative function and could serve as accoutrements in wedding attire.<sup>132</sup> It is conceivable that certain spices such as

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125 Evans, *English Posies*, pp. 2-3, 106; Bury, *Introduction to Rings*, p. 25.

126 PRC 17/21/110v.-12 (15 Oct 1536). Also, e.g. PRC 17/43/192v. (will of Alice Mantell, widow, of Wye, 28 Mar. 1576).

127 See also e.g. Bloxham and Picken, *Love and Marriage*, pp. 32-41, 44-9; Bury, *Introduction to Sentimental Jewellery*, pp. 15-16, 28; *Aspects of Folk Life in Europe*, pp. 149-50, for a later vogue.

128 *Aspects of Folk Life in Europe*, e.g. pp. 172, 177, 185.

129 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/3, f. 19, *Monday v. Parker* (1546).

130 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/12, ff. 173v.-4v., *Lee v. Sething* (1565).

131 Also Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, p. 301.

132 Bloxham and Picken, *Love and Marriage*, pp. 43, 76-82.



ginger were thought to be aphrodisiacs, that other foodstuffs like oranges represented fertility, <sup>133</sup> and that food gifts were generally considered an important aspect of ritualized festive exchange. Highly personalized gifts were obvious symbols of affection and promise, and at times, the personal nature of giving was related to previous marriages. The widow, Joan Bridger, who was found to have a silver goblet belonging to William Nightingall, recalled the time when he went to her house and 'sitting at table dryncking, he having a goblet of sylver in his hand *which* he brought with him drank to her saying this goblet was a token betwixt me and my first wife and I do drinke to you in the same on condicon you shalbe my wife. She answered that she wold pledge hym, but not upon any such condicon'.<sup>134</sup> Particular gifts may also have been used at other life-cycle events, but the circulation upon remarriage presumably betokened the transfer of sentiment and expectations to the new spouse, although some prospective brides have been wary of accepting such recycled gifts. The same day after the making of the contract between the widower George Bell and the widow Juliane Mason, he gave her ten pieces of linen, a cap and a hat, a new waistcoat and a cassock, which cassock, it was said, 'she would not permit to be brought into her house for fear it was Bell's wife's, who died of the plague'.<sup>135</sup>

As for the giving of household goods, one manner of interpretation, would be to regard it as anticipating and symbolizing the transfer of property at marriage and, at the same time, alluding to domestic relations and the setting up of a household, although it would seem that, in the diocese of Canterbury at least, such objects were rarely incorporated into the symbolism. Where monetary gifts were concerned, their associations with payment, purchasing power, and possibly dowry and jointure, may be perceived as economic, and might express the economic status of the parties involved, but they also possessed explicit symbolic value when 'broken', 'bowed', or 'bent'. Witnesses reported that Thomas Kennet gave Bennet Dunnye a 6*d.* piece, 'bendying yt once, as a tooken and pledge of the bargin and promis passed betwene them'.<sup>136</sup> Likewise, at such time when William Warde and Catherine Tench contracted themselves, he did 'brake (a) peece of gould a sunder and gave her one halfe and kepte the other himselfe'.<sup>137</sup> There are various other references to coins which, like gimmel rings, were

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133 *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

134 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/18, ff. 144-v., *Nightingall v. Bridger* (1579).

135 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/16, ff. 196-8, *Mason v. Bell* (1576).

136 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, ff. 183 -v., *Kennet v. Dunnye* (1570).

137 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/5, ff. 225-6v., *Warde v. Tench* (1598).

symbolically shared, and recalled the making of an indenture.<sup>138</sup> An interesting tension existed however between the real economic value of the gift bestowed and the symbolic nature, between the act of purchase on the one hand, and mutual promise on the other. Thomas Kennet would have given Bennet Dunnye a ten shilling piece of gold, '*which she would not receive, saying that a les pece should serve thoughe yt were but a penny*', and in another instance, after financial matters were satisfactorily negotiated, John Comb gave Anne Smyth a penny saying, '*take this it is as much to bynd up the bargain betwixt us as a thousand pound*'.<sup>139</sup> Attitudes to symbolic value, as opposed to economic worth were, in part, coloured by an idealistic view of marriage. That there was a desire to impress a person with wealth is seen in the case of *Awsten v. Rogers*, when William Awsten asked Marian Rogers '*if she wold have anye monye and wold have geven hyr some and offeryd hir hys purse and all that was in it, and she answered and said I will take you some monye of myne if you will and I will have none of yours and said further that she had rather to be at home and continue together with him in hys house than to have all the money that he had*'. Upon taking leave of each other, with a kiss she '*byd hym farwell and said that he shold have hyr harte whersoever he went and he lykewyse said the same to her*'.<sup>140</sup>

Money gifts exemplify the duality of real and symbolic value, and illustrate the flexibility of objects as exchanged items. While certain gifts could express a range of personal, domestic, and sexual relations, or have been associated with particular stages of courtship, many objects may have possessed a significance which is either now lost, or is difficult to recover, and whose symbolic status remains ambiguous. Returning to the case of *Ottringham v. Grigge*, and William's gift of the orange to Agnes, what is so perplexing is the precise significance of both the gift and its giving. The giving may have been intended as a generous one, a touching sentiment, or personal remembrance. If it was meant as a parting gift, it could also be understood as a keepsake or token of unending love. William's motives were ill-defined. The strategy to end a former relationship was complicated by his miscalculated remarks, in which he spoke in the present tense of his love for Agnes, yet expressed his love for Katherine, whom he was on his way to marry, in the past tense. In her eyes, the personification of the orange, and the sexual implications were apparent. For her,

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138 See also Rushton, 'The testament of gifts', p. 26 which suggests that the custom of bending was optional.

139 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/18, ff. 98-100v., *Smyth v. Comb* (1578).

140 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, ff. 187-v. (1567).

the distinction between 'hart' and 'body' was a false one. William's words and action, amounted to Agnes having his heart, his body, and all.<sup>141</sup>

If the ambiguity and the problem of ascertaining the significance of the orange is highlighted in this case, the giving of letters between parties, in other cases, could arguably become a statement of clarification. Jane Hardes, 'gentlewoman', testified that when William Alcocke was at her father's house in Upper Hardres, he 'importuned her . . . for her resolution as tuching maryadg to be had betwene them, signifieng further to (her) that yf she would not give him a resolute answeare he would set his love on some other and named both place and person whereunto (she) answeared him that she was contented therewith, with which her answeare the said William Alcocke (was) not contented but (desyred her) for an answeare in writing under (her) hand'.<sup>142</sup> In another case, the note which John Spayne had made under his own handwriting signifying that he was contracted, and given to Judith Symons, was later to be returned and burned. Frances Hicks or Higgess deposed that, at her request, he went to John Spayne with the message that she feared she could never have his friends' goodwill and that she might match herself well with another, entreating him to come to talk and, if he were contented, to end matters between them:

'And yf he could not come unto her that then he should signifie unto her by some pryvye token that he was contented to surcease and leave her the said Judyth to her further choyse *which* message (Hicks) forthwith *delivered* unto the said John Spayne whoe thereuppon willed (Hicks) to goe unto the said Judyth with this token that she the said Judyth had a note in writing which he willed her to send unto him, And soe (Hicks) with the same token went unto the said Judyth whoe delyvered a certeyne note unto (him) whereunto was subscribed the said John Spaynes name and the said Judyth Symons name which (Hicks) sawe taking in the same note and the contents of the same note were concerning matrimony betwene the said John Spaine and the said Judyth . . . *which* note (Hicks) burned as he sayth'.<sup>143</sup>

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141 See above p. 72.

142 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/3, f. 5v., *Alcocke v. Hardes* (1598); *ibid.*, MS. Y/3/2, f. 66.

143 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/5, f. 255, *Symons v. Spayne* (1598).

## Conclusion

Taken in its entirety the symbolism of gifts and tokens in the transaction of marriage may be seen to possess an important duality. The symbolic import of gifts and tokens might be most obviously experienced on clearly defined occasions when their significance corresponded with the purpose of the occasion. On the other hand, as has been seen, individual tokens might be given over the whole range of occasions leading to marriage, and it seems likely that the function of the symbolism in these non-specific instances was to provide a flexible language of initiation, promotion, development, confirmation, or termination of relations. The case of *Haffynden v. Awsten* illustrates contemporary awareness of this flexible symbolism. Constance Awsten alleged that James Haffynden offered 'to geve her a payer of gloves, whiche she in no wise wold receyve, James saying, Why Custaunce you may take them if it were of one that you never saw, And therapon she answering, and receaving the gloves said, I take them at yor handes as thoughe you were but a straunger towards me'.<sup>144</sup>

All transactions entered into by individuals or groups in the sixteenth century were multi-dimensional whether primarily economic, social, political, or religious in intention. The transaction that led to marriage was simply a special case, crucially involved, as it was, in the reproduction of the community. In seeking to incorporate the complexity and ambiguity of changing relationships and interests, it developed a language by means of which change might be expressed and accommodated. It has been suggested that the language was the versatile and deliberately ambiguous symbolic language of the giving of gifts and tokens within the structured progression from courtship to wedding. This language was part of the wider language of reciprocal exchange, of feasting, ceremonial, visiting, courtesy, and other contexts of gift-giving, and it was part of a range of elaborate processes which served also to enhance the value of important relationships and social institutions.<sup>145</sup> At the personal, familial, and community level, the giving of gifts and tokens, on closer examination, was a vital, sustained code of popular practice. As this chapter has mentioned, such exchanges were sometimes channelled through intermediaries and third parties. The next chapter argues that the use of such go-betweens, likewise, was a no less important and significant part of the making of marriage in the sixteenth century.

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144 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, ff. 165v.-6v. (1560-1).

145 For the wider notion of reciprocity in exchange, see also, Muldrew, 'Interpreting the market', *passim*.

## Appendix: Types Of Gifts And Tokens

### Money

angel <sup>1</sup>	flemish; gold; noble; old; old/15 shillings; quarter; of 10 shillings in gold
crown <sup>2</sup>	english; french; gold; half
ducat <sup>3</sup>	of gold
gold	angel of; bag of; crown of english/ french; ducat of; great piece of; pieces of; and silver; small pot of; tokens of; two shillings and sixpence of; five shillings of; ten shillings of; thirteen shillings and fourpence of; twenty shillings of
groat <sup>4</sup>	new; old; old/three pence
money	
money	amounts: two pence; three pence (bowed); four pence; six pence (bowed); ten pence; twelve pence; two shillings and six pence; three shillings; three shillings and ten pence; five shillings; six shillings and eight pence; twenty shillings; twenty-six shillings
penny	bent; silver
pistolet <sup>5</sup>	of six shillings
royal <sup>6</sup>	( <i>ryall</i> ): half; old; old/fifteen shillings; spurr(?)/fifteen shillings
silver	and gold; penny; Spanish; of two shillings and sixpence
sovereign <sup>7</sup>	( <i>sufferaine</i> ): half
teston <sup>8</sup>	
white	ten shillings of

### Clothing and Leather

apparel	
apron	of buffins <sup>9</sup>
calles (?)	
canvas	ell of
cap	coif <sup>10</sup>
cape	
cassock	of woollen cloth
christening smock	
cloth	gown; jerkin <sup>11</sup> linen
cotton	
facing of frock	
fringe	
garments	
garters	pair of
girdle	riband; silk
glove(s)	knit; pair of
gown	cloth; kirtle with sleeves; <sup>12</sup> wedding
handkerchief	
hat	felt; silk
heading	
hose	pair of

jerkin	cloth
kerchief	
kirtle	worsted - nether bodice for
lace	little penny; satin and silk; silk
linen	cloth; ell of white
napkin	
neckerchief	
partlet <sup>13</sup>	
petticoat	russet
point <sup>14</sup>	silken
purse	and all in it; of black velvet; of red sarcenet; of silk
raiment	
riband	girdle; silk
scarf	silk
shadow <sup>15</sup>	
shoes	pair of
sleeves	gown kirtle with; pair of
stockings	jersey
stomacher <sup>16</sup>	
waistcoat	
wedding	garments; gown

### **Metal Gifts And Trinkets**

bracelet	
button	enamelled; silver and gilt
crucifix	silver
eyes	of silver
goblet	silver
hooks	gilted; silver
knife	pair of knives
nutmeg	gilded
picktooth	silver
pin	silver
ring	bagguage; <sup>17</sup> copper; gimmall /gemmey of gold/jeomey of silver; <sup>18</sup> of gold of the value of a crown with a stone; hoope; <sup>19</sup> little hoope ring of silver; jet; with ruby; of silver; signet ring of gold; of silver and gilt; wedding
tokens	of gold (?)
whistle	silver

### **Written**

book
letter
note
prayer book
testament/ psalter

### **Animal and Foodstuffs**

bullocks  
cake        spice  
cattle  
cony  
fish  
ginger      raisin of  
nutmeg  
orange  
peas        bushel of  
pigeons  
sow and pigs  
strawberries basket of

### **Household Goods**

basin  
candlestick  
chamber pot  
chests  
coverlet  
ewer  
flockbed  
pot  
wood

### **Notes To Appendix**

1. English gold coin, originally called angel-noble and coined in the reigns of Edward IV-Charles I, varying in value between 6s. 8*d.* and 10s. In 1552 it was worth 10s.
2. English crown worth 5*s.*, issued in 1551.
3. Gold coin of varying value. In 1387 said to be half an English noble, and later worth 7*s.* 6*d.* Loosely refers to a piece of gold.
4. 4*d.* Old groat could be 5*d.*
5. Foreign gold coin. In sixteenth century valued between 5*s.* 10*d.* and 6*s.* 8*d.*
6. Gold coin, originally 10*s.* In 1526, 11*s.* 3*d.*, and in 1556, 12*s.*
7. Gold coin, minted in Henry VII's reign at 22*s.* 6*d.* In 1542 was the greatest English coin, and worth 4  $\frac{1}{2}$  crowns, but by 1591, worth only 10*s.*
8. In English, first applied to a shilling of Henry VII's reign. Sank from 12*d.* in 1543 successively to 10*d.*, 9*d.*, and 6*d.*, and recalled in 1548. Said to be 6*d.* in 1577. Counterfeit testons which remained in circulation were rated even lower at 4  $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* and 2  $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* in 1560, their red colour described as a 'blushe for shame'.
9. A coarse cloth in use for the gowns of the middle class in Elizabeth I's time, or a garment of that material.
10. Close cap covering top, back and sides of head.
11. Sleeveless jacket.

12. Woman's gown or outer petticoat, alternatively a man's tunic or cloak.
13. Worn about the neck or upper chest, originally a neckerchief of linen, otherwise a collar or ruff for women.
14. Piece of lace used as a kerchief in the seventeenth century.
15. Woman's head-dress, appliance for shade.
16. Worn by women under the lacing of the bodice, and by men as a waistcoat.
17. Possibly bague.
18. The term may have been more generally used for rings bearing clasped hands, but specifically refers to two or more separate rings joined together (Kunz, *Rings for the Finger*, pp. 218-20).
19. Possibly a variant of the puzzle ring.

Note: Unless otherwise stated all definitions come from the Oxford English Dictionary.



## CHAPTER 3

### 'IF EVER THOWE WILTE DO FOR ME, DO FOR ME NOW...' 'MOVERS', 'SUTORS', 'SPEAKERS' AND 'BROKERS' OF MARRIAGE: THE ROLE OF GO-BETWEENS AS A 'MEANS' OF COURTSHIP.

#### I

In a moment of self-reproach and of self-realization, the widow Whiter confessed to John Payne of Seasalter and his wife Joanne, her fault in 'drynkyng and making merye amonge yonckers', and firmly acknowledged the mutual unsuitability of any match with such as 'woulde littell regard (her) hereafter'. Choosing instead the elderly William Rolf, one evidently 'fytt for me and I for him', being 'a man well broken in the world', she urged Payne to make a six-mile return journey to find Rolf and bring back a definite answer of marriage, stressing furthermore, the apparent crisis of the situation in her plea to him that 'if ever thowe wilte do for me, do for me now'.<sup>1</sup> While she and Rolf appear in the record as the principal protagonists in the marriage dispute, the mediation of the forty-one-year-old Payne, himself a presumably established and reputable fellow-parishioner, going between the parties, in this case, to confer about marriage and determine matrimonial intention, was of timely significance in the complex management of personal relationships. In sixteenth-century English society, where the making of a match was inextricably tied to circumstances of family, fortune and place, amongst other issues, and where the necessity of forging 'a good match'<sup>2</sup> was a matter of pressing consequence, the process of finding appropriate partners often involved the 'twoo doings' of the parties concerned, as well as the machinations of other 'makers of a marriage',<sup>3</sup> a concept already partly discussed in the earlier examination of parental, kin, and community participation. Choice of partner, as will be shown in the following chapter, was dependent to some extent on the environmental limitations of locality and residence, and the opportunities made available to individuals living in close proximity or coupled from further afield, but the unions which did ensue, however temporary or permanent they may have been, were arguably not simply a matter of fortuitous occurrence. Even where geography made or hindered

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1 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/4, ff. 52, 60, *Rolf v. Whiter* (1549).

2 E.g. C.C.A.L. MSS. X/10/8, ff. 126-8, *Rayner v. Chamber* (1561), and X/10/11, ff. 213-14v., *Richards v. Cockes* (1570), give contemporary opinions on the suitability of particular matches.

3 C.C.A.L. MS. X/10/12, ff. 173v-4v., *Lee v. Sething* (1565).

relations, or where situations for courtship manifested themselves in a range of coincidences, the apparent spontaneity might itself have disguised the underlying possibilities for other kinds of influential arrangements, for among those institutions for couples to meet in courtship, was the institution in varying degrees of formality, of the intermediary as a 'means' of courtship.

It will be the purpose of this chapter to consider closely the role of those who, in some capacity, acted as agents, spokesmen, negotiators, intercessors, or messengers, in the course of matrimonial proceedings, and in so doing, seek to gauge part of 'the collective aspect of making a match'.<sup>4</sup> Qualifying the assertion expressed elsewhere that 'courtship was a game (which), on the whole, people played for themselves',<sup>5</sup> it may alternatively be said that all games, of necessity, incorporated certain rules or moves, checks and procedures, which furthered or hindered their development. In courtship, the so-called 'movers' and 'medlers', 'utterers' and 'brokers', may have been crucial in the interests of publicity and attestation,<sup>6</sup> but at the same time such persons might be recognized to occupy a more active function as 'not onely a wytnes but allsoe an actor'.<sup>7</sup> Their use and influence in marital negotiations and solicitations among the more privileged status groups and within aristocratic society have been observed, and identified, as part of the etiquette of courtship, not least in the interests of financial considerations.<sup>8</sup> Beneath the match-makings of leading men like Lord Burleigh, and the brokering activities, amongst rich merchant families, of so-called 'matrimonial bawds',<sup>9</sup> the lesser (though still propertied) families, might also seek the assistance and expertise of outsiders in the preliminaries to marriage.<sup>10</sup> Among the middle-class of early modern London, introductions to courtship might entail considerable brokerage fees. As Peter Earle observed, 'How common such brokerage fees were one does not know, but given the mercenary nature of much of the London marriage market it seems probable that they were far from unusual. Some people certainly made a business of marriage broking', and might include scriveners, 'experienced matrons', or neighbourhood match-makers 'who knows to a title the exact rates of the market and the current prices of young women that are fit to marry'.<sup>11</sup> Reluctant nevertheless to accredit any

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4 Cook, *Making a Match*, p. 104.

5 Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, p. 295.

6 Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, p. 34.

7 E.g. C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/3, ff. 56v.-7, *Alcock v. Hardes* (1598).

8 Cook, *Making a Match*, pp. 107-8.

9 Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, p. 295.

10 Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, p. 72.

11 Quoted in P. Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class. Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660-1730* (London, 1989), pp. 193-4.

real significance to this form of behaviour even for those of titled or wealthy rank, Alan Macfarlane was much less prepared to admit the possibilities of a more general employment of go-betweens in the conduct of courtship. Convinced of the absence of any such 'instituted role' in early-modern England, he argued that 'below the level of the upper gentry and merchant families, there is little evidence of marriage brokers. They are not mentioned in ecclesiastical court cases about broken engagements, they are not visible in accounts of courtship in diaries, they do not appear in letters, they are not referred to in accounts of courtship'.<sup>12</sup>

If such a statement is to be upheld however, little sense indeed can be made of the evidence from the Consistory Court of Canterbury which strongly testifies to the contrary, of the custom of 'deputized courtship' which figures so prominently in the contemporary literature, or of particular entries in English diaries of the seventeenth century. The well-known diary of Samuel Pepys shows Pepys actively engaged in arranging a marriage for the daughter of his patron, helping in the discussions, giving advice, making various visits, even instructing the inexperienced young man in the business of love matters and art of amorous wooing.<sup>13</sup> Lovers themselves would rely on others in their plots and intrigues. Lady Elizabeth Livingston, ashamed of her vanity and flirtations, confessed the 'little subtleties' she played with a 'particular knot of friends' to discover the secret thoughts of her admirers,<sup>14</sup> while further down the social scale, the apprentice shopkeeper Roger Lowe, on more than one occasion, allowed others to intercede for him, accompany him, and devise strategies for him in various aspects of personal diplomacy.<sup>15</sup> Several of the Shakespearean comedies and tragedies make play with the intricate complexities and problems attendant upon courtship, employing the proverbial figure of the go-between in diverse ways as a device in dramatic complication or resolution. In situations such as that of geographical separation, clandestinity, or perhaps deception, the familiar character variously termed 'go-between' or 'goer-between', 'spokesmate', 'attorney', 'agent', and 'messenger', features unmistakably in the plot, performing or subverting the customary role of a marriage intermediary in Elizabethan England.<sup>16</sup> But in Shakespeare, as well as in the study of contemporary historical records pertaining especially to the courtships of the middling and lower classes, the importance and prevalence of this cultural practice, and its implications, have

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12 Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, p. 295.

13 R. A. Houlbrooke ed., *English Family Life 1576-1716* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 22-7.

14 *Ibid.* pp. 27-8.

15 *Ibid.* p. 20; Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, pp. 36-8.

16 Cook, *Making a Match*, pp. 110-19.

not received the appropriate critical recognition. Macfarlane's over-emphasis upon traditional models of marriage brokers of the kind found in societies geared towards universal, early, and formally-arranged marriage, where often paid professionals specialized in finding partners of desirable status and connections, were commissioned to initiate and conclude matrimonial arrangements,<sup>17</sup> has effectively limited the historical identification of these match-makers or middlemen, and in order to evaluate the strength of this cultural phenomena and its relevance in the regulation of matrimony, it becomes necessary to extend one's definition to accommodate a more flexible range of intermediary types.<sup>18</sup>

Proceeding therefore in less rigid a manner of interpretation, this chapter seeks to examine the diverse forms of interposition which existed in the management of courtship. It suggests that those hints of activity of the more traditionally recognizable type and, more commonly, the various introductions, investigations, recommendations, arbitrations, persuasions, and negotiations which took place, might generally be regarded as part and parcel of the customary role of the go-between. From the more definable model, to the more informal manifestations of their functions, the identity of the go-between, and the importance of their conduct in marriage transactions and in the pilotage of liminal experience, deserve close attention. The making of property transfers which they directly or indirectly effected and which, as will be seen in a following discussion, were fundamental to marriage, invests their position in courtship with a conservative as well as with a dynamic significance. Who they were; of what age, status, and relationship to the parties; their place of residence; the nature of the tasks they performed and their apparent motivation; the ambiguity of their role; and their many guises, will form the subject of this chapter.

The legal specifications regarding the practice of employing matrimonial agents would seem to suggest the possible familiarity of its usage.<sup>19</sup> Canonical discussion of proxy marriages made provision for betrothal and marriage to be

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17 Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, pp. 247, 294; and for other historical examples of brokerage, see C. Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy* trans. L. G. Cochrane (Chicago and London, 1985), p. 183; Segalen, *Love and Power*, p. 22; M. A. Kaplan ed., *The Marriage Bargain. Women and Dowries in European History*, (New York, London, 1985), pp. 126, 129-30.

18 For an interesting parallel discussion of social intermediary types and the problems of definition, see 'Cultural Intermediaries' in M. Vovelle, *Ideologies and Mentalities*, (Oxford, 1990), pp. 114-25.

19 Cook, *Making a Match*, pp. 109-10, for a summary of the laws.

contracted through sufficiently appointed persons.<sup>20</sup> According to Henry Swinburne, the three ways by which it was possible to contract between absent parties involved the mediation of proctors, of messengers, or of letters.<sup>21</sup> Legal strictures on mediation permitted the use of delegates throughout the progress of courtship, with the validity of the contract dependent upon its being made in due form by a person with a sufficient mandate to act, provided also that there was no alteration in the mind of the sender. Such a proviso applied also in circumstances where the messenger was without any such authority, but was employed simply for the bare delivery of a message or letter, in which case the consent of the recipient ratified the contract. Canon law did not discriminate between a woman's and a man's right to contract by a special messenger, but sought to protect the intentions of both male and female clients by setting limitations on the mediator's exercise of authority. By law, all messengers had to be *specialy sent*, and might not validly contract in another's name of their 'own accord and motion', but when they were sufficiently authorized to do so, a messenger who came not in his own name, but in the name of the sender, was regarded as 'the voice of the others mind, and the picture of his person'. Notwithstanding the legal restrictions on the role of proxies in courtship and on their ability to negotiate independently or make overriding choices, what is clearly significant is the ample recognition of this custom in the eyes of the law, the implication that certain persons might well transgress those limits, and the legal distinction between various forms of intermediaries.

## II

In examining the actual conduct of marriage and proceedings throughout the practice of courtship, the evidence recorded by church court officials for the diocese of Canterbury suggests a common contemporary nomenclature. Although individuals were never specifically referred to as 'go-betweens', certain terms which were often used identified the range of mediatory doers, whether they were said to be 'persones *indifferently chosen*'<sup>22</sup> or '*indifferent men*' sent 'to enquire what she was' to see if she was 'fite to match',<sup>23</sup> or '*a sutor*' as the aged

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20 Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, p. 2; J. A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe*, (Chicago and London, 1987), pp. 436, 497-8.

21 Swinburne, *Treatise of Spousals*, sect. xiii 'Of contracting spousals either betwixt parties present or absent', pp. 154-92, esp. pp. 162-7, 178-82, for what follows in the paragraph.

22 E.g. C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/9, ff. 46v.-8, *Hopkinson v. Philipps* (1563).

23 C.C.A.L. MS. X/11/2, ff. 41v.-2v., *Woollet v. Saunders* (1590).

Peter Bellingham was, on Robert Cousen's behalf, to a reputedly rich widow 'that he might obtayne her in mariage to be his wife'.<sup>24</sup> Richard Dennys of Kennington, a thirty-year-old bricklayer, likewise represented himself as a *sutor* to Katherine Richards for Edmond Coppyn, speaking for him in expectation of securing twenty nobles 'yf he coulede brynge yt to passe', but neither he nor Henry Lodge who had been acquainted with both parties for four to five years, could prevail as 'an earnest *sutor*'.<sup>25</sup> Some described simply as 'messengers' were charged with the delivery of a bare fact, or to expedite matters. When Margaret Cole's parents were sent for to the bedside of Henry Lyon, 'the *messinger* (declared) that if ever they wold see hym alive they shuld com out of hand',<sup>26</sup> but even messengers with apparently limited authority might act as disruptive or compromising agents. Tangential evidence recalling the elopement of Mary Hale, disclosed important enquiries as to whether or not her mother and stepfather William Tanner 'both or one of them did not as much as in them was both by themselves their *servantes* and *messengers* seeke by all meanes to hinder and breake the same mariage'.<sup>27</sup> At times the terminology of brokerage was clearly used. William Hawsnothe, for example, a weaver residing in Frittenden, was voiced to be 'the first *broker* of the mariage between Julian Barnes and Bridgeman',<sup>28</sup> but more common, was the general suggestion of self-styled intermediaries. Thomas Mussred claimed that he accompanied Richard Harker of Whitstable, to John Lawrence's house in St. Nicholas, Thanet, at the start of his suit 'to be a *means* to break the matter to Lawrence and his wife and to Jone Young', the defendant in the case.<sup>29</sup> In a different case contended between Mark Giles of Selling and Katherine Wyborn of Sheldwich, among the several individuals called upon to act as negotiators, Christopher Sowthouse of Selling, aged sixty-three and well known to both parties, deposed that 'he hathe been a *meane* and persuaded with the parties and Paramor (her uncle) that there ought to be some good end made without swyte in law'; Edward Songar, a middle-aged yeoman from Boughton-under-Blean, sought 'to confer' with Paramor and 'mytigate his anger', describing himself as 'a *meane* to Paramor to grant his goodwill'; and Hugh Hall of Woodnesborough, cousin to Katherine, was reportedly requested likewise 'to be a *meane*' to Paramor for his consent.<sup>30</sup>

24 E.g. C.C.A.L. MS. X/10/12, ff. 97v.-9, *pro partem John Parkes of New Romney* (1564).

25 C.C.A.L. MS. X/10/7, ff. 134v.-5, 326v.-7, *Coppyn v. Richard* (1560-1).

26 C.C.A.L. MS. X/10/7, f.83, *Lyon v. Cole* (1560).

27 C.C.A.L. MS. J/J3 38, *Simons v. Spayne* (1598).

28 C.C.A.L. MS. X/10/8, f. 24v., *Cole v. Barnes* (1561).

29 C.C.A.L. MS. X/11/6, ff. 251v.-2v., *Harker v. Young* (1594).

30 C.C.A.L. MS. X/10/18, ff. 49v.-53, 67-9v., 81-4v., *Giles v. Wyborn* (1578).

The language employed in identifying more formal designations of spokesmen and substitutes, is cogently expressed in a lengthy deposition made by the proxy, Regenold Smith, who was deputized to act for the widow Alice Porter of St. Mary-in-the-Marsh. Smith, a yeoman living in the adjacent parish of Dymchurch, was sufficiently acquainted with her after six years, but professed a far longer-standing relationship with the opposing party, Regenold Aderyn, resident about thirteen miles away. He testified that after some initial private talk of matrimony, he was duly 'appointed and made by her, Alis Porter to be *an utter and speaker or mover* of all suche promis and contractes as she did make to (him) in behalf of Regenold Aderyn to be uttered to Aderyn, and also that (he) should have and receive of Aderyn all such promis, faith and trowth, and contractes as he would make to him, in behalf of Alis Porter', and that upon further entreaty, she promised him to take Aderyn to her husband, to bestow herself and her goods and, in her words, '*perfoorme* to him that I do promis yow for him'. Immediately afterwards, everything was repeated to her brother who was called to witness, with Smith rehearsing how she had specifically '*ordeyned* (him) to be a *speaker and utterer*'. Taking her subsequently by the hand for confirmation of her consent, he asked 'yf the woords aforesaid wer not her mynd. And (she) said yes and gave (him) her hand'. While she was later to deny ever having made any promise to Regenold Aderyn, she did acknowledge the making of a faithful promise to Regenold Smith on Aderyn's behalf.<sup>31</sup>

The constituting of a proxy in this case, invested with the potential authority to make a match between absent parties, marks one of a number of intermediary types who were involved as matrimonial agents in the sixteenth century. Allowing for a certain latitude in their features and functions, a typology of different characters presents itself, from the more traditional and official mediators such as the parish priest,<sup>32</sup> and church court personage, to the letter-writers, midwives, bawds, busy-bodies and medlers, and dealers in magic existing on the margins of social and legal respectability, not to mention the friends, relations, and patrons of either party concerned. Seen from a literary angle, it has been suggested that 'go-betweens may come from any segment of society'.<sup>33</sup> In what follows, a closer, if selective, analysis of the above said kinds of characters will be attempted as they emerge from the historical records of matrimonial cases.

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31 C.C.A.L. MS. X/10/14, ff. 229-31v., *Aderyn v. Porter* (1573).

32 See also Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, pp. 124-5.

33 See also Cook, *Making a Match*, p. 119.

While the conventional role of the parish priest officiating at a marriage ceremony may be an assumed part of his ecclesiastical duty, the functions of religious-type intermediaries (whether rector, vicar, or clerk) in the affairs of courtship, were not limited to the stage of contract making.<sup>34</sup> Enquiries regarding the marriage plans of the couple, the intended place of wedding, and careful examination of their appropriate consent were professionally called for,<sup>35</sup> the very act of clarification encouraging the expedition of proceedings, and affirmations of promise. Instrumental in matters of pacification and arbitration, they gave advice and comfort in the interest of harmonized relations,<sup>36</sup> and might serve as advocates to a particular cause. Acting on behalf of the defendant William Saunders, the curate of Minster, Thanet, sought to 'pacifie the displeasure' of his father, and 'persuaded Edward Saunders to receive his son into favor again',<sup>37</sup> and in a separate case as we have seen, the clerk William Walsall, was asked by William Divers to treat for marriage with Elizabeth Williams and her mother. Soliciting for the goodwill and consent of both women, whether by fair means or foul, persuasions, threats, and the alleged invocation of magic, were the tools of his labour to make a match between the parties.<sup>38</sup> Even after contracts were made, clerics were called upon to resolve problems and assuage doubts. Peter Bennet, curate of Stodmarsh, went at the request of his fellow 'countrywoman' Isabell Parker, to Thomas Tanner's house in Herne, and there conferred with him 'about certeyne doubts' he had, assuring him of the falsity of certain reports made of her which had prompted his change of mind.<sup>39</sup>

Perhaps less conspicuous in his professional capacity as a type of intermediary, the legal agent nevertheless figured as witness, mandate, and envoy, even acting indirectly at times, it would seem, outside the expected call of duty. Edmond Arundell of Wootton, a distant relation of the plaintiff John Mantle, might actually have served the office of summoner at the occasion of his visit to the Mereweath household in Sheperdswell, but he firmly denied to Mistress Mereweath having brought any citation with him to command her daughter Parnell's presence in court. In the course of his apparently unauthorized visit, the neutrality of his position was immediately transformed to a role of

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34 For an example of the curate's role in the contract, see C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/10, ff. 3-4v., 9, *Bircheley v. Pelland* (1562-3).

35 E.g. C.C.A.L. MSS. X/10/6, ff. 115v.-6, *Lambard v. Harewood* (1556); X/10/11, ff. 231-v., *Turner v. Hubbarde* (1570?).

36 E.g. C.C.A.L. MS. X/11/4, ff. 91-2, *Pigeon v. Hastling, Taylor* (1601).

37 C.C.A.L. MS. X/11/2, ff. 41v.-2v., *Woollet v. Saunders* (1590).

38 C.C.A.L. MS. X/11/5, ff. 223-5; MS. J/J3 38, *Divers v. Williams* (1597-8); see above chapter 2, pp. 57-60.

39 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/4, ff. 161v., 162v.-4v., *Parker alias Parr v. Tanner* (1602).



confessor, confidant, secret messenger and conspirator, at the instance of Parnell's emotional and private declaration. Affirming 'with weeping teares to him' her love for John Mantle, with whom she was contracted, she spoke despairingly of the misery she suffered under her parents' and brother's spite, fearful of her father's intense anger and readiness to kill her if he should learn of their conversation, seeking to elope rather than endure her present life, and beseeching him to convey her commendations and everything she had spoken, to John Mantle. Having consequently written down his deposition on paper for his better remembrance as he claimed, Arundell was able to report that she had said to him in secret, 'I pray you have me comended unto him, and tell hym that whensoever he will serve any citacon upon me that I will com furth to my answer although I dye within an hour after for it'.<sup>40</sup>

Some characters appearing in the depositions who were sufficiently literate, although not necessarily public notaries of any kind, were employed to write letters in the name of one party and see to their safe delivery, the mediation of letters being, as previously indicated, a legally-recognized means of contracting between absent parties.<sup>41</sup> Thomas Ridley of Herne, on the other hand, (a fifty-five-year-old deponent in the case of *Hannyngs v. Cockman*, who was allegedly appointed by Richard Cockman to bring Thomasina Hannyng to his house 'by any meanes possible', and in so doing witnessed their promise of marriage), may have had some pretensions of professional legal expertise. His dabblings in the law did not, however, stand him in good repute among his neighbours. Described as 'a medler of everymans', and such a one as having 'no other meanes to lyve by but as a *broker* of mens matters in law being no lawyer, take the monney of men for whome he neither can doo good, ne yet is able to help them to their right', he was generally regarded as a false 'sutor', dissembler, and a goer-between people with ill tales, making debate between them.<sup>42</sup>

With local talk and the spreading of reports being, in some measure, a controlling factor in the making of matches, it is important to recognize the very act of inter meddling as a form of intermediary behaviour, regardless of whether or not the intervention which was made helped to forward or obstruct a particular suit. Intermediaries had the capacity to interfere in negative, as well as positive means. The witness Cicely Goodstone, for example, wife of a Littlebourne labourer, was taken by Ralph Cole to be a 'buysybody and a comonly medler in

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40 C.C.A.L. MS. X/10/16, ff. 333-6, *Mantle v. Mereweath* (1577).

41 E.g. C.C.A.L. MSS. X/10/18, ff. 14v.-15v., *Mantle v. Mereweath*; X/11/5, ff. 243-5, 246v.-7, *Symons v. Spayne* (1598).

42 C.C.A.L. MSS. X/10/9, ff. 56v.-7v., 62-3; X/10/10, ff. 23-8v., 30v.-2, *Hannyngs v. Cockman* (1563).

meny folkes maters'. He told the court that, at the time when he was a suitor to Anne Hall of Littlebourne, whom he subsequently married, 'Cicely was and wold ever be against his sute, saying reporting him to be a nawghty and lewde fellow, and wheare as the mayd had made a promise to him of mariage...Cicely would give her counsaill not to marry...persuading her to forsake him and that she would provide her of an honest man and as riche, and this manner of evill talk she had...And herapon (he) perceyving her ill tongue and disposition against him, desired her to be contented and that he might have her goodwill, and to that ende he promised to give her som reward, as...2s....and promised her an apron besides...and over that he had her to the alehouse divers times...And thyen ever after she did give him a good report to the mayde night and day...'<sup>43</sup>

The goodwill and support of Cicely Goodstone in Ralph Cole's courtship, obtained as he said 'by reason of giftes', strongly parallels the desire felt by William Witherden 'at that tyme of his sute to have...mother Butterwickes favor and goodword'. The elderly Agnes Butterwick, appointed by the will of alderman Starkey of Canterbury to be a stay and bedfellow to his wife, not only presided at the wooing dinner for widow Starkey's hand in marriage, but was, it seems, the means whereby Witherden was brought and allowed to enter the widow's bedchamber. Although he acknowledged having promised her at other times 'that if it wer his fortune to spede of the widow or place hymself with her, meanyng thereby to marry with her, and that she wold speake a good word for hym he would recompence her paynes', Butterwick was later to complain that 'for her good will she was negentilly rewarded', and that when she required to have 'a good torne' of him for that cause, (being a gown of Mr. Starkey's to make a frock for herself), he 'bad the said Agnes walk like a bawde and get her out of the house for ther she shuld no longer loge nor have anything of him'.<sup>44</sup>

Mother Butterwick, as she was known by some, was by profession a midwife in the community, itself an agent of social contact within a predominantly female network that was possibly regarded as potentially subversive, and capable of use for informal brokering. Possessed of an identity which incorporated complex images of a disreputable past, she was perhaps as much an ideological construction of conflicting opinions, as a real definable personality.<sup>45</sup> A practitioner on the one hand, a so-called 'bawd' on the other,<sup>46</sup> characters which perhaps were not unlike such goer-betweenes as appear in

43 C.C.A.L. MS. X/10/15, ff. 240v.-2v., *Smyth v. Gray* (1567).

44 C.C.A.L. MS. X/10/8, ff. 134-8, 161-2v., *Coppyn v. Richard* (1560-1); see below chapter 4. for the wooing party, p. 164 .

45 See above introduction, n. 41.

46 Cf. the term 'matrimonial bawd', in Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, p. 295.

Shakespeare, the 'bawd' representing 'the final debasement of the Shakespearean agent in courtship'.<sup>47</sup>

Existing also on the fringes of lawfully recognized culture, semi-professional quack doctors practised their knowledge of physic and magic to intercede on behalf of their customers, as the experience of Thomas Fanshaw of Canterbury with his patient Alice Suttill highlights. It was said that Fanshaw visited her house on several occasions, during which time they held long conferences, that he and his wife received food, money, cloth and a ring from her in return for physic, in particular, a bill or scroll with 'dyvers prayers' in it to cause her husband William Suttill, to love her, and that Alice was seen by her household servant to wear a piece of paper about her neck night and day. Whether or not the failure of Fanshaw's intervention in the cause of love was later inverted to predict or divine death, remains uncertain. Later charged for the use of 'witchcrafte and socerye to know as yt was said how long William Suttill should live and be her husband', Fanshaw confessed that Alice did 'intreate (him) to gyve hir something or to do somewhat for hyr to make hir husband to love hyr, and that he did give her a prayer or a charme', which was 'a certen bill of socerye concernyng William Suttill but said that bill could not do any harme to (him) only he did yt to please Alice Suttill because until he had so done he could not be in quiet'. By the report of others, he served her as a reluctant intercessor, experiencing acutely the dilemma of doing 'that he could not do'. As he told the warrant bearer at the time of his arrest, 'Suttills wife would have me do *that* for her *that* I cannot do and by no meanes I cann be quiet for she is so importunate upon me...'<sup>48</sup>

### III

In the preceding sections, it has been suggested that different kinds of intermediaries may have been customarily employed in the activities of courtship and in the making of matches in the sixteenth century, and that both the contemporary literature and the law, might be seen to confirm the use of this social custom. Moreover, some attempt has been made to develop the concept of the intermediary by identifying certain of the range of intermediary types as they are variously termed in the marriage cases, looking thus far, at those with more traditional, and professional, or marginally professional roles. In the remaining half of this chapter, the intention will be to measure and examine in detail, the

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47 Cook, *Making a Match*, p. 118.

48 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/2, ff. 215-17, 232-4v., 247-8, 249v.-50, 256, *Suttill v. Blackburn alias Suttill* (1591).

questions posed earlier on regarding the background of the goer-betweens, their geographical proximity and association with the couple concerned, and their various means of acting on behalf of either party, in making or breaking a match.

Taking into account all of the marriage cases (300+) which are to be found in the consistory court depositions for the period under consideration, approximately one quarter of those cases (80+) provide evidence for use in this study. In every sense, the proportion underestimates the much more extensive involvement of outsiders in the conduct of courtship. Several cases which indicate the presence of witnesses to private promises and contracts, are not included here, since this chapter is more intent upon treating forms of intervention of a demonstrably active, rather than apparently passive, nature. More importantly, the critical role of parents as marriage-makers or *hinderers*, and of group interference, has been discussed in chapter 1, where the rule of parental authority and group choice evidently came into conflict with individual preference.

This being said, the 145 persons who might with some justification be regarded as intermediaries, were found to be living in parishes located throughout the diocese of Canterbury, representing therefore a generally unbiased geographical distribution. Where there is clear evidence to indicate the place of residence of the marriage partners concerned, and of the intermediary employed in those particular cases, the parishes which were named were compared in terms of intervening distance in order to show the degree of residential proximity of all three parties. Of the sample, 35 percent of marriage partners lived in the same parish, and in such situations, almost always called upon the go-between services of another fellow-parishioner, but clearly, it was far more common in this study, for couples to live at some distance from each other although, as we shall see in the next chapter, the distance was unlikely to have been very great. If it may be argued that this sample favours cases where partners were predominantly separated by distance, (implying perhaps that such separation might encourage a match to be negotiated by means of others), it is also very noticeable that under these circumstances, it was just as likely for the intermediary to reside in a totally different locality, as to reside in the same parish as either one of the parties. Measuring the distance between the intermediary and the closer of the two marriage partners, it would appear that they were largely drawn from within an area of three to ten miles, otherwise from adjacent parishes, at times up to twenty miles away. Given, however, that these distances represent the minimum estimate, since one of the parties would be living further away, the field of courtship activity and matrimonial negotiation within the diocese may be more

extensive and complex, suggesting too that a careful and conscious use of outside intervention was at play, and that the conduct of courtship was neither haphazard nor simply dictated by situations of convenience.

Seeing that the majority of plaintiffs in disputed matrimonial cases were men, and that intermediaries generally acted on behalf of the man, it is not surprising that they themselves were usually male, but while men were overall the more likely choice, there was no absolute sexual discrimination. Male suitors employed the services of both men and women, and so did their female partners, with the proportion of women who requested outside help in managing their courtship (28%) somewhat exceeding the proportion of female intermediaries (20%).

Although there is insufficient information regarding the status of the parties concerned, (except in so far as they clearly included widows, some who were servants, virgins, or young people, a gentleman, a weaver, a shoemaker's daughter, a scholar and other literate persons), more can be gleaned about the intermediaries themselves, whose depositions provide clues and often specify their age, occupation, and personal knowledge of both parties in the marriage case. Altogether, eighty-four ages were mentioned, of which only three were under twenty-one years, nineteen more under thirty years, forty-four between the ages of thirty-one and fifty, another twelve in their fifties, and an additional six who were sixty-one years of age or more. Assuming that the average age of marriage in early modern England as shown in family reconstitution studies is no less applicable here,<sup>49</sup> it would appear that intermediaries were, by and large, older than the parties themselves. Indeed, some were very senior members, implicitly bearing the hallmarks of respectability and experience, household and family establishment. At least in terms of age, there may have been little question of parity between the parties and the choice of intermediary, as marriage partners opted instead for sobriety, decorum, and a more institutionalized means of conveying the seriousness of their intention.

The professional and economic status of these intermediaries may also seem to confirm this conclusion. As already shown, certain professional groups, by virtue of their calling, were ideally positioned for mediating and negotiating relationships. Several of religious rank, of 'gentle' and predominantly 'yeoman' status, served as go-betweens in some form or another. Artisans, those in the building, clothing, and food trade, including the Buckland butcher, Edward Reade, with 'learninge enough' to oversee a marriage,<sup>50</sup> were likewise involved,

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49 See below chapter 5.

50 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/5, ff. 250-2, *Symons v. Spayne* (1598).

while among the women, the midwife, widows, and particularly wives as opposed to single girls, acted as channels of communication between partners. Some were however servants, and with only one exception, were stated to be under the age of twenty-five years. Although a few of them served in important households, the majority of intermediaries who were simply servants, were either fellow-servants, or former fellow-servants to the parties concerned, or servants in the household of their kin. Almost invariably, their task was more restricted, and their authority limited to the delivery of tokens or messages, themselves a form of mediation. Occasionally they also delivered the appropriately desired commendations, wrote letters on behalf of one party, or in the course of their own business, served as contacts and bearers of news. Nevertheless, even those servants who ranked lower down the social scale, were qualified in other ways to act as agents in courtship. As trusted servants in one's household, whether the place of work or home, they were relied upon as despatchers, informants, and sensors in marriage.

If age and status were only two of the likely criteria governing the choice of intermediary, the third was probably forged on the basis of personal kin ties or the strength of mutual acquaintance. Of those who were neither servants, nor religious men, we have evidence of personal links for seventy-three individuals. At least fifteen intermediaries identified themselves as being 'kin' or 'cosyn' to one of the parties, with thirteen others termed 'friend', 'felowe', or 'neighbour'. In some cases, relationships based on work and property incorporated those who were clearly masters, tenants, and, in one instance, a nurse to the household. Intermediaries who simply specified the number of years they had known the parties, might well have included blood relatives or affines. Where, as was generally the case, the length of time differed for each party, it was considered more appropriate to examine the acquaintance ship with the party on whose behalf the intermediary served. They were evidently known to at least one of the marriage partners for a minimum of two to three years, more often four or five years, and in several cases up to twelve and even twenty years. Some intermediaries professed a knowledge dating back from childhood, or described their relationship as one of many years standing, and it would seem therefore, that even in circumstances where they were not related through blood or marriage, the durability of fictive ties, of work, property, and place, and the credibility gained out of personal knowledge, were critical in motivating action.

If we look more closely at the whole question of motivation, it is possible not only to examine who the instigating party may have been at a particular time, but also, in some instances, the stated reasons for intervention given by the

intermediaries at their interrogation. Laurence Taillor of Frittenden, who had known Juliana Barnes and Ralph Cole of the same parish, for approximately five years, described his relationship with Cole as being one 'a good while together of acquayntence and freendes'. Often going to visit her together, and often being present when Cole declared the purpose of his coming was to marry her, Laurence Taillor deposed that in 'perceyving the good will that she did beare towards hym the said Rauf that way, (he) fayned to be a sutor for hym selfe thereby to understand and trye her constancy towards Ralf Cole/ Julian declaring to (him) that she had made a promise to Ralf Cole and that she wold have hym only and forsake all other with which her aunswer (he) percyving her mind so bent towards Ralf Cole said to her, Than I have my aunswer Juliane, and I will trouble ye no more but will geve place unto Rauf of whome I percyve you be well spell'.<sup>51</sup> Others too gave testimony to their familiarity, affection, and goodwill for a certain party. The sixty-year-old John Hudson, who had known Edward Longley of Boughton Maleherbe since childhood, and Joanna Marchaunt of Hartlip (the servant of his kinsman Thomas Blechinden) for eight years, acted out of 'the love and familiarity that he of long tyme had borne towardes Edward Longley and knowing hym to be a very honest and frendly man brought hym to Thomas Blechindens house...wher the said Edward was never but ones afore...of intent to make merry...' during which time the couple talked privately.<sup>52</sup> In a different marriage case contested between Thomas Launsfield and Margery Overye, her ex-master Robert Austen, a Littlebourne yeoman of forty-four years, acted as 'a meanes to get her freinds goodwill', earnestly soliciting for the consent of her step-father John Rigdon, 'very much endeavoring to make up a maryage between the parties', the 'cause of which his endeavour (Rigdon) beleventh to be the great affection he beareth unto Launsfield'.<sup>53</sup> Being 'moved of goodwill' for the man, was also the reason which the tailor John Rolf professed for his participation in Robert Sloden's suit to win his own sister's hand. He claimed that he 'hath been a meanes to Robert Sloden for that he hath alwaies seamed to be a very honest man and well able to lyve of hymself, to be a sutor unto Silvester Witherden to wyne with her in conference of talke of mariage. Wherapon (Sloden) folowing (his) advice attempted his sute unto the wedowe...'<sup>54</sup>

Some go-betweens acted, as we have seen, in the interest and expectation of financial reward or other means of remuneration. Richard Dennys was promised twenty nobles, Agnes Butterwick a gown for a frock, or at least

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51 C.C.A.L. MS. X/10/7, ff. 155-v., *Cole v. Barnes* (1560-1).

52 C.C.A.L. MS. X/10/12, ff. 280v.-2, *Longley v. Marchaunt* (1566).

53 C.C.A.L. MS. X/11/4, ff. 125-7, 130v.-2v., *Launsfield v. Overye* (1601).

54 C.C.A.L. MS. X/10/8, ff. 47v.-9v., *Edmonds v. Witherden* (1561-2).

appropriate recompence for her pains,<sup>55</sup> and Cicely Goodstone some reward such as money, clothes and drink.<sup>56</sup> Small payments were occasionally made for more restricted tasks. The widow Marcia Mace, known to both parties for three years, was asked by Jone Swift to fetch Thomas Wood to her house, and was offered 4*d.* for doing so.<sup>57</sup> But perhaps what is more interesting is the moral sense of indebtedness incurred, and the desire for some kind of reciprocal behaviour, as expressed in the allegations made against William Beale. Beale, who wrote and delivered a letter on Judith Symon's behalf which appointed a time wherein the parties made a privy contract, was himself secretly married to Mary Hale at about the same time. During his interrogation, he was asked 'wether he did promise to Judith Simons that if it coule so be broughte to passe that he mighte marrye with Mary Hale his now wife, that then he woulde be the meanes and in such sorte he would compasse and bring to passe that she should marry with John Spaine...(and) whether not long before or ymediatly after he was married to his nowe wife he would have procured and so much as in hym was did procure the sayd John Spaine to have contracted hymself in mariage to Judith Simons'.<sup>58</sup>

So far then, we have seen intervention borne out of an official capacity, motivated by an openly declared personal affection, or prompted at least in part by material incentives or the promise of future obligation. Seldom, it seems, did intermediaries act entirely independently. Legally at least, in terms of making a contract, they were not entitled to act without specific recommendation, and without being specially sent. Considered overall, it was the parties themselves and, as already stated, predominantly the man, who requested their services, but arguably, the crucial point is not merely a matter of who the instigating party was, but the fact that it was customarily necessary for others to be called upon to manage the courtship and, moreover, the effect of their actions, which might exceed the initially desired task.

In some situations, however, neither of the parties were responsible. Master, kindred, and particularly parents, sought to use go-betweens for specific ends. Edward Saunders, unwilling to grant his consent for his son William to marry with Susan Woollet, and believing, as he said, that 'she was no wife for his son, and dyvers matters were against her', claimed that he had sent 'indifferent men' to make formal enquiries regarding her suitability, and had received 'answere that she was in no sorte fite to match with his son'.<sup>59</sup> Less formally,

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55 See nn. 25 and 44.

56 See n. 43.

57 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/16, ff. 56v.-7v., *Wood v. Swift* (1575).

58 C.C.A.L. MSS. X/11/5, ff. 243-5, 246v.-7; J/J3 58 (25), *Symons v. Spayne* (1598).

59 See n. 23.



parents and kin relied upon others to inform them of what was going on between the parties. 'At the biddinge of John Wyse', father of Katherine, Edward Sowgate went to speak 'secretly' with Edward Clynche to demand an acknowledgement of his promise to her. Although he denied it at first, he confessed that they were indeed sure together, but that she 'protracted and prolonged allweys the marriag tyme, wheruppon he said that he would be no longer pynned to her sleeve, but would marrie otherwise with one that did not so lynger the tyme'.<sup>60</sup> Probing to understand what the matter was, and the intention of the parties, was only one of the several tasks which intermediaries were assigned to perform. Edward Williams, the brother of the defendant Joan Williams of St. Alphege, Canterbury, was persuaded by his mother and father to, in turn, persuade his sister to favour Peter Levet, and acting therefore as 'a meanes unto her ..to allure her goodwill', he declared the 'goodwill and fervent love that Peter ought to her, and also the willing consents of his father and mother'.<sup>61</sup> By contrast, the cleric Thomas Wilson was sent for by old Collye, father of Thomas Collye, to confer about the dissolving of a promise between Thomas and Elizabeth Baker and, by his advice, 'the matter grewe to be dissolved',<sup>62</sup> while in another case, the efforts of John Colen, prompted by Agnes Wills' parents and by Richard Benet, were designed to ensure that Agnes might clear herself from James Lambart in order to marry with Benet, Lambart communicating his consent that she might 'marie where she woulde'.<sup>63</sup>

Having considered the various reasons which intermediaries gave for their role in the conduct of courtship, the different degrees of formality attached to their activities, and the instigator behind their actions, it remains to be seen what roles they actually played and were asked to discharge, the problems they caused and in turn faced, and the general significance of their position in the *moves and stratagems of marriage*.

According to John Gillis, intermediaries were employed in order that all procedures should be witnessed and publicized whensoever the need for confirmation arose,<sup>64</sup> and it was indeed not uncommon for the man to bring someone with him to bear witness of the woman's promise,<sup>65</sup> or to hear matters of marriage discussed. Richard Randall recalled how he had been sought and asked by his brother-in-law, Philip Joyce, to accompany him to Hartlip to hear just such a matter, at which time Randall said to Joanne Marchaunt 'I have

60 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, ff. 208-v., *Wyse v. Clynche* (1570?).

61 C.C.A.L. MS. X/10/17, ff. 95-6v., *Levet v. Willyams* (1574).

62 C.C.A.L. MS. X/11/4, ff. 13-v., *Off. v. Collye* (1600).

63 C.C.A.L. MS. X/10/3, ff. 78v.-9v., *Benet v. Lambart* (1548).

64 Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, p. 34.

65 E.g. C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, ff. 154-7, *Cole v. Barnes* (1560-1).

brought you here my frende to whom I perceyve by hym you bear goodwill, and to hear what answer you will give him and stand to'.<sup>66</sup> Alternatively in Shakespearean drama, the function of the intermediary in bringing together parties in clandestine situations was no less apparent in the court cases.<sup>67</sup> The aforementioned Edward Reade, who was informed by Thomas Kennet and Judith Simons of their intention to marry which he kept secret, was asked by both parties soon after Kennet was expelled from Mr. Tanner's service, to 'be a meanes to bring them together to some place from Mr Tanners house where they might meette and talke together, and to that end he ...carried tokens from eche to other...'<sup>68</sup>

In circumstances where the go-between acted at the man's behest, approximately half of the cases involved the delivery of a token, compared to a third of the cases where women were concerned. With both, however, the task was often not restricted to the mere delivery of a token, as the person carrying the token in his or her name, was charged with declaring commendations, reporting back to the sender, questioning and talking to the recipient, testing his or her conscience, and reminding either of their promise.<sup>69</sup> Numerous other instances demonstrate even more cogently the importance and diversity of the intermediary's role throughout every stage of courtship. Whether at a frivolous or perhaps irreverent level, it is not clear if Judith Simons really did rehearse the marriage ceremony with a female proxy. It was asked whether 'at such tyme as she hath byne pleasant and merrye...(she) hath taken a booke of comon prayer and taking unto her a mayden hath said unto her these wordes or the like in effect viz thou shalt be the man and I wilbe the mayde...and we wilbe married, and therupon taking or ioyning handes together she hath reade of mariage...'<sup>70</sup>

If proxies were used in the antics of courtship which young people played, more seriously, they were employed as a means of recommendation, arbitrating in some cases, soliciting in others, making investigations, giving their opinion, advice and assistance, seeking to confirm one's intention, trying to bring matters to a conclusion, and generally interposing at any time in the course of matrimonial proceedings. Some intermediaries such as Peter Bellingham served as a form of introduction,<sup>71</sup> or were present to accompany the man at the

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66 C.C.A.L. MS. X/10/12, ff. 284-6v., *Joyce v. Marchaunt* (1566).

67 Cook, *Making a Match*, p. 110.

68 See above n. 50..

69 E.g. C.C.A.L., MSS. X/10/6, ff. 115v.-16, *Lambard v. Harewood* (1556); X/10/7, ff. 326v.-7, *Coppyn v. Richard* (1561); X/10/12, ff. 280v.-2, *Longley v. Marchaunt* (1566); X/10/18, ff. 23-5, *Mantle v. Mereweath* (1577).

70 C.C.A.L., MS. J/J3 58 (24), *Simons v. Spayne* (1598).

71 See n. 24.

beginning of his suit.<sup>72</sup> Thomas Colly, the kinsman of the defendant also named Thomas Colly, prepared the way for future marriage entreaties by testing the ground early on, reporting to Mary Oldfield's mother, the goodwill which existed between the couple, and indicating that Thomas had sent him 'to know whether he should be welcome or not' to her house.<sup>73</sup> Go-betweens were employed no less at the end of a suit. The gentleman Christopher Gay, for example, went to the house of Jane Bedford's father at Oliver Symons's request, to require her to speak with him in discharge of their conscience.<sup>74</sup> In between, they acted in a variety of ways, both positive and negative, attempting to make or break a match, and going to bridge the physical or mental distance between parties and their kin.

We have already observed how certain intermediaries were required to speak a good word, do a good turn, entreat for the goodwill of party or kin, alleviate any displeasure incurred, carry messages and gifts, help to arrange rendezvous, act as chaperone, confidante, confessor, arbitrator, counsel, informer and investigator. The practical assistance they provided in terms of financial assurance was also evident. Anne Philpott, who wept at thinking herself 'undone' because Thomas Funell was 'worthe nothing', was given an assurance by James Boykett that he would be worth £10 at the day of marriage and that she need not be afraid to marry him, upon which promise she desired Boykett to bid him to come to her again.<sup>75</sup> The aged carpenter John Taylor, asked by Elizabeth Overie to speak to old Terry in order to get as much as he could of Terry for her and her children if she was to marry his son John,<sup>76</sup> was likewise responsible for moving matters forward, performing the duty of financial arrangement considered so crucial as a basis for marital security.

It is, however, important to realize that whatever the apparently definable nature of the task specifically required of the intermediary, the effect of the actual confrontation might also have been significant. Some intermediaries, after all, were unlikely to have been impassive communicators, especially given their probable acquaintance with the party concerned. Opinions which might be expressed were themselves a manner of advertisement, admonition, challenge or provocation. The nurse and widow Dorothy Fittell who was asked by John Spayne to 'helpe him to speak with Judith Simons' lying sick at that time in the house, began to talk herself with Spayne and 'told him that he must nowe trye himselfe a man or a boy', either to stand to his promise or else to leave her to her

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72 See n. 29.

73 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/3, ff. 136v.-7v., *Oldfield v. Colly* (1599).

74 C.C.A.L. MS. X/10/6, ff. 200v.-1, *Simons v. Bedford* (1558). See above chapter 2, n. 108.

75 C.C.A.L. MS. X/10/7, ff. 174-5, *Funell v. Philpott* (1567).

76 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/1, ff. 1-3, 8-9, 12-14, 336-v., *Terry v. Overie* (1585).

other suitor.<sup>77</sup> George London, on the other hand, having known both parties to have been very familiar in his house in Bekesbourne, and having been told by Nicholas Fookes of Patrixbourne that Mary Lowes had forsaken him, spoke to her at Fookes's request. Riding to Fordwich and calling upon her, he reminded her of the trouble which had fallen out between herself and Nicholas, and testing her conscience, warned her 'it wer best that you did advise with yorself whither you wer man and wife'.<sup>78</sup> Certainly so far as intercommunication via tokens was concerned, the mere delivery of a token by an agent stimulated a response. Christopher Bridge, asked by his late household servant, Thomasine Lee, to deliver a letter and an enclosed handkerchief to Robert Sething, returned to report what 'he perceyved', and also delivered to her a reciprocated gift of love.<sup>79</sup>

The perceptions, opinions, and reports of go-betweens cannot always be assumed to have been correct, whether due to misinterpretation, misguidance, or wilful falsity of representation. Contemporary fiction illustrates some of the problems caused by the abuses, vexations and plots of 'ambassadors', 'friends', and agents, and the potential for treachery which existed, and writers of conduct books on matrimony also warned against the dangers of relying upon intermediaries, expressing the suspicions which surrounded a much practised custom.<sup>80</sup> At times the accounts given in court cases depict the craftiness of their behaviour through the medium of false reports, disguised gifts, or cunning pretexts. When Katherine Richards refused to accept the pair of knives which Richard Dennys offered her, Dennys confessed to having 'tolde her that he gave them to (her) hymself as his owne gyfte, and not as the gyfte of Edmund Coppyn which Edmund willed hym soo to doo yf she wolde not receive them',<sup>81</sup> a form of deception which, however harmlessly intended, might have significant repercussions. More ingenious was the bizarre tale of the hole-in-the-wall contract between Dorothy Hocking and Richard Edmundes which took place in the parish of Holy Cross near Westgate, Canterbury, in 1564, between the backyards of Hocking's house and the house of Robert Holmes. By her own deposition, Dorothy maintained an apparent innocence in the contrivances worked out by Holmes's wife. She claimed that while she was busy in her mother's affairs in the backside of the house, Holmes's wife called her to come and speak with her through the hole in the wall, on the pretext of showing her how Dorothy's dog had entered their backyard and stolen their conger fish.

77 C.C.A.L. MS. X/11/5, f. 241v., *Symons v. Spayne* (1598).

78 C.C.A.L. MS. X/11/1, ff. 218-v., *Fookes v. Lowes* (1588).

79 C.C.A.L. MS. X/10/12, ff. 173v.-4v., *Lee v. Sething* (1565).

80 Cook, *Making a Match*, pp. 105-6, 110-11, 117-18.

81 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, ff. 134v.-5, *Coppyn v. Richards* (1560-1). See above n. 25.

Encouraging Dorothy to kneel down so that they could speak secretly at the hole, she took Dorothy's hand through the hole, and Richard Edmundes being present thereupon had her by the finger, seeking to contract matrimony with her.<sup>82</sup>

While there may have been some justifiable misgivings regarding the motives and activities of intermediaries, they too placed themselves at risk and were subject to abuse. We have already observed the dilemma of Thomas Fanshaw, coerced into acting beyond his means in order to 'be ride of his patient and customer, Alice Suttill.<sup>83</sup> One Dionisia Archer also took a gamble when she was charged with delivering a silver ring and a pair of shoes from John Bonham to Margery Ellet, then a servant in the house of Salmon Wilkyns at Tonge. In so doing she met with her aunt, Mistress Wilkyns, in the cherry garden, and 'told her that she had a ring to deliver to Madge her maide, which ring [Dionisia's] awnt toke away from her, and did beate [her] for bringing the same'.<sup>84</sup> In another case, it was alleged that Mary Rolf was a 'principall partie' in procuring the marriage between William Beale and Mary Hale, the step-daughter of William Tanner of Dymchurch, that she gave her consent 'to the stealing or taking away of Mary Hale by William Beale and his confederates', and for her role, was whipped and scourged by Mr. Tanner or his wife before certain of their neighbours of Dymchurch, and turned out of their service.<sup>85</sup>

Although the use of intermediaries in the game of courtship, and the playing of that role, were in part recognized as a gamble, the whole area of courtship represented a field of testing, negotiation, and experimentation between the single and married state, in which the go-between was one popular means of bridging the gap and another aspect of mediation and influence at work. Some parties required several intermediaries to woo on their behalf, or depended upon the same person repeatedly to see to the conclusion of the suit, so that intermediaries were not only important at the moment of crisis, but at various encounters, indeed as we have seen, at every stage of courtship from beginning to end. They acted in the presence of both partners as well as in the absence of one. John Hudson, for example, was specifically asked by Edward Longley after he left Joanna Marchant's company, to deliver a ring of gold to her 'whan he was goon...and to ask her the question whether that she were the same woman and of the same mynde that she was towards him the last tyme that she and he had talk together, and to examyn her of the talk'. Hudson did so, and she declared 'that

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82 C.C.A.L. MS. X/10/12, ff. 122v.-3, *Edmunds v. Hockings* (1564); see also W. Urry, *Christopher Marlowe and Canterbury*, ed., A. F. Butcher (London, 1988), pp. xxxii-xxxiv.

83 See n. 48.

84 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, ff. 74-v., *Bonham v. Ellet* (1560).

85 C.C.A.L. MS. J/J3 58, (20, 28 and 33), *Symons v. Spayne* (1598).

there was faith and trowth between her and Longley of marriage, and sayd that she wold never forsake hym so long as she lyved'. She accepted the ring 'very gladly and willingly of herty goodwill without any forcement seaming very willing to have hym to her husband, and apon the receipt of the ring required [Hudson] to have her commended to him'.<sup>86</sup>

The importance of intermediaries in the process of courtship was not only a recognized, and frequently employed, cultural phenomenon, it involved the use of prime and secondary movers with different degrees of influence, and suggests the existence of a hierarchy of intervention, albeit a flexible one. The fifty-eight-year-old yeoman, John Beere, fearing himself unable to speak on William Saunder's behalf to his father, and believing that 'he could do nothing with his father', spoke instead to the curate of the parish, desiring him to solicit for the goodwill of Edward Saunders in the marriage between his son and Susan Woollet.<sup>87</sup> While John Beere transferred his given responsibility to a higher authority, Margery Overye sought the help of Robert Austen more directly, requesting that her intended, Thomas Launsfield, obtain Austen's consent to their marriage 'because she sayd she thought that noe man was soe likely or more likely to get her freinds goodwill then (he)'.<sup>88</sup> The need to acquire the favour and goodwill of intermediaries such as Robert Austen, and even of less reputable characters like Agnes Butterwick and the meddlesome Cicely Goodstone,<sup>89</sup> testifies to their implicit power to make a match or obstruct it.

Although most of the go-betweens, as we have seen, were unlikely to have been professionals, and unlikely to have conformed to the model of formal, expert marriage brokerage - ranging instead from the aged and respectable, to the marginal characters at the other end of the spectrum - all may nevertheless be regarded as go-betweens in some sense. The pervasiveness of their use suggests a degree at least of formalized procedure in marriage negotiations, even among less prosperous rural folk in the communities and provinces of sixteenth-century Kent. Their significance was not, however, confined to the conduct of courtship, for they operated in their various guises (such as that of arbitrator, chaperone, ally, persuader and counsel), within existing marriages, as well as outside of marriage, in the affairs of law and finance. In the highly personalized and negotiable state of the 'moral economy', where every relationship might be considered polyvalent, intermediaries (like gifts and tokens) were used to negotiate all kinds of relationships and transactions. It is suggested that their

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86 C.C.A.L. MS. X/10/12, ff. 280v.-2, *Longley v. Marchant* (1566).

87 C.C.A.L. MS. X/11/2, ff. 62v.-3v., *Woollet v. Saunders* (1590).

88 C.C.A.L. MS. X/11/4, ff. 130v.-2v., *Launsfield v. Overye* (1601)

89 See nn. 43 and 44.

participation in the conduct of courtship shows that their role was not random, but purposeful, and in some respects regulatory.

In courtship, go-betweens served when couples lived in close proximity, but were also prepared to make journeys to bridge physical distances between prospective partners. In so doing they performed a vital function in the maintenance of liaisons between couples who may not have lived as near neighbours for the total duration of their courtship. The following chapter will attempt a fresh examination of such courtship horizons since questions of distance and location were further mechanisms and determinants that might facilitate or hinder the making of marriage.

## CHAPTER 4

### COURTSHIP HORIZONS IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY: 'I WILL GO WITH THEE TO ANY PLACE YF IT WERE TO THE WORLDES END'<sup>1</sup>

#### I

While the testimonies given by litigants in matrimonial suits are, as we have seen, often expressive of the sentiments and varied activities of courtship, they are more vague and reticent about the actual *origins* of specific relationships, for, while a range of possibilities and circumstances are suggested, the significant moment and location when a couple met and where a courtship began, are less easy to define. In his pertinent reminder that courtship was 'a continuous activity', Macfarlane stated further that 'the numerous and varied occasions where courtship began and took place are partly to do with high geographical mobility'.<sup>2</sup> The intention here will be to examine both these aspects: focusing firstly, on the distances over which potential marriage partners initiated and conducted their affairs, and secondly, exploring more closely the likely auspiciousness of time and place occasioned by such interactions. Assuming that courtship horizons are partly indicative of marital choice, this chapter seeks to elucidate some of the mechanisms involved in choosing a partner, through an understanding of the spatial context within which personal relationships were developed.

That physical mobility was the common experience of most people living in pre-industrial England has been widely shown in several studies.<sup>3</sup> Certain laws

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1 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/4, f. 88v., *Pidgeon v Hastling* (1601). The term 'courtship-horizons' was used by C. Phythian-Adams, *Re-thinking English Local History*, Department of English Local History Occasional Papers, 4th ser., 1 (Leicester, 1987), p. 41.

2 Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, p. 296.

3 E.g. P. Clark and D. Souden eds., *Migration and Society in Early Modern England*, (London, 1987); P. Clark, 'The migrant in Kentish towns 1580-1640', in P. Clark and P. Slack eds., *Crisis and Order in English Towns 1500-1700. Essays in Urban History* (London, 1972) pp. 117-63; H. Hanley, 'Population mobility in Buckinghamshire, 1578-1583', *Local Population Studies* 15 (Autumn 1975), 33-9; M. Siraut, 'Physical mobility in Elizabethan Cambridge', *Local Population Studies* 27, (Autumn 1981), 65-70; A. S. Kussmaul, 'The ambiguous mobility of farm servants', *Economic History Review* 2nd ser., 34 (1981), 222-35; Zell, *Industry in the Countryside*, pp. 80-5.



or tendencies of migration,<sup>4</sup> complicated by diverse local, economic and demographic circumstances, by differences in institutional features, by changes over time, and by the vagaries of individual background and motivation,<sup>5</sup> made the structure and dynamics of mobility a complex one. Nevertheless, movement between places was, characteristically, highly localized and 'circular', with 'servants, apprentices, would-be spouses, and others out to better themselves, travelling fairly limited distances, to a neighbouring town or village, usually within an area defined by traditional notions of a sub-regional "country"'.<sup>6</sup> Often contained within the county, moves which were largely restricted to horizons of 10-15 miles were pervasive from the late Middle Ages to the early nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> The post-Restoration movement of servants in husbandry, although frequent, was geographically circumscribed,<sup>8</sup> while in the 16th and 17th centuries, their urban counterparts in East Anglia usually migrated from distances of only 8 to 20 miles.<sup>9</sup> London's immigrants in the seventeenth century, in

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4 See P. Clark and D. Souden, 'Introduction', in Clark and Souden eds., *Migration and Society*, pp. 11-48 (esp. pp. 13-20); Phythian-Adams, *Re-thinking English Local History*, pp. 35-6.

5 For factors influencing mobility, and for further discussion of variations according to region, town and country, status groups and gender, see. Clark and Souden eds., *Migration and Society*, p. 29; P. Clark, 'Migration in England during the late 17th and early 18th centuries', in *ibid.*, pp. 213-52 (especially pp. 220-36); P. Clark, 'Migrants in the city: the process of social adaptation in English towns 1500-1800', in *ibid.*, pp. 267-91 (especially pp. 267-8); P. Clark, 'The migrant in Kentish towns 1580-1640', pp. 123-33; J.Patten, 'Patterns of migration and movement of labour to three pre-industrial East Anglian towns', in Clark and Souden *ibid.*, pp. 77-106; J.Boulton, 'Neighbourhood migration in early modern London', in Clark and Souden, *ibid.*, pp. 107-49 (p. 133); Hanley, 'Population mobility', p. 36; L. R. Poos, 'Population turnover in medieval Essex: the evidence of some early-fourteenth-century tithing lists', in L. Bonfield, R. Smith and K. Wrightson eds., *The World We Have Gained. Histories of Population and Social Structure* (Oxford 1986) pp. 1-22, (p. 4); V. B. Elliott, 'Single women in the London marriage market: age, status and mobility, 1598-1619', in R. B. Outhwaite ed., *Marriage and Society. Studies in the Social History of Marriage* (London, 1981) pp. 81-100.

6 Clark, 'Migration in England', p. 215.

7 See Poos, 'Population turnover in medieval Essex', p. 4 for continuities in the migration pattern, and Phythian-Adams, *Re-thinking English Local History*, pp. 32-4 for references to localized mobility within territorial boundaries. Also J. D. Chambers, *Population, Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial England* (Oxford, 1972), p. 45. In particular Clark, 'Migration in England', pp. 223, 228 suggests a radius of little more than 10 miles in the period 1660-1730, and Hanley, 'Population mobility', pp. 35-6 found that 68% of his sample moved 15 miles or less. For short-range residential mobility within London in the seventeenth century, see Boulton, 'Neighbourhood migration'. For the localized mobility of the Kent Wealden population, see, Zell, *Industry in the Countryside*, pp. 84-5.

8 Kussmaul, 'The ambiguous mobility of farm servants', pp. 228, 233-4.

9 Patten, 'Patterns of migration', pp. 86-7.

common with other towns, included many of marriageable age <sup>10</sup> and, more generally, the fact that the most mobile element of the population comprised a workforce significantly made up of young, unattached men and women, meant that a fund of marriage partners was continually in circulation between residences, and provided circumstances which ensured opportune moments for courtship to proceed.<sup>11</sup>

The experiences of single women in the London marriage market would seem to indicate that mobility was indeed one factor which might affect the timing and finding of suitable partners and the extent to which courtship was supervised,<sup>12</sup> while for some, the expectation of marriage may have motivated moves to and from towns,<sup>13</sup> and predisposed those engaged in agricultural service to change their place of residence in search of a spouse.<sup>14</sup> Small parishes, in particular, offered fewer eligible partners of appropriate standing and interest. The lack of marital opportunities in such places, and the problem of unlawful marriage within prohibited degrees, might have prompted exogamous matches,<sup>15</sup> but at the same time, countervailing pressures, family and other ties, considerations such as cost <sup>16</sup> and travel,<sup>17</sup> perceptions of distance and locality, and restrictions imposed by natural and cultural frontiers,<sup>18</sup> could have encouraged choices made in geographical proximity.

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<sup>10</sup> Boulton, 'Neighbourhood migration', p. 109; Elliott, 'Single women', p. 90. For age at migration, see also Goldberg, 'Marriage, migration, servanthood and life-cycle', p. 148; Patten, 'Patterns of migration', p. 80 (citing P. Spufford); Clark, 'Migration in England', pp. 226-7; Clark, 'The migrant in Kentish towns', p. 124.

<sup>11</sup> For service and child-exchange between households, see McCracken, 'The exchange of children in Tudor England', *passim*. The importance of service in the maturation of youth is treated by I. K. Ben-Amos, 'Service and the coming of age of young men in seventeenth-century England', *Continuity and Change* 3, 1(1988), 41-64, and I. K. Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England*, (New Haven and London, 1994).

<sup>12</sup> Elliott, 'Single women', esp. pp. 84, 97.

<sup>13</sup> E.g. Goldberg, 'Marriage, migration, servanthood and life-cycle', p. 148; Siraut, 'Physical mobility', p. 68. For marriage as a means of effective integration into an urban community, see Clark, 'Migrants in the city', pp. 270-1. Cf. Laslett, *Family Life and Illicit Love*, p. 70, on marital migration in the villages of Clayworth and Cogenhoe.

<sup>14</sup> Kussmaul, 'The ambiguous mobility of farm servants', p. 225. Also on settlement of servants, see Hanley, 'Population mobility', p. 37.

<sup>15</sup> Clark and Souden eds., *Migration and Society*, p. 13; Carlson, 'Courtship in Tudor England', p. 24.

<sup>16</sup> For parish fees, see J. Boulton, 'Itching after private marryings? marriage customs in seventeenth-century London', *London Journal* 16, 1 (1991), 15-34 (pp. 16-19).

<sup>17</sup> R. Phillips, *Putting Asunder. A History of Divorce in Western Society*, (Cambridge, 1988), p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> Clark and Souden eds., *Migration and Society*, pp. 26-7; Phythian-Adams, *Re-thinking English Local History*, esp. pp. 30, 35-6.

The distance over which regular personal contact might be maintained was inevitably determined by what was feasible, and by how far suitors and lovers could and would journey.<sup>19</sup> Living within close range of one another *at the time of marriage* would, therefore, have been predictable, but it did not necessarily mean that this had hitherto been the case. 'Marrying someone who has always lived a mile or two away' was quite different from 'marrying someone whom one has only known for a year or two because he or she has recently moved from elsewhere...'<sup>20</sup> Writing about urban relations, and the marriage choices of St. Saviour's inhabitants, Boulton notes that 'place of residence does not tell us anything about period of residence and it is possible therefore that many brides and grooms may have been inhabiting the parish for only a short time, as servants, apprentices or lodgers before their marriage'.<sup>21</sup>

The record of deponents' mobility experience was probably seldom complete,<sup>22</sup> and using parish registers to understand marriage horizons may be misleading, because the place of residence recorded solely on the eve of wedding, obscures any previous moves. Furthermore, while the apparent custom of marrying in the bride's parish, meant that it was usually immigrant husbands who could be traced,<sup>23</sup> neither place mentioned would necessarily indicate choices made by the couple concerning ultimate place of settlement.<sup>24</sup>

Bearing in mind these reservations, while courtship may not have been 'a particularly in-bred affair with village natives courting and marrying each other',<sup>25</sup> local studies of marriage horizons do confirm that most marriages occurred over a short distance. At Easingwold, between 1644 and 1812, the majority of chosen partners were resident in the parish. Of the 33% from outside,

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19 Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, p. 261; Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, p. 51; Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, p. 110. For a hypothetical local scale of interaction, see, J. Millard, 'A new approach to the study of marriage horizons', *Local Population Studies*, 28 (Spring 1982), 10-31 (p. 13).

20 Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, pp. 261-2.

21 J. Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society. A London Suburb In The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 234.

22 Boulton, 'Neighbourhood migration', p. 137; Clark, 'Migration in England', p. 218; Clark, 'The migrant in Kentish towns', pp. 119-20.

23 E.g. Boulton, 'Itching after private marryings', p. 18; B. Maltby, 'Easingwold marriage horizons', *Local Population Studies* 2 (Spring 1969), 36-9 (p. 36); Laslett, *Family Life and Illicit Love*, p. 70; E. A. Wrigley, 'Age at marriage in early modern England', *Family History* 12 (1982), 219-34 (pp. 229-30); E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, 'English population history from family reconstitution: summary results 1600-1799', *Population Studies* 37(1983), 157-84 (p. 163).

24 Phythian-Adams, *Re-thinking English Local History*, pp. 35, 41.

25 Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, p. 110.

only 10% came from more than 10 miles away.<sup>26</sup> Eversley stated that 'generally speaking, marriages between persons resident in the same parish, and those involving a partner from an adjoining parish or one within a five-mile radius, account for 75-80 per cent of all marriages, and if we extend the radius to fifteen miles, we are likely to include all except an insignificant fraction of places of origins of partners'.<sup>27</sup> As late as 1800, about 90% of Lancashire villagers who were of labouring or artisan status, chose brides 'from within 10 miles, and all but a negligible proportion from within 20 miles',<sup>28</sup> while the Midland parish of Claybrooke had a parochial endogamy rate of about 85% between 1771 and 1841.<sup>29</sup> Calculations from East London, and from the parish register of St. Saviour's, Southwark, similarly show that in the seventeenth century, 'marriage horizons were relatively restricted'.<sup>30</sup> Finding 'little significant difference between the marriage horizons of each sex', what was characteristic of marriage choices was geographical endogamy, with 83% choosing partners from within the parish boundary, and an additional 5% looking to the immediate neighbourhood.<sup>31</sup>

The pattern of marrying within a limited radius may have existed 'not only in the age of parish registers where such figures are calculable, but also probably long before', as indications from 11th-century Hertfordshire suggest.<sup>32</sup> Using the evidence of medieval Act books, Helmholz identified that 38 of 78 marriage contract cases in 15th-century York, and 21 of 42 cases in Canterbury between 1411 and 1420, concerned partners who came from the same parish, but he was doubtful about the meaning of these findings. 'In themselves these figures do not prove a great deal about population mobility', he wrote. 'They may be unrepresentative of marriage in general, and I have not been able to calculate the average distance between parishes'.<sup>33</sup>

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26 Maltby, 'Easingwold marriage horizons', pp. 37, 39.

27 Cited in Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, p. 261.

28 Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, p. 51.

29 Phythian-Adams, *Re-thinking English Local History*, pp. 40-1.

30 Boulton, 'Neighbourhood migration', p.135.

31 Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society*, pp. 235-6.

32 Phythian-Adams, *Rethinking English Local History*, p. 34.

33 Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 80-1. The figures are, however, provided to suggest that spouses were commonly sought from outside.

## II

It is the aim of this chapter to pursue this very inquiry. Through a detailed study of such evidence for the Canterbury diocese between 1475 and 1600, basing the analysis upon precisely the kind of calculation which Helmholz did not attempt, the Act books will be used to explore further the question of such horizons which may more appropriately be considered those of *courtship*, rather than purely those of marriage. The analysis which follows is restricted to the use of litigants' places of residence, and to the spatial relationship between places where the record is complete for each party. The information featured here is drawn from actions styled simply in the books as matrimonial, or spousal cases. Other forms of marriage causes, and suits for divorce or separation, have not been included. Nor has it been possible to assess the evidence with reference to, for example, age and status distinctions.

When examined in conjunction with the corresponding church court depositions, it becomes apparent that the marital status given in these Act books is not consistently specified. Used on their own, the books would provide a misleading impression of remarriage figures. Both sources were further compared in order to establish the significance of the places named in the Act books, for, given the frequency of mobility, the practice of living-in service as opposed to occasional hiring, and the difference between place of birth and that of residence, what was actually recorded required some clarification. For all the richness of biographical detail which prefaced individual witness accounts, it was sadly not the practice of the court to register such information where the plaintiff and defendant were concerned. Nevertheless, the parties were sometimes stated to be of a particular parish, and often it is possible to deduce this from the rather jumbled narratives, as circumstantial details in the depositions touch upon their place of habitation or their family's parish of residence, the place of work, of courtship, of rendezvous, of betrothal, of common fame, or of marriage and subsequent settlement.

A complementary study of the two sources reveals that the parish named in the Act Books was not the litigants' place of origin. The widow Thomasine Rayner, for example, was recorded as being of Lydd, where she and her father evidently resided, but she was born in the parish of Woodchurch.<sup>34</sup> The place given in the Act books referred instead to that of domicile, the entries according by and large with the information gleaned from the depositions, which embraced

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<sup>34</sup> C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/18, ff. 45, 62v.-3, *Dale v. Rayner* (1578); MS. Y/3/16, f.129.

the varied situations of independent or shared accommodation, residence with either or both parents, with relatives, masters or mistresses. At times, the peripatetic nature of service made it difficult to establish any clear parochial identity. Richard Bonnam, household servant to William Gybbes of Sturry, deposed 'that he ys of that parryshe most commonly where he may gett woorke, and not certeyne in any one parryshe but ys subiecte to my lorde of *Canterbury* jurisdiction'.<sup>35</sup> Place of residence did not, of course, necessarily correspond with place of service, in circumstances where employees did not live with their employers, and the retrospective character of deposition evidence which recalled former residences and intermediate moves, would further account for discrepancies in the otherwise concurring series of records. Very occasionally there was some internal contradiction. Marion Rogers was apparently living with her uncle in Tenterden at the time of the incident deposed, and in one deposition it was stated that she 'was of *parishe* of Faversham, but now ... is dwellinge in the *parishe* of Tenterden', but in another account she was said to be lately of Tenterden, and now of Faversham.<sup>36</sup> Changes in residence between the time recollected by individuals and the time when a particular case came to court and was recorded in the Acta meant that, theoretically at least, the information provided in the Act books was more contemporary. Elizabeth Hathe of Pluckley, for example, had evidently moved from the parish of Rainham where she had dwelt as John Mendam's maidservant,<sup>37</sup> while some litigants moved even during the course of court proceedings. Among them, Joan Williams was found to be of St. Andrew's, Canterbury at the time of citation, and later of St. Peter's parish.<sup>38</sup> But the Act books themselves might not always specify the most recent changes. Joan Parker, who 'since the last court day', was of the parish of Adisham, was nevertheless recorded as being of Sandwich.<sup>39</sup>

In seeking to evaluate the dynamics of courtship horizons, a further point of clarification should be made concerning the relevance of the places identified in that source. Like marriage registers, if studied in isolation, no conclusions can be drawn regarding choice of residence subsequent to marriage, had this been the outcome. The location mentioned in the Act books represents at least a terminal point of contact in what might have been an extended, and shifting courtship

35 C.C.A.L., MS X/10/11, f. 35, *Bramelo v. Bonnam* (1568). In the Act books, he is described as being from Chilham; *ibid.* MS. Y/2/25, f. 445v.

36 C.C.A.L., MSS. X/10/7., f. 188; X/10 15, f. 249v., *Austen v. Rogers* (1567).

37 C.C.A.L., MSS. X/10/12, ff. 36v.-9v.; X/2/26, f. 135, *Norman v. Hathe* (1563).

38 C.C.A.L., MSS. X/10/17, ff. 89, 92v.; Y/2/30, f. 252, *Levet v. Williams* (1574).

39 C.C.A.L., MSS. Y/2/16, f. 40; X/10/3, f. 19, *Mondaye v. Parker* (1546).

scene, but it affords no guide as to what was the customary place of settlement in circumstances where marriage was successfully resolved. Daniel Defoe's later account of marshmen in Essex annexing brides from neighbouring upland areas, provides a literary example of post-marital residence in the groom's parish,<sup>40</sup> and it might be inferred from the appropriate historical records that such was the normal practice.<sup>41</sup> The depositions to some extent confirm this picture. Alice Fryer, a servant in Hothfield, acknowledged that Richard Rolf had asked her whether or not she could be content to go and live with him in his parish of Minster, Thanet,<sup>42</sup> and in the case of *Fells v. Bowes*, the collar-maker, Nicholas Fells hired a house in his parish of Milton near Sittingbourne purposely for himself and Agnes Bowes to dwell in after marriage, her father having recently died in Borden, although she still had 'friends' living in the Isle of Sheppey.<sup>43</sup> The process of testing the ground, and of being introduced into a community was not, however, only experienced by the presumptive bride. It was reported that William Horne had confessed to having made a promise of marriage to Elizabeth Arion, an Irish woman, dwelling some time in Stowting, 'that he meant to marry with her at Canterbury and go from then to London and so to Ireland and there remaine a yeare and longer yf he liked the countrye but yf he liked not of yt then he would return again to his house at Stowting'.<sup>44</sup>

At times the depositions recount the places where marriage partners celebrated their wedding, albeit often surreptitiously, and where they either intended to, or did actually, live afterwards. While clandestine marriages were frequently performed outside the parties' parish of residence,<sup>45</sup> and while it has been shown elsewhere that this was often the case with weddings by licence,<sup>46</sup> even in open situations, diverse personal circumstances presumably helped to determine where couples chose to marry, impinging likewise upon decisions made for later conjugal settlement. For some, the desired or resulting residential arrangements did indeed involve the independent provision of newly secured

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40 M. Dobson, "'Marsh fever'- the geography of malaria in England', *Journal of Historical Geography* 6, 4 (1980), 357-89 (p. 374), cited in Phythian-Adams, *Rethinking English Local History*, p. 35.

41 E.g. Phythian-Adams, *Rethinking English Local History*, p. 40.

42 C.C.A.L., MSS. X/10/9, ff. 27v.-8, 32v.-, 34v.-7; Y/2/26, f. 31v., *Rolf v. Fryer* (1563).

43 C.C.A.L., MSS. X/11/4, ff. 4-6v.; Y/3/3, f. 7, (1600).

44 C.C.A.L., MSS. X/11/3, ff. 108-9v., 110v., 111v.-12v.; Y/3/2, f. 167, *Arion v. Horne* (1598-9).

45 E.g. C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/2, ff. 41v.-4, 62v.-3v., 73-5, 173v.-4v., 180v., 192-4, *Wollet v. Saunders* (1590).

46 Boulton, 'Itching after private marryings', p. 15. The reasons for such private marriages, were, however, complex, *ibid.*, p. 26.

accommodation.<sup>47</sup> For Dorothy Prowde and John Gibbs of Ash, expectations were quite different. Dorothy was allegedly unperturbed at the prospect of adjusting to pre-existing conditions in his home, and may even have welcomed the possibility of sharing quarters with the then resident couple whom she said, 'would be good company for her'.<sup>48</sup> There were those who would, of course, have appropriated their inheritance, while others depended upon cohabiting with the natural parents or relations of either spouse, however interim the measures were. George Cruttall and Barbara Baull, for instance, were apparently wedded in the parish of Ospringe, (one witness specifically observing the weapons carried by the groom and others to the church ceremony), the report being furthermore that they dwelt in the house of Cruttall's father-in-law in Faversham ever since the said marriage.<sup>49</sup>

The local network of family and 'friends' might have influenced ultimate residential options,<sup>50</sup> and occasionally, cases of divorce lent helpful additional testimony, as they exposed affinal tensions in close proximity, and profiled the sometimes chequered moves of married couples. For a year and a half after they were married, the Tresses lived together in Canterbury in the house of Mary's father, Richard Gawnt. Whether this had provoked seeds of conflict can only be surmised. Despite subsequent moves, Walter Tresse was heard to say 'that he would kill Mr Gawnte ... thoughe he wer hanged at (his) door', and 'that yf any of his wives freinds did ever anger or trouble him he would be revenged upon his wife saieng that an other country was as good for him as this'.<sup>51</sup> In another suit for divorce, it was the restless fortunes of John Russell and Ursula Russell alias Barrow which were portrayed. On the eve of their marriage, John dwelt in the city of Canterbury, while Ursula lived in the village of Alkham, about twelve miles distant, where she was employed as maidservant to her aunt. Married in Alkham church, they remained in that parish for two years, moving then to Tetbury in Gloucestershire. It would appear that John Russell later travelled to Barwick (Somerset), ostensibly to see his father-in-law, before his final desertion and remarriage. Located at some time in Buckinghamshire, London, and Kent, it is perhaps unsurprising that his place of abode was left unrecorded in the Act

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47 E.g. C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/15, ff. 160-2v., *Ottringham v. Grigge* (1567).

48 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/2, ff. 28v.-9v., *Prowde v. Gibbs* (1589-90).

49 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/16, ff. 107v.-12v., *Filpot v. Baull alias Cruttall* (1575).

50 Boulton, 'Neighbourhood migration', p. 135.

51 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/6, ff. 198v.-201, 215-17, 220v.-25, 227v.-230 (esp. ff. 199-v., 217, 221v., 225, 228-v).



books, and that of his abandoned spouse who pleaded for divorce, similarly uncertain.<sup>52</sup>

### III

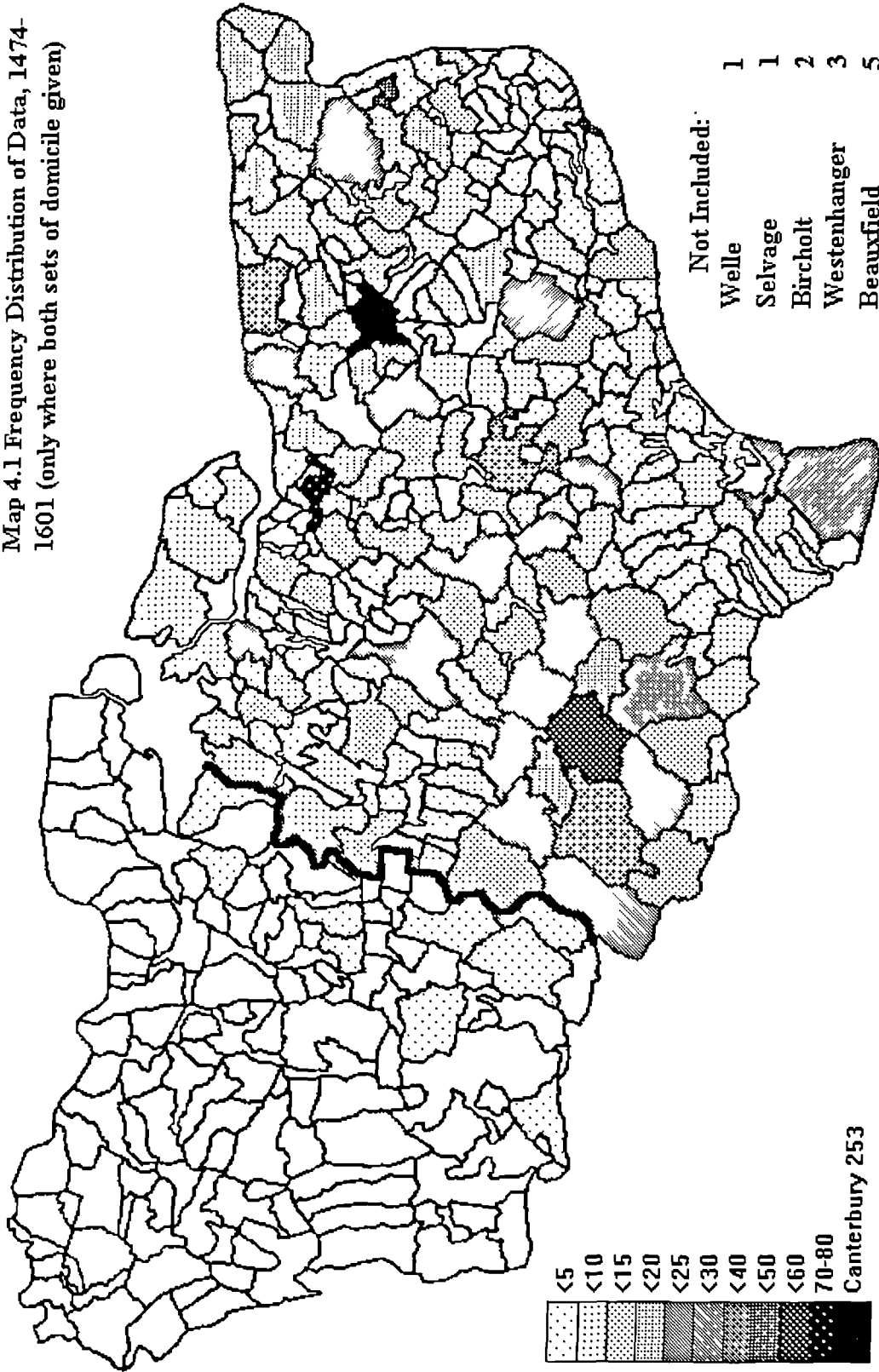
The purpose of the foregoing discussion has been to define the significance of the places documented in the Act books in order to give a better understanding of the point of reference, and the application of this data, in the succeeding analysis. Although the information given as to the whereabouts of potential marriage partners at a critical time in their relations may appear narrow in its situational focus, the evidence is particularly valuable because it enables us to examine the geographical ambit of social interaction framing the activities of courtship which may, or may not, end in marriage. Such an examination would complement the demographer's preoccupation with duly completed marriages recorded in the parish registers, because it would theoretically provide a preview of marriage in the process of ongoing negotiation. The registers may be effectively used to estimate the proportion of parochial out marriage, but the Act books can be used further, to demonstrate a more fluid working model of reciprocal intercommunication, and to ascertain the normative perimeters of courtship.

The frequency distribution of the evidence, plotted on map 4.1, which is essentially confined within diocesan bounds, shows how extensively the Consistory Court of Canterbury impinged upon the amorous affairs of people all over the diocese. Nearly every parish is represented. The primacy of the city of Canterbury, and the lesser, but still substantial, significance of some other market towns and of parishes in the generally populous parts of the Weald, would seem to reflect regional economic and demographic conditions to some extent at least. (See also map I.2 for the population density of the diocese). It was sometimes difficult to identify the given location, either because of problematic spelling, or because the records did not distinguish between parishes bearing the prefix 'old' or 'new', 'east' or 'west', as for example, in the case of Romney. Where identical place-names occurred, such as Stone (near Faversham), and Stone (in the Isle of Oxney), the analysis erred on the conservative side by underestimating distance, but was clearly inappropriate for cases which involved both litigants residing in the same parish. In such cases, the more plausible place of residence was included. Appendix 2, Table A2.1 presents the figures for individual places, and

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<sup>52</sup> C.C.A.L., MSS. X/10/19, ff. 172-4, 184v.-5v.; Y/3/21, f. 87, *Russell v. Russell* (1585).

Map 4.1 Frequency Distribution of Data, 1474-1601 (only where both sets of domicile given)



differentiates the number of times marriage partners were found living within the same parish, from the instances when exogamous relationships were formed.

The assumption that people living in a centre like Canterbury and seeking partners within the city, did not have to travel at all, is of course inaccurate, and renders the notion of zero miles, somewhat misleading. Calculations of distance which were undertaken probably underrates the number of miles separating potential couples. Since the actual route was seldom ever straightforward, measurements made 'as the crow flies' between parish churches marked on an ordnance survey map, are inevitably approximate.<sup>53</sup> Distances of less than five miles seldom, in fact, exceeded three miles, and very often comprised parishes adjacent to one another. Throughout the period considered, 47% of litigants were apparently resident in the same parish, with just over 70% forming relationships within a 5-mile radius. Extended to 10 miles, the figure rose to 84%, and stood at 93% for contact under 15 miles (see Table 4.1). There was clearly a marked emphasis upon highly localized courtship pursuits, which is consistent with previous studies of marriage choices, and may help us to assess the typicality of court records. Despite the overwhelming evidence for restricted horizons being the norm of courtship behaviour, it is also important to identify the apparent outer limits within which marriage communications were spatially circumscribed. When examined over time, furthermore, it would appear that it was becoming less common to choose partners from within the same parish. Figure 4.1 and Table 4.2 measure the late sixteenth-century expansion in courtship horizons, based on a fifteen-year moving average.

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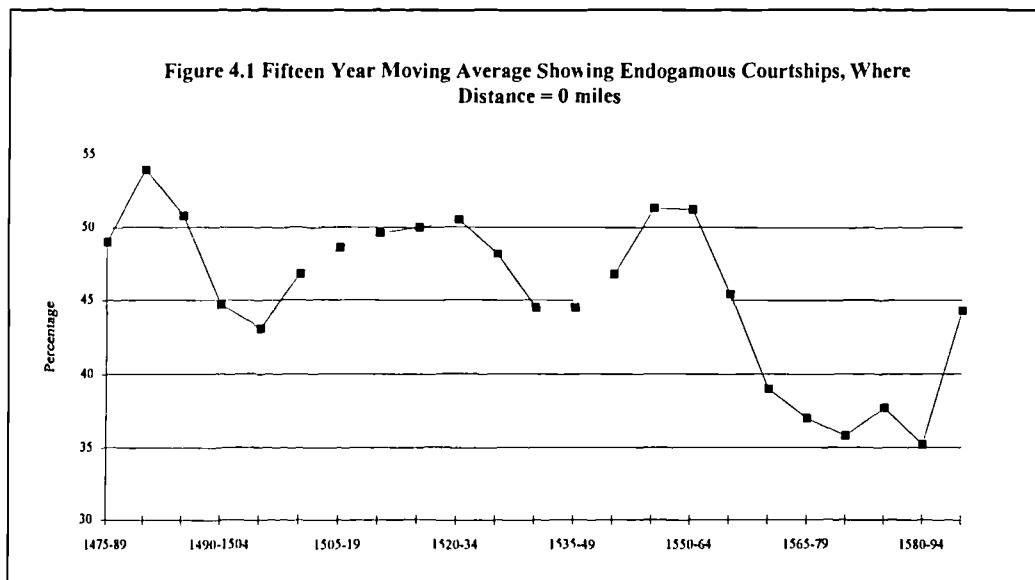
<sup>53</sup> See also Clark, 'The migrant in Kentish towns', pp. 124-5 and 'Migration in England', p. 223.

**Table 4.1: Distance between Domiciles of Matrimonial Litigants Measured over Time, 1475-1599.**  
 (Distances In Miles, Expressed As A Percentage of Total per Quinquennium)

Miles %	0	<5	<10	<15	<20	<25	<30	<35	<40	<45	<50	<55	<60	<65	<70	>70	Total Number of Cases
Date																	
1475-79	40	32.3	10.8	6.2	1.5	3.1	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5						65
1480-84	46.5	30.2	9.3	14													43
1485-89	60.4	8.3	16.7	6.3	2.1	2.1					2.1				2.1		48
1490-94	55.2	13.8	15.5	8.6	3.4					1.7	1.7						58
1495-99	36.8	31.6	15.8	7.9	5.3	2.6											38
1500-04	42	28	14	8	4	4											50
1505-09	50.6	20.7	12.6	6.9	2.3	2.3	1.1	1.1	1.1			1.1					87
1510-14	47.8	24.4	16.7	4.4		3.3	1.1	1.1	1.1			1.1					90
1515-19	47.3	23.7	16.1	7.5	4.3		1.1										93
1520-24	53.6	21.8	10.9	7.3	1.8	3.6						0.9					110
1525-29	49.1	24.1	10.7	8	5.4	0.9	0.9						0.9				112
1530-34	48.8	25	11.9	8.3	2.4	2.4	1.2										84
1535-39	46.7	26.7	6.7	20													15
1540-44	38.1	42.9	7.1	7.1	2.4			2.4									42
1545-49	48.8	26.3	11.3	10		2.5	1.3										80
1550-54	53.5	21	9.3	7	3.5	5.8											86
1555-59	51.6	24.2	8.1	11.3	4.8												62
1560-64	48.6	18.6	14.3	12.9	1.4	2.9									1.4		70
1565-69	36.1	29.5	16.4	8.2	4.9	1.6	1.6									1.6	61
1570-74	32.3	25.8	16.1	19.4	6.5												31
1575-79	42.6	21.3	13.1	11.8	3.3	4.9			1.6								61
1580-84	32.6	28.3	10.9	21.7	2.2	2.2	2.2										46
1585-89	37.9	27.6	27.6	3.4	3.4												29
1590-94	35	15	30	15	5												20
1595-99	60	4	12	20	4												25
1475-1599	47.0	23.8	13.1	9.2	2.9	2.1	0.6	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0	0.1	0.1	1506

**Table 4.2: Fifteen Year Moving Averages of Courtship Distances**

Miles	0	<5	<10	<15	>15
1475-89	49	23.6	12.3	8.8	6.3
1480-94	54	17.4	13.8	9.6	5.2
1485-99	50.8	17.9	16	7.6	7.7
1490-1504	44.7	24.5	15.1	5.5	10.2
1495-1509	43.1	26.8	14.1	7.6	8.4
1500-14	46.8	24.4	14.4	6.4	8
1505-19	48.6	22.9	15.1	6.3	7.1
1510-24	49.6	23.3	14.6	6.4	6.1
1515-29	50	23.2	12.6	7.6	6.6
1520-34	50.5	23.6	11.2	7.9	6.8
1525-39	48.2	25.3	9.8	12.1	4.6
1530-44	44.5	31.5	8.6	11.8	3.6
1535-49	44.5	32	8.4	12.4	2.7
1540-54	46.8	30.1	9.2	8	5.9
1545-59	51.3	23.8	9.6	9.4	5.9
1550-64	51.2	21.3	10.6	10.4	6.5
1555-69	45.4	24.1	12.9	10.8	6.8
1560-74	39	24.6	15.6	13.5	7.3
1565-79	37	25.5	15.2	13.1	9.2
1570-84	35.8	25.1	13.4	17.6	8.1
1575-89	37.7	25.7	17.2	12.3	7.1
1580-94	35.2	23.6	22.8	13.4	5
1585-99	44.3	15.5	23.2	12.8	4.2



The picture of a possible transition from more insular, static communities, to one of enlarged contacts and theoretically a wider pool of available spouses, should be set against the backdrop of deposition evidence surviving from the mid-sixteenth century, which throws light upon the quality of family and local

relations and their role in the process of marriage formation. Significantly, the detailed testimonies which were recorded, concerns a period of apparently increasing fluidity in the marriage arena. The much-noted 'common fame' which deponents attested to, often referred to more than a single parish, reflecting perhaps the potential for a growing nexus of connections, and for the distal spread of reputation and regulation. It could indeed be supposed that the difference between a radius of say two miles and twenty miles was considerable in terms of family, social, economic, and work relations. Whether or not the strength of external pressures on marriage choice, and the maintenance of personal relations and courtship, were directly affected by geographical bounds which were themselves changing, may be gleaned to some extent from the depositions. In their account of Martha Sowtherne's suspected incontinent behaviour with one Mount (the keeper of Mr Edward Boyse's mill in Nonington), witnesses drew attention to the silk girdle which she had received from him, and to the fact that she had sent a pair of garters and brought him a basket of strawberries. It was often reported that Martha, who served Mr. Stace of Upper Hardres, resorted to the mill, and it was believed that 'the mill and Mr Stace's house are 4 miles asunder at least'.<sup>54</sup>

As already shown, travelling distances of a few miles, were commonly part of the pattern of courtship. Although contemporaries may have envisaged the likelihood of making longer journeys, the normative structures implicit in the Act book material would seem to accord with the kind of expectations deduced from the depositions. In the complex unfolding of Judith Symons's case against John Spayne, allegations were made that Spayne's mother sought to prevent the love match between them, and instead did 'privilye' but purposefully 'practize to make a match between (Thomas) Kennet and her'. The widow Dorothy Fittell of Dymchurch claimed that Mistress Spayne had told her 'she would finde a remedy' for the love between her son and Judith, 'and set them further asunder'. Both parties were said to have lamented at some time because of their parting. Judith wept when he 'was gone away from hir', and John Spayne was heard to confess 'that yd did soe greeve him that he was about to go out of the country'. Although his parents' house was situated in the parish of Dymchurch where Judith worked as a servant in the custody of William Tanner, John was probably living at that time in Hinxhill, within reasonable distance for courtship to be maintained, and for planned meetings to take place. It was however assumed, that beyond a certain point, the intervening distance might be sufficient to hinder further marriage communications. In his deposition, Thomas Bryant who was himself a

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54 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/6, ff. 191-v; 194-5, 198-v., *Stace v. Mount* (1593).

sutor to Judith Symons, recalled his conversation with Mistress Spayne touching the imminent match in making between his rival and Judith, 'whereunto Mistress Spayne answered that she would break that match well enoughe & she would set them far enough asunder and so afterward placed her son at Battell in Sussex being 20 miles from Dymchurche or thereabouts'.<sup>55</sup>

The treatment of distance as a psychological experience as well as a matter of physical practicality, may in this case have been coloured by some sense of regional identification, with the perceived threshold being the boundary separating the counties of Kent and Sussex. The ritual incorporation of incoming marriage partners into communities, and the apparent necessity in certain instances for testimonials to be procured by outsiders,<sup>56</sup> suggest a mental construction of notional barriers. Dorothy Browne of the city of Canterbury testified that Thomas Brooke came to her chamber, and later into her bed where they talked of marriage. Lying next to her in only his shirt, and in the presence of one Mary Pynnocke, a girl of 14 or 15 years of age, who lay in the same bed on the other side of Dorothy, Thomas was said to have declared his intention to marry her if he could 'have his frynds good will to marry *with* a Kentishe mayd and to dwell in Kent'.<sup>57</sup> Coming from Bristol (diocese of York?)<sup>58</sup> he was allegedly doubtful about his chances of success in the matter, 'howbeyt he said that at his next coming into this countrye he wold tell hyr how his fryndes liked of yt'.

In his discussion of frontier restrictions on physical mobility, Phythian-Adams remarked that 'where shire and or ancient diocesan boundaries coincide with geographical obstacles, the existence of cultural barriers will also be likely', and that the 'shire divisions of this country (and, indeed, sometimes their major subdivisions, as possibly in the cases of East and West Kent) are extraordinarily ancient'.<sup>59</sup> At times, the recognition of particular territories is expressed openly, as in the case cited above. According to one statement of the negotiations for marriage between Mark Giles of Selling and Katherine Wyborn of Sheldwich, a convenient place was to be appointed for his friends to meet and confer with 'Katherine's frendes of East Kent'.<sup>60</sup> Another deposition given by a fellow-servant, concerning Bartholomew Pigden's suit for matrimony, provided the

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55 C.C.A.L, MSS. X/11/3, ff. 25v.-27v.; X/11/5, ff. 236, 240, 241v., 243v., 255, 256v., 266v., 269v. *Symons v. Spayne* (1598).

56 O'Hara, "'Ruled by my friends'", pp. 23, 27-8.

57 C.C.A.L, MS. X/10/15, ff. 246-7, *Brooke, v. Browne* (1567).

58 C.C.A.L., MS. Y/2/27, f. 118v.

59 Phythian-Adams, *Re-thinking English Local History*, pp. 36, 47.

60 C.C.A.L., MSS. X/10/18, ff. 67-9v.; Y/3/16, f. 106, *Giles v. Wyborn* (1577-8).

evidence that 'a ring out of Est Kent' was brought from Pigden to Mary Willard in Benenden.<sup>61</sup>

When marriage contacts formed outside of the county, or the diocese, are examined in the Act Books, it would seem that the eastern half of Kent was relatively self-contained. While it has not been possible to accumulate evidence for the bordering diocese of Rochester, the material which has been studied suggests that the coincidence of the river Medway with the diocesan boundary created an effective, although not an absolute, partition. Table 4.3 which gives the location and distance of such links shows that marriage partners were perhaps more likely to be found in the neighbouring county of Sussex, than in western Kent, despite the influence of county divisions. If so, this might help to confirm Phythian-Adams's concept of an 'inter-mixed buffer zone' between counties, being an 'area of "overlap"... conspicuous where continuous stretches of homogenous countryside, like the wealden region of Sussex and Kent cut across the county divisions'.<sup>62</sup>

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61 C.C.A.L., MS.X/10/12, f. 114, *Pigden v. Willard* (1564).

62 Phythian-Adams, *Re-thinking English Local History*, p. 36. Regarding the mobility of the Kent Wealden population, migrants rarely came from beyond the county and Sussex, see Zell, *Industry in the Countryside*, p. 85. For further evidence that the county boundary dividing Huntingdonshire from Cambridgeshire 'was clearly perceived as an edge', with most people seeing their marriage horizons as being inside the county, see M. Carter, 'Town or urban society? St Ives in Huntingdonshire, 1630-1740', in C. Phythian-Adams ed., *Societies, Cultures and Kinship, 1580-1850. Cultural Provinces and English Local History* (Leicester, 1993), pp. 77-130.



**Table 4.3: Extra County and Extra-Diocesan Links (by Place and Mileage)**

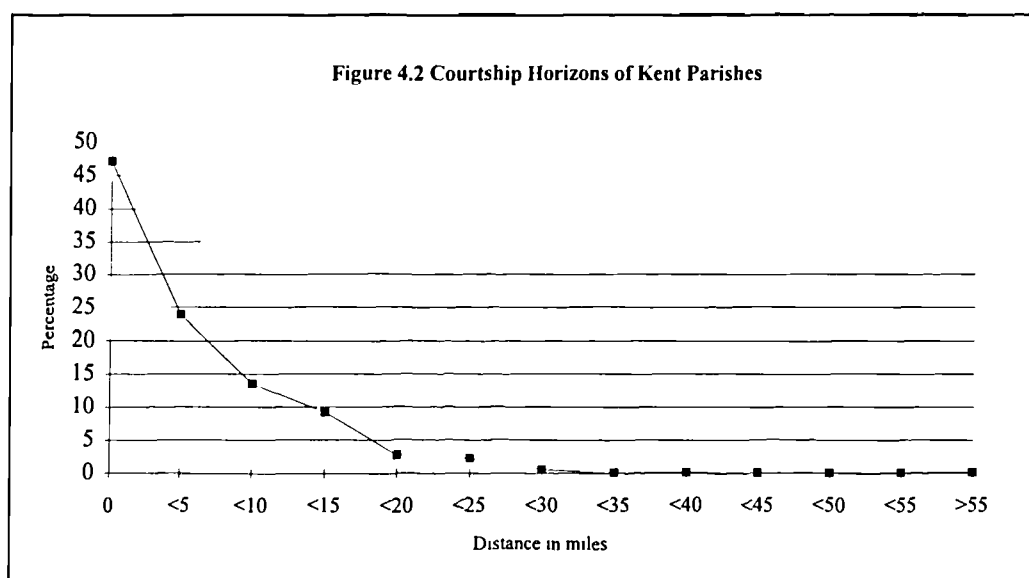
Eastern Kent (Canterbury Diocese)	Western Kent (Rochester Diocese)	Distance in miles	Sussex	Distance in miles	Other	Distance in miles
Ashford			Rye	14.7		
Benenden	East Malling	16.6				
Brookland			East Guildford	4.4		
Canterbury	Hadlow	32.3	Robertsbridge	33.3	London x2 Bristol	54.4
Canterbury						
Chartham	Town (West) Malling	26.6				
Dover					Calais	22
Eastry					Fulham near London	70
Faversham	Rochester	17.8			London	45.4
Frittenden					Madingley (Ely diocese)	
Goudhurst	Horsmonden	2.3				
Hawkhurst			Winchelsea	11.9		
Headcorn			Robertsbridge	14.3		
Lower					Calais	40
Hardres						
Littlebourne			Lindfield	58		
Maidstone			Speldhurst (diocese of Sussex)	15.4		
Marden	Brenchley	4.5				
Marden	Yalding	4.4				
Mersham					Calais	45
Sandhurst			Ewhurst	1.75		
Sittingbourne					London	39.4
Sutton			Rye	19.2	London	36.7
Valence						
Tenterden					Calais	50
Westcliffe near Dover					London	66
Woodchurch	Horsmonden	15.4	Howe	23		
Wye					London	50.5
Wye					Calais	38.6

Kent's geographical position in relation to London and the continent presumably fostered some connections with the metropolis, and with the port of Calais,<sup>63</sup> but what is apparently exposed in the previously cited case of *Tusten v. Allen*, is the still tenuous nature of communications maintained at that distance. Before the solemnization of her marriage with Simon Aunsell in Mersham, the widow Godlen Allen, residing approximately 4½ miles away at Wye, received tokens 'for a remembrance' sent to her from Richard Tusten, who was then temporarily

<sup>63</sup> For links with London and Calais, see, Clark, *English Provincial Society*, p. 11.

away in London. Lamenting his absence, and fearing the machinations of others,, Godlen was said to have weepingly declared her fervent wish for his return home.<sup>64</sup>

In overall statistical terms, the rather marginal significance of attachments made with partners from outside the county and, in particular, the apparent dissociation between the eastern and western halves of Kent, provides a methodological justification for studying the diocese of Canterbury as a regional entity. Appendix 2: Table A2.2 lists the parishes within the diocese alphabetically, and presents the range of marriage contacts for individual places. The total numbers (now based on *persons* rather than cases) recorded within each category of distance were calculated as percentages, and the results displayed in aggregate, in Figure 4.2. If the analysis is taken further, the figures can be reworked to take into account the size and character of particular places, and the possible existence of economic and cultural sub-regions.



Every now and then deponents did, after all, voice their tolerance of, or lack of immunity towards, their environment. Joanne Harewood of Mersham, claimed that 'she could not abide' the air in Folkestone,<sup>65</sup> while in another case, the defendant Richard Bonnam may have had more just cause for being apprehensive. As household servant with Prudence Bramelo to William Gybbes of Sturry, he related the circumstances of his refusal to marry her as hastily as she desired, exposing her anxiety to dispatch the affair, the rumours of her pregnancy, their master's underhand liberality and their mistress's ignorance of what was going on. He also told how Gybbes had declared to him 'that Prudence

<sup>64</sup> See above, Chapter 1, pp. 37-8.

<sup>65</sup> See above, Chapter 1, p. 49.

was syckly and coulede not well a waye, *with thayer* there at Sturrey', commanding him as his servant, and threatening to have him imprisoned if he would not obey, to carry her off into her own country.<sup>66</sup> Such sensitivity to the environment might, however, in other circumstances, be interpreted as a matter of acculturation or allegiance to a community which, by implication, differentiates between places, and particularizes peculiar features. What emerges therefore, is the need to be more specific and discriminating in the analysis, for not only did contemporaries express a conscious sense of their present or future surroundings, they also indicated their identification of distinctive regions. In one instance, Richard Russell of Northgate, Canterbury, and his wife Elizabeth, describing the company of men gathered at evening supper in the house of the recently widowed Mistress Starkey, referred to there being 'divers Weldishe handsom men of the wealld of Kent'.<sup>67</sup>

The type of *pays* was one factor which might affect the geographical pattern of marriage choices. It was found, for example, 'that the large well-populated wealden parishes, which contained numerous dispersed settlements, were likely to be more endogamous than the small under-populated parishes of the wolds', in the early seventeenth century.<sup>68</sup> Previous work on migration fields and marriage horizons, has considered the relationship between demographic, and socio-economic criteria, and the distance of interaction or 'catchment area' of particular places. Jeremy Millard predicted that parishes with large populations would have low *proportions* of extra-parochial marriages but would, paradoxically, form more distant marriage contacts in *absolute terms*. While it has been established that 'urban migration was more geographically extensive', it has also been shown that the individual character of specific urban communities and their hinterland, produced different migratory responses, and that 'in principle, the larger the town, the wider its catchment area', as comparisons between Canterbury, Maidstone, and Faversham in the period 1580-1640 demonstrate.<sup>69</sup>

In proceeding with the analysis of the Act book evidence, distinctions had to be made between types of community, which immediately raised problems of definition and classification.<sup>70</sup> Peter Clark has suggested that settlements with a

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66 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, f. 34v., *Bramelo v. Bonnam* (1568).

67 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/8, ff. 134-5v., 136v.-8v., *Coppyn v. Richard* (1560).

68 Phythian-Adams, *Re-thinking English Local History*, p. 35.

69 Millard, 'A new approach to the study of marriage horizons', pp. 11, 14; Patten, 'Patterns of migration', p. 102; Clark, 'Migration in England', p. 230, and 'The migrant in Kentish towns', p. 126.

70 See, eg., A. Everitt, 'The market towns', in P. Clark ed., *The Early Modern Town* (London, 1976), pp. 168-204; W. G. Hoskins, 'English provincial

population of 1,000 or more were seen by contemporaries to possess an urban identity.<sup>71</sup> Assuming that marriage choice was determined to some extent by economic relations, and that marketing patterns might influence courtship and marriage distance, a hierarchy of communities descending from those which ranked as established urban centres, was somewhat crudely formulated, on the twin basis of population size, and the complexity of socio-economic functions.<sup>72</sup>

The cathedral city of Canterbury, with an estimated population of over 3,000 in the mid-1520s which, by the seventeenth century had nearly doubled, was examined first on its own, and the range and frequency of its external connections plotted on map 4.2. More than two-thirds of Canterbury's marriage litigants would seem to have had partners resident within the city. Of the remaining 30%, contacts were most marked with other towns, with villages in the immediate vicinity and along the coast. Minimal links with the Weald may suggest that the area generated a sufficient number of choices. For a centre which might be expected to form the most distant courtship connections, while also sustaining much larger numbers of internal marriage competitors, Canterbury's horizons were predominantly provincial, and it was just as common for women, as for men living outside the city, to intermix with its inhabitants, (see map 4.3). In the late fifteenth and in the sixteenth centuries, the city did however exhibit some connections further afield (see table 4.4) and there is the slight suggestion in the data that courtships undertaken within the locality of Canterbury itself may have been a little less common at the end of the period, in line with the possible expansion of courtship distances detected for the diocese as a whole (see above Figure 4.1).

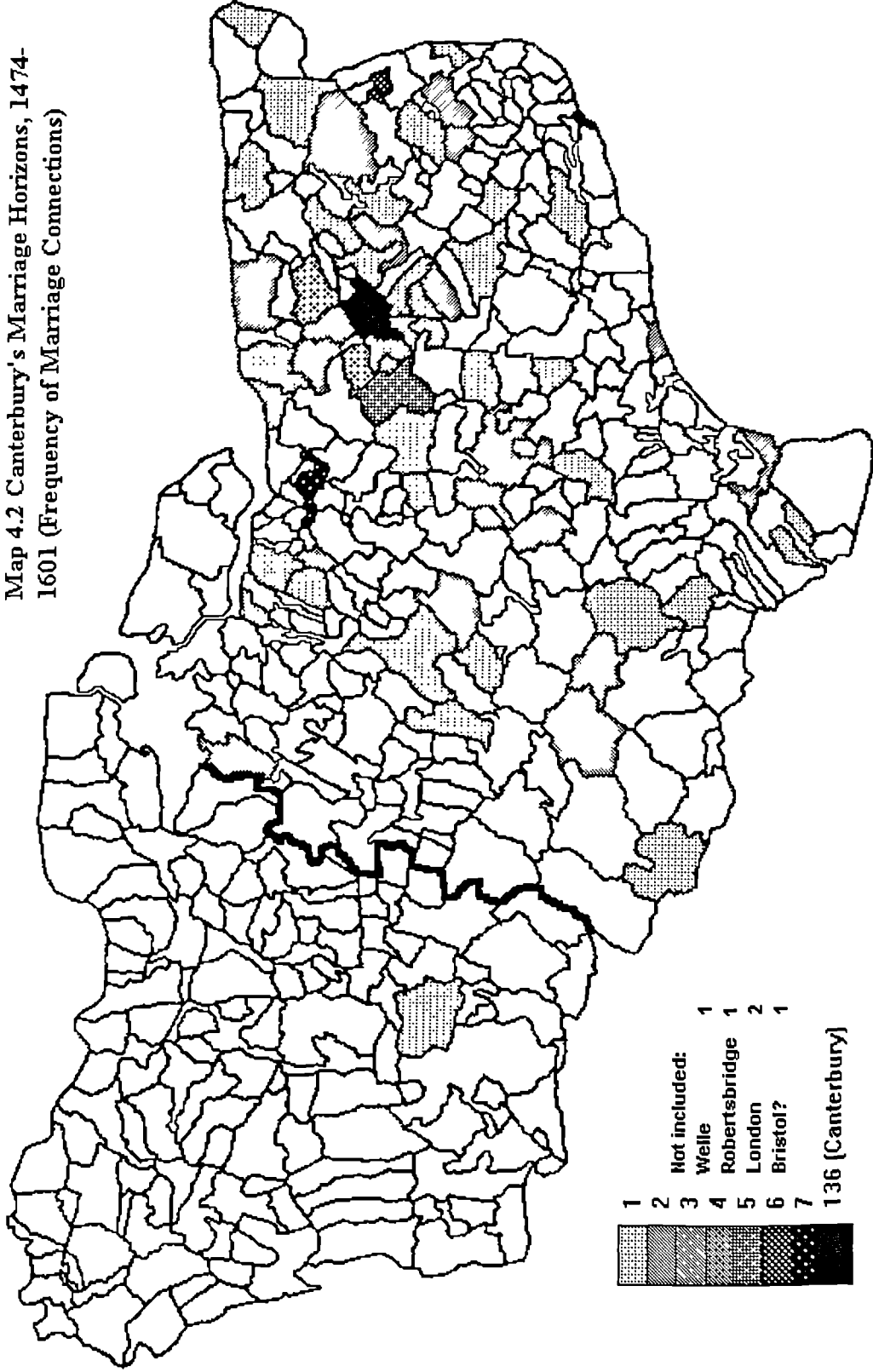
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towns in the early sixteenth century', in *ibid.*, pp. 91-105, and J. F. Pound, 'The social and trade structure of Norwich 1525-1575', in *ibid.*, pp. 129-47.

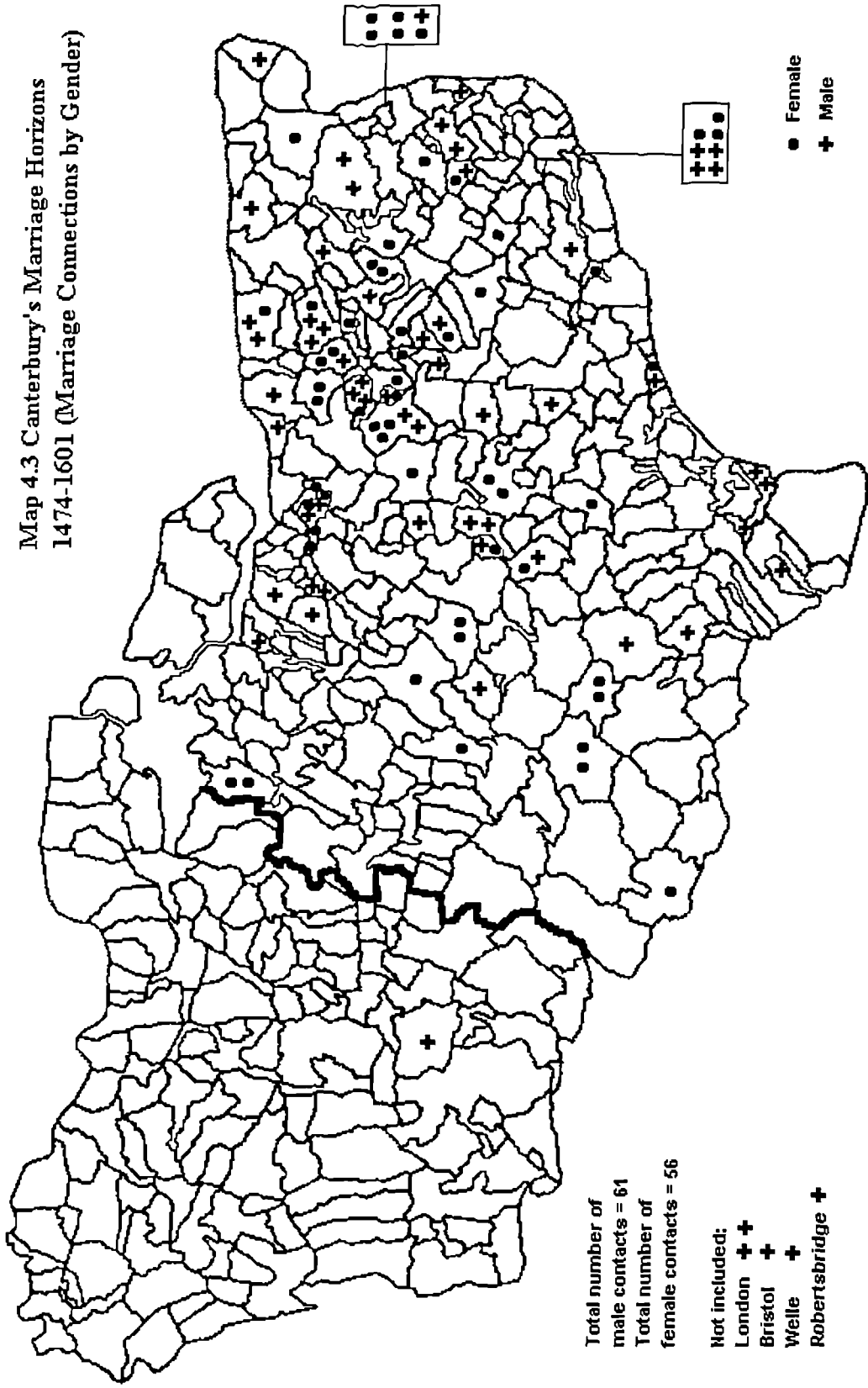
<sup>71</sup> Clark, 'The migrant in Kentish towns', p. 132.

<sup>72</sup> Some approximate population figures for individual shire towns, head cinque port municipalities and other boroughs in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, can be found in Clark, *English Provincial Society*, pp. 8-9; C. W. Chalklin, 'A seventeenth-century market town: Tonbridge', in M. Roake and J. Whyman eds., *Essays in Kentish History*, (London, 1973), pp. 89-99 (p. 89). For market towns, see Everitt, 'The market towns', pp. 178-9. For further population estimates of Canterbury, Faversham, Maidstone, Sandwich, New Romney, Dover and Hythe, see also, Chalklin, *Seventeenth-Century Kent*, pp. 30-1; Tronrud, 'The response to poverty', p. 10, n.2; Tronrud, 'Dispelling the gloom', pp. 10-11; Clark, 'The ownership of books', pp. 97-8.

Map 4.2 Canterbury's Marriage Horizons, 1474-1601 (Frequency of Marriage Connections)



Map 4.3 Canterbury's Marriage Horizons  
1474-1601 (Marriage Connections by Gender)



**Table 4.4: Canterbury's Courtship Horizons, 1474-1599 (Percentage)**

Miles	0	<5	<10	<15	<20	<25	<30	<35	<55	>55	Total number
1474-9	75.0	12.5	6.3	6.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16
1480-9	82.1	7.7	5.1	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0	39
1490-9	44.4	11.1	22.2	22.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	18
1500-9	64.9	10.8	5.4	2.7	2.7	8.1	0.0	2.7	2.7	0.0	37
1510-19	71.4	9.5	4.8	4.8	2.4	4.8	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	42
1520-9	79.2	5.7	3.8	5.7	1.9	3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	53
1530-9	71.4	0.0	0.0	21.4	0.0	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14
1540-9	62.9	8.6	11.4	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	35
1550-9	77.8	11.1	2.8	8.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	36
1560-9	64.3	10.7	0.0	14.3	0.0	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.6	28
1570-9	64.0	16.0	8.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25
1580-9	60.9	4.3	13.0	17.4	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23
1590-9	72.7	4.5	4.5	18.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	22
1474-1599	70.1	8.8	6.2	9.3	1.3	2.8	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.3	388

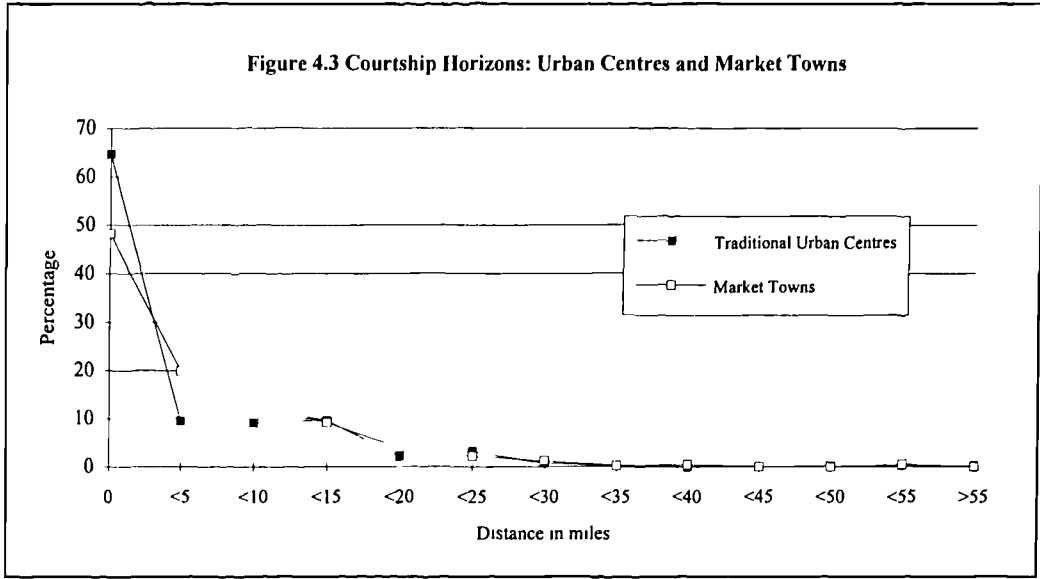
**Table 4.5: The Courtship Horizons of Different Areas and Communities (Percentage)**

Miles	0	<5	<10	<15	<20	<25	<30	<35	<40	<45	<50	<55	>55	Total number
Traditional Urban Centres	64.7	9.6	9.1	9.7	2.1	3.2	0.7	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.1	711
Market Towns	48.3	19.9	13.9	9.2	4.0	2.2	1.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	402
High Weald	52.5	21.0	11.5	7.1	3.8	2.9	0.6	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	480
Wealden Vales	37.6	29.4	15.3	8.2	5.9	1.2	1.2	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	85
Romney Marsh Area	52.8	18.1	11.9	9.8	2.1	3.6	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	193
Isle of Thanet	62.6	14.5	11.5	6.9	1.5	3.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	131
North Kent Coast	44.9	29.9	12.9	8.2	2.0	1.4	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	147
Rural parishes in the North Downs	35.6	32.2	17.8	11.0	1.7	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.4	236

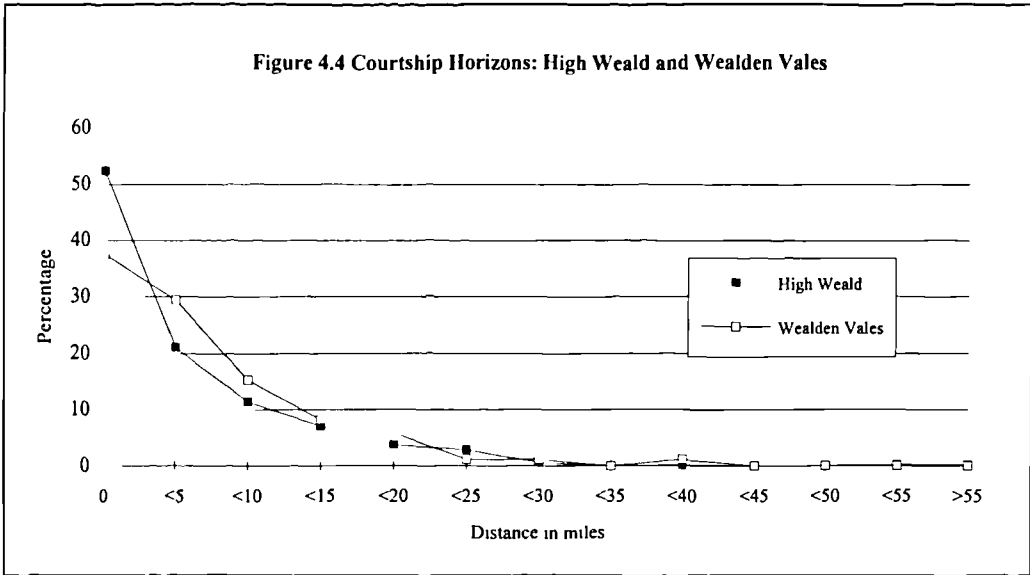
Grouping the principal urban communities together, and comparing their pattern of courtship and marriage distance with that exhibited for market towns, it is immediately apparent that individual towns had different scales of interaction, and that the smaller market towns were usually less endogamous than larger urban centres, often making up for the shortfall with partners living nearby, but otherwise, the results shown were broadly similar.<sup>73</sup> (For all results discussed hereafter, see Table 4.5, Figures 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and Appendix 2, Table A2.3)

<sup>73</sup> The urban-rural distinction may be seen by comparing the pattern shown here with that for certain rural parishes in the North Downs.

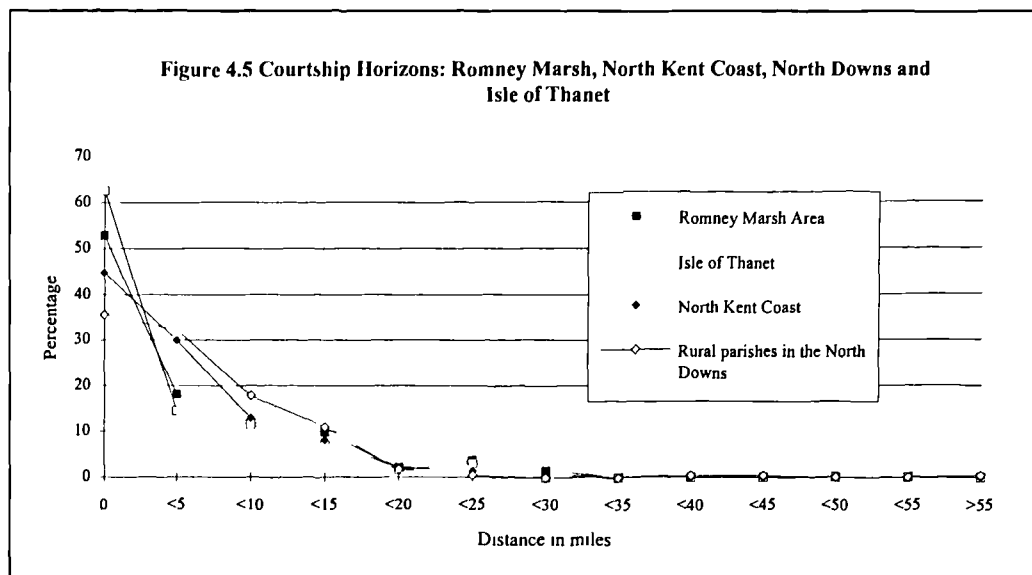
**Figure 4.3 Courtship Horizons: Urban Centres and Market Towns**



**Figure 4.4 Courtship Horizons: High Weald and Wealden Vales**







While the courtship characteristics of parishes in specific regions of Kent may be tentatively examined, any strict demarcation between the physical landscape of weald, downland, marshland, and the mixed areas of wood and arable in the diocese, is inevitably an abstraction.<sup>74</sup> Ascertaining a particular sub-regional boundary could be perplexing, as the contemporary topographer William Lambarde implied, commenting on the 'diversity of opinions touching the true limits of this Weald; some affirming it to begin at one place and some at another'.<sup>75</sup> Much of the weald was not only particularly populous, it contained significant market towns and, by the mid sixteenth century, was sufficiently prosperous to undermine the primacy of traditional urban communities. The expansion in the cloth and iron-making industries in several of the parishes there, ensured the growing economic attraction of the High Weald.<sup>76</sup> With this considered, it is unsurprising that the courtship horizons of the area were nearly identical to those encountered by market towns, although the pattern for parishes located in the Wealden vales would appear to have displayed more rural characteristics.

Residents of the Romney Marsh region, which comprised the southern coastal marshlands of Romney and Walland Marsh, the Denge promontory and the Isle of Oxney,<sup>77</sup> frequently paired themselves with those living in the Weald,

<sup>74</sup> See above Introduction, pp. 18-20.

<sup>75</sup> R. Furley, *A History of the Weald of Kent* 2, ii, (Ashford, 1874), p. 699.

<sup>76</sup> Thirsk, *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, pp. 57-9; Clark, *English Provincial Society*, pp. 7-8; Jessup, *Kent History Illustrated*, p. 43; *Victoria County History of Kent*, III, pp. 384-9, 403-12; Zell, *Industry in the Countryside*.

<sup>77</sup> For parishes located in the Romney marsh area, see, J. Eddison and C. Green eds., *Romney Marsh Evolution, Occupation, Reclamation*, 24 (Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1988), pp. 92-3, and fig. 0.1.

as well as forming noticeable attachments with Ashford and its environs, with coastal parishes from Hythe to Dover, with Canterbury and its neighbourhood, and less frequently with places in the salt marshes to the north of the county. Drawing upon a study undertaken on the origins of Romney freemen in the late-fifteenth and sixteenth centuries,<sup>78</sup> the kind of interconnections shown in courtship for the area as a whole, reflects links which were established by the town, the radius of its hinterland which approximated to 30 miles, being perhaps comparable to the limits in the range of marriage choice for the southern marshes. The other regional marshlands of the Isles of Thanet and Sheppey, and the salt marshes of Kent's north shore were geographically less extensive in their courtship ties, but often interacted with each other, with the Cinque Ports, Canterbury, the Stour river parishes and villages in the North Downs, and with neighbouring market towns. It was probably marketing links with Faversham and Milton near Sittingbourne which mitigated against the otherwise insular mentality displayed by Sheppey islanders in their partnerships; and if indeed the exogamous matches of the Isles were, in part, a consequence of their not possessing any obvious market town of their own, the implication might be, that marital contacts and the circumstances promoting marriage choice were, to some degree, dependent upon an economic determinism and local market structure. According to Alan Everitt's calculations on market areas in Eastern England, 60% of people going to market travelled 1-5½ miles, a further 25% up to 9½ miles, 13% between 10 and 19½ miles, and only 2% over 20 miles.<sup>79</sup> Judging from those figures, it is possible that the correlation's between market distance and the courtship distance surveyed overall in the Act books for the Canterbury diocese, suggests that marketing activities and the patterns of movement generated by them, provided an economic framework and a communication apparatus within which other kinds of social interchange were likely to occur, and in which marital relationships were facilitated.

The general results of all this analysis invites certain prefatory remarks about courtship and marriage choice. Clearly, the matter of geographical context was only one variable affecting actions, decisions, and, most importantly, opportunities. The courtship distance uncovered in the Act books is a measurement of exploratory personal contact, of relationships in the process of communication and compromise. As evidence of courtship horizons, it is particularly suggestive, because it is not centred on any one location, and may actually serve to qualify the quantitative use made of marriage registers. It should

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78 Butcher, 'Origins of Romney freemen'.

79 Everitt, 'The market towns', p. 193.

also be said that the Act books need not be regarded as a record of marriage failure, but more appropriately and significantly, as indicative of possibilities, and of provisional liaisons in an experimental phase. The high degree of essentially localized contact in courtship, anticipates the pattern of marriage horizons studied by demographers, and helps to refute any claim which might be made that disputed court cases simply emphasize marriage breakdown and longer-distance relationships. The results would seem to indicate some correlation between courtship distance and the character or size of individual communities. Perhaps what was crucial was the general influence of marketing functions, with courtship horizons largely tied to a marketing radius and, as will subsequently be shown, with markets and especially fairs, tied to courtship. It has been seen that in the course of the sixteenth century, horizons were changing. By implication, the vexed issue of choice and control within marriage would constantly have adjusted its meaning. The contacts of a parish, the ties of kin and neighbourhood, the geographical bounds of a moral community, were partly dependent upon the general demographic background, and the particular experience and features of individual places. On the whole, however, partners were often found quite locally both in courtship, and in marriage. Mobility in the sixteenth century, although frequent and prevalent in different aspects, was mostly short-distance. Arguably it may have done little to sever contacts, and may instead have effectively extended the regulation of marriage, and assimilated wider influences. So much then for the overall spatial context of courtship. Where parties met, how they met, the occasion and timeliness of meetings, and the liminality of negotiating relationships, will be considered in the next section.

#### IV

The kind of narrative provided in the church court depositions allows us to observe the varied surroundings and incidents of fortuitous meetings or assigned rendezvous, but the personal experiences of individuals within a domestic, work, or social environment, can only be partially recreated. As advanced at the start of this chapter, the enfolding drama of courtship, re-enacted through the testimonies, seldom specifically locates the *earliest* point of encounter between partners. Although numerous instances and meetings may be rehearsed, the frequent failure of the testimonies to recall plainly and unequivocally the initial circumstances of contact, represents a gap in the accounts, stories without an obvious beginning. As such, they evoke more faithfully succeeding stages in a sequence of events, serving as episodic

snapshots, open to imaginative interpretation. While the use of literary and autobiographical evidence may offer further clues concerning the first manner of meeting or awareness,<sup>80</sup> the reading of depositions can nevertheless go a long way in exploring the context and opportunities, by chance or design, of marriage choice.

The occurrence of fairs and markets has been recognized, in passing, as a favourite venue for much social activity, and intermingling between the sexes.<sup>81</sup> Of the opportunities for social contact afforded by English medieval fairs, it has been said that 'not only in the variety of goods and services they attracted, but also and especially in the interactions they provided between people of different regions and social groups, were fairs such an important institution of the high middle ages'.<sup>82</sup> In the Elizabethan period, servants in the manor of Havering, Essex, were found to be a mobile group, travelling on errands during work time, while 'in their free time, they went to meet their friends commonly at Romford market'.<sup>83</sup> Deposition accounts confirm this picture of sociability, and the role of fairs and markets as a meeting-place. Meeting at Tenterden fair a little before St. George's day, John Spayne reportedly protested his solemn intention to marry with Judith Symons, and in the company of servants gathered together in the inn that fair day, 'wished that his fleshe might rotte from his bones yf he meant not as he sayd'.<sup>84</sup> The leverage for clandestine reunions too is illustrated in the case of *Cullen v. Cullen*, and follows Stephen Smith's expulsion from service, as a consequence of his unseemly behaviour towards his mistress, Mildred Cullen. She was alleged to have wept upon learning of his departure, begging leave of her husband to go to the Christmas fair at Canterbury where they had secretly agreed to meet. Both were accused of continuing to frequent each other's company, of 'appoynted meetings ...in blynde alehouses and suspicious places,...and especiallie at a markt kept at dover, or in her returne by the way as

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80 E.g. Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, p. 296; Houlbrooke ed., *English Family Life*, pp. 15-51.

81 Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, p. 72; Boulton, 'Neighbourhood migration in early modern London', p. 127; Carlson, 'Courtship in Tudor England', p. 24; Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, p. 110; Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth*, p. 200. For the attendance at fairs instead of at church, see, Emmison, *Elizabethan Life*, pp. 82-3. On the possible connection between fairs and sexuality trends, see E. Lord, 'Fairs, festivals and fertility in Alkmaar, North Holland, 1650-1810', *Local Population Studies* 42 (Spring 1989), 43-53.

82 E. W. Moore. 'Medieval English fairs: evidence from Winchester and St. Ives', in J. A. Raftis ed., *Pathway to Medieval Peasants Papers in Medieval Studies* 2, (Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto, 1981), pp. 283-99 (p. 283).

83 McIntosh, 'Servants and the household unit', p. 16.

84 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/5, ff. 238-41, *Symons v. Spayne* (1598).

she came from dover markt..'. On divers occasions, Mildred 'made arrandes to markettes and fayres to meet with the said Smith', revealing the same to Katherine Wallup and Rebecca, two housemaids in Thomas Cullen's service.<sup>85</sup> As the case suggests, travelling to and from market may, at times, have been as eventful as the actual market-place scene or fair ground. For Mildred Cullen and Stephen Smith, the meeting was reputedly already planned, but in other instances, some degree of coincidence, or at most of heightened expectation, were equally possible. Not long before her death, Agnes Butterwick, as the key witness in Edmond Coppyn's suit for marriage, provided evidence of just such an encounter. She testified that while she was en route 'to old Mr Coppins dwelling without the walles of Canterburie...at the torne pike at St. Austens wall, in the afternone, Katherine Richards comyng to the towne and Edmond Coppyn from London mett together by chaunce in the place aforesaid'.<sup>86</sup> Another deponent verified the meeting 'alongist the wall', and observed the basket which Katherine carried on her arm as she made her way to the market, Katherine herself admitting that 'she being at the market at Canterburie, and going to her mestres house chaunced to speake *with* Edmond Coppyn at the further end of St. Austyns wall without the city, who offrid to her a pair of gloves...'<sup>87</sup> described by Agnes Butterwick as 'a pair of new faire gloves'.

Conceptualizing the journey to fairs and markets and the point of juncture as a 'territorial passage' may enhance our understanding of the potential significance of the marketplace. Adopting that notion to establish a framework for his discussion of rites of passage, Van Gennep proposed 'that the passage from one social position to another is identified with a territorial passage, such as the entrance into a village or a house, the movement from one room to another, or the crossing of street and squares..<sup>88</sup> The idea of a delimited territory, and the image of crossroads, gates, or other 'kinds of entrance', symbolizing a threshold,<sup>89</sup> are perhaps worth elaborating upon. That many markets would have occupied religious spaces, often attached to church property or located next to religious portals,<sup>90</sup> suggests that they were special places, and it is indeed possible to imagine the marketplace as a liminal zone within formally bounded areas, where people from different communities met together outside of their normal, daily pattern of life, often protected in their coming to market and in

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85 C.C.A.L., MSS. X/11/5, ff. 26-8v.; J J1 146, J J1 150 (1595).

86 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, f. 17-v., *Coppyn v. Richards* (1560).

87 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, ff. 130-1, 332v.

88 Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, pp. 15-25, 192.

89 M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London, first pub. 1966, Ark edn., 1984), ch. 7, esp. p. 114.

90 I am grateful to A. F. Butcher for this information.

their transactions by special rules to govern that particular occasion, rules which provided new boundaries for their temporarily unbounded existence. Although the participants in the market were ostensibly engaged in economic exchange, the marketplace with its own social ambience, was also the territory where social transactions were conducted, where the communication of ideas, gossips, news, and the liminal experience of noise and activity, might mediate changes in social relations and permit the negotiation of new relations. Writing about Rabelais's world and the role and language of the marketplace and fairs of the Renaissance, Bakhtin described the 'certain extra territoriality' of that space, and the 'atmosphere of freedom, frankness, and familiarity'. The marketplace relationship was regarded as 'a special type of relationship', pertaining to 'a peculiar second world within the official medieval order'.<sup>91</sup> Bakhtin's interpretation of the market or fair as the festive representation of the traditional, folk community outside 'official order and official ideology' may overemphasize the populist domain, and in seeking to offset the conceptualization of the fair as exclusively the site of popular, unofficial celebration, it has been argued elsewhere that the fair should be seen as 'a point of economic and cultural intersection'. It was the 'crossing of ways', the 'interconnection' of different 'languages, images, symbols and objects', which was thought to be significant. Stressing that 'the market square was a crossroads, and if it was the focus of "community" it was also the point of intersection of different cultures', it was also said that 'even the smallest fair juxtaposed both people and objects which were normally kept separate and thus provided a taste of life beyond the narrow horizons of the town or village'.<sup>92</sup> Whichever interpretation is deemed the more appropriate, the theme common to both is the idea that the fair or marketplace possessed a special status, constituting a dangerous, vulnerable, and energetic space, in which cultural, social, and economic aspects were inter-related, and in which a heterogeneous collectivity manifested itself, and where participants, spectators and commodities merged and crossed roads.

The kind of activity which occurred during fair-time, as is evident from the circumstantial details given by deponents in matrimonial proceedings,

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91 M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. H. Iswolsky (Cambridge, Mass., 1968, 1984 edn.), ch. 2 'The language of the marketplace in Rabelais', pp. 145-95, (esp. pp. 153-4). For further discussion of the marketplace as a 'ritually circumscribed', 'ambivalent' and 'marginal space', and for seventeenth-century images of the market as a festive place, a place for discovery, intrigue, negotiation, and risk, see, L. Hutson, 'The displacement of the market in Jacobean city comedy', *London Journal* 14, 1(1989), 3-16 (pp. 7-9).

92 'The fair, the pig, authorship', in P. Stallybrass and A. White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (London, 1986), pp. 27-43, (esp. pp. 27, 29-30, 36-8).

suggests that such an occasion was often instrumental in the making of marriage, serving in a variety of ways as a forum for courtship. The depositions recall events in Canterbury, Faversham, Sittingbourne and Hythe fair, in the several fairs attached to such market towns as Ashford, Wye, Lenham, Elham and Cranbrook, and to rural parishes like Elmstead and Warehorne. When trying to imagine the life of the fair, the multiplicity of sites and times should be seen alongside the paradoxically special quality of that institution.

Even if fairs are regarded predominantly as marts for economic transactions, the kind of commodities which were advertised, sold and bought, might include items used as wedding accessories, objects given as tokens of love or for amorous solicitation.<sup>93</sup> In the case begun by Stephen Hannyng of Horton against Godline Knowler, who dwelt about sixteen miles away, it was reported that some time after the contract, at Midsummer or Canterbury fair, Hannyng bought 'a red pettycot cloth for Godly as for his wif, and so mucche tuffed mokado as made a pair of sleeves and other things'.<sup>94</sup> The purchase of bridal clothes at fairs or markets was likewise evident in the testimony given by Clement Knoll, a tailor from Appledore. He deposed that on the 16th August 1600, he met with William Gabriell and Martha Burche 'at the market of Ashford upon purpose to helpe buy the wedding apparell for Gabriell and Burche, where the same at that time was boughte by them both together, *whiche* being bought Martha Burche asked (him) against what day he could make yt readye and he promised her against the next Thursday then following, wherof she desired (him) not to fayle'.<sup>95</sup> Thomas Yomanson, a capper normally resident in St. Mary Magdalene parish in Canterbury, provided a more detailed account of when he first became acquainted with the parties Margaret Cole of Lympne, and Henry Lion of Challock. He recalled

'that he was at Wye fayer kept upon Saint Gregories day last to make sale of his wares there/ And Valentyne Nott and his wife *with* Lion and Cole came to him standing in the said fayer to buy a wedding capp for Henry and a wedding cap for Margaret as Valentyne Nott and his wife shewed (him) declaring that it shuld serve for Henry and Margaret after Easter/ And so Henry Lion bought a cap for himself of this deponent of the price of 4s. and appointed the maide to com another tyme to Canterburie for her cap because he had not at that tyme non fyne enough to serve her...And this deponent said that Henry and the parties being at his stall aforesaid had a fardell of cloth and other things to the value of 8li or

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93 See above, chapter 2, pp. 73-4.

94 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/16, ff. 295-303v. (1577).

95 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/4, ff. 26v.-7, *Greenway v. Burch et Gabriell* (1600).

above as he judgeth, which Henry said that he had bought for the mariage apparell of him and Margaret. And this deponent said that then and there Henry shewed him a wedding ring of gold and a pair of hooks of silver and gilt that he had bought'.<sup>96</sup>

The 'booth or standing place' occupied by a glover may have been frequently visited on a fair day by men intending to purchase a pair of gloves for their desired or prospective partners. Ralph Cole of Frittenden was seen standing at a glover's stall on Saint Giles's day at Cranbrook fair, and two other witnesses identified his presence at one particular booth when the clock struck four, it being said by Walter Harneman that Ralph 'asked (him) then and there if he wold bye there any shirtes, to whom (he) said that he wold if he had money'. Precisely what happened that fair day and at what hour, were matters of dispute, but according to the testimonies of Thomas Dogett, a clothier of Cranbrook, and of Laurence Taillor, a long acquaintance and friend to Ralph Cole, it would seem that the defendant, Juliane Barnes of Frittenden, received a pair of gloves that afternoon upon promise of marriage, both deponents being present to witness the same. Dogett deposed how he 'by chauce mete *with* Raufe Cole in the fayer/ who desired him to tarry *with* him to hear *communication* of matrimony betwene hym and Juliane Barnes for the which Juliane he did loke to speke *with* in the fayer And the same Rafe Cole *perceyving* that she cam not to the fayer according to his expectation told this deponent that he wold goo before to Frittenden to the house of William Hawsnothe unto her wher she dwelt...desiring this deponent after his buysynes in the fayer doon to com to Frittenden unto hym'. All three men appointed to meet at Frittenden church, and after drinking together in 'the church taverne', proceeded to the house, where they found Juliane willing to stand to her promise of marriage and to accept the gloves which Ralph offered her.<sup>97</sup>

In admitting only to having received the gloves 'of hym for fayringes', Juliane implicitly denied their contractual significance but, like many other women in those circumstances, she also drew attention to the close association between fairs, gifts, and the practice of courtship. Mary Hubbard, similarly protesting that she never made Richard Turner any kind of promise, nor ever gave her consent 'in the way of marriage', did nevertheless confess, that 'at one faire the said Turner gave (her) and one of her fellowes eather of them a pair of glooves'.<sup>98</sup> The purchase of fayrings at fairs, and the giving of such presents at

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96 C.C.A.L., MSS. X/10/7, ff. 85v.-6, *Lyon v. Cole* (1560); Y/2.22, f. 53v.

97 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, ff. 152, 154-7, 346-7v., 352v., *Cole v. Barnes* (1561).

98 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, ff. 229-v., *Turner v. Hubbard* (1570?).



that time, whether they were the gloves which Benedict Dunnye of Mersham received from her two claimants, Thomas Kennet at the fair of Warehorne and Peter Wattle at Wye fair,<sup>99</sup> or perhaps the 'pair of knyves for a fayring' which Edmond Coppyn delivered to one Dennys for Katherine at the fair of Lenham,<sup>100</sup> and which Mary Wraight of Swingfield accepted at Elham fair,<sup>101</sup> meant that such occasions might indeed serve to stimulate and intensify personal familiarity, and might have been customarily perceived and experienced by suitors as expedient for their matrimonial purpose.

The kind of goods advertised in fairs which Rabelais may have observed in his time, probably included herbs for sexual potency,<sup>102</sup> sold by itinerant quacks, if not by tradesmen on open stalls. A pedlar's wares, according to an early seventeenth-century ballad, invited buyers to 'view the Fayre' of fashionable cosmetics,<sup>103</sup> but even when seen in terms of personal intimacy, the fairs were not simply concerned with the exchange of items of beautification or bridal adornment, or with arousing new desires. Unofficially they may have been timely occasions for pronounced sexual and verbal licence, as couples were seen behaving in unchristian manner, and gossip less restrained. Parishioners of St. Nicholas in Thanet deposed that they heard Richard Crispe say 'that upon the fair lay at Canterbury', he 'hadd started a hare commyng to the towne', by which he meant that he had seen Thomas Wood and Blakisland's wife down together in the highway going to Canterbury, against Chislet park, she lying upon her back with soiled clothes, and 'Thomas Wood standing by her trussing of his hose'.<sup>104</sup> More importantly, in the process of courtship, fairs were appropriate times for keeping appointments. They were situations which allowed for the discovery and searching out of partners, for further communications of marriage, if not for the renewal or making of promises. In the case of *Frid v. Chawker*, witnesses testified to having heard John Frid recite and declare all that had passed between him and Alice Chawker of St. Martin, Canterbury. Among other talk, he claimed that at Lenham fair they 'eche to other had renued repeated and confirmed the self-same promises and covenantes or contracte', and that upon making 'themselves sure and betrougthed by faith and trouthe eche to other...did break a sylver ring yn two peeces yn token of the faith and trouthe then given'.<sup>105</sup> Other

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99 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, ff. 179v.-82, *Kennet v. Dunnye* (1570).

100 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, ff. 134v., 332v., *Coppyn v. Richards* (1560). See above, chapter 3, n. 81.

101 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/18, ff. 152v.-3, *Hogben v. Wraight* (1579).

102 Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 186.

103 Stallybrass and White, 'The fair', p. 39.

104 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/6, ff. 34v.-7, 38v., *Wood v. Crispe* (1553).

105 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/13, ff. 84-6v. (1571).

instances suggest that the fair day itself provided some kind of opportune justification for rekindling relationships, and that going to the fair together was somehow celebratory as well as practical. It was 'apon the fayer kept at Rochester', that John Norman 'as sutor by appointment' was said to have gone to John Mendam's house in Rainham and 'challenged a promis of marriage' of Mendam's maidservant, Elizabeth Hache, and that the following day 'they two went to Rochester fayer'.<sup>106</sup> As courtship merged with traditional forms of popular recreation, so the fair focused the celebrative mood of marriage with the conviviality of social intercourse. It was not uncommon for contracts to be made on a fair day among a company found drinking together. On Michaelmas day, Geoffrey Cooke 'being at Sittingborn fayer went up into a chamber of one Allen's house in Sittingborn to drink *which* for the fayer time William Croxon had hired', and found John Jenkyns and Barbara Adams, who had gone to the Kingshead 'to drink together being at the fayer there kept', talking of marriage and concluding a contract.<sup>107</sup> More specifically, in the case begun by Henry Den against Margaret Cole, the joint testimonies given by Edward Carden, James Ilchinden, and William Cole, who were all residents in Lympe parish, described an incident which occurred at Elmstead fair kept on St. James's day. Having 'chaunced to repair thither as...doth accustemally use at that place in tyme of faires to buy certain neecessaries/ And chaunced to goo into a barne aside the place of the fair situate/ to recreat...and to drinck/where many resorted for like cause', they ate and drank in the company of Henry Den and Margaret Cole, after which repast, they witnessed the promise made between the parties, and according to William Cole, 'a pair of new gloves and a silken riband of the value of 4*d.* or 6*d.* ...she toke at his hands'. He further deposed that about a fortnight later, when he came from the church 'with them in company, Henry asked her if she would stand to her promise at the fair. And she said she was content'.<sup>108</sup>

The cases cited, dramatize the importance of drinking places as centres of communal activity, where merriment might lead to slanderous talk,<sup>109</sup> or to marriage entreaties. It would appear, for instance, that Thomas Hawkins was at Faversham with Mathew Rayner and Henry Ady 'at the Signe of the Ship, of intent and *purpose* to comon of a mariage with Henry Adee to be had betwene his daughter viz. *goodwife* (Elizabeth) Chamber and Mathue and to have his goodwill therin'.<sup>110</sup> Emphasizing the popularity of drink as a 'social lubricant',

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106 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/12, ff. 36v.-7v., *Norman v. Hache* (1563).

107 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/18, ff. 46-8, *Jenkyns v. Adams* (1578).

108 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, ff. 123v.-7v., *Den v. Cole* (1560).

109 Above, n. 104. Words of defamation spoken in a 'chaffering' house.

110 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/8, ff. 126-8, *Rayner v. Chamber* (1561).

Keith Wrightson noted those 'specific occasions of heavy indulgence, such as at fairs, wakes, festivals and "rites of passage", but also less formal occasions on which drinking was bound up with the establishment and re-establishment of mutual relationships'.<sup>111</sup> Apart from bringing together partners and their relatives in the negotiation of marriage, the alehouses of the sixteenth-century, whether licensed or unlicensed and however rudimentary, had a significant role to play in the process of social integration and mediation.<sup>112</sup> It was at the Sun tavern in Canterbury that the vicar of Tenterden united the two parties, Thomas Bennet and Henry Smith, who were in dispute over a matter of defamation, making 'anmytie and agreement betwixte them',<sup>113</sup> while in a matter of matrimony, the 'occasion of (the) meeting together' at Ovell's victualling house in Hythe, was on account of a letter of appointment sent from Judith Symons to John Spayne. Anxious to speak with him to understand his intention, and 'eyther to be assured of him or els utterly to leave one another', the couple met there on St. Barnabas's day together with John Wilson and William Beale, and 'they four being so all met together spent there in drink and shred pyes and bread about 18d.', before moving on to serious talk of marriage.<sup>114</sup> In the same case of *Symons v. Spayne*, the deposition of Thomas Bryant of Dymchurch exemplifies the way in which alehouses served to accommodate conflicting interests and reconcile tense situations. As a rival suitor for Judith Symons's hand in marriage, he recalled his confrontation with John Spayne who warned him 'that if he would not surcease his suite unto Judyth that then he would be revenged of him, and so afterwards Spayne challenged and dared (him) to fight, and on the 2 May they fought together appon the same quarrell at a sluice between Dymchurch and Romney after which their fighting (he) and Spayne went together to St Maryes in the marshe unto a victualing house there where they drank together and were good freinds'.<sup>115</sup>

The need for local taverns and tippling houses as meeting places was presumably partly due to the fact that private homes were often ill equipped for much social activity.<sup>116</sup> They provided a refuge from the cramped environment and scrutiny of domestic houses, and were commonly associated with illicit

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111 K. Wrightson, 'Alehouses, order and reformation in rural England 1590-1660', in E. and S. Yeo eds., *Popular Culture and Class Conflict 1590-1914* (Hassocks, 1981), pp. 1-27, (p. 6).

112 Also Clark, 'Migrants in the city', pp. 280-1.

113 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/2, ff. 20-1, *Bennet v. Smyth* (1542?).

114 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/5, ff. 243-4, 246v.-7, *Symons v. Spayne* (1598).

115 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/5, ff. 256-8.

116 See Boulton, 'Neighbourhood migration in early modern London', pp. 126-7, 131, for social activity outside the dwelling-place.

sexual liaisons and clandestine unions.<sup>117</sup> We are reminded of the appointed meetings between Mildred Cullen and Stephen Smith in 'blind' alehouses,<sup>118</sup> while in *Coppyn v. Richards*, we read of Agnes Butterwick, reputedly once the wife of one Best, dwelling in Ashford and keeping a little blind alehouse, the haunt and resort of many 'light people', 'suspected personnes' and 'nawghty' women.<sup>119</sup> The common tipping house may have principally served the needs of single and married men, particularly among the less well-to-do, but they were not simply a male domain.<sup>120</sup> The function of the alehouse in the ritual procedure of matrimony has already been indicated, with solicitations, marriage communications, and celebrative cheer often located in such surroundings.<sup>121</sup> Groups of youths of both sexes might entertain themselves there. An example from Lancashire in the 1660s shows how rambles could end in an alehouse,<sup>122</sup> and it was precisely the society of young people, frequently servants, which 'gave the alehouse something of a role in courtship'.<sup>123</sup>

Social gatherings, whether of mixed company or not, encouraged playful, provocative, and arousing behaviour. The presence of a group of men making merry and playing at cards, is richly illustrated in a case which smacks of blasphemy and appears to mock the solemnity of marriage.<sup>124</sup> Certain of the deponents in the case 'chanced to come' to John Woodland's house, a tippler in Benenden, others went there upon 'hearing that dyverse of Goodherst aboute the number of eyght yowng men were come to Benenden to make merrye', while some, 'among other yonge men of Benenden (were) invyted and desyred upon a certen day appoynted to meet' there. Apart from the men of Goudhurst, there were several others of Benenden, at least a dozen, plus men in blue coats, and men of Cranbrooke, Horsmonden, Hawkhurst and Brenchley, playing cards, laughing, and decreeing among themselves 'that who so ever had loste all his money shoulde bee searerd upon the buttockes with a hott yron', a fate which befell Thomas Grymmell of Cranbrooke. Grymmell was reported to have said repeatedly 'that he thoughte hym selfe so symple that wolde no body have him',

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117 P. Clark, 'The alehouse and the alternative society' in D. Pennington and K. Thomas eds., *Puritans and Revolutionaries. Essays in Seventeenth-Century History Presented to Christopher Hill* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 47-72 (p. 60).

118 See above n. 85.

119 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/8, ff. 43v.-4v.

120 Wrightson, 'Alehouses, order and reformation', p. 7; Clark, 'The migrant in Kentish towns', pp. 140-1.

121 Also Clark, 'The alehouse and the alternative society', p. 62, and P. Clark, *The English Alehouse. A Social History 1200-1830* (London, 1983), pp. 127-8, 147-53.

122 Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, p. 72.

123 Wrightson, 'Alehouses, order and reformation', p. 8.

124 Para. based on C.C.A.L., MS. PRC 39/6, ff. 89v.-90, 93-5, 97-9 (1571).

and that he would rather marry himself to George Sowtherden's mare than be branded again with the iron. The mare (which William Willard had shortly before that time sold to Sowtherden in jest, for 18*d.* and two pots of beer) was escorted into the room in between two men, the sight of which, 'so bare and impotent' was said to have moved the company to great laughter. Those who were present recalled the antics of Thomas Grymmell, who stood on a table or stool and asked the banns of marriage between himself and Mildred Willard of Benenden, before Sowtherden forbade it, and dinner subsequently served, but they denied knowledge 'of eny maryage of the mare or of eny ryngge gyven or hanged on the mares eare', or of 'eny takyng of the mare by the hoofe in stede of the handes'. Explaining why it was that the men of Goudhurst should have rung two peals in the church of Benenden, Stephen Mannocke claimed that it was 'not for solemnyte' nor 'in yoye of eny suche foolishe maryage', but in reciprocation and fulfilment of promised hospitality, 'for that they of Benenden were abowte a fortenyght before at goodherst in makyng merrye, and there theym of Benenden dyd ryngge a peale or two, and so lykewyse the men of goodherst dyd desyre to ryngge a peale at Benenden'.

From the event narrated above, it would not be difficult to imagine similar circumstances of courtesy visits, the communal reception of 'strangers' from another parish, the various ways in which individuals came together to fraternize, and the kind of conversation, camaraderie and foolery which might ensue. News spread by word of mouth that guests were expected, may well have stimulated the interest of those seeking eligible partners, temporary unions, or other forms of introduction. Even if the presence of parties of youths did not lead to direct encounters, the situation might approach and anticipate future relationships, or at least be conducive to sexual dalliance. Wherever groups formed, whether at play, or at work, there was greater scope for sexual relations, close friendships and courtship. Times of village celebrations and amusement were propitious for broaching the question of marriage. In *Bonham v. Ellet*, it was 'among a great multitude of company' gathered at the forestall beside Teynham vicarage house watching the May dances, that Joan Wynter heard John Bonham openly ask of Margery Ellet if she would keep to her promise.<sup>125</sup> The working environment likewise created opportunities for initiating and pursuing desires. The deposition of Anne Beane, for ten years a servant to Mr. Thomas Brodnex of Godmersham, indicates moreover the potential influence of seasonality and labour in the timing and effecting of relationships. Testifying to the alleged sexual exploits of one Christopher Carter, she maintained that he

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125 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, ff. 73v.-4 (1560).

never attempted to seduce her except once, 'in a harvest tyme the young men and bachelers of godmersham coming to Mr Brodnex...to reap corne (she) went up to make a bed in a chamber of her masters house (and he) came up after her and was there playeng and toyeng with her and at length...did put out the candle and still contynued jesting and playeng with her untill som of his company called him awaye'.<sup>126</sup>

Of the various contexts in which social bonds were formed and personal relationships likely to develop, it is probably easiest to document the experience of those in service and infer, as Brodsky Elliott does, 'that the most common meeting ground for potential spouses was in the households which brought together unmarried men as apprentices and women as servants'.<sup>127</sup> While the marriages of ex-servants need not necessarily have involved peers of the same household,<sup>128</sup> the physical proximity of young people in households promoted emotional ties and nourished sexual appetites. Peter Laslett highlighted the features of 'courtship, sexual experimentation and exploitation', among the servant population.<sup>129</sup> Flirtation between servants was to be expected. Frank Kelsam, discounting any obligation to Parnelle Norton, said that his attentions were 'not seryously' meant, 'but as servants use somtyme to iest one with another',<sup>130</sup> and William Kemsley also only admitted to having had communications with Mildred Mason 'meryly (as servants together in one house use *sum* tymes to do) of marriage in iest'.<sup>131</sup> But the attachments which were furnished might well have been intense and companionate. One of Mr. Leede's household servants said that Richard Nashe and Anne Colyar were her fellow-servants in the house at that tyme, that she often heard them talk of marriage, and that 'thone favored thother mucche, and wold be together, and for the most parte (Anne) wold kepe hym company in the house wheresoever Richard went'.<sup>132</sup> Two other servants kept in Mr. Wyse's employment, were observed together in the same house, in intimate and loving conversation, although Constance Austen herself apparently claimed that the atmosphere of close contact was claustrophobic because of James Haffynnden's disquieting importunity, which made it necessary for her to abandon her place of service in order to be rid of him.<sup>133</sup> Even a change

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126 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/5, f. 90, *Carter v. Maverlye* (1596).

127 Elliott, 'Single women', p. 96.

128 E.g. McIntosh, 'Servants and the household unit', p. 21.

129 P. Laslett, 'Notes and queries. The institution of service', *Local Population Studies* 40 (Spring 1988), 55-60 (p. 56).

130 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/18, f. 94v., *Norton v. Kelsam* (1578).

131 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/18, ff. 165-v., *Mason v. Kemsley* (1579).

132 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, ff. 71-2v., *Nashe v. Colyar* (1560).

133 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, ff. 165v.-6v., 208-9v., *Haffynnden v. Austen* (1567).

of service did not, however, always provide an escape for those who did not fancy the assiduous pursuit of their admirers. Katherine Grigge professed, that when she and William Ottringham were household servants to William Norwood of Sampson Court in Thanet, he often courted her but she, 'not favoring him, desired him to acquiet his mind, saying she'd never have him'. Nevertheless, about two years later, while she was in the service of the victualler Richard Wynter of Wingham, being at that time somewhat sickly, William Ottringham resorted to her, seeking to renew his love for her and his earnest suit for marriage.<sup>134</sup> In households where several servants were in attendance, or in households where employees came and went, the prospect clearly existed for jealousy in love, for the making of multi-promises and a number of close partnerships. Both Sara Paramor and Jane Mussered, for example, who were together in service in David Hole's house in Ash, appear to have had some claim on one Lawrence Claringboll who also dwelt there for nearly a year.<sup>135</sup> Returning to the case of *Symons v. Spayne*, the competition for William Tanner's servant-in-trust, has already been shown in the challenge between John Spayne and Thomas Bryant who 'then being Mr Tanners man was greatly in love with (Judith)'. Although Spayne was never actually in Tanner's service, he had presumably succeeded Tanner's former servant, Thomas Kennet, in her affections, since witnesses reported that Judith Symons and Thomas Kennet had shown goodwill in marriage, but that Tanner would not suffer them to marry, and had put Kennet out of his service in order to 'breke the matrimony which he feared would be contracted'.<sup>136</sup>

At the same time as introducing servants to their peers, being in service provided the opportunity for male servants such as Robert Launsfield, to seek to marry their employer's daughters, in this case, Anne Austen of Ickham.<sup>137</sup> Female servants also found themselves in situations which furnished similar relationships. Barbara Baull, a servant to Mistress Filpot of Faversham, was heard to affirm that she should have her mistress's youngest son, William Filpot, to her husband. She 'confessed that she was bounden to sett downe on her knees to geve god thanks that ever she cam to her mestres...declaring...that she was a mother to her and a speciaall good frend to kepe her as she did'.<sup>138</sup> Alternatively, the depositions expose the vulnerability of some servants in the machinations of

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134 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/15, ff. 160-2v., *Ottringham v. Grigge* (1567).

135 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/6, ff. 192v., 193v., *Claringboll v. Mussered* (1593).

136 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/5, ff. 240, 241v., 242v., 250 (1598); see above n. 115 and above chapter 3, n. 68.

137 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/12, ff. 150-v., *Launsfield v. Austen* (1565).

138 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/16, ff. 70-5v., 81v.-3, *Filpot v. Baull alias Cruttall* (1575).

courtship. Alice Cotton, who served Henry and Elizabeth Baxter in Sandwich, would have had little to be thankful for. In her testimony, she appealed to the judges to dissuade her master and dame from abusing her with stripes and threats. Afraid of returning to her service 'she saith she hath had such a miserable lif with her dame and master and partlie for that she was alwaies unwilling to consent to marrye with Thomas Baxter that she wishe her dailie out of her lif and she is assured that if she go home to her masters house agen she shalbe sharply punished the rather for the disliking of his son'. She deposed how she wept at being constrained to fulfil a contract with Thomas Baxter which she said was done only out of fear, and not out of any love or goodwill towards him.<sup>139</sup>

Partnerships might also originate between servants and their employer's other relatives. It was while she dwelt with Mr. Coppyn, the alderman of Canterbury, that Katherine Richards frequently encountered Edmond Coppyn, who resorted several times to his uncle's house,<sup>140</sup> and as for John Davye's suit for marriage to Marion Wright, her master, Thomas Davye of Eastchurch, claimed that 'he himself was the first mover' of the contract made between his servant and his kinsman.<sup>141</sup> It is seldom clear precisely how much initiative employers took in negotiating relationships of this character, but what is apparent, is that the conditions and fortunes of service cultivated the possibility for certain kinds of personal contacts to materialize. If not with fellow-servants, or with their master's immediate family or kin, some servants later found themselves wedded to their former employer.<sup>142</sup> Especially in circumstances where the intention was, presumably, primarily sexual, relationships between employers and their subordinates were predictable. We have already glimpsed the conduct of Mildred Cullen with her servant Stephen Smith, and the suspected pregnancy of William Gybbes's maid, Prudence Bramelo.<sup>143</sup> In the parish of Hackington, it was commonly reputed 'among women', that either the widower William Johnson, or one of his men, had got his servant Benet Hutchyn with child, but while women may generally have believed that to be the case, Johnson claimed 'that the men (did) not thinke so', reflecting perhaps deep-seated gender divisions over particular issues.<sup>144</sup>

Although employment within a household has been portrayed as a most likely environment for uniting people of the opposite sex, in situations where

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139 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/17, ff. 150v.-5v., *Baxter v. Cotton* (1574).

140 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, ff. 17-v., 131, 332v., *Coppyn v. Richards* (1560).

141 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/6, ff. 39-40, *Davye v. Wrighte* (1554).

142 E.g. McIntosh, 'Servants and the household unit', p. 21; Elliott, 'Single women', p. 89.

143 See above nn. 66 and 85.

144 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/14, ff. 40-v. (1572).



relationships developed outside of the domestic setting, the experience of service might inhibit the frequency of meeting, or indirectly encourage parties to depend upon alternative meeting-places. Thomas Tanner, who lived and worked in Herne, sent a message to Isabel Parker alias Parr at Stodmarsh, in which he requested 'that she would not take his absence unkindly for that he was a servant and could not come to her soe often as he could afford'.<sup>145</sup> The examination of Edward Reade in the case of *Symons v. Spayne*, highlights the importance of tokens in focusing relationships,<sup>146</sup> and signifies the intention of the parties, Thomas Kennet and Judith Symons, to meet in secret at an appointed place - the meeting-place specified by Kennet being in the highway leading from Dymchurch to Eastbridge. Later on, at a time when Judith was being courted by both John Spayne and Thomas Bryant, she went accompanied by Dorothy Fittell, 'unto the seae syde at Dymchurche wall' and there they met with John Spayne, who then promised her marriage.<sup>147</sup>

The meeting at Dymchurch wall, and the fight between the two men at the sluice between Dymchurch and Romney,<sup>148</sup> provide dramatic focal points, and may well be understood to possess symbolic relevance. When perceived as a barrier or bridge, like rails, gates, stiles or crossroads, such topographical features might also represent liminal areas in the manner described earlier for fairs and marketplaces. Katherine Richards met Edmond Coppyn at the turnpike at St. Augustine's wall,<sup>149</sup> and in a separate case, William Keble and Suzanne Butler were seen sitting together 'on the thresholde of the bine dore' before promising each other marriage 'at a rayle under the peare tree'.<sup>150</sup> References in the depositions to people sitting upon their 'threshold doore' and the 'entry' of private homes, and the fact that incidents of defamation so often occurred when parties were poised at their own doors,<sup>151</sup> may likewise indicate the significance of the doorstep as a marginal space. That institutionalized meeting-places existed for courting couples, in addition to the traditional popularity of alehouses and the customary social gatherings, may be recognized in Sampson Marshall's advice to Simon Aunsell and Agnes Court, as they approached a stile joining the highway between the parishes of Wye and Boughton Aluph. Enquiring of them whether they could both be contented to conclude a marriage bargain there, he further said

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145 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/4, f. 162v., *Parker alias Parr v. Tanner* (1602).

146 See above ch. 3, n. 68.

147 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/5, ff. 241v., 250-3v. (1598).

148 See above n. 115.

149 See above n. 86.

150 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/19, ff. 250v.-1v., *Keble v. Butler* (1585).

151 Gowing, 'Gender and the language of insult', p. 18.

'that at that stile bargagnes of Cli or twoo have been made'.<sup>152</sup> The evidence is naturally impressionistic, but we may nevertheless speculate as to the possible significance of specified areas such as Riding gate in Canterbury where John Jackson and Rebecca Odert met together,<sup>153</sup> or outside Northgate, and elsewhere, in the 'Queenes parke'.<sup>154</sup>

Having explored some of the contexts and places of meeting which brought together individuals who often resided in the same household, or parish, or within a reasonably short distance of each other, it has been presumed that the economic and social circumstances of work, marketing, and leisure pursuits, would stimulate that process, and that the experience of personal contacts depicted in the depositions at various stages of courtship, appropriately reflects in part, the kind of original prevailing opportunities in marriage choice for that strata of society. Without any further detailed knowledge of social networks and how they operated, we have to depend primarily upon the more predictable situations, but may still glimpse those other means of introduction which is so seldom readily accessible in the records. Nowhere is this more apparent than in circumstances where the widow proved herself a marketable asset.<sup>155</sup> Noticeably, a large proportion of the deposition cases are concerned with the marriage of widows, and in several instances, the competition for widows would appear to have been pronounced. The widow Elizabeth Chamber, was heard to declare to her suitor Mathew Rayner, 'many doo com hither to see and speak with me, but I doo use to kepe in, and speake with none except with suche as I doo well know, but that with you specially I am well contented to speak withall'.<sup>156</sup> That many men sought the hand of Margery Dennys of Faversham was aptly expressed by her neighbour who, being in his own house, and hearing 'a great talking noyse in Dennys' house, he went thither, and seing her said, goodwyf dennys you are a foole, for you have a great sort of sutors come to you, and if you will do as I wold have you do I wold take hym that I love best by the hand and take him to my husband, and wold set all the rest out of dores'.<sup>157</sup>

When confronted with so many suitors, the criteria upon which choice was made was evidently most pertinent. Instead of a possible succession of

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152 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/10., ff. 29-30, *Aunsell v. Court* (1563).

153 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/3, ff. 81v.-3, *Jackson v. Odert alias Simons* (1598).

154 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/4, ff. 85-7, *Blighton v. Jiggin* (1601).

155 On the high premium attached to widows in the London marriage market, see V. Brodsky, 'Widows in late Elizabethan London: remarriage, economic opportunity and family orientation', in L. Bonfield, R. Smith and K. Wrightson eds., *The World We Have Gained* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 122-54.

156 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/8, ff. 121v.-3, *Rayner v. Chamber* (1561).

157 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/16, ff. 266v.-7v., *Jefery v. Dennys alias Cook alias Read* (1577).

suitors, the presence of a wooing party assembled at one time in widow Starkey's house in Canterbury, has been noted in the earlier part of this chapter.<sup>158</sup> The incident described, occurring as it did only eight weeks after the death of her husband, a late alderman of the city, may hardly have allowed a sufficient period for mourning, but the reception of the handsome and substantial men who came from the Weald of Kent, all gathered together at supper 'of intent of wooing the said *Mistress* Starkey and for marriage', demonstrates the active lure of the widow with position or wealth. It was, however, the man seated silently at the end of the table, who lodged that night in the widow's house, who later married her. The situation whereby the widow found a spouse was apparently created by the opportune coming of a group of eligible partners, but the reason for the final choice of one William Witherden, who 'shuld have the wedow from them all', a man who was then resident in the nearby parish of Wingham, barely five miles away, is more difficult to discover. Agnes Butterwick's role in 'bringing the marriage to passe', may have been crucial. At that time she declared, 'here sitt a merry company and yet I see one among them all that sitteth still and saieth never a worde that may putt all the rest of the company out'. There is no indication in this case of the kinds of social mechanisms which prompted the coming of the Weldishmen, but one of the ways in which such knowledge might spread and in which such introductions might be made, is hinted at finally, in the deposition of Peter Bellingham of Willesborough, who had known the widow Agnes Ely of New Romney, daughter of William Baker of Willesborough, for thirty years. He swore that Mr. Brent's miller told him one day, as he was grinding the corn, 'that reporte was made at Mr Brents table of a riche wedowe and a handsom woman that had well where *withall* to lyve dwelling at New Romney requesting (him, Peter Bellingham) to be a sutor for him to the said wedowe'.<sup>159</sup>

The role of intermediaries in the activities of courtship and marriage has already been considered in the preceding chapter, and so too the geographical compass of their negotiations. In both sections of this chapter, the evidence presented suggests that courtship horizons more generally, were relatively limited. In rural areas they were usually confined to the more immediate locality, with more distant connections occurring with and between towns. It is suggested that the more remote links were partly a factor of the greater size of such places and were also determined by the complexity of economic, social, cultural and administrative functions of urban communities. It may be, in fact, that the extent

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158 See above n. 67, and above chapter 3, n. 44.

159 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/12, ff. 97v.-9 (1564). See above chapter 3, n. 24.

of courtship horizons corresponded to some extent, with the range of social and economic interest of particular communities. The social interaction of young people, then may have been affected by the extent of social and economic interaction of parents, families, households (both parental and service) and communities.

As the depositions show, the places and opportunities for relationships to develop were varied. Such bonds could clearly develop in the work-regulated environment of service, whether it was within the master's household, in the course of work as servants outside the household, going as a servant to other households, or as a servant between households, there were stolen opportunities for friendship and intimacy, and conditions which must have encouraged other flows of information. On special occasions, and at particular times and places, further opportunities manifested themselves. Some of the places could permit social interaction which was otherwise not possible, as in the tavern or alehouse, often socially marginal and subversive institutions, with their own networks of communication, common knowledge and gossip. Others gave licence to unusual degrees of intermingling, such as markets but perhaps especially fairs, where relationships would be initiated, tested, explored, flirted with, or confirmed. Such occasions were regular, complex social gatherings of marked importance within the locality, and may conceivably have provided a kind of secular sanction for courtship activities, observing and permitting the development of potential relationships.

Tavern, alehouse, market and fair may be seen to represent, in different ways, social experience beyond the conventional, ideologically sound, moral regulation of the community. They possessed a distinct liminality, inhabiting a domain which had its own rules outside of the normally, bounded system, and providing the opportunity for licensed and unlicensed transgression. Both liminality and transgression were crucial in the negotiation of courtship and in the pursuit of personal relations. Other less formal kinds of social institution or practice, such as the private assignation, intimate meetings by stile, gate or other specified barriers, and the activities of identifiable youth groups, and parties of youths, might have similar functions. They might also have possessed their own rituals of set times and places, and ways of behaving, ritualizing their activities along traditional lines, or borrowing ritual to invest the occasion with some memorable significance. Not only then was courtship itself liminal as Van Gennep emphasized, poised between the unmarried and married condition, within its area of social activity, it employed in the real world, other liminal states for its exploration.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE TIMING OF MARRIAGE: CONSTRAINTS AND EXPECTATIONS

#### I

'but she answered him that she mynded not to marry with anny before she shuld attayn to be of thage of twenty yeres. And [he] said agayn to her that she was of yere sufficient to marry yf that she wold and that there were lesse in yeres than she that have marryed, but she answered that she did not care for that, and said she wold not marry with any otherwise then as afore she answered hym...'<sup>1</sup>

The previous chapter discussed how distance and place might provide some underlying determinants or parameters of courtship, and in this chapter, another constraint over courtship will be examined, that of ages at which marriage was supposed to commence. Expected or prescribed ages of marriage were a further consideration which could inform the behaviour and attitudes both of courting couples and the family and friends who sought to influence and guide their choice. Moreover, the ages at which people actually married or perhaps, just as significantly, perceived the possibilities of marriage, have more than the mere demographic consequences studied by historical demographers,<sup>2</sup> since such ages might also be seen to represent the crucial, ultimate threshold of adult status in a complex process of maturation and coming of age. Any evidence we can glean about the identification and recognition of ages which contemporaries thought proper for the timing of marriage could arguably, therefore, tell us a great deal about prevailing notions of youth, competence, and stages of life, notions which could provide important demarcations for courtship in the past, and for the definitive transition and integration into adult life.<sup>3</sup> The appropriate age at which to marry was not necessarily thought of solely in terms of economic self-sufficiency although, as we shall see in the following chapter, earning power, employment opportunities, and financial resources and prospects, were critical

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1 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, ff. 93-4, *Austin v. Parker* (1569).

2 See below, section II.

3 For the conceptual link between marriage and adulthood in European society in the past, see for example, K. Thomas, 'Age and authority in early modern England', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 62 (London, 1976), 1-46 (esp. p. 24); M. Mitterauer, *A History of Youth* trans. G. Dunphy, (Germany, 1986, Eng. trans., Oxford, 1992), esp. pp. 31-3, 38, 59, 79-86; Ben-Amos, 'Service and the coming of age', pp. 58-60; Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, p. 106.

prerequisites for marriage to proceed. For many participants in courtship, a subtle blend of customary attitudes and values, as well as an evident attachment to those economic considerations, would seem to have been displayed.

In the Wiltshire court cases, Ingram found some incidental references to kin and neighbourhood antagonism towards the marriage plans of unknowing, inexperienced adolescents, and at the same time, a collective dislike of excessive age-differences between partners. But he also remarked upon the flexibility which was shown, and concluded that it was 'not law but social custom, internalized as a sense of what was "fitting", [which] thus largely governed marriage age'.<sup>4</sup> Canon law did, of course, set minimum legal ages of 'discretion' and consent, when binding marriage contracts could be made, at 14 years for boys and 12 for girls,<sup>5</sup> accrediting the young with some judgement and legal rights before the 'full age' of 21 years,<sup>6</sup> and in the course of the sixteenth century, proposals were made to reform the canon law in England which, if effected, would have raised the minimum ages of contract, and invalidated the marriages of dependants made without parental consent.<sup>7</sup> Along with efforts directed at constitutional changes, piecemeal legislative proposals, such as that 'by which young men should be restrained from marriage till they be of potent age, and tall and puissant persons stayed from marriage of old widows',<sup>8</sup> demonstrate both the pressure to change current legal thresholds, and also the disagreement over when precisely such thresholds should be reached. Such disagreement is hardly surprising given the fact that there existed no single, uniform age at which adult competence in all spheres of social, economic, religious, and political life should

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4 Ingram, *Church Courts*, pp. 129-30, 140-1. For hostility towards early marriage, see also Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth*, pp. 32-3.

5 Burn, *The Ecclesiastical Law*, ii, pp. 434, 455.

6 Ben-Amos, 'Service and the coming of age', p. 44. For the age of majority of 21, see also Thomas, 'Age and authority', pp. 19-21, 25-6.

7 Some of the proposals were of doubtful legal force. Thomas, 'Age and authority', pp. 24-5, cites those made in 1571 to raise the ages to 16 and 14 respectively, and the proposal of 1552, to make void teenage marriages made without parental agreement, but the former was in reality a canon agreed upon in convocation without Queen Elizabeth's authorization. Carlson's book, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, shows how the European reformation of marriage made parental consent indispensable for the marriage of dependants, while the English church continued to uphold 'pre-Tridentine rules', remaining even more 'Roman', in its rejection of marriage reform (pp. 3-8). Among the rejected proposals was that of 1535 which would have set a higher legal minimum age limit for contracts at 17 and 14 years; the proposals in 1539-40, intending to invalidate the marriages of minors without parental consent; and the more ambiguous intentions of the 1553 proposal (pp. 72-81, and n.97, p. 219). Further reforms concerning requirements for parental consent were proposed in 1563, surfacing in parliamentary debate over marriage licences (pp. 92-6, 138).

8 Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, p. 81.

commence.<sup>9</sup> Contemporaries then had their own disparate ideals regarding the timing of marriage, at what ages it was considered psychologically, physiologically, socially, and economically mature enough to marry, as well as the kind of age-gap between spouses deemed reputable and most desirable for a successful union. Such ideals turned on contemporary age definitions, the notional threshold of adulthood, legal limitations, past experiences, appropriate means, and a host of formal and informal recommendations. The 'gerontocratic ideal' outlined by Thomas for the early modern period ascribed maturity, wisdom and self-government to increasing age, and contrasted those capacities with the irrationality and foolishness of youth, often represented as 'a slippery age, full of passion, rashness, wilfulness'.<sup>10</sup> According to Macfarlane, there was the common assumption that men matured only after 25 and women after 20, an assumption which both 'reflected and checked age at marriage'.<sup>11</sup>

From the Kent depositions, there is some evidence to show that the restraints upon too early marriages were, it seems, internalized by the parties themselves. When the teenage 'vyrgyn' Suzanne Parker refused to marry 'the yonge man' John Austin, or any other before her age of twenty years, she may have been expressing precisely her own sense of unpreparedness for marriage.<sup>12</sup> Other girls likewise rejected their suitors, indicating the untimeliness of their proposal. Amy Colyer discussed marriage with Richard Nashe, but told him that 'she was but a child and wold not marye yet'<sup>13</sup> and the servant Mary Hubbard answered her suitor 'that she would not marrye yet and that she was not meate

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9 For the diversity of milestones in youth and adulthood, and the variety of numerical timing, see Thomas, 'Age and authority', pp. 12-30; Mitterauer, *A History of Youth*, pp. 45-87; Ben-Amos, 'Service and the coming of age', pp. 45-6, 58-9; M. Pelling, 'Child health as a social value in early modern England', *Social History of Medicine* 1(1988), 135-64 (esp. pp. 138 and notes). For limitations set by the 1563 statute, see, Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, p. 44; Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, p. 68. The age at sexual maturation is discussed by Laslett, *Family Life and Illicit Love*, pp. 214-32. I am grateful to Dr Ralph Houlbrooke for pointing out that, among the upper classes, 16 years was generally considered the minimum age for girls to engage in sexual relations, even in child marriages, and that it was also the normal age for the termination of female wardship. The traditional ending of male wardship, on the other hand, would seem to have depended upon types of tenant, with 21 being the normal age of knightly majority, but several years earlier for certain other tenancies.

10 Thomas, 'Age and authority', pp. 5, 16. But the alternative depictions of youth also shows that seventeenth-century perceptions were controversial and ambivalent. See Ben-Amos, 'Service and the coming of age', pp. 42-5.

11 Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, pp. 211-16. Cook, *Making a Match*, pp. 17-38, (esp. p. 23), cites the ages 17-22 for women, and 20-25 for men, as recommended ages at marriage.

12 See above, n. 1.

13 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, f. 65v., *Nashe v. Colyar* (1560).

bye reason of her age'.<sup>14</sup> In another case, upon being asked by William Amys to forsake all other men for him, Elizabeth Fayreman 'said she would not, because she was not of yeers to proceede that way, and he said, that ther were as young as her which did marry and that she might leekewise, but she said no'.<sup>15</sup>

Some partners, though, were clearly still adolescents when they got married or at least contemplated marriage.<sup>16</sup> One Mary Hale, for example, was said to have been just 13 or 14 when she eloped with the 20-year-old Beale to marry at London, contrary to the wishes of her mother and step-father, William Tanner.<sup>17</sup> As for the projected marriage between his servants, Thomas Kennet and Judith Spayne, the same Mr Tanner was heard to object strongly, 'the said Judyth being but a gyrl committed to his custody'.<sup>18</sup> Further cases similarly suggest the occurrence of youthful contracts, allegedly made in the mid-to late-teens.<sup>19</sup> For the 'smale' Godlina Knowler of Herne, it was commonly reported that she was 'sold' in marriage by her step-father, at the early age of about 14 years. Although theoretically, she would have been legally eligible for marriage at that age, the opinion of the cleric, John Bridges, may have been representative of prevailing social assumptions regarding the proper time for marriage. Declaring to Godlina's mother, 'his disliking ... that they [Hannyng and Knowler] should kepe company together the maid being so yong ... the mother told him that Hannyng had promised her that they should not accumpny together till her frendes thought good that they should accumpny so together'.<sup>20</sup>

Occasionally, deponents disclaimed any dealings in the marriage plans of their children on the assumption that they had sufficient maturity of judgement. The yeoman John Prowd of Ash called upon his daughter 'to answer for herself, for quoth he, she is of age to make choyce herself...'<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, the deposition statements alone seldom make it clear just what that perceived threshold in age was. What they do reveal is, on the one hand, the expressed apprehension towards too early marriages. While some marriage litigants

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14 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, ff. 229-v., *Turner v. Hubbard* (1570?).

15 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/14, ff. 46-7, *Amys v. Fayreman* (1572).

16 Nevertheless, Ingram, *Church Courts*, p. 194, claimed that most spousal litigants in the period 1570-1640 were in their 20s or early 30s, with only a small number under 21 years.

17 In C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/5, ff. 236v., 241, 242v., 248, *Symons v. Spayne* (1598).

18 *Ibid.*, f. 27v.

19 Eg. C.C.A.L., MSS. X/10/3, ff. 19-23, *Munday v. Parker* (1546); X/10/12, ff. 116v.-18v., 122v.-3, *Edmonds v. Hocking* (1564). Joan Parker of Sandwich was thought to be about 15, and Dorothy Hocking of Canterbury, between the ages of 16 and 20.

20 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/16, ff. 312v.-16.

21 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/1, ff. 279v.-85, *Prowd v. Gibs* (1589). Also, MS. X/11/5, f. 223, *Divers v. Williams* (1598).



appeared to be self-conscious of their juvenility and, like Juliane Marden, professed 'that she was to younge to marry, and that she would not marry without the consent and goodwill of her frendes',<sup>22</sup> there were those whose marriage objectives were specifically said to hinge upon the timing of their inheritance. John Fulcombe alleged that he could not marry Margery Graves until he was 21 years, when his goods were to come to his hands in one and a quarter years time, to which one John Knightsmyth replied, 'that maketh no matter, for you be yonge both and may tarry a while'.<sup>23</sup>

On the other hand, the depositions also suggest that ageing litigants might have their own misgivings about their marriageability. John Eddredge asked Dionisia Rede, 'canne you fynde in yor harte to love me as I canne love you for I am sum what aged'.<sup>24</sup> As Keith Thomas has pointed out, cultural conceptions about age and the behaviour thought appropriate to the age, applied accordingly to the old as well as the young. Contemporaries mocked the sexual passions of the elderly for being socially inadmissible for that age-group.<sup>25</sup> Regarding the famed incontinency of one Richard Abarrow, seen running naked out of a certain woman's house, and generally suspected of incontinent behaviour with other women, the sixty-year-old deponent William Collye believed him to be 'clear from the vice, for he beleeveth that a man of that age and yeers hath little or no desier to comit any suche acte...' adding later that he 'taketh Richard Abarrow to be 70 years and not able to get a child, to be so weake of body that he ys not provocable to fleshely lust'.<sup>26</sup>

Just as the excessive youth or age of couples might be seen as an obstacle to marriage, transgressing the acceptable norms of proper marriage age, some litigants clearly felt conscious too of the need to avoid excessive differences in age between themselves and their future partners. The widow Joan Whiter, as we have already observed in an earlier chapter, sought a more elderly man whom she regarded as more suitable for her in contrast to the carousing 'yonckers'.<sup>27</sup> Those who ignored such customary constraints of age-parity might risk a certain degree of mockery and ridicule by their fellow-parishioners, for although disparities in age may not have been uncommon in the early modern period, their acceptance remained questionable.<sup>28</sup>

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22 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/12, ff. 182-v., *Tusnothe v. Marden* (1565).

23 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/6, ff. 14v.-17, *Graves v. Fulcomb* (1592).

24 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/6, f. 174, *Eddredge v. Rede* (1557).

25 Thomas, 'Age and authority', p. 41.

26 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/14, ff. 219-21v., *Abarrow v. Hawke* (1572-3).

27 See above, Chapter 3, p. 102.

28 See also, Ingram, *Church Courts*, pp. 140-1; Thomas, 'Age and authority', p. 42; Cook, *Making a Match*, pp. 24-38.

In the case of *John Estland v. Mary Barrow* of Ash in 1580,<sup>29</sup> it would seem that the publication of the banns of marriage between the parties in Ash church precipitated some kind of crisis for Mary Barrow, then resident as a servant in the house of her uncle, John Chapman, a middle-aged husbandman, and long-established parishioner. None were 'sayeing agenst it', and Mary was herself apparently absent at the time, but when one Mr Brooke of Ashe 'found fault' with Chapman for permitting the asking of banns between Mary, 'being of some yeres and Estland who is but a boye', he thereupon chided her and put her out of his service, 'somewhat disliking' the liaison. Not 'knowing els whether to go', Mary went to live in the house of old father Estland, during which time John Estland was also present, and there she received free board for 4 to 6 weeks. At the third time of asking of the banns, perhaps the most critical, there was again no formal impediment expressed. 'None spoke up against it', and Mary later claimed to have been sitting 'far off, and also thick of hearing', although it was said that she seemed to consent to it since she also said nothing. As soon as the service was completed, however, the parishioners began to utter 'sondry speaches ... agenst her' in the churchyard, 'marvelling that she wold have suche a boy to her husband', and believing that 'she did folishly to matche with such an one as Estland was'. Angered by all the gossip, Mary was heard to reply:

'My bak is brod enough to beare all your moks and flowts (turnyng herself specially to a kynswoman of her own called goodwif Wacher). But though Estland be a boy, he may be a man and I will not forsake hym whilest breath is in my body. Goodwyf Wacher answered that she was sory and ashamed to understand that she Mary had so misused herself as she did. Mary said that she cared not, for quoth she I am nether whore nor thef, and I will never forsake hym while breath is in my belly'.

Mary's own account is somewhat less pointed, but interesting nevertheless for being so defensive. If, as she alleged, there was never any agreement of marriage between herself and John Estland, and if she never did consent to the publication of the banns, her own rejoinder would have been an impromptu, impulsive response occasioned by the jeers of her neighbours and kin. According to her, whatever her intentions towards Estland, they were justifiable, for 'though he is now but a boy yet he wilbe a man one daie by the grace of god'. Certain persons who stood by her applauded her stance, prompting her to repeat, 'those words I've said, ... I will never denye'. Within an hour after the incident, Mary went to drink together with Johanna Robinson and Mary

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29 C.C.A.L, MS. X/10/21, f. 11v.-13, 40v-46v, for full references to the case.

Cork, and in the company of several others, Johanna Robinson drank unto Estland, with Mary answering, 'I pledge you ... I will never forsake him ... and all present comended her for her constancy and so incorage her to be still'. That same night, Mary Cork did lie with her in old Estland's house, at which time Mary Barrow told how 'that she might and she wold marry with a wydower namyng hym goodman Mustred. But quoth Mary, I will never have hym. And I think ... my uncle Chapman wold rather consent I should marry hym then with this fellow that now I shall have (viz.) John Estland. But ... thys mans labor is going away (viz) Mustred, and the other though he be but a boy his labor is comyng'.

The ambiguities in the case are clearly revealing. If no lawful impediment existed then the objections raised derived principally from social attitudes, informal pressures which might, in the short-term provoke the breaking of norms, but sustained over a long period, would ultimately influence and check the considered marriage decision. In countering such opposition, Mary Barrow may have been forced to take a particular rhetorical stand, resembling those moments of conflict in cases of defamation where parties harden in their respective positions. The allusion to defamation is no less real in the assertions of honour and loyalty. The case may express contemporary disapproval of the implicit sexual appetite of women for younger men, and represents the possibilities for Mary Barrow in her choice of partner by the pitted polarities of the 'widower' as opposed to the 'boy', the ebbing strength of the one, in contrast to the potential physicality of the other. From the voices of discontent, the limits of toleration are exposed, such 'gossip' accusations presumably depending for their making, their reception, and their effectiveness, upon the prevailing social, economic and demographic conditions. But the nature of informal control proves itself to be ambiguous and conflicting, as the case demonstrates the influence of positive as well as negative pressure. Keith Thomas may rightly have identified the gathering of particular social and age-groups after church services.<sup>30</sup> Mary Cork is likely to have been Mary Barrow's bedfellow and confidante, and Johanna Robinson, clearly a neighbour-at-hand. Both are also 'virgins', unmarried, aged 26 and 41 respectively, sharing in female sociability, supportive and positively encouraging of Mary's choice. But perhaps their intimacy and sympathy with her as friends and drinking companions, transcends the real opinion and conception of what is generally acceptable. More likely, the negative voice of goodwife Wachter reveals more about the *cultural constraints and notions* regarding marriage age and age-parity.

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30 Thomas, 'Age and authority', p. 7.

## II

As for the actual ages at marriage encountered and observed for the reconstitutable proportion of the early modern English population, the work of historical demographers have several important, albeit generalized, findings to present. It has long been recognized that age at marriage has important demographic as well as social and cultural significance. Historical demographers have revealed its centrality as a variable in population movements and, together with the proportion ever marrying, it is thought to be one of the prime determinants of fertility, although recent research has reassessed the relative significance of changes in the timing, and incidence of marriage, and places greater emphasis on the latter's role. As one mediating variable for changes in the fertility in the English population until the nineteenth century, age at marriage affects the community's capacity to reproduce itself, and thus influences size of families, household and age structures, and overall population trends.<sup>31</sup> Serving both as a demographic indicator, and as an index of changing attitudes and experience on an individual and collective level, it is also essentially tied to various kinds of socio-economic and cultural processes such as migration, modes of property transmission, the culture, population density and economic system of a region, and the general 'performance of the economy'.<sup>32</sup> Not only then did marriage age possess a 'high strategic significance... in relation to a wide range of economic, social and demographic questions', it was capable of 'respond[ing] flexibly to opportunities and constraints'.<sup>33</sup>

Measurement of age at first marriage is, however, extremely difficult. Some sources do give stated ages at marriage, namely marriage licence allegations, but this material is biased socially and in other ways, and the ages reported are, sometimes, rounded, making comparison across time or space exceptionally problematic.<sup>34</sup> Moreover such licences, though procured, did not

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31 Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History of England*. For references to age at marriage and proportions never marrying, see pp. 255-65, 423-4; Wrigley and Schofield, 'English population history', p. 161; R. Schofield, 'English marriage patterns revisited', *Journal of Family History* 10,1(Spring '85), 2-20.

32 J. Hajnal, 'European marriage patterns in perspective', in D. V. Glass and D. E. C. Eversley eds., *Population in History* (London, 1965), pp. 101-43, (esp. pp. 132-3).

33 Wrigley, 'Age at marriage', pp. 219-20.

34 For the use made of marriage licences, see Elliott, 'Mobility and marriage'; Elliott, 'Single women'; P. Laslett, *The World We Have Lost - Further Explored* (London, 1983 edn.), pp. 82-4; Ingram, *Church Courts*, p. 129; Chalklin, *Seventeenth-Century Kent*, p. 37. On the growing awareness of

necessarily mean that the marriages actually took effect. In the case of *Hannyng v. Knowler* cited earlier, it is clear that Stephen Hannyng did indeed obtain a licence to marry Godlina Knowler, but when he carried her off to Hackington to be married, she resolutely refused to proceed, and wept bitterly.<sup>35</sup> Although accurate ages at first marriage can be calculated from parish registers using the technique of Family Reconstitution,<sup>36</sup> the evidence suffers from several disadvantages, with registers not commencing until 1538 at the earliest, with calculated ages distorted by the effects of migration, and the very fact that reconstitution cannot recapture the entire local population, but only that possibly unrepresentative 'reconstitutable minority'. What this means, in effect, is that we have no reliable national age at marriage figures until the last decades of the sixteenth century. For the earlier period there are virtually no sources that shed direct light on this problem. The marriage licences, although useful for the seventeenth century, cannot be depended upon to supply age information for the preceding century. Some medieval historians have made inferences from other sources, such as church court depositions, to derive a rough estimate of the prevailing demographic regime, and to infer likely marriage regimes from proportions in service or mobility statistics, but the empirical evidence is scanty, and before the period when age at marriage can be measured satisfactorily, the situation pertaining in England is more contentious.<sup>37</sup> As L. R. Poos remarked, 'no source or methodology has yet been discovered that can conclusively yield reliable data for marriage ages in rural England before 1500'.<sup>38</sup>

For the early modern period, it is usually assumed that England was part of the wider North-west European household formation pattern, which classically consisted of a late average marriage age for both men and women, typically in the mid to late 20s, and a substantial proportion of women who remained celibate, such a pattern being closely associated with predominantly nuclear

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numerical age, see K. Thomas, 'Age and authority', pp. 3-5. But, as Thomas pointed out, 'In Tudor times such awareness was far from universal'.

35 C.C.A.L., MSS. X/10/16, ff. 326v.-9, 336v.-7; X/10/18, ff. 6v.-8v., 10v.-11v., (1577). Licence dated September 21 1576, J. M. Cowper ed., *Canterbury Marriage Licences, 1568--1618*, (Canterbury, 1892).

36 See above nn. 31, 33 and Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, p. 106, for the difficulty of tracing those who married back to the baptismal register.

37 Goldberg, 'Marriage, migration, servanthood and life-cycle', pp. 154-5; P. J. P. Goldberg, 'Female labour, service and marriage in the late medieval urban North', *Northern History* 22 (1986), 18-38, (esp. pp. 25-6); Goldberg, *Women, Work and Life Cycle*, pp. 8-9, 205-9, 225-32; R. M. Smith, 'Human resources', in G. Astill and A. Grant eds., *The Countryside in Medieval England* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 188-212 (esp. pp. 200-12).

38 L. R. Poos, *A Rural Society After the Black Death. Essex, 1350-1525* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 145.

households, and the institution of service which allowed children to leave home in their mid-teens and to save up enough property to help establish their own independent households.<sup>39</sup> Several studies indicate that this was generally so. The most recent published work from the Cambridge Group suggests that, for thirteen reconstituted parishes in the early Stuart period, the mean age at first marriage for women was 25.6 and for men 28.1, but it does not cite any age at marriage data for the Elizabethan period.<sup>40</sup> The figures for the Elizabethan period derived from previous reconstitution evidence, based on one twelve-parish sample implied that age at marriage for single women in the period 1550-1599 lay between 26.4 and 26.1, and for men, between 29.3 and 28.2,<sup>41</sup> while figures drawn from a smaller ten-parish sample suggest that the mean age at first marriage for women in the same period was only 24.8, and 27.2 for men.<sup>42</sup> That there was considerable variation in the actual range in marriage ages found within parishes has also been shown in local studies. In Hunstanton, Norfolk, for example, although the average age of first marriage for women and men between 1566 and 1597 was 26.2 and 27, the range in ages lay between 16 and 34 years, and between 19 and 38 years respectively.<sup>43</sup> The mean figures themselves were variable across regions and parishes, and between urban and rural areas, highlighting the absence of a 'clear pattern in the age of marriage' and instead a 'crazy-quilt of individuality' in their experience.<sup>44</sup> In the sixteenth century, several parishes in

39 Hajnal, 'European marriage patterns', p. 108 suggests that the mean age at first marriage for women should be at least 23+ years, usually 24+, for an identifiable European pattern. A non-European pattern would imply one below the age of 21 years.

40 Wrigley and Schofield, 'English population history', p. 162.

41 Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History of England*, pp. 423-4.

42 Wrigley, 'Age at marriage', pp. 221-2. For the parish of Colyton, Devon, see also, Laslett, *Family Life and Illicit Love*, p. 127; P. Sharpe, 'The total reconstitution method: a tool for class-specific study?', *Local Population Studies* 44 (Spring 1990), 41-51. For some early-modern European examples of a late marrying regime, see S. C. Ogilvie, 'Coming of age in a corporate society: capitalism, pietism, and family authority in rural Wurttemberg, 1590-1740', *Continuity and Change* 1, 3 (1986), 279-331 (p. 321); M. Segalen, *Historical Anthropology of the Family* trans. J. C. Whitehouse and S. Mathews (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 116-19.

43 Oestmann, *Lordship and Community*, pp. 174-5. See also, Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, pp. 216-17.

44 For differences between market and rural communities, see, for example, M. K. McIntosh, *A Community Transformed. The Manor and Liberty of Havering, 1500-1620* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 73, n. 179. For regional variation and for the early marriage age of native-born London brides, based on marriage licences, see Elliott, 'Mobility and marriage', pt iii; and Elliott, 'Single women', pp. 86-9. A concise statement regarding the wide range of individual experience can be found in D. Levine and K. Wrightson, 'The social context of illegitimacy in early modern England', in P. Lastlett, K. Oosterveen and R. M. Smith eds., *Bastardy and its Comparative History* (London, 1980), pp. 158-75, (esp. pp. 159-61).

the Weald of Kent which were linked to rural industry were characterized by an average age at first marriage which was lower than the national findings.<sup>45</sup>

While late entry into marriage was by no means universally practised in early modern England, the general prevalence of the 'North-West European marriage pattern' in the period after parish registration began has been reasonably well established. Its origins are, however, more obscure, and for the late medieval period, the age and frequency of marriage are much debated. According to Hajnal, the distinctively 'European' regime he described, did not exist in England in the later fourteenth century, but originated in the post-medieval era,<sup>46</sup> and Razi supports this thesis with evidence of a low marriage age for peasant families with access to land in the manor of Halesowen, Worcestershire. Their findings have been criticised by those who emphasise the degree of continuity between the late medieval and early modern period, and who argue that marriage in the later-fourteenth and fifteenth-centuries was 'companionate', relatively late, and 'compatible with the West European model'.<sup>47</sup> However, the phenomenon of teenage marriage is recognized as a very real one, particularly amongst the fifteenth and sixteenth-century aristocracy and some other more elevated social groups.<sup>48</sup>

Indeed, of the several variables which might have affected age at first marriage, that of social group is among the most pronounced. While the pattern of marriage for the middling and lower classes is generally thought to have been late, the situation of early marriage was much more common among the British peerage and squirearchy in the sixteenth century, although not all children within those social echelons would have married early.<sup>49</sup> In seventeenth-century London, on the other hand, the inverse association between social status and age at first marriage did not apply, since men of lower status crafts married at a

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45 In Brenchley, the mean for women and men was 23.7 and 25.3, and in Staplehurst, 23.5 and 26.3, in Zell, *Industry in the Countryside*, pp. 69-76. Relatively early marriage ages have also been found for the parish of Terling, Essex, and for late sixteenth-century Stratford-upon-Avon. See, Wrightson and Levine, *Poverty and Piety*, pp. 47-8; Laslett, *Family Life and Illicit Love*, p. 218.

46 Hajnal, 'European marriage patterns', esp. pp. 119, 134.

47 See above, nn 37-8. Also Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, pp. 63-5.

48 Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life-Cycle*, p. 231; Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, pp. 65-6; Oestmann, *Lordship and Community*, p. 175; F. J. Furnivall ed., *Child Marriages, Divorces and Ratifications etc., in the Diocese of Chester, A.D. 1561-6*, Early English Text Society, 108 (London, 1897); Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, pp. 96, 107-8.

49 T. H. Hollingsworth, 'The demography of the British peerage', *Population Studies*, suppl. to vol 18, no. 2 (Nov. 1964), i-iv, 3-108 (esp. pp. 15, 25-7, tables 5-6, 17 and figs 1-2); L. Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641* (original edn., Oxford, 1965, abridged edn., 1967, repr. 1977), p. 294; Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, pp. 40-5; Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*, pp. 82-4.

slightly younger age than their more privileged counterparts, but whereas status did not greatly influence variations in male marriage age, it did affect the pattern of age-difference between spouses. Indeed, as Brodsky Elliott has shown, other important factors, such as migration and parental mortality, rather than status alone, could decidedly affect marriage age.<sup>50</sup> If alteration in the social composition of the population might alter the prevailing age at marriage, the state of local marriage markets could also influence marriage opportunity, as could changes in the sex ratio, the prevalence of service in husbandry, and the amount of female employment available, whether in urban domestic service or industry, which offered women an independent alternative to marriage.<sup>51</sup> Finally, in addition to the kinds of economic correlations already discussed, age at marriage impinges upon other more social questions. It affects the age gap between husband and wife, and hence the possible equality or patriarchalism within marital relations.<sup>52</sup> Marrying at young ages is usually equated with a greater degree of parental control over the marriage decision, particularly for women, and child marriages are often identified with the union of families, rather than individuals.<sup>53</sup>

As we have seen then, deponents in marriage cases made it clear that their age was indeed a factor to be taken into consideration when making marriage decisions, and demographers are agreed that the age at which such decisions were made, played an important part in regulating population growth, although the

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50 Elliott, 'Mobility and marriage', *passim*; Elliott, 'Single women', pp. 82-6. A study of the middle-class in London confirms Elliott's findings, see Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, pp. 180-4. For differential marriage ages between occupational groups, see for example, Poos, *A Rural Society after the Black Death*, pp. 63, 157; Sharpe, 'The total reconstitution method', pp. 47-9; Chalklin, *Seventeenth-Century Kent*, p. 37; M. Drake, 'Age at marriage in the pre-industrial West', in F. Bechhofer ed., *Population Growth and the Brain Drain* (Edinburgh, 1969), pp. 196-207.

51 Sharpe, 'The total reconstitution method', pp. 47-50; Wrigley, 'Age at marriage', p. 231; Wrigley and Schofield, 'English population history', p. 163; A. Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1981); Goldberg, 'Female labour service and marriage', *passim*; Goldberg, *Women, Work and Life-Cycle*, pp. 324-61; Smith, 'Human resources', p. 211.

52 At the end of the sixteenth century the average age difference between spouses was 2.4 years, with a trend towards a declining age-gap during the seventeenth century. See Wrigley, 'Age at marriage', p. 223; Wrigley and Schofield, 'English population history', pp. 166-8; A. Laurence, *Women in England 1500-1760. A Social History* (London, 1994), p. 32. For the companionate nature of medieval marriage, see, Goldberg, *Women, Work and Life-Cycle*, pp. 226-32, where the average age difference found among urban couples was 2.9 years and among rural couples, 3.8 years. On the age-difference found in early modern London, and its social implications, see Elliott, *op. cit.*

53 Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, p. 42; Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy*, p. 294; Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, p. 66. For a discussion of regulated marriage against freedom to choose, see above chapter 1.



empirical basis of their knowledge, before the end of the sixteenth century, is somewhat deficient. What needs to be examined, therefore, is any supporting evidence we might have which could perhaps add to what we already know about the ages which contemporaries thought suitable for marriage to commence, about perceptions of age categorizations and the use of numerical ages. The next section will present some of that evidence which, it is argued, may conceivably contribute to our understanding of age at marriage in late fifteenth, and sixteenth-century Kent.

### III

If depositions can be said to reveal something about contemporary self-awareness of their age at marriage and about the various expectations governing the timing of marriage, and parish registers show the pattern of marriage age for at least a proportion of the population which was followed in practice, the evidence from wills, it is suggested, may indicate the existence and significance of notional minimum ages, by representing statements of intention in the transmission of property, the perception of when such transmission would occur and possibly, therefore, the time at which independence and competence for marriage were expected to begin.

General problems concerning the nature of the source; and the limitations of the wills as evidence, are already familiar to the historian. Leaving aside the theoretical legal requirements and restrictions upon will-making, how pervasive the institution was in practice, is problematic, both as a social phenomenon and as an inherently male prerogative.<sup>54</sup> Much work has been devoted towards the question of status groups among testators, the family circumstances which necessitated the making of a will, and other underlying motives and pressures, as well as the formal structure of the will itself and its implications for authorship, religious persuasion, and personal intention.<sup>55</sup>

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54 For the non-testamentary capacity of particular groups such as minors, married women, and excommunicants, see, e.g. M. M. Sheehan, *The Will in Medieval England from the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to the End of the Thirteenth Century* (Toronto, 1963), esp. Chapter 6; S. Coppel, 'Wills and the community: a case study of Tudor Grantham', in P. Riden ed., *Probate Records and the Local Community* (Gloucester, 1985), 71-90, (p. 73); Burn, *The Ecclesiastical Law*, iv, pp. 44-498, esp. pp. 44-63.

55 C. Howell, 'Peasant inheritance customs in the Midlands, 1280-1700', in J. Goody, J. Thirsk and E. P. Thompson eds., *Family and Inheritance. Rural Society in Western Europe 1200-1800* (Cambridge, 1976, ppbk. edn., 1978), pp. 112-55; M. Spufford, 'Peasant inheritance customs and land distribution in Cambridgeshire from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries', in *ibid.*, pp. 156-76; B. Capp, 'Will formularies', *Local Population Studies* 14 (Spring 1975), 49-

As to the general level of testation among local populations, there is some significant variation in historical findings. Michael Zell suggests that in the Kent Weald, there was probably an increase either in the popularity of will-making, or in the practice of enrolling wills in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, with fluctuations coinciding with changes in mortality levels, but with the growth maintained until the plateau at the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>56</sup> In the Lincolnshire town of Grantham, on the other hand, the evidence points to an increase in testation in the later sixteenth century, thought to be characteristic of the general experience.<sup>57</sup> It would seem, that in early modern England, the proportion of the dying adult local populations represented by testators may have ranged between 5% and 45%.<sup>58</sup> Certainly, it was not typical of most men to leave a testament, and for women, far less likely.<sup>59</sup> Erickson concluded that 'family

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50; E. Poole, 'Will formularies', *Local Population Studies* 17(Aut. 1976), 42-3; M. Spufford, 'Will formularies', *Local Population Studies* 19 (Aut. 1977), 35-6; M. Spufford, 'The scribes of villagers' wills in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Cambridgeshire and their influence', *Local Population Studies* 7(Aut. 1971), 28-43; Matlock Population Studies Group, 'Wills and their scribes', *Local Population Studies* 8(Spring 1972), 55-7; R. Richardson, 'Wills and will-makers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: some Lancashire evidence', *Local Population Studies* 9 (Aut 1972), 33-42; Vann, 'Wills and the family', *passim*; L. Bonfield, 'Normative rules and property transmission: reflections on the link between marriage and inheritance in early modern England', in L. Bonfield, R. Smith and K. Wrightson eds., *The World We Have Gained. Histories of Population and Social Structure* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 155-76; S. Coppel, 'Will-making on the deathbed', *Local Population Studies* 40 (Spring 1988), 37-45; A. L. Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London and New York, 1993), pp. 32-9, 61-97, 129-51, 204-22; Zell, *Industry in the Countryside*, pp. 20, 55-6, 114-15; Oestmann, *Lordship and Community*, pp. 185-7, 191-3; Collinson, 'Cranbrook and the Fletchers', p. 187; Macfarlane, *The Family Life of Ralph Josselin*, pp. 64-7.

56 Zell, *Industry in the Countryside*, pp. 20, 55-6. A detailed discussion of will registration in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, compared to provincial courts, is given by M. Takahashi, 'The number of wills proved in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Graphs, tables and commentary', in G. H. Martin and P. Spufford eds., *The Records of the Nation* (Woodbridge, 1990), pp. 187-213.

57 Coppel, 'Wills and the community', p. 77.

58 Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 32. For calculations of the rates of will-makers to intestates, or 'potential testators', see Bonfield, 'Normative rules', pp. 164-6. In Banbury, testation ran at 25% of males and 10% of females; the parishes of Terling and Orwell show a comparable rate of will-making, with testation being slightly higher in Willingham. In Grantham, between 1581 and 1610, it was on average 10%; in Earls Colne between 1610 and 1640, only 8%; but in one chapelry in Kirkby Lonsdale, approximately one third. See Coppel, 'Wills and the community', pp. 78-9. Finally, in Hunstanton, the proportion was roughly a quarter in the sixteenth century, see, Oestmann, *Lordship and Community*, p. 185.

59 Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 204. She finds that men were six times more disposed to will-making than women. Also Bonfield, 'Normative rules', p. 161, and Vann, 'Wills and the family', p. 347, emphasize the point that most men didn't leave wills.

situation, wealth and local economy seem to have had some impact on men's will-making (although the relationship is not yet clear) but none of these factors is a good predictor of a widow's likelihood of making a will. Although wealth caused prosperous people to think of making a will more often than poor people, it was also important to many poor people, especially women, to make a will'.<sup>60</sup>

Indeed, of the several predispositions to make a will which have been identified among male testators, factors of wealth and status may have been of some significance. In Banbury, will-making tended to come from the richer, propertied classes, although all social classes with the exception of paupers, were represented,<sup>61</sup> while the Hunstanton testators comprised a reasonably wide economic and social cross-section of the community, but with certain groups either not represented or under-represented.<sup>62</sup> Contrary findings indicate that prosperity alone may have been rather less causative than usually assumed, the actual nature of property itself being a likely factor,<sup>63</sup> along with other variables. Indeed, the Grantham results suggest that in the later sixteenth century, the lower socio-economic groups were increasingly prevalent among will-makers, and that while the middling rich strata were most prominent, 'will-making by the late sixteenth century was becoming a socially downward process'.<sup>64</sup> In the Kent Weald too, it would seem that by the mid-sixteenth century, a proportion of landless men was more disposed to make a will.<sup>65</sup> Spufford's and Howell's explanation for will-making argues against any clear correlation between absolute wealth and property ownership, and the tendency to greater testacy. Of the 49 will-makers in Willingham at the end of the sixteenth century, most came from the poorer ranks. Singling out family responsibilities instead, Spufford showed that the dominant motivation behind will-making was the need to provide for under-aged and un-established dependants.<sup>66</sup> Similarly, for the inhabitants of Kibworth Harcourt, 'the decisive factor was not class or family, but the age and family responsibilities of the testator at the time when he made his will'.<sup>67</sup>

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60 Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 207-8.

61 Vann, 'Wills and the family', pp. 352-6.

62 Oestmann, *Lordship and Community*, pp. 185-6.

63 Bonfield, 'Normative rules', pp. 167-9.

64 Coppel, 'Wills and the community', pp. 77-8.

65 Zell, *Industry in the Countryside*, p. 20.

66 Spufford, 'Peasant inheritance customs', pp. 169-73.

67 Howell, 'Peasant inheritance customs', p. 141. See also, Oestmann, *Lordship and Community*, pp. 191-3. He, too, identifies the provision for dependent children as determinative, and connects it with the need to protect the family's property rights where primogeniture failed.

In recognizing the significance of the demographic status of testators and their stage in the life-cycle,<sup>68</sup> it has also been observed that most wills were usually made close to death. An analysis of the sixteenth-century wills of rural Leverton and Grantham in Lincolnshire showed that half of the testators made their wills on their deathbed and that, despite the moral and legal recommendations, will-making was often delayed until death was imminent.<sup>69</sup> A glance at the testamentary cases in depositions would reveal some of the family, kin, and community pressures brought to bear on men in such circumstances, seeking themselves to salvage their conscience, and declaring their ultimate intentions.<sup>70</sup> To what extent the conditions of will-making might have determined the attitudes and strategies of testators can only be surmised. As noted elsewhere, 'the will ... was the testator's ultimate public act representing the final conscious statement of his intentions prior to decease. In some ways, as Ariès has suggested, it was part of the ritual preparation for death. The proximity of death sometimes prompted deathbed penitence, anxiety for proper burial, or hasty provision for surviving dependants'.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, the ways in which wills were produced could introduce further problems of interpretation. The authorship of wills has been much disputed, since the influence of scribes, professional notaries and clergymen in will formularies could affect the originality of the will, and might extend from religious preambles, to actual specifications contained within the testament.<sup>72</sup>

Finally, to conclude this discussion of the general use of wills as a source, it needs to be remembered that, for the majority of people, will-making was not necessary in circumstances where the existing local, manorial, and ecclesiastical customs required no modification.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, it is commonly understood that

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68 Vann, 'Wills and the family', p. 347.

69 Coppel, 'Will-making on the deathbed'. This finding applies where the dates of burial of testators are known. See also, Oestmann, *Lordship and Community*, p. 187.

70 As stated above in the introduction (p. 8), in addition to consulting the deposition volumes for matrimony cases, I have also read through all the testamentary cases, although time forbade noting them in any detail for future reference. See also, Coppel, 'Wills and the community', p. 81; J. Addy, *Death, Money and the Vultures. Inheritance and Avarice 1660-1750* (London, 1992), *passim*.

71 Coppel, 'Wills and the community', p. 80.

72 For a discussion of will formularies and scribes, see above, n. 56. Also, Coppel, 'Wills and the community', pp. 82-7; Collinson, 'Cranbrook and the Fletchers', p. 187.

73 Bonfield, 'Normative rules', p. 161; Oestmann, *Lordship and Community*, pp. 189-90, where the custom of primogeniture was so strong as to require no ratification; Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 78, where will-making may have been designed to modify the effects of primogeniture and allow for the provision of other dependants. See also, pp. 26-8, for rules of inheritance in intestacy.

the transmission of property was often a gradual process, and that non-testamentary, pre-mortem gifts and settlements were a frequent occurrence.<sup>74</sup> As Bonfield emphasises, inheritance by will in early modern England was only one stage in an extended system of inter-generational property devolution, where various 'strategies of inheritance' were in operation, and where the will might serve as 'a supplement, the means of correcting biases in lifetime transfers or creating them at death'. But while his study of inheritance among Preston copy holders illustrates the alternative and preferred means of property transmission, and the non-exclusivity of testamentary provision, he nevertheless argues for a close connection between inheritance and household formation, suggesting that, 'for some families the marriage of the child was the juncture at which commitments regarding inheritance were undertaken', that 'admittance to a future rather than a present possessory interest in property was related to marriage ...[and] that it was the assurance of resources rather than actual possessory transfer that was crucial'.<sup>75</sup>

In what remains of this chapter, some attempt will be made to examine the possible link between property transfer, as shown albeit, solely through the will, and the timing of marriage. While the exact nature of the relationship is questionable, it is hoped that a study of the Kent wills may suggest an alternative approach to the subject.

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74 Vann, 'Wills and the family', pp. 347, 361-2; Spufford, 'Peasant inheritance customs', pp. 173-6; Macfarlane, *Family Life of Ralph Josselin*, pp. 64-7; Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 32-3.

75 Bonfield, 'Normative rules', esp. pp. 160-1, 171-6.

## IV

Relating paternal death to the age of first marriage of the succeeding generation is, as Vann points out, problematical, given the significance of the pre-mortem transfers, and the establishing of married children during one's lifetime.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, Levine would argue, on the basis of his family reconstitution study of Shepshed, Leicestershire, 1538-1799, that there is no connection between inheritance and marriage age, since the majority of marriages preceded paternal death. In rejecting the 'inheritance-marriage' model, however, he narrowly restricts his definition of inheritance to post-mortem transmissions.<sup>77</sup> The findings of the Cambridge Group also indicate that 'despite all the literature, there is no evidence in the reconstitution data that the survival status of fathers had any influence on age at marriage'.<sup>78</sup> Nonetheless, the absence of any such simple correlation between paternal death and marriage ages, does not preclude a link between property devolution and the timing of marriage, since it might merely show the widespread existence of inter vivos settlements. In those circumstances, however, where fathers died leaving under-aged, unmarried legatees, the evidence of wills may be used to reveal something about the minimum ages generally thought opportune to commence married life, or at least to begin independent property holding, and the possible influence, therefore, of property transmission upon marriage decisions and their future timing.

No study of wills as yet has given much detailed consideration to the range and meaning of the ages specified by testators, although some mention has been made of these stipulations, which, in the case of daughters especially, implicitly equate marriages with the provision of legacies. Aristocratic daughters, in the late seventeenth century were being paid their portions between the ages of 17 and 21, most commonly at 18,<sup>79</sup> middle-class testators in London usually provided for their daughters at marriage or at the age of 21, depending upon which event occurred first,<sup>80</sup> and a number of local studies in the early modern

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76 Vann, 'Wills and the family', pp. 361-3.

77 D. Levine, "'For their own reasons': individual marriage decisions and family life', *Journal of Family History* 7, 3(Fall, 1982), 255-64 (esp. pp. 255-9). Levine also suggests that paternal death delayed marriage.

78 Jim Oeppen, private communication. Its effect on the proportions ever marrying, however, cannot be ascertained.

79 Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, abridged edn., p. 274. By that period, the portions were paid irrespective of marriage. Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, p. 100, uses the Elizabethan wills of Essex gentry and merchants, to show that only a small proportion of testators who provided for their unmarried daughters, placed restrictions on their daughters' marriages after the age of 21 years, (adulthood). See also, below chapter 6, pp. 208-11.

80 Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, p. 187.

period, have also indicated age specifications in wills. In the parishes of Earls Colne and Kirkby Lonsdale, daughters were automatically paid at their age of 18 or 21,<sup>81</sup> in Banbury, payment was normally tied to the age of 18, even 16, or marriage, whichever was earliest, with the range in age between 16 and 25,<sup>82</sup> while in Kibworth Harcourt, children were allowed their share of inheritance at the stipulated ages of 16, 18, or 21, or at the time of marriage.<sup>83</sup> Ages prescribed for sons were usually somewhat later. In the parish of Orwell, compared to daughters who were provided for at 18 or at marriage, and sometimes between the ages of 19 and 21, sons did not usually receive their legacies until they were 21.<sup>84</sup> Similarly in Hunstanton, bequests to sons were made over slightly later, although both sons and daughters did not acquire their parts till their early twenties.<sup>85</sup> According to a more recent study, based on a large sample of Ely diocesan wills in the period 1545-1602, of the 2500 wills which provided for unmarried children, it was commonly found that legacies were made conditional upon attaining a specified age. Although many testators allowed their children to receive their inheritance if they married before that age, the proportion leaving bequests solely at marriage and irrespective of any age, was small. Unfortunately, despite the invaluable size of the sample, and the evident significance of age specifications, no further analysis was undertaken in the study, and the age specifications themselves were not presented.<sup>86</sup>

Such references to age qualifications as cited in the above-mentioned studies do not, perhaps, extend our understanding of their significance much further. It has been suggested that the obligatory payment of legacies at the aforementioned times, (which might precede the day of marriage, or which might be received irrespective of marriage), meant that the testamentary means of property transfer did not, in any way, function to retard or control the marriages of children.<sup>87</sup> However, although it may be the case that these clauses were not intended to delay or dictate marriage behaviour, (since the property transmission was usually envisaged at ages earlier than, according to demographers, was normally prevalent),<sup>88</sup> the specifications of ages may, alternatively, imply that testators were intent upon prescribing at least some lower boundary to marriage

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81 Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, p. 269. This payment was again made, regardless of marriage.

82 Vann, 'Wills and the family', pp. 357, 362.

83 Howell, 'Peasant inheritance customs', p. 145.

84 M. Spufford, *Contrasting Communities. English Villagers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Cambridge, 1974, ppbk. edn., 1979), p. 112.

85 Oestmann, *Lordship and Community*, pp. 195-6.

86 Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, p. 139.

87 See above, nn. 79-82, 86 and also, Vann, 'Wills and the family', p. 363.

88 See above, section II.

age, and/or minimum limitations upon when children might commence independent property-holding. The examination of such ages could arguably tell us something very interesting about the ages at which young people were customarily reckoned to be financially capable, and maritally eligible. This section, therefore, will attempt to use such information in a more systematic and wide-ranging way to consider the hitherto under explored question of notional, ideal ages, as prescribed by testators in five Kent parishes.

All the registered wills probated in the archdeaconry and consistory courts of Canterbury for the chosen parishes of Tenterden, Wye, Whitstable, Chislet and Sturry, in the period from the mid-fifteenth to the end of the sixteenth century, have been used in this analysis.<sup>89</sup> As has already been discussed in the introduction,<sup>90</sup> these communities were selected partly because of the sheer volume of their testamentary survival, particularly in the case of Tenterden. In total, 1304 wills were consulted for all five parishes combined,<sup>91</sup> a list of which, arranged chronologically for each parish, can be seen in the bibliography. In addition, a further 501 wills for the brief period 1503-9, which were geographically more representative of the diocese of Canterbury, were also used in a preliminary analysis (see bibliography and Maps 5.1 and 5.2). Since the latter served merely as a pilot study, its findings are supplementary, and will be incorporated into the general discussion of methodology, and of broad ideal strategies of intention, but detailed statistical treatment will be confined to the individual parish studies.<sup>92</sup> The status of testators cited in the bibliography is that given in the will, and no attempt has been made to infer their social or occupational status. Although they would appear to have been more commonly provided from the mid-sixteenth century, such details are largely insufficient for the identification of social groups in any systematic way, or for undertaking any

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89 Neither the original wills, (Centre for Kentish Studies, PRC 16/) nor the P.C.C. wills have been consulted. An index of the archdeaconry court wills (C.K.S., PRC 17) and of the consistory court wills (C.K.S., PRC 32) can be found in H. R. Plomer ed., *Index of Wills and Administrations in the Probate Registry at Canterbury 1396-1558 and 1640-1650*, Kent Records vi (London, 1920). For later sixteenth-century wills, an MS index is available in the C.K.S. The proving of wills in all five parishes came under the jurisdiction of the archdeacon's official, with the commissary general exercising jurisdiction only in particular circumstances. For a discussion of jurisdiction, see, Woodcock, *Medieval Ecclesiastical Courts*, part i, 'the jurisdictions'.

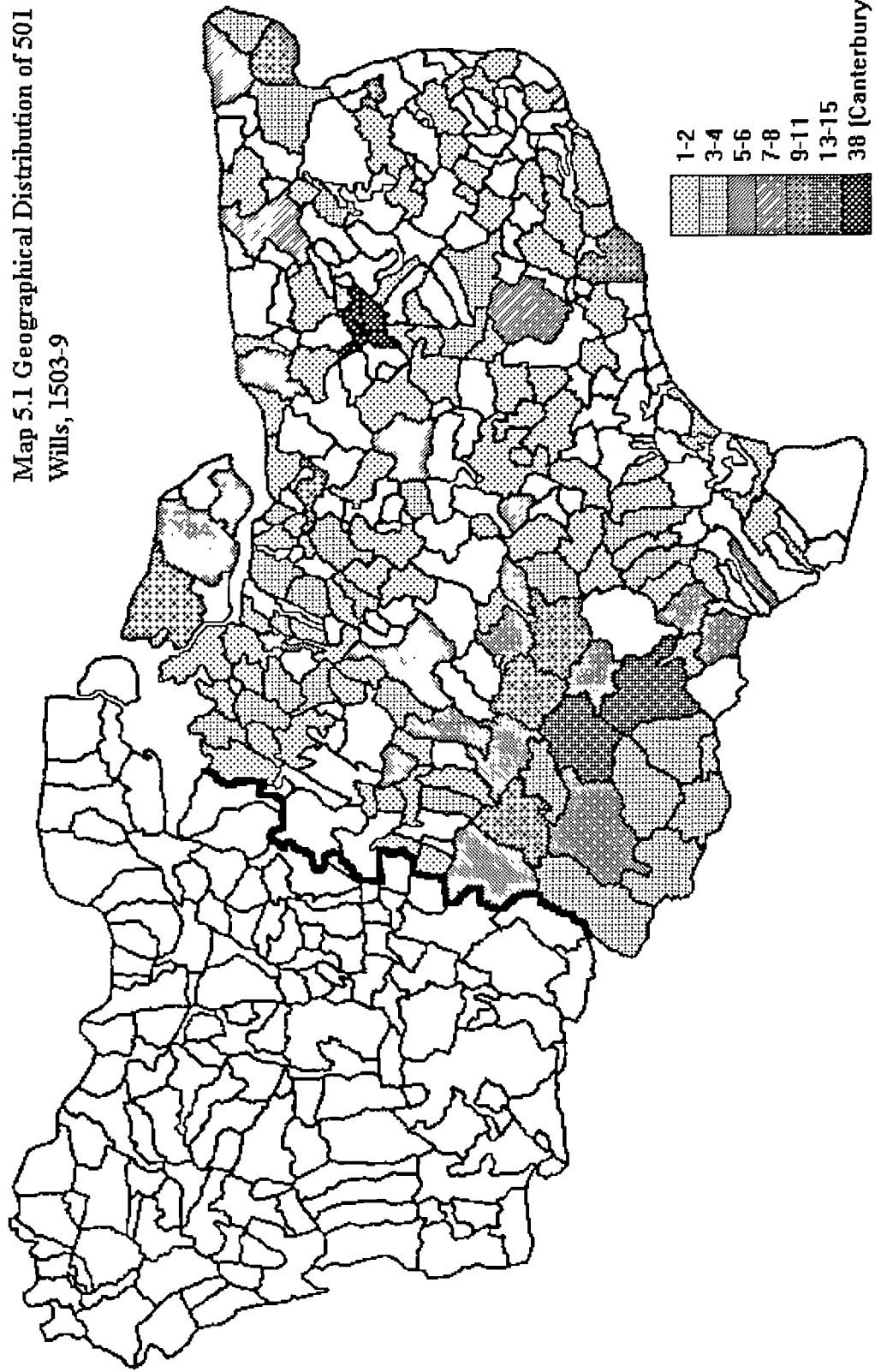
90 See above, introduction, pp. 9, 12, 21-6.

91 The number of wills for each parish is as follows: Tenterden, 1449-1600 (506); Wye, 1464-1600 (288); Whitstable, 1455-1600 (217); Chislet 1460-1600 (176); Sturry, 1464-1600 (117).

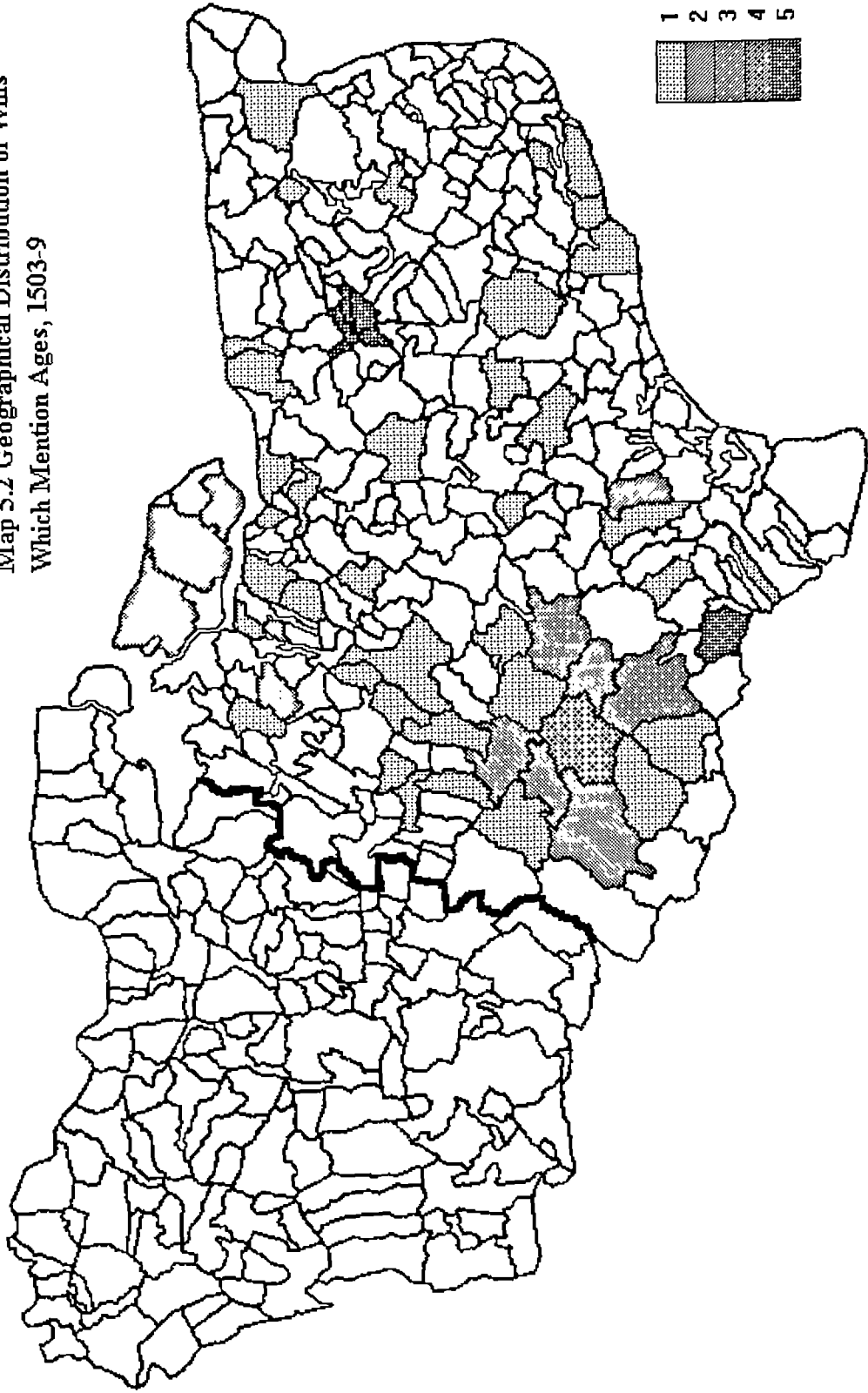
92 Those wills were read from a consecutive series of two archdeaconry court volumes (C.K.S., PRC17/9-10) which were available on microfilm at the time the project was undertaken. They represent an early attempt to engage with the source, and the problem encountered of age specificity.



Map 5.1 Geographical Distribution of 501  
Wills, 1503-9



Map 5.2 Geographical Distribution of Wills  
Which Mention Ages, 1503-9



kind of social class and occupational group differential analyses. As Zell's study of surviving sixteenth-century wills from the Kent Weald also shows, while the number of extant wills is certainly ample, the occupational information found within them is less than satisfactory. He therefore concludes that it is 'not possible to derive a valid measure of occupational diversity and of local trades from the wills alone'.<sup>93</sup>

Compared to other local findings, the proportion of the dying population represented by testators may generally have been on the low side, although it was by no means negligible.<sup>94</sup> From the five sample parishes, Tenterden, for example, had a total of 209 wills in the period 1550-99 when 2389 burials were recorded, suggesting a ratio of will-makers to burials of 1 to 11, whereas in the parish of Whitstable, the ratio in the period 1560-99 was approximately 1 to 17.<sup>95</sup> While it is clear that the total number of wills which survive vary considerably for each of the parishes, as does the decadal pattern in the distribution of wills, the overall trend in the five parishes combined, indicate an increase in the level of testation from the late fifteenth to the mid-sixteenth centuries, peaking in the 1550s, with a decline at the end of the period (see Figure 5.1).<sup>96</sup> Even in the parishes of Chislet and Sturry where the population may have increased in the course of the sixteenth century, there was no apparent corresponding growth in will-making at the end of the century.<sup>97</sup>

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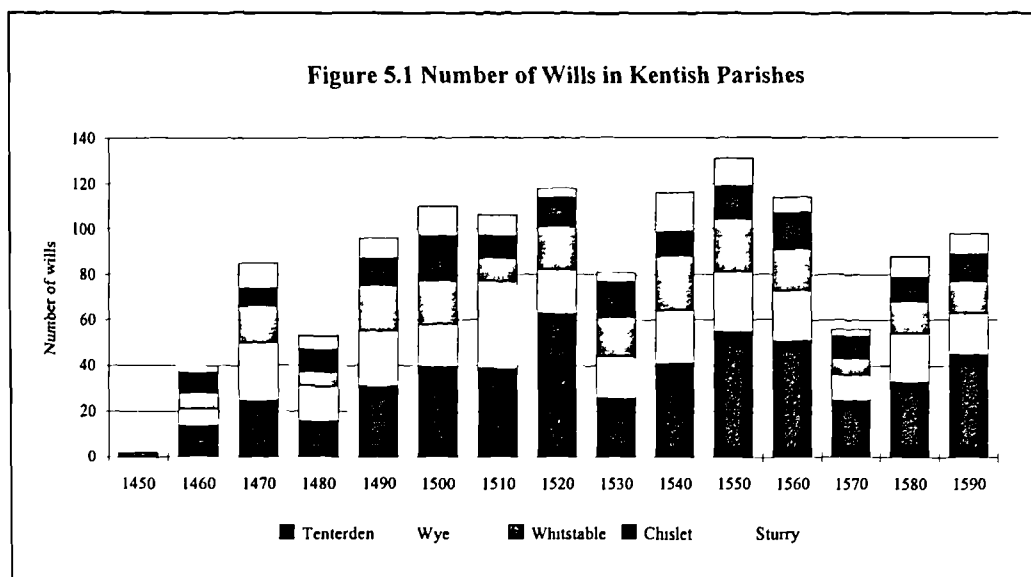
93 Zell, *Industry in the Countryside*, pp. 114-15.

94 See above, n. 58.

95 The ratio is something of an underestimate since the burials recorded also include that of women and minors, those who were legally excluded from making a will. It should also be noted that the ratio tended to vary between decades, the period 1570-9, for example appearing to be one of an exceptionally low rate of testation coupled with a generally lower mortality level. See C.K.S., P 364/1/1, (parish register of Tenterden) and C.C.A.L., U3/131/1/1 (parish register of Whitstable).

96 See above, nn. 56-7. The decades when the highest number of wills were made are as follows: Tenterden 1520s; Wye 1510s; Whitstable 1540s; Chislet 1550s; Sturry 1540s.

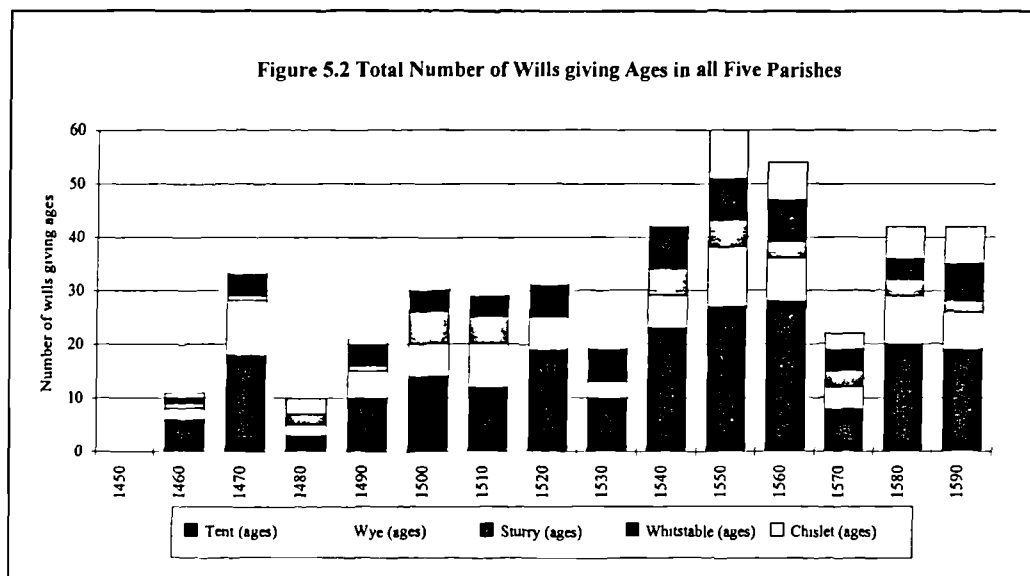
97 See above introduction, p. 23-4.



In examining the age data provided in the wills, all the ages prescribed by testators for their children, for specified kin, and for legatees bearing the same surname as the will maker, were included. Without record linkage it was clearly not possible to establish all relationships mentioned in wills, nor construct a demographic profile of the testators and their family, hence particular step-children and grandchildren may have been omitted where the relationship was uncertain. Most of the evidence, however, concerns the will maker's own sons and daughters. No consideration could really be given in the following analysis to other forms of timed bequests, such as those contingent upon maternal or sibling death, or the widow's remarriage. Alternative time measurements included provision within a period of years after the testator's death, when apprenticeship came to an end, when a son could work, or when an elder sibling received an inheritance. Furthermore, several unspecified references to 'lawful age', 'full age', 'nonage', 'age of discretion', 'age of maturity', 'age of puberty or marriage', 'lawful age or marriage', 'age of marriage', 'minority', and 'within age', could not be used in the quantitative analysis. The actual numerical ages specified, therefore, represent one definable time limit on the transfer of property, by far the most predominant when dealing with young, unmarried children, but nevertheless, one of a range of stipulations.

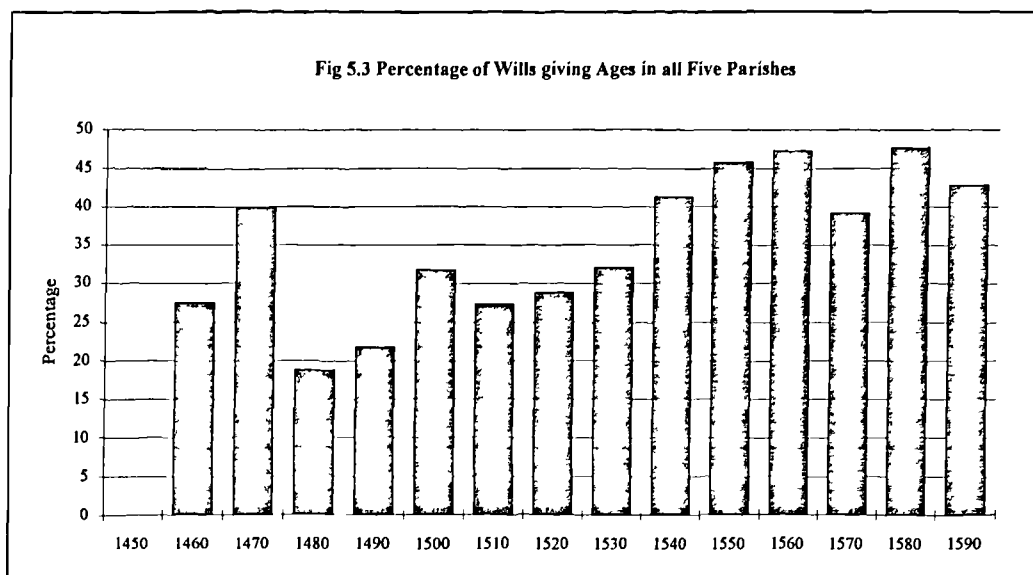
Overall, approximately 36% of all the wills for the five sample parishes, provide evidence on numerical age. Apart from Tenterden, with the highest proportion of 43.1%, the other parishes mentioned ages in about one third of their wills for the entire period studied: Wye 30.2%; Whitstable 31.8%; Chislet 34.7% and Sturry 31.6%. Every parish also made references to the above mentioned

unspecified ages, with their implications for attitudinal thresholds. It is also important to note that in each of the parishes examined by decade, the percentage of wills giving ages fluctuated. The discernible trend, however, is that despite the apparent fall-off in the total number of surviving wills in the latter part of the sixteenth century, the proportion of wills giving ages appears to rise although the increase was uneven, meaning that the quantifiable evidence presented in this chapter is generally best in the second half of the sixteenth century (See Figures 5.2 and 5.3).<sup>98</sup> Whether these findings reflect the burgeoning 'awareness of their numerical age' and their increasing 'social relevance', as suggested by Keith Thomas for the population of early modern England, can only be conjectured.<sup>99</sup> In Tenterden and Wye at least, there was a surprising consciousness of it in the 470s.



98 The number of wills with prescribed ages is as follows: Tenterden (218); Wye (87); Whitstable (69); Chislet (61); Sturry (37); total 472. For comparison, only 82 of the 501 wills in the period 1503-9 specify ages (16.4%).

99 Thomas, 'Age and authority', pp. 3-5.



Seeking to understand what the prescribed ages in wills actually mean and represent, is far more complex and problematic. Problems of age definition clearly exist, and while it is possible to surmise about the significance of particular numerical ages, on the basis of legal and religious precepts, economic and political activity, and social and biological maturations, the milestones of independence, adulthood and marriageability were, as suggested earlier, themselves subject to modification, there was no universal consensus of opinion regarding certain ages,<sup>100</sup> and 'the very meaning of numerical age was still ambiguous'.<sup>101</sup>

In those earlier studies where the evidence of ages in wills have been used, the ages have generally been accepted uncritically as ages of inheritance and/or ages of majority. From the Ely diocesan wills, Carlson seemed to conclude that the age denoted was unquestionably that of inheritance age, and that 'testators assumed that marriage would not normally precede the specified age of inheritance', their intention being to enable their children to be possessed of independent resources, and thus allow them the freedom to marry independently as they chose.<sup>102</sup> With lawful age of majority presumed to be 21, any inheritance which did not occur at that time was either underage, or overage.<sup>103</sup> But even where such interpretations may be correct, the treatment and recognition of ages specified, deserves greater attention. As regards the meaning

<sup>100</sup> See above, nn. 3, 5-8, 9.

<sup>101</sup> Thomas, 'Age and authority', p. 4.

<sup>102</sup> Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, n. 278 (p. 244). The term 'age of inheritance' is also used by Thomas, 'Age and authority', p. 20, n.2 (citing Stone).

<sup>103</sup> See above, nn. 80, 82.

of majority, Mitterauer pointed out that 'the details given about ages of majority do have their importance for social history, for they reflect social conceptions about minimum age limits for growing up with respect to different areas of life',<sup>104</sup> while, in relation to inheritance ages, Keith Thomas stressed that 'the age of inheritance envisaged by will-makers ... varied considerably and cries out for more investigation'.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, a close examination of the Kent wills would suggest that the precise meaning of the various ages stipulated by testators, be they of inheritance, majority, discretion, maturity, service, puberty, or marriage, were in fact far from easily identifiable, nor necessarily exclusive.

One complicating factor was the possibility of having separate ages prescribed for a particular beneficiary. The testator, James Robyns of Tenterden, bequeathed a chest to his son at the age of 12, other household goods, oxen, cash, lands and appurtenances at 21, and an annual sum of 5*s.* from the age of 15 until 21 years.<sup>106</sup> With the exception of Sturry where none was recorded, sons, daughters, and other male relatives might receive some form of annuity, or land profits, often as part of their legacy, and often prior to their main inheritance. This was particularly so for sons in Tenterden. Stephen Davy was to be endowed with lands at 26 years, for his 'marriage or worship and profits', but was to take the profits from the age of 16.<sup>107</sup> Such forms of early provision meant that some teenagers entered service already partly endowed with a small income and annual expectations. In Tenterden, boys and girls were ideally thought to enter service at 14 years, boys sometimes at 15 or 16 years, the ages prescribed generally coinciding with the termination of school and maternal upkeep, from 12-16 years, but usually at 14 years. The clothier Edmund Lewkenor, for example, provided for his three sons to come to their lands at 21 years, with the land profits used towards the upkeep of all his children until 14 years, 'and as they grow to that age, they be put to service, and each have per annum 20*s.* until their full age'.<sup>108</sup> In her study of service and adulthood in the seventeenth century Ben-Amos also found that 'the wills of some craftsmen and tradesmen...make it clear that there was an age in which children were considered sufficiently grown up to be bound apprentices'.<sup>109</sup>

That there were definite conceptualizations of age contained within the wills, and strategies formulated to accommodate them, is itself significant. The evidence of wills, as prescriptive documents, as well as retrospective statements

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104 Mitterauer, *History of Youth*, p. 59.

105 Thomas, 'Age and authority', p. 26.

106 PRC 17/30/166-v. (1555).

107 PRC 17/3/365-v., Richard Davy of Tenterden (1481).

108 PRC 17/23/26-7v. (1541).

109 Ben-Amos, 'Service and the coming of age', p. 46.

of marital, family, social and economic relationships, include within them then important age specifications, or sets of ideal strategies, which might conceivably limit the behaviour of the succeeding generation, although their particular social relevances, and the actual extent of their determinative influence, is unclear. For our purpose, the extent to which the ages prescribed might, at best, be interpreted as ideal ages at marriage and might, at least, represent perceived minimum thresholds in the timing of marriage and independent property-holding, potentially capable of affecting the proportions marrying beyond certain age categories, will be considered here.

As the following chapter will demonstrate, the association between provisions for female beneficiaries and dowry payments was particularly strong and frequently quite explicit, the timing of their legacies being often specifically linked to marriage.<sup>110</sup> It was not uncommon for testators like John Peake of Wye to leave equal cash portions to his two daughters, Alice and Agnes, 'to be paid to them at the age of marriage'.<sup>111</sup> John Pett, a Tenterden clothier, referred to his daughter coming to the 'age of discretion and marriage', providing for her 'at age of marriage',<sup>112</sup> while John Edward, senior of Whitstable intimated an 'age of puberty or marriage'.<sup>113</sup> In some wills, therefore, there was a definite concept of an age of marriage. Robert Robard of Hougham stipulated that 10s. bequeathed to each of his two daughters should be invested in the hands of his wife and brother, 'unto such tyme as they be maried or come to the age of mariage. And if either die before thei be maried or cume to the age of mariage then the other to enjoye the hole XXs. with thencrease of the same'.<sup>114</sup> Testators were generally far more flexible in the timing of provisions for daughters than for sons, allowing for legacies to be paid at the time of marriage whensoever the event occurred, at 'lawful age of marriage',<sup>115</sup> at a specified age or at marriage, or simply the age prescribed, although they were also more disposed in particular circumstances, to attach restrictive or conditional clauses.<sup>116</sup>

For male beneficiaries, the specifications tended to be less flexible, and were usually of particular ages only. Nevertheless, given the ideal set of rules and ages formulated, testators showed some recognition of the fact that their sons might marry, or require advancement, before the time or age specified, and some

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110 See below chapter 6, pp. 208-11.

111 PRC 17/12/254-v. (1512).

112 PRC 17/5/152v. (1490).

113 PRC 17/1/125 (1463).

114 PRC 17/9/354-v. (1509).

115 For example, see, PRC 17/6/305v., Thomas Consant of Chislet, 1497; PRC 17/4/170v.-2, Richard Elmere of Whitstable (1488).

116 See also below chapter 6, pp. 208-11.



made provision for this eventuality, especially where the ages prescribed were already in the twenties. Henry Pellond of Tenterden left certain lands to his son John at 22 years, but provided that 'if John before that age marry as it may be to his profit and worship after the discretion of my executor and feoffees, then I will that he have to his marriage the said lands and tenements or part thereof after their discretions'.<sup>117</sup> The three sons of Robert Davy were each to receive the land profits and the estate at 26 years, but if they married before 26, then 'for their promotion' the feoffees were to 'make and grant such reasonable jointure to those of his wife'.<sup>118</sup> To grandsons, as well as to sons, such prior provisions made to their 'advantage', or 'rather if it seem necessary for their use', might apply,<sup>119</sup> decisions being left to the testator's executor and feoffees.<sup>120</sup> In certain instances, the inheritance received was not only subject to age stipulations, but also to further qualifications. Simon Smethe of Wye willed that his son Roger should come to his lands at 22, 'provided he be ruled and guided by his mother'.<sup>121</sup>

Although the relationship between marriage, and the timing of property disposition is far less self-evident, and much more tenuous, where males are concerned, the importance of marriage in this regard, was still embedded in contemporary consciousness. Some testators were more explicit in their intentions. Thomas Cok bequeathed his lands to his son William at 24 years, 'in view of marriage', or 'to his profit and worship',<sup>122</sup> and Thomas Pyrkyne of Chislet specifically referred to an 'age of marriage', in relation to both his sons and daughters, devising a reversionary clause 'if any of my said children die before they come to their age of marriage'. Particularly referring to his son Thomas inheriting certain land, he added a further clause should Thomas die before he come 'to age of marriage'.<sup>123</sup> In most wills, however, the connection between the ages prescribed for males and the timing of their marriages may be deduced from the interchangeable terminology used (such as the equation of 'age of marriage' with 'being of age' or of 'lawful age'), the implicit tendency to assign equal status and meaning to the 'day and time of marriage' of daughters with the stipulated ages of their brothers, and the general presumption of testators that the ages prescribed would generally either coincide with, or precede, the marriages of

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117 PRC 17/3/217-v. (1479).

118 PRC 17/6/110-11, Tenterden (1494).

119 For example, see, PRC 17/48/55-v., Agnes Frye, widow, Tenterden (1590).

120 For example, see, PRC 17/2/290v.-1, John Lucas, Tenterden (1473); PRC 17/6/177v.-9, William Gybon, Tenterden (1495); PRC 17/39/288-9, John Clarke, Sturry (1566).

121 PRC 17/10/63 v. (1505).

122 PRC 17/2/148-v., Tenterden (1473).

123 PRC 17/29/265-6 (1549).

their children. Seen in this light, the ages specified in wills may be perceived as the recognized minimum ages for marriages to occur, or at least, for property to be transmitted, thus enabling economic resourcefulness and competence for marriage. When Thomas Reade of High Halden provided for his daughter Johane, to 'have to her mariage when she comyth to XX yers of age', £10 in 'mariage money' and a parcel of land,<sup>124</sup> and when Simon Hokkyng of Whitstable willed that when his youngest son John 'shalbe married after he cometh to the age of 20 years', he should enjoy certain lands,<sup>125</sup> in both circumstances, the testator apparently considered his child as marriageable only at that age or after.

The ages mentioned in the wills then, may provide an invaluable insight into contemporary notions of the lower bounds of marriageability in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They do not, of course, necessarily represent the actual ages at which beneficiaries married, since marriage would often have taken place earlier or more often later than envisaged, or not at all, according to a variety of individual circumstances. Nevertheless the numerical ages specified in wills provide potentially important evidence about the social, legal, economic and customary landmarks which could affect courtship behaviour and it is to an analysis of them to which we should now turn.

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124 PRC 17/9/73v-4v. (1504).

125 PRC 17/12/338 (1514).

**Table 5.1 Percentage Distribution of Ages Specified in Wills for all Men and Women**

Men (ages)	1449-74	1475-99	1500-24	1525-49	1550-74	1575-99
10-14	4.7	3.9	2.2	5.1	3.5	0.7
15-19	37.2	24.7	17.4	17.2	19.8	11.9
20-24	51.2	59.7	73.9	75.8	74.9	80.6
25-29	4.7	9.1	4.3	1.9	1.8	3.7
30-34	2.3	2.6	2.2	0.0	0.0	3.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Women (ages)	1449-74	1475-99	1500-24	1525-49	1550-74	1575-99
10-14	18.2	0.0	6.3	4.1	2.5	0.8
15-19	18.2	18.2	46.9	35.1	43.3	57.5
20-24	63.6	81.8	46.9	60.8	52.9	40.9
25-29	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.8
30-34	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The results of the findings are presented in Table 5.1. What is immediately apparent is this discrepancy between the specified ages at which property was transferred by will (and possibly the ages at which testators perceived the minimum age at marriage), and the average age of marriage generally thought to be characteristic of English society in the early modern period.<sup>126</sup> Unfortunately the reconstitution data do not really consider the social status of the brides and grooms or the mortality of their parents, and measurement of marriage age distributions among the will-making sector, and the parish register population is not strictly comparable. Moreover, the diversity disguised by the mean figures makes it difficult to identify correspondence in the range of ages. Nevertheless, the results suggest that there were nubile men and women already endowed with property for some years before the age when most of those who married, actually did so.<sup>127</sup>

For sons and other male relatives, there appears to have been a disappearance over time in the proportion of teenage bequests, with an increasing tendency in the sixteenth century for a consolidation in the age category of 20-24 years. Throughout the period too, it was relatively uncommon for children to

<sup>126</sup> See above, nn. 39-45.

<sup>127</sup> There is no discrepancy between early property transmission and a predominantly late-marrying regime. The aspiration to marry need not have coincided with actual marriage. Testators may also have sought to provide for their orphaned children early, in an attempt to give them better prospects, and the financial opportunity to make responsible matches appropriate to their means and status.

receive legacies beyond the age of 25, (usually 7% or less). For women there was, perhaps, a gradual decline in the specification of very young ages (less than 15 years) and a shift instead to the later teens, although fluctuations in the overall teenage distribution, and the smaller number of beneficiaries involved, renders interpretation more problematic. The late fifteenth century (while based on only a handful of wills) does, however, seem significantly different to the later period in this regard. From 1525, when there are just under a hundred or more female legatees in the samples, there appears to be a steady increase in those aged 15-19 years, and a corresponding decrease in the early twenties. As for those over the age of 24, it was extremely rare for them to be still financially unprovided for at any time from the mid-fifteenth to the end of the sixteenth centuries.

To understand more fully though, the pattern in age categorizations shown in Table 5.1, we need to examine in greater detail the concentration by testators on *particular* numerical ages. Tables 5.2a and 5.2b display the percentage distribution of each individual age specified in the wills.

**Table 5.2a Percentage Distribution of Ages, all five Parishes (Men)**

All men	1449-74	1475-99	1500-24	1525-49	1550-74	1575-99	%
10	0.0	2.6	1.1	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.5
11	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
12	4.7	1.3	1.1	0.0	1.8	0.0	1.1
13	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.4	0.0	0.4
14	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.2	1.3	0.7	1.2
15	0.0	0.0	2.2	2.5	1.8	2.2	1.8
16	14.0	9.1	7.6	9.6	3.5	1.5	6.2
17	0.0	3.9	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.5
18	23.3	11.7	7.6	4.5	14.1	8.2	10.4
19	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.1
20	7.0	20.8	20.7	24.2	17.6	9.7	17.7
21	16.3	6.5	23.9	21.7	33.0	64.2	31.4
22	18.6	16.9	19.6	21.0	9.3	3.7	13.4
23	0.0	1.3	0.0	1.9	3.5	1.5	1.9
24	9.3	14.3	9.8	7.0	11.5	1.5	8.6
25	0.0	3.9	1.1	0.0	1.3	1.5	1.2
26	4.7	5.2	0.0	0.6	0.4	2.2	1.5
27	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
28	0.0	0.0	3.3	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.7
29	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
30	2.3	2.6	1.1	0.0	0.0	3.0	1.1
31	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
32	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	43	77	92	157	227	134	730

**Table 5.2b Percentage Distribution of Ages, all five Parishes (Women)**

All women	1449-74	1475-99	1500-24	1525-49	1550-74	1575-99	%
10	0.0	0.0	3.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
11	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
12	18.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	1.1
13	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.6	0.0	0.4
14	0.0	0.0	3.1	3.1	1.3	0.8	1.5
15	0.0	0.0	3.1	0.0	3.8	1.6	2.0
16	18.2	4.5	21.9	10.3	10.2	8.7	10.7
17	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.3	0.0	0.7
18	0.0	13.6	21.9	22.7	28.0	43.3	28.7
19	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	3.9	1.3
20	9.1	27.3	31.3	39.2	29.3	7.9	24.5
21	9.1	4.5	9.4	8.2	9.6	26.0	13.6
22	18.2	18.2	3.1	6.2	8.3	2.4	6.8
23	0.0	13.6	0.0	4.1	1.3	0.8	2.2
24	27.3	18.2	3.1	3.1	4.5	3.9	5.7
25	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
26	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.8	0.7
27	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
28	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
29	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
30	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	22	22	32	97	157	127	457

Note: numbers in Tables 5.2a and 5.2b refer to each individual legatee with a specified age

Where male ages were prescribed, it is quite clear that certain ages were distinctive, with the age 16 commonly mentioned until 1549 (10%), and that of 18 in approximately 5-25% of cases throughout the period, while few testators ever stipulated the years 15, 17 or 19. Again despite the frequent use of ages 20 to 22 years, and the relatively common occurrence of 24 until the late sixteenth century, age 23 was insignificant, and no age over 24 can be identified as possessed of any legal or customary prominence.

As to the changing distribution of ages over time, the period witnesses the decrease of property transmission to men aged 16 and, to a lesser extent, to those at 18 years, and in contrast, an extraordinary concentration on the age of 21 in the late sixteenth century which may help to explain the diminution in bequests below the age of 20. Between 1500 and 1550, the ages 20, 21 and 22 were favoured nearly equally by testators, but by 1575-99, 64.2% of the male legatees would have anticipated their age of 21 as a landmark, compared to only 8.2% at age 18. Even the preferred upper age limit of 24 specified for about one in twelve men, virtually disappeared by the end of the sixteenth century, making the

growing importance of the age of 21 for men, the most marked feature of the period.

The evidence of bunching around particular ages for women is demonstrated similarly in Table 5.2b, although it is statistically less soundly based. A focus on the age of 16 is clearly discernible and, after 1474, on 18 years. Otherwise, as with men, testators chose the ages 20, 21, 22, and to a lesser extent, 24, that of 20 years being especially noteworthy in that regard. When examined over time, the growing popularity of 18 as a perceived milestone (as against the decline in age 16), and a gradual increase in the age of 21, are immediately observable. While 20 years had been stipulated for approximately one third of all the women in receipt of property between 1475 and 1574, the specification switched thereafter to 21, marking the age of 21 as a phenomenon of the late sixteenth century, although never with the same overriding significance with which it was attached to men. For women, even more than men, the age of 24 years no longer possessed the same degree of relevance by the end of our period.

The above findings then illustrate not only the pattern within certain age-categorizations and the general range of age-specifications contained within the wills, but more precisely, the apparent distinctiveness of particular numerical ages. The priorities attached to the ages 16, 18, 20-22 and 24, for both sexes, (with some mention of 12, especially for women in the mid-fifteenth century) would suggest their identification as conceptual structural landmarks, while the evidence, for example, of an increasing concentration on the age of 21 for men, and the growing popularity of 18 for women, serves as an important reminder that the values attached to particular ages were *not* necessarily constant throughout the period. Historians bemoan the imprecision and difficulty of exploring contemporary age-definitions given the diversity and variation according to context, but in his treatment of the problem, Thomas similarly earmarks some of the same numerical ages as points of especial significance for boys and girls, and discusses their specifications according to a host of legal and economic criteria. The gradual standardization of the legal age of majority at 21, and in the Tudor and Stuart period, the increasing practical applicability of numerical age<sup>128</sup> may well be substantiated by the will evidence cited here. The apparently growing integration of and consensus about particular ages as demonstrated in Kentish wills by the end of the sixteenth century might give some indication of how changing contemporary concepts of numerical

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128 Thomas, 'Age and authority', especially, pp. 5, 14, 19-26. See also above, section I, and nn. 99-101.

maturation could have some effect on marriage age, in ways not yet envisaged by historical demographers, with such legal and cultural notions being, perhaps, just as, if not more, effective than any subconscious response to the prevailing level of economic resources. Likewise, although the relationship is speculative, the decline in teenage bequests to men over time, coupled with the decline in very early age specifications for women, might be associated with a disappearance of child marriages, implying that whereas in the fifteenth century, a greater proportion of single young people might have been endowed at a more youthful age, by the end of the sixteenth century, the minimum limits of marital eligibility may have been higher, and generally more uniform.<sup>129</sup>

Certain qualifications to this growing consensus of opinion on age specifications do, however, need to be addressed. The results of the analysis presented in Tables 5.1 and 5.2 have so far amalgamated the findings of all five Kent parishes, but further tentative conclusions may be drawn if the sample is broken down by parish. The general pattern exhibited in the parishes was for women to be prescribed ages somewhat younger than those for men, with the usual age gap of a few years.<sup>130</sup> In all parishes, individual testators commonly, but not invariably, allocated similar ages to each surviving son or daughter, irrespective of their birth order. In only three parishes, Tenterden, Wye and Whitstable, however, were sons also more routinely given bequests later than their sisters. In the other two parishes, where the statistical evidence is weaker, gender disparities within families appear far less, if at all. Inevitably, some diversity is to be expected, since individual circumstances, the familial context and personal predilections of testators, necessitated individual strategies.

It was also found that while testators in all five parishes most commonly prescribed the age of 21 and, to a lesser extent, the ages of 20 and 22 for men, there were some noticeable differences between the parishes where other age specifications were concerned. In Tenterden, property was rarely envisaged as being transferred in the teens, (except in the form of annuities), whereas mention of 18 was evident in Wye, Whitstable and particularly Chislet, and 16, in all

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129 The disappearance of some early bequests may be partly due to a decline in kin bequests over the period, see below chapter 6, pp. 235-6, although most of the legatees were sons and daughters. It should also be noted that provisions in the form of additional cash annuities or small livestock bequests went disproportionately to teenagers, so that a reduction in the number of teenage bequests, if that occurred, could conceivably be related to a decline in bequests of that nature.

130 If the *mean* age for men and women in each parish is compared over time, the difference between genders was usually between one and three years. Such an age gap is also apparent in Family Reconstitution populations. See, Wrigley and Schofield, 'Family reconstitution', p. 162.

parishes except Tenterden. Furthermore, some emphasis on age 24 was discernible in Tenterden, Wye and Whitstable, but not in the remaining two parishes. Nevertheless, despite these differences, the recognition of particular ages for men showed a significant degree of regional consistency and homogeneity.

By contrast, the previous discussion has already established that for the whole sample, there was a greater variety of experience for women, making it harder to identify changes over time. This might suggest that there was more regional variation in the prescription of ages for women than for men and an examination of the most favoured ages within individual parishes confirms that this was indeed the case. Throughout the period, 20 was the prominent age in Tenterden, ages 21 and 18 were equally favoured in Wye, in Whitstable and Chislet it was overwhelmingly 18 years, and in Sturry (although numbers are few), the age of 16 was preferred.<sup>131</sup> Whereas the oldest age of property receipt in Tenterden was 24, and 26 in Wye, there was an apparently greater emphasis on the transmission of property to teenagers in the other parishes, where none of the ages specified exceeded 22. If the *mean* age of property transfer for women is considered, it lay between 18 and 22 years in Tenterden and Wye, comparatively higher than it was for Whitstable, Chislet and Sturry, which was invariably the mid-to-late teens in the whole period.

## V

The findings of this chapter then, suggest that there may have been some differences in the age strategies adopted by individual testators for their dependent children and relatives, and in the experiences of young men compared to women, and that there could also have been some local variation in the ages so prescribed.<sup>132</sup> Moreover, there is evidence of some change over time, in particular, the increasing concentration upon the age of 21 as the established landmark for men. More importantly though, it is the *significance* of prevailing ideas of appropriate age in the process of maturation and marriageability, and the enduring nature of these norms, to which this chapter has drawn attention. To the extent to which age of marriage was linked to the process of social maturation, the evidence presented here suggests that historians who expect dramatic changes

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131 The three most significant ages for women in each parish follows in order of preference: Tenterden, 20, 18, 21; Wye, 21, 18, 20; Whitstable, 18, 16, 21; Chislet, 18, 20, 16; Sturry, 16, 21, 18.

132 It may be of note, that the *actual* ages at first marriage calculated by Family Reconstitution were generally somewhat higher in market towns than they were in rural areas, see above, n. 44.



in age at marriage in this period, or who would even imply a change from a low to a high age at marriage regime between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, would find relatively little support for such views. For while there is some evidence of convergence in ages, and greater numerical agreement by the end of the sixteenth century, the change in the distribution of ages over time was surely not as marked as it might have been if the marriage regime itself changed radically. Indeed, more recent demographic work has emphasized the importance of marriage incidence rather than marriage age, as the determinant of fertility change and population growth, and has found little evidence of any really significant change in the average age of marriage in our period. It may well be that one reason for such relative rigidity in actual marriage age, was the multitude of social, legal, and customary assumptions about the appropriate age at which to receive property, reach maturity and competence, and commence marriage. The information on ages contained in wills have been used to help identify some of those perceived thresholds, and it has been argued that not only were there particular points of numerical significance, but notional ages of property transmission, and of competence to embark on marriage. While in some circumstances, the wills seemed to imply a definite concept of 'age of marriage', more generally, the age specifications may be understood as representing the ideal minimum limits of marriageability. It is, of course, a mistake to imagine that we can derive from the statistical results presented here, a mechanical mirror of the demographic ages of marriage, precisely because the age at which individuals got married was not simply a response to environmental pressure or population growth rates, independent of a host of other constraints and expectations. The evidence of such attitudes may, however, assist in explaining some of the findings of historical demographers, for example, local variations in the age at first marriage, or the pattern of male marriage age being generally higher than that for women.

Ingram's statement of marriage age as being something thought of as "fitting", thus conceals a far more complex reality.<sup>133</sup> As the deposition evidence indicated, contemporaries possessed their own notions about the ages appropriate for courtship and marriage, but it is clearly extremely difficult for historians to identify what these ages actually were, especially since the perceptions of appropriate age must have been governed by a sometimes conflicting range of moral and legal recommendations, external forces, economic and cultural factors and personal desires. Clearly, there was no single determinant to age at marriage.

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133 See above, n.4.

Demographers may calculate the actual ages of marriage on the basis of parochial registration, but such calculations are virtually impossible before the later sixteenth century and any other available sources on marriage age are therefore invaluable. Direct evidence about the customary restraints on age of marriage, above and beyond the simple questions of economic sufficiency, is hard to come by, and notional ages of marital eligibility are a relatively unconsidered aspect of early modern courtship. What the evidence culled from the wills can perhaps supply, is the ideal ages which testators thought appropriate for the transmission of property to the younger generation, ages which were theoretically at least, usually tied to marriage, and reveal those particular numerical ages which might have represented milestones in the achievement of personal, legal and economic maturity. In examining those symbolic ages systematically for the first time, the implicit connections between the timing of inheritance, majority, courtship and marriage can be appreciated more fully. The transmission of property was crucial in the negotiations of courtship and this will be demonstrated in the next and final chapter which considers one important aspect of that property transfer, namely the provision of dowries.

## CHAPTER 6

### PROVIDING FOR MARRIAGE: SOME ASPECTS OF DOWRY CONSIDERED

#### I

Introducing the study of dowries in European history, Marion A. Kaplan drew attention to the apparent neglect of that subject. At the same time, she emphasized its widespread importance in such matters as inheritance and family property, courtship, household and group formation, the position of women in the family and economy, and their marriageability in the prevailing social, political and economic climate.<sup>1</sup> The essays, including among them, Diane Owen Hughes's study of the evolution of the dowry, discuss the fluctuating significance of that institution from the medieval period, and its importance especially in times of economic and social instability. As well as being a means of conferring status, of building alliances, and of transferring and redistributing wealth, the studies suggest that dowries could also influence social and family relations and symbolize the role of women and their property rights. Perhaps most significantly dowries could affect their marriage bargaining power, partner and prospects, by determining who, when, and whether they married.<sup>2</sup> Anthropologists, by contrast, have paid due recognition to the importance of dowry in certain societies. They see it as a measurement and expression of status and family relations and of conjugal roles and activities, and as a way of regulating co-operation between social groups.<sup>3</sup> Discussing the various types of marriage payments and their possible co-existence in any one social context, the payment of dowry is perceived as another of the 'multiple transactions and payments' in every marriage, whose universal significance is in the making and symbolizing of relationships.<sup>4</sup>

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1 M. A. Kaplan, 'Introduction', in Kaplan ed., *The Marriage Bargain*, pp. 1-11.

2 Kaplan ed., *The Marriage Bargain*; Owen Hughes, 'From brideprice to dowry', *passim*.

3 E.g. J. K. Campbell, *Honour, Family and Patronage. A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a Greek Mountain Community* (New York and Oxford, 1964, repr. 1979), pp. 44-6; Davis, *People of the Mediterranean*, pp. 181-2, 188-94; S. J. Tambiah, 'Dowry, bridewealth and the property rights of women in South Asia', in J. Goody and S. J. Tambiah eds., *Bridewealth and Dowry* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 59-169.

4 Mair, *Marriage*, ch. 4, 'The cost of getting married'; J. Goody, *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 206, 240-61; Barnard and Good, *Research Practices in the Study of Kinship*, pp. 114-

In her recent work on women, property and marriage settlements in early modern England, A. L. Erickson, suggested likewise, that payments of dowry and bride wealth are not mutually exclusive. She pointed out that although early modern England is described as a 'dowry culture', 'in actual practice ... Dowry and bride price operated simultaneously, except that the bride price went not to the bride's family but to the new marital household'.<sup>5</sup> As well as emphasizing the significance of the groom's financial contribution to complement the bride's portion or dowry, she seeks to redress the over concentration by other historians on the upper classes and their marriage settlements, and on the common law.<sup>6</sup>

By that common law, women were entitled to a life-time right of dower in a third of their husband's freehold during their widowhood. Increasingly, however, from the later Middle Ages, the marriage agreements which were made, specified the portion brought by the bride and, in return for her dowry, a settlement in the form of a jointure to maintain her if her husband died first. The provision of a 'contractual jointure' - either as a lump sum, an estate, or an annuity arising from it - which became the usual alternative to common law dower by the sixteenth century, aimed to protect women's rights and material interests,<sup>7</sup> but the question of just how far down the social scale the practice of making such settlements extended, will need to be addressed. Unlike some European countries, where the financial management of dowries was a municipal concern and where notarial evidence of portions is extensive, the information about dowries and jointures in early modern England is more difficult to come by.<sup>8</sup> Because of this, until very recently, discussion of this primary topic has been restricted to the social élite whose marriage bargains are better recorded and more visible to the historian. As their studies show, the size of portions, and the size of jointures thought appropriate to them, were matters of intense negotiation among the landed classes, and the changing balance between the two, have

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17; J. Goody, 'Bridewealth and dowry in Africa and Asia', in Goody and Tambiah eds., *Bridewealth and Dowry*, pp. 1-58; Tambiah, 'Dowry, bridewealth', in Goody and Tambiah, *Bridewealth and Dowry*, p. 71.

5 Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 91; cf. Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, pp. 277-8, who emphasizes the absence in England of 'bridewealth' or 'brideprice'.

6 See also, A. L. Erickson, 'Common law versus common practice: the use of marriage settlements in early modern England', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 43, 1(1990), 21-39.

7 For definitions of jointure, and for a description of the common law governing women's property in marriage, see Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 24-8; 'Common law versus common practice', pp. 24-5; Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, pp. 272-6, 281-5; Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, pp. 83, 209; Cook, *Making a Match*, pp. 122-3; Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, p. 195; Laslett, *The World We Have Lost - Further Explored*, p. 242.

8 Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 81.

important implications for the aristocratic marriage market in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>9</sup>

As Stone and Outhwaite suggest, several factors such as the particular family circumstances, parental love, the number of daughters, their individual characteristics and any necessary compensation for personal defects or status discrepancy, might influence the size of marriage portion, which varied considerably over time, and between social groups.<sup>10</sup> Although there is some disagreement about the estimated average size of aristocratic portions in the early sixteenth century and the rate of nominal and real increase in the course of that century and the next, historians agree that a massive dowry inflation well in excess of aristocratic income and the general price rise, was experienced by the social élite in the early modern period. Both Stone and Cooper maintain that portions were nominally twelve or thirteen times higher in 1675-1729 than in 1525-49. Outhwaite argues that by 1625-49 average portions had probably risen to at least seven times their level in 1475-1524, compared to the six-fold rise in the general price index and the three-fold rise in the industrial one, but notes that the 'rise in dowries before the early seventeenth century remains largely unexplained'. Estimating in her article, a doubling or tripling of marriage portions between 1600 and the early eighteenth century and, in her book, an alternatively more dramatic four to five-times rise in portions of the English peerage, Erickson was cautious to observe that 'the actual increase relative to prices is problematic', but that it was 'substantially more', than any contemporary price inflation. According to Stone, it was after 1600 that the then nominal inflation of dowries gained momentum in *real terms*, and surged ahead of agricultural prices.<sup>11</sup> With inflated dowries valued typically at several thousand pounds among the aristocracy in the seventeenth century, the charge on the parental estate, worth

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9 Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 86-9, 119-28; Erickson, 'Common law versus common practice', pp. 28-31; R. B. Outhwaite, 'Marriage as business: opinions on the rise in aristocratic bridal portions in early modern England', in N. McKendrick and R. B. Outhwaite eds., *Business Life and Public Policy: Essays in Honour of D. C. Coleman* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 21-37; J. P. Cooper, 'Patterns of inheritance and settlement by great landowners from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century', in Goody, Thirsk and Thompson eds., *Family and Inheritance*, pp. 192-327; Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, pp. 290-3; Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, pp. 264, 281.

10 Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, p. 290; Outhwaite, 'Marriage as business', p. 25.

11 Cooper, 'Patterns of inheritance', pp. 221, 307, 310; Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, p. 290; Outhwaite, 'Marriage as business', pp. 23-5, 29; Erickson, 'Common law versus common practice', pp. 30-1; Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 120-2.

perhaps the equivalent of up to three years income, became increasingly burdensome as the century progressed.<sup>12</sup>

As well as demonstrating the phenomenal rise in the level of bridal portions within that social class, historians have also sought to calculate the ratio of portion size to jointure size in assessing the balance of financial exchange at marriage. They have found that the average ratio of £5 of portion to £1 of jointure that existed at the start of the seventeenth century (and possibly before in the mid-sixteenth century) had changed to a 10:1 ratio by the end of the century,<sup>13</sup> implying thereby that the balance of the matrimonial market was weighted decisively against aristocratic women who may have found themselves appreciably disadvantaged in the course of the seventeenth century. Although there is some disagreement about the actual causes of those trends, a number of explanations have been put forward, some more convincing than others. It has been argued that the sex ratio of the aristocratic marriage market was affected by an increasing, although inexplicable, tendency for eligible aristocratic males to remain celibate, and that social and demographic developments, among them, the loss of adult males from emigration, war and falling male survival rates, the rise in the number of heiresses, and the surplus of status-seeking girls, created a situation which supplied increasing numbers of marriageable women and fewer men to meet their demand. Combined with these demographic factors, economic developments such as a decline in interest rates which allowed for easier borrowing or mortgaging, and inflation coupled with growing expenditure, may have contributed to the inflation of dowries.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, it has been suggested, that aristocratic women faced increasing competition from mercantile and financiers' daughters, from the daughters of the squirearchy, from the daughters and widows of City aldermen, and from wealthy widows generally. In explaining the causal factors of dotal inflation in Europe, Owen Hughes described a situation where those with new fortunes might use dowry 'as a mechanism for alliance and the acquisition of status', and where those with status pursued wealth. It was therefore 'its use as a mechanism for alliance and mobility in a

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12 Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, p. 264. Cf. Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, p. 291 who suggests that by the early seventeenth century, few fathers would have given portions worth less than one year's income. Some examples of aristocratic portions are also cited in Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 86; L. Stone, *Road to Divorce. England 1530-1987* (Oxford, 1990), p. 309, for the portion of £10,000 brought by Anne Pierrepont in 1658 to John Lord Roos; Cooper, 'Patterns of inheritance', pp. 306-27.

13 Outhwaite, 'Marriage as business', p. 23; Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, pp. 291-2; Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 119-20; Erickson, 'Common law versus common practice', p. 30; Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, p. 281.

14 Outhwaite, 'Marriage as business', pp. 26-36; Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, pp. 292-3; Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 121-2.

status-conscious yet mobile world that may have encouraged the dowry to rise dramatically in value'.<sup>15</sup> Where Owen Hughes drew attention to the imbalance between wealth and status, Erickson emphasized the social significance of dowry as a symbol of status in itself. 'The significance of early modern bridal portions as symbols of social status had not been directly addressed in previous studies', she wrote, 'but that must surely be one reason why truly massive inflation was limited to the highest echelons'.<sup>16</sup>

Inflation of portions on a less massive scale has also been identified among social groups beneath the level of the aristocratic élite, that of the gentry and knightly class. For the sixteenth century, knightly families studied by Cooper, offered portions averaging £286 in the first half of the century and £859 in the latter half, which represented a trebling in value comparable to increases for the peerage in the period between 1475-1524 and 1575-99.<sup>17</sup> The Lestrangle family of Hunstanton in Norfolk may provide some indication of the size of gentry portions at the end of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. On his marriage to Amy Heydon in 1491, Sir Roger Lestrangle (d.1506) received £280 in dowry over the space of four years. The betrothal of another of his family, Thomas Lestrangle (d. 1545) with Anne Vaux in 1501 brought no less than 1000 marks.<sup>18</sup> In the early seventeenth century, compared to aristocratic portions which were often in excess of £5000, portions among the upper gentry ranged between £1000 and £5000 and those among county gentry, approximately between £500 and £1000. Amongst Erickson's Chancery litigants, who mostly comprised wealthy yeomen and tradesmen, and also gentry, knights, and baronets, the median portion increased threefold from £200 in the later sixteenth-century to £500-£600 at the end of the seventeenth, although the peak level of portions throughout the period reached c. £5000. In connection with the three-fold rise in gentry portions and those involved in Chancery suits, the portion:jointure ratio

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15 Owen Hughes, 'From brideprice to dowry', pp. 288-90.

16 Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 122.

17 Outhwaite, 'Marriage as business', p. 35; Cooper, 'Patterns of inheritance', pp. 221-2, 311, using evidence compiled from 49 wills and 27 settlements for 1501-1600. For dowry inflation in the early sixteenth century among the noble and knightly class, see also, B. J. Harris, 'A new look at the Reformation: aristocratic women and nunneries', *Journal of British Studies* 32, 2(1993), 89-113. In her will sample, she found that, of 207, the median dowry for the daughters of knights rose from between 101 and 200 marks in the period 1450-1513, to between 201 and 300 marks in 1514-35. Of 64 noble marriage portions, it was between 501 and 750 marks in 1450-92, doubling to between 1001 and 2000 marks in 1493-1532 (p. 97).

18 Oestmann, *Lordship and Community*, pp. 14-15.

followed a similar but less marked trend from that experienced by the aristocratic élite.<sup>19</sup>

Moving yet further down the social scale, the evidence about bridal portions is more difficult to find. Peter Earle remarked on the paucity of information for analysing middle-class contracts, but was convinced that 'there must have been rules and conventions, as well as market pressures, which determined the approximate size of the portion a girl would have to bring to her marriage with men of different fortunes and expectations and so determined in turn the parameters of the bargaining process', among the middle-classes, as among the upper classes.<sup>20</sup> For the vast majority of yeomen, tradesmen, craftsmen, husbandmen and labourers, surviving probate documents give evidence of the widespread making of marriage settlements, and of portions bequeathed towards marriage. From her examination of probate accounts, Erickson was able to demonstrate that marriage settlements were commonly found among those status groups normally regarded as 'propertyless', that ordinary folk sought to preserve even modest amounts of property, and that those settlements that were primarily concerned with protecting the wife's property, were made by ordinary women in 10% of instances, at the very least.<sup>21</sup> However, it was also observed that probate documents were sometimes less than informative, and that they hardly ever specified the value of portions among the lesser folk. Drawing upon her study of wills in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Sussex, it appeared that few testators provided details concerning an already married daughter's portion, that only a small number of wills even specified a marriage portion as such, and then only from the later seventeenth century, giving portion sizes which were disproportionately wide-ranging. But what the source does allow is an examination of bequests to unmarried daughters which, it seems, 'can at least suggest the size of portions, although these figures represent minimum marriage portions since they rarely take into account bequests from grandparents or uncles or aunts, they only sometimes mention previous gifts in the parent's lifetime, and there is no reason for them to consider the young woman's earnings'.<sup>22</sup>

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19 Erickson, 'Common law versus common practice', pp. 30-1; Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 86-9, 120-2. See also Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, p. 264.

20 Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, pp. 196-7.

21 Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 129-51. The median amount of property involved being £40. See also, Erickson, 'Common law versus common practice', pp. 31-6.

22 Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 87-8.



In addition to Erickson's recent work, which considers for her calculations of dowry size, bequests to unmarried daughters drawn from 105 Yorkshire wills and some surviving from will-makers further south, other local studies have used wills to make assessments of the size of dowries amongst their inhabitants.<sup>23</sup> Macfarlane based his calculations for husbandmen's daughters on 39 portions that were mentioned in wills from Lupton, near Kirkby Lonsdale (Westmoreland) for the period 1550-1720, and on 13 portions bequeathed in Earls Colne (Essex), between 1550 and 1800, but he pointed out that such portions were 'not specifically tied to marriage', and that it was extremely difficult to uncover evidence for dowries at the level of labourers.<sup>24</sup> Cicely Howell's study of Kibworth Harcourt (Leicestershire) analyses a total of 207 wills to track the movement in the value of cash legacies between 1520 and 1720 and the shift from legacies in kind to legacies in cash, but despite the apparent size of her sample, her method of analysis was not confined to marriage portions for daughters, but included all the portions of younger and unmarried children, irrespective of sex.<sup>25</sup>

Although it is questionable whether legacies given to unmarried daughters should necessarily be regarded as dowry payments, other historians who have used wills have, it seems, treated them as such, in assuming that the portions provided for daughters as their inheritance were expected to be used for marriage. For the purpose of what follows, that assumption will likewise be made, but with some qualifications which will be discussed later. It has been recognized that there was a close, almost indistinguishable relationship between dowries or specific marriage gifts, and the daughter's natural, ordinary female inheritance. Owen Hughes sees the relationship as pertaining particularly to less wealthy folk; Howell equates the marriage portion with a child's portion; Erickson notes that the portion inherited was intended to become a dowry, although many never actually married; and Macfarlane justifies the use of wills as evidence, 'since the portion was both an anticipation of inheritance and a marriage gift'.<sup>26</sup>

In the preceding chapter, we have already examined the significance of notional ages of marriage and inheritance, and the synonymous use of such terms

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23 Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 88.

24 Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, p. 264.

25 Howell, 'Peasant inheritance customs', pp. 149-52.

26 Owen Hughes, 'From brideprice to dowry', p. 281; Howell, 'Peasant inheritance customs', p. 144; Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 96; Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, pp. 263, 265; Goody, *Development of the Family and Marriage*, pp. 243-5. Also, Harris, 'Women and nunneries', pp. 94-5, who uses the wills to show how often men left money to their daughters with the intention that it should be used as portions to marry.

as 'day of marriage', 'being of age', 'lawful age and marriage' and 'lawful age of marriage'.<sup>27</sup> As well as specifying the provisions made for women, particularly daughters, wills often stipulated that such portions were to be received at their 'time of marriage', when they 'be married, or come to the age of marriage', or alternatively, at a given age, or whensoever they married, depending on which event occurred first. William Graunte of Chislet (prob. 1545), for example, bequeathed £10 to each of his three daughters at their day of marriage, with specific reversions if any died before coming 'to the age of marriage'.<sup>28</sup> Likewise, William Collin of the same parish (prob. 1559) left his daughter a feather-bed and £6 13s. 4d. at the day of her marriage, willing that she be kept with the profits from his land and moveables by his executor 'till she com to thage of mariage'.<sup>29</sup> As we have seen, several studies illustrate the way in which testators prescribed an age for their daughters to inherit, or for the legacies to be paid over upon their daughters' marriage. In my analysis of wills surviving for the parish of Tenterden between 1449 and 1600, of 275 legacies mentioned as being given to daughters and used in the sample, 150 daughters were to be endowed at a specified age or at marriage, 97 daughters were to receive portions at marriage, and the remaining 28 at an age stipulated by the testator. For the parish of Wye, in the period 1464-1600, of 115 portions to daughters examined, the numbers were 20, 70 and 25 respectively.<sup>30</sup> The frequency of bequests specifically tied to marriage alone, or to either marriage or a notional age, helps to validate the assumption that the portions willed to unmarried daughters were genuinely intended as payments of dowry, and that the study of ages prescribed for daughters in the preceding chapter is, as suggested earlier, possibly one of expected minimum marriage age.

Where previous work has indicated the time when payment of legacies to daughters were to be made, it has also been said that the arrangements prescribed by testators rarely imposed sanctions designed to control the marriages of children. In Banbury, stipulations or inducements which aimed at ensuring approvable marriage choices did appear in some wills, but they were infrequent, and largely irrelevant upon children attaining the age of 21 years.<sup>31</sup> For the middle classes, Peter Earle was of the opinion that fathers were generally lenient and seldom imposed a threat of disinheritance. Although he cited some examples of penalties, and found that 14 out of 181 testators in his sample commented

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27 See above, chapter 5, section IV.

28 PRC 17/25/16.

29 PRC 17/25/47.

30 For a complete list of wills examined in this chapter, and in chapter 5, see bibliography.

31 Vann, 'Wills and the family', pp. 361-3.

upon their daughters' marriages, he concluded that 'the vast majority of fathers provided no sanction at all against daughters who married without consent, even though they were under age, and hardly any provided sanctions against those who were over age'.<sup>32</sup> According to Erickson, any requirements which were made in ordinary men's wills, when at all, for children to marry with their mothers' or guardians' consent, were as applicable to sons as to daughters, and were usually limited to persuading them to take heed of their elders' advice.<sup>33</sup> Even Stone suggested that among aristocratic classes, the maxim of strict compliance by daughters which was normal in the sixteenth century was, between 1560 and 1640, becoming increasingly more liberal. With the changing attitudes reflected in the nature of testamentary bequests, 'fierce disposition' became the exception rather than the norm by the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless, although few testators may have attempted harsh regulation of their daughters' behaviour post-mortem through the will, (by specifying marriage partners, incurring obedience through rewards or forfeitures, or generally placing restrictions to govern their marriages), it remains the case that where such control was attempted, the wills can reveal exceptionally well the provision of portions tied to marriage, and contemporary attitudes to their payment.<sup>35</sup> John a Bere, of Chislet (will 1499), left a portion of 10 marks to each of his daughters towards their marriage, with the general condition that they be married by the consent and goodwill of their mother, otherwise they were to receive only half their portion.<sup>36</sup> Other testators were more specific about their daughter's marriage choices. Andrew Hawker, elder of Wye (will 1498), anticipating his daughter's desire to marry John Alcy, butler of the college of Wye, and evidently disapproving of the match, willed that his executors 'pay to her marriage no more in money and stuff but onely to the valew of 40s.'. Moreover, he added, that 'if Thomasyne wilbe rewlid and governed by my will and be thadvise of my feoffeis and executors and mary with some other man that it is my will that my executors pay to the mariage of Thomasine be good advyse 20 marke of money, and stuff of household'. In this case Thomasine was urged not only to accept parental advice, but also the advice of other kin and of neighbouring parishioners.<sup>37</sup> By contrast, the widow Johana Alarde, also of Wye, (will 1536), sought to promote the marriage of her daughter Alice with one Mr

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32 Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, pp. 187-8.

33 Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 94.

34 Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, pp. 273-4.

35 Other instances of restrictions can be found in Ingram, *Church Courts*, pp. 140-1; Coppel, 'Will-making on the death-bed', p. 41.

36 PRC 17/7/133v.

37 PRC 17/7/62.

Tucker. Having bequeathed to her sons William, John, and Robert, a 'silver salt', 13 silver spoons with images of God and his apostles, and her best mazer, she willed to her daughter, amongst other things, the following;

'that if she marry with maister Tucker as my wyll is god helpyng thereto that then the salt of silver bequeathed to William and the spones and masers before assigned... be utterly void, and all the said silver salt spoon and masers to remain to Alice my daughter, and for the £30 given to her by her fathers wyll, I wyll she have all my sheepe for and in recompense of the same £30. Also if Maister Tucker have her to wyff then I will to Alice all my housholde stuff, and if that maryage breake and take not effect then I will all my said housholde stuff be evenly devyded ...'

In addition, if the marriage was to proceed, Alice was to acquire the best chest, and five other chests originally intended for her brothers.<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately it is not possible to discover whether or not this very real attempt to encourage a particular match, actually succeeded. With a prospective marriage so critically poised on the threshold of a parent's death, one can only infer what emotive pressures may also have operated beside the material inducement, and how difficult it may have been to flout a parent's death-bed wish. Some testators, it seems, might have seen their final days as a time for reconciliation with daughters. The yeoman, Richard Smith of Tenterden, gave by his will nuncupative (1599), to his daughter Anne, the then wife of John Howlte, butcher, 'who as he said married against his will, in token of his free pardon of her said faulte the sume of 13li 6s. 8d.'.<sup>39</sup>

## II

Revealing though such qualitative evidence is, the true value of the material found in wills is that it provides some indication of the size of marriage portions among the will-making population, and sheds light on the crucial question of changes in dowry over time. An approach to such questions must therefore be a quantitative one, and the study of dowries which follows is based on the wills used in the preceding chapter; the 1304 wills surviving for the five chosen parishes, together with the 501 wills sampled for 1503-9.<sup>40</sup>

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38 PRC 17/21/110v.-12.

39 PRC 32/38/208.

40 See above, chapter 5, nn. 89-92. The exclusion of the P.C.C. wills excludes those few disproportionately large dowries from the social élite, who frequently possessed property in more than one location. This strategy, therefore,

The methodology involved recording the nature and value of legacies to each of those daughters presumed to be unmarried. Although the wills do occasionally refer specifically to childrens' 'portions', the term 'dowry' as marriage payment for daughters is not used.<sup>41</sup> Instead, the words 'dowrye', 'dower', 'joynter' and 'widdowright' are seen in connection with a widow's provision.<sup>42</sup> The legacies were therefore only noted where they were clearly stated to be bequests 'towards marriage', given 'at marriage', or at a specified age, usually implying that the daughters were then minors. Other forms of timing, alluded to earlier, could not be included.<sup>43</sup> Nor were reversionary bequests from immediate members of the family, and from unmarried sisters. Hence, the possibility of an increase in the size of portions following such reversions could not be accounted for in the analysis. The observation made by Cooper is particularly pertinent here, that 'in general wills may tend to understate the amount actually given in portions, because they often provided that, if a child died underage and unmarried, the portion should go to the survivor, or be equally divided among survivors'.<sup>44</sup> Conversely, the amount of legacy might be diminished in the event of another child being born. William Gybon of Tenterden (will, 1495) assigned 10 marks each to the marriages of his daughters Johane and Eleanor, but arranged for the portions to be reduced to 7 marks and no more, if another daughter should be born subsequently.<sup>45</sup> Such information was tabulated where possible, but where testators apportioned a given amount to an unborn child, irrespective of gender, as it was common for them to do, that amount was not considered, since it applied to sons as much as to daughters.<sup>46</sup> The analysis was also intended to provide a broad survey and, given its chronological dimensions and coverage, no attempt was made to account for particular family circumstances, or to compare on an individual basis, legacies received by daughters with those received by sons. We do not know about birth order, family size, nor much about the occupations and wealth of testators.

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allows for better examination of those social groups below the rich, who were genuinely resident in the parishes chosen for this study.

41 See also Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 84. Spufford, *Contrasting Communities*, pp. 112, 143, 159, uses the terms 'dowry' and 'dower' interchangeably.

42 Egs. PRC 17/38/3 Richard Downe, 1563 (Tenterden); PRC 17/51/81v.-3v., Richard Ramsden, 1595 (Tenterden); PRC 17/13/85, John Hasten, yeoman, 1509 (Wye); PRC 17/26/339, William Ovende, 1549 (Sturry); PRC 17/44/15, Henry Harryson, 1582 (Sturry); PRC 17/49/297v., John Harryson, 1594 (Sturry).

43 See above, chapter 5, p. 187.

44 Cooper, 'Patterns of inheritance', p. 309.

45 PRC 17/6/177v.

46 See also, Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 73.

The wills also make occasional reference to marriage gifts left to women whose relationship to the testator is unspecified. In 1549, Katherine Church of Sturry bequeathed to one Alice Bewman, certain household goods and her wedding ring at the day of her marriage, to Margery Chapman, more household goods at her marriage day, and to Katherine Farmor, the additional present of lambs, when she married.<sup>47</sup> Among other marriage gifts which have not been considered, are those charitable bequests to pauper marriages, usually in the form of small money payments. The dowering of poor maidens, as Owen Hughes has pointed out, was to guarantee female chastity, and although Mediterranean societies placed more emphasis on the symbolic importance of dowries and its moral connotations for women, the provision made for marriages of poor girls was common in England from at least the Middle Ages, and continued in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>48</sup>

Bearing in mind the above qualifications and omissions, the quantitative study about to be presented omits, in addition, those portions provided towards the marriages of other female kin and of resident female servants. Such portions, though far fewer in number and often worth substantially less than the provisions made to unmarried daughters, were still not negligible, particularly in the earlier part of our period. Other historians have commented upon the contributions which girls could expect from relatives, friends, and employers in funding their marriages. That received from parents constituted the main source of dowry, but there was, nevertheless, a variety of sources of inherited and accumulated means.<sup>49</sup> Erickson referred to those 'small gifts' which 'provided a steady flow of contributions to portions'. Although she did not distinguish between female and male legatees, she found that approximately one fifth of her sample of wills from Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Sussex for the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, provided for godchildren, a similar proportion of Lincolnshire and Sussex testators gave bequests to siblings, grandchildren, and other relations, and

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47 PRC 17/26/200.

48 Owen Hughes, 'From brideprice to dowry', pp. 285-5; Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 95-6; P. H. Cullum, "'And hir name was Charitie": charitable giving by and for women in late medieval Yorkshire', in P. J. P. Goldberg ed., *Woman is a Worthy Wight. Women in English Society c. 1200-1500* (Stroud, 1992), pp. 182-211 (see pp. 198-9). See, for example, W. J. K. Jordan, *The Charities of London, 1480-1660*, (London, 1960), pp. 184-5.

49 See, for example, Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, pp. 267-8, 276. Legacies, gifts and financial benefits from masters and fellow-servants are cited in Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth*, pp. 172-5, 179-80. She suggests, however, that such legacies were less likely to come from smaller craftsmen and husbandmen, and her examples come instead from the wealthier mercantile class. Also, Harris, 'Women and nunneries', p. 95, found that nearly 10% of her 393 male testators left dowries to other female kin who included sisters, nieces and step-daughters, but particularly granddaughters.

12% to servants. Suggesting furthermore, that women, (in particular single women) favoured female recipients, and demonstrating that the preference extended to all kinds of bequests, young girls entering into marriage could probably also expect to find a 'benefactress' in the form of a sister, aunt, mistress or grandmother.<sup>50</sup>

For the Kent parish of Chislet, in a separate examination of female testators' bequests, out of the 176 wills for the period 1460-1600, 25 (14%) were made by women, usually widows, a proportion which accords with Erickson's estimate of 12-17% for women testators in the sixteenth century.<sup>51</sup> Their pattern of bequests likewise suggests the general significance of female legatees, and other sets of priorities and relationships outside of the nuclear family, among them, kinswomen, god-daughters, servants, wives, widows and women whose connections are unknown, sister-in-laws, grand-daughters, and women from their own family of origin.<sup>52</sup> Comparing the wills of wives with those of their husbands, more interesting than the similarities were the differences which were found, illustrating perhaps diverse sets of relationships which might exist, women's personal networks, and continued attachment to their natal family.<sup>53</sup>

Returning to look specifically at marriage payments to non-daughters made by male and female testators in the five Kent parishes and in the Canterbury diocese, of 69 testators mentioning portions in the survey for 1503-9, 11 gave cash bequests to the marriages of their grand-daughters and god-daughters (16%). For the five parishes under observation from the mid-fifteenth century to the end of the sixteenth century, testators provided for the dowries of 130 women other than their daughters, whilst providing at the same time for 480 daughters, a ratio of bequests of roughly 1 to 4. Bequests to non-daughters came disproportionately from female testators,<sup>54</sup> and included a range of female kin, both real and fictive. In Tenterden, 56% were grand-daughters, nieces and great-nieces 16%, unspecified female kin 10%, god-daughters 9%, 'cousins' 5%, and the small remainder were sisters and affines.<sup>55</sup> Although the proportions varied

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50 Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 85-6, 215-17.

51 *Ibid.*, p. 204.

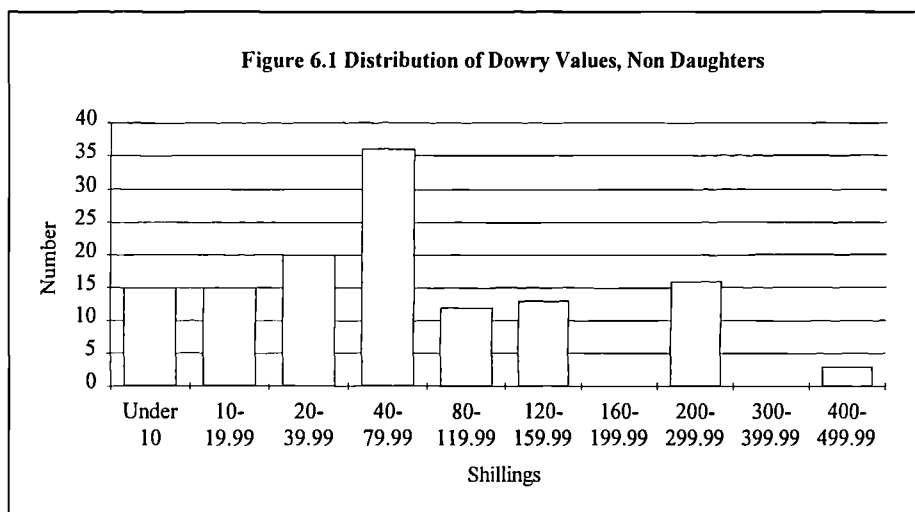
52 See for example, the will of Isabel Fowler, virgin (1584), PRC 17/45/293-4.

53 The examination here is largely impressionistic, although some statistical analysis was also applied. For the likely pairing of couple's wills, see, for example, the will of Margery Bonior, widow (1536), PRC 17/20/228-9 and Richard Boniour (1532), PRC 17/19/209v.-10.

54 Although the sample is small, about 30% of those testators providing for non-daughters were women. In Sturry, however, it was only one sixth.

55 In Tenterden, the total number of non-daughters was 83. For Wye, of 27 mentioned, 8 were grand-daughters, 5 god-daughters, 6 nieces, 6 servants, and the remaining were unspecified kin.

between the parishes, vertical blood-ties were most prominent, indicating the generational obligation to provide something for the marriages of maiden relatives. The recognition of kin obligation was particularly marked in the absence of single young daughters. Of the 46 testators from Tenterden who mentioned female kin, only 9 made provision for unmarried daughters too. In such circumstances it is clear that the dowering of relatives was much less generous than that of immediate family.<sup>56</sup> The yeoman Thomas Smythe gave £20 to his daughter at her day of marriage but only 5 marks to his grand-daughter at her marriage,<sup>57</sup> while the widow Anne Love left nearly ten times as much to her two daughters at their age of 18 or day of marriage, as to her 9 grand-daughters at 18 or 15 years.<sup>58</sup> Testators who provided for more than one kinswoman did not always give equal amounts to each. Among all the non-daughters receiving cash bequests, the amount received ranged from under 10s. to as much as £25, although the modal value was 40s., with the average for the entire period being 76.7s. (See Figures 6.1 and 6.2)<sup>59</sup>.



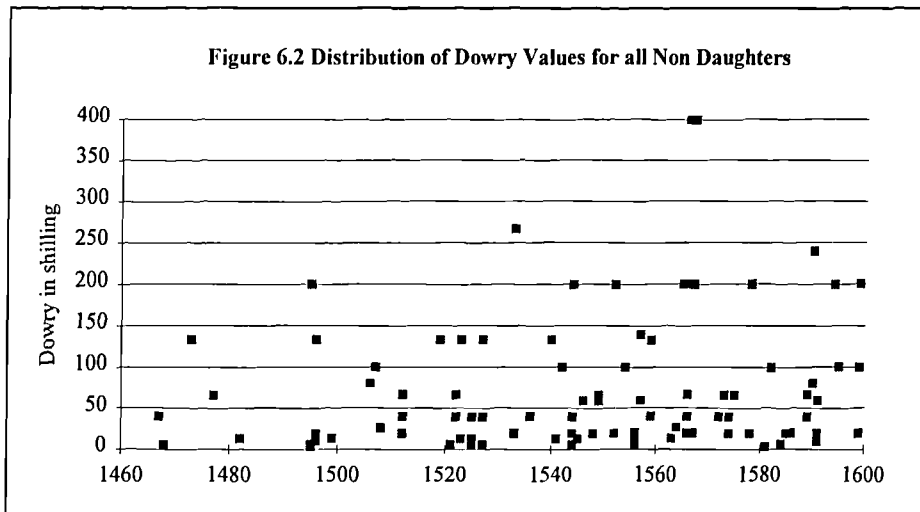
56 In Wye, no such comparison was even possible.

57 PRC 17/39/276-7v. (1566).

58 PRC 17/48/7-8v. (1589).

59 Such variation is to be expected, given that we are not always dealing with the same kind of relationship or familial circumstances.





While marriage gifts for kinswomen were mostly cash payments, some testators bequeathed items of household such as bedding, silver, pewter and brass utensils, personal clothing, and occasionally a few cows and sheep. In 1519, William Edward of Whitstable willed that his grand-daughter Eleanor should have to her marriage or when she attained the age of 18 years, a cow, certain bedding and 10 marks in cash.<sup>60</sup>

At times the provisions made towards the marriages of kinswomen were clearly conditional. Juliane Scott could hope to receive from her brother, Richard Castwesill of Tenterden, 5 marks at the time of her marriage or at 21 years, provided she married 'by discretion of parents and friends'.<sup>61</sup> In an effort perhaps to control female sexuality, the yeoman, William Bodell, left £10 to his cousin's daughter, but only 'upon condition she keep herself honest and be ruled' by his wife.<sup>62</sup> Other examples can be found to illustrate restrictions imposed on female relatives and servants. The single cow and the small sum of 13s. 4d. was willed by Thomas a Deale to his niece in 1525, 'if she wilbe gided and ruled ... unto the tyme she be maryed', otherwise the gift was to be void.<sup>63</sup> Grandparents could seek to reinforce parental authority in marriage choices. Thomas Serles, the elder of Wye, bequeathed £6 13s. 4d. to his grand-daughter Rose on the day of her marriage, and a further £6 13s. 4d. a year later, 'so that she be rulyd by her father and mother'.<sup>64</sup> Other testators who provided for the marriages of female servants attempted not only to regulate their marriages, but also their mobility, by ensuring continued service for members of their family. Richard Hokkyng, the elder of Whitstable, for example, left 40s. and bedding to his servant Alice

60 PRC 32/13/97.

61 PRC 17/3/208 (1477).

62 PRC 17/39/225 (1566), Tenterden.

63 PRC 17/16/301 (1525), Tenterden.

64 PRC 17/19/391 (1533).

Hokkyng, provided she continued with his daughter Johane until the time of her marriage. If not, she was to receive only 6s. 8d. and a black sheet.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, William Consaunt of Chislet stipulated that his kinswoman Alice a See was to have to her marriage £6 13s. 4d. 'if so be that she dwell with my wife till the time of her marriage and do her service in the mean season', or else she was to have nothing. Another servant was to be given 40s. 'so that she be in likewise ordered and ruled by my wife'.<sup>66</sup>

Such evidence as that cited above makes clear the fact that bequests to non-daughters were an important feature of endowment for marriage, with significant implications for kin relationships, and influences upon marriage decisions outside of the immediate nuclear family. Although dowries were primarily given to daughters, natural sterility and infant and child mortality might allow for testators to endow female kin, in the absence of any surviving maiden daughters. It was not, of course, the case that female kin were *only* endowed in such circumstances, and while some of those legatees might have been orphans themselves, the majority were probably receiving other sources of dowry from their own family of origin. Marriage portions for kin were relatively small compared to those for daughters, reflecting in part their ancillary and sometimes reversionary nature, but it is essential to remember that a certain number of would-be brides would receive additional money and goods from relatives, masters and mistresses. Probably too ante-mortem transfer to kin would have occurred to augment their potential prospects. Hence, the dowry figures for daughters which follow must, in some cases, have been supplemented by bequests and contributions from their more distant relatives, and represent therefore only the *minimum* amount apportioned. Furthermore, the figures concern the value of cash-legacies only, and do not account for portions which were paid to daughters in kind.

A number of studies have made reference to the fact that cash bequests did not constitute the total dowry given. Cicely Howell drew attention to those legacies in kind which children of both sexes were given in her parish of Kibworth. Although she argued that 'by the 16th century, the legacy wholly in kind was so rare as to have little statistical significance', and attempted to demonstrate an increase in the proportion of cash-only legacies between 1560 and 1600, she nevertheless indicated the continued payment of mixed-legacies, and the tendency for poorer small-holders (as opposed to the more prosperous yeoman and husbandmen) still to leave legacies in kind in the course of the

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65 PRC 17/17/188 (1527).

66 PRC 17/17/254 (1527).

seventeenth century.<sup>67</sup> As for his studies of Lupton and Earls Colne, Macfarlane found that money portions were, by far, the predominant ones, but daughters in the Westmoreland parish could expect to receive, in addition, one calf or cow in the later sixteenth century, and occasionally bedding and chests. In certain circumstances only, houses or land might be given too, but such endowment was 'an optional extra'. Remarking upon the 'emphasis on moveable wealth' - in particular that of ready cash, followed by household furniture, linen, chests, and other furnishings - Macfarlane admitted the possibility of English girls embellishing their own trousseaus, but saw little evidence for such practices in early modern England compared to Mediterranean societies.<sup>68</sup> In several instances, the Kent wills refer to the instuff of household, the livestock and other moveables brought by testators' wives at the time of marriage. Thomas Pyrkyne of Chislet willed in 1549 that his wife Agnes receive 'all her own household stuff which she brought with her when I married ... all her bedding, brass and pewter, brewing vessell, pair of almayne rivetts, a great cupboard and all her chests',<sup>69</sup> while Alexander Maycote, a parishioner of Sturry, specified that his wife Alice should have 'all such instuff of howsehold horse cattall and corne as I had with her none to be mynysshed'.<sup>70</sup> Occasionally, such tangential references to the goods brought as dowry included silver items. According to Thomas Childmell's will of 1496, Katherine had evidently 'brought to me the day of our mariage', 6 silver spoons, and a little mazer harnesssed with silver, and one of gilt.<sup>71</sup> Finding too, similar references among even poor testators in Banbury, Richard Vann concluded that 'dowering must have gone on in all social ranks'.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, the bringing of a portion to marriage 'even if solely household goods', was a necessary requirement,<sup>73</sup> but most brides would probably have brought cash (which they had saved in service and/or received as legacies and gifts) as their

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67 Howell, 'Peasant inheritance customs', pp. 150-2. The general shift from legacies in kind to legacies in cash is not, however, an obvious one. Figure 4, p. 150, is not easy to interpret in her work since we do not know what constitutes 'portions in kind', nor do we know the different proportions of kind-cash in the category of mixed legacies, to make such comparisons intelligible.

68 Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, pp. 265-6. For the embroidery of linen, and the significance of a bride's trousseau of beds, sheets and whitewear in Southern Europe, see for example, Davis, *People of the Mediterranean*, pp. 181-2 and J. Schneider, 'Trousseau as treasure: some contradictions of late nineteenth-century change in Sicily', in Kaplan ed., *The Marriage Bargain*, pp. 81-120. Goody in Goody, Thirsk and Thompson eds., *Family and Inheritance*, p. 2, wrote 'that an endowment at marriage is more likely to be of moveables than of land itself'.

69 PRC 17/29/265.

70 PRC 17/8/33 (1499).

71 PRC 17/6/192 (Sturry).

72 Vann, 'Wills and the family', p. 362.

73 Elliott, 'Single women', p. 95.

principal form of dowry, sometimes also bringing endowments of household, animals, grain, ornamental and personal wear, and occasionally immovable property.<sup>74</sup>

Using the inventories of six Lincolnshire servants, each of whom possessed goods appraised at £2-£14, Erickson suggested that the contents of their dowries probably comprised mainly cash, a few livestock, their clothing and certain household stuff.<sup>75</sup> A thorough study of the inventories of unmarried people would surely prove invaluable in this respect, but unfortunately, for comparison, only a few inventories of known single women survive for the five Kent parishes under consideration. Marie Stephens of Chislet had a 'portion' limited to her of £4 out of her deceased father's goods, and a 'portion' given to her by her mother at the time of her remarriage of which £3 was recovered.<sup>76</sup> The virgin Isabel Fowler, also of Chislet, had moveables valued at £17 3s. 8d. in 1585, which included money held in her own purse, 58s. 4d. for her wages held in the hands of her dead master's executors and a further cash sum in another man's keeping, her clothes, chests, and three kine worth £5.<sup>77</sup> The variety of moveable goods belonging to young, unmarried girls may be gleaned in the inventory of Thomas Burr of Whitstable made in 1582, to which is appended an inventory of the goods and cattle given by him to his own daughter Anne Burr, and to his step-daughter Katherine Winter, both girls and their 'portions' being committed to the governance of specified persons during their 'nonage'. Anne's goods amounted to £14 2s. 10d., while Katherine's was significantly less, £8 2s. 4d., of which one cow and ten ewes valued at over £3 was the gift of her own father, John Winter. Anne too had animals worth c. £6, and although she was allotted the best christening sheet and had a greater share of the household goods, both girls would probably have also brought to their marriages, feather-beds, chests, all kinds of pewter and brass plates, dishes, kettles, pots, pans, candlesticks, spits, silver or silver-fashioned items, and silver rings as part of their dowry.<sup>78</sup> Neither possessed any cash except for the token penny-halfpenny according to the inventory, but it was not unlikely that they would have invested their portions, received cash sums from other quarters, or earned money in service before marriage. When the spinster Sibell Alcockes of Wye died, her goods came to £33 7d. Although she owned all kinds of clothes, old sheets,

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74 See, for passing references to such practices, Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, pp. 84-5; Spufford, *Contrasting Communities* p. 112; Laslett, *The World We Have Lost - Further Explored*, p. 100.

75 Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 85.

76 PRC 10/24/287.

77 PRC 10/14/218.

78 PRC 10/13/319-327.

bedding, an old chest, a linen wheel, a psalm book and a testament, over £31 worth of her moveables consisted of money held in the hands of a gentleman and a yeoman.<sup>79</sup> Clearly, the relative proportions of moveable assets differed among the nubile female population, but regarding the division of moveable goods among her sample of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Sussex testators, Erickson observed the marked preponderance of gifts in cash to immediate female kin, making it evident that 'assets of young women more often consisted principally in bonds or ready cash than their brothers did'. She claimed that single women in particular were 'a significant source of cash in the local lending markets', constituting 'by far the most likely to hold their wealth in credits, although the amounts that they loaned out were relatively small'.<sup>80</sup>

An examination of the Kent wills confirms the strong preference for cash payments, but at the same time reveals additional provision of legacies in kind. Of the 501 wills, cash bequests *alone* were generally the norm to all daughters, although some daughters may also have received household items as part of their dowry from both their parents, and in a few instances, testators chose to leave livestock to their daughters' marriages. Robert Style, of Leysdown, in Sheppey, bequeathed to his daughter one cow and 20 acres, and the two daughters of John Lambe of Sutton Valence could expect to bring to their marriages exceptional flocks of 100 ewes each, 2 silver spoons, but only 60s. in cash.<sup>81</sup> The wills also make it clear that daughters might inherit further cash sums, other goods and land, often as reversions, but sometimes as legacies which were not specifically tied to marriage, or to a prescribed age.

It has been said elsewhere that fathers did not usually leave land to their daughters if they had surviving sons, but that girls could find themselves endowed with it 'through more circuitous routes'.<sup>82</sup> Very occasionally, in Lupton and Earls Colne, when houses and land were bequeathed as dowry, it was due to the absence of sons, and the death of both parents.<sup>83</sup> In the five Kent parishes studied here, with the exception of Sturry, land was mentioned among the types of bequest given towards marriage for 7-11% of daughters, and it would appear that in Tenterden at least, such provision may well have been due to such girls not having any unmarried, under-aged brothers.<sup>84</sup> In 1471 John Godday provided

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79 PRC 10/19/239v.-40 (16 Sept 1591).

80 Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 81. Two-thirds of 113 will-makers who left cash to immediate kin, preferred female legatees. For a general division of property, see also, pp. 61-8, 215-16.

81 PRC 17/9/325-v

82 Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 61-2.

83 Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, pp. 265-6.

84 There is no mention of land as a marriage portion in Sturry.

that his daughter Margery might receive his lands upon her marriage, but in the event of a son being born to him, the lands were to descend instead to him, and he was to pay his sister at marriage or at the age of 22, 10 marks.<sup>85</sup>

Testators, male and female, were much more likely to leave household gifts to their daughters' marriages, the proportions for Tenterden, Wye, Whitstable, and Chislet being respectively 21%, 16%, 23% and 20%, although it was rare for such gifts to constitute the sole dowry.<sup>86</sup> In the assembly of household goods, all kinds of beds, bedding, furniture, linen and utensils were distributed, among them, sheets, coverlets, pillows, blankets, table cloths, christening sheets, chests, cupboards, crockery, plates, pots, brass and pewter dishes, and silver spoons, goblets and mazers. Only sometimes were more personal legacies tied to the marriages of daughters, reflecting in part, the predominantly male bias in the will-making population. Even so, a handful of fathers bequeathed clothes which had belonged to their wives.<sup>87</sup> John Swanton, a mariner of Whitstable, left his daughter Alice '40s. at her day of marriage, and all apparell that was my wife's, and all my instuff'.<sup>88</sup> More often, it was widows themselves who gave personal clothing and paraphernalia. Joane Penny supplemented her daughter's marriage portion of £10, with her apparel, silver hooks, household goods, pewter, a chest, her best beads, a silk ribbon, a purse and a girdle,<sup>89</sup> while Marie Slade, the widow of a Tenterden yeoman, provided that her daughter receive £33 in cash, the rest of the pewter, brass, household implements and furniture, linen, clothes, a further 40s., and a testament.<sup>90</sup>

Of the other types of goods bestowed in marriage, a very small number of daughters in Chislet were given portions of corn, and in the coastal parish of Whitstable, John Smelte left his daughter Elyn 'my weir at 1/2 boat, willing that whosoever doth marry her shall allow my wife fish for her own household the first year', while his other two daughters were each given two bullocks, two kine, and 40s. at their day of marriage.<sup>91</sup> In both those parishes, gifts of livestock

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85 PRC 17/2/66v.-7 (Tenterden).

86 Once again, Sturry is the exception, since few daughters in that parish received anything other than cash. The total number of daughters for which dowry is mentioned in some form or another is as follows: Tenterden 275; Wye 115; Whitstable 65; Chislet 82; Sturry 23. Percentages for each parish do not, of course, amount to 100% if the separate categories are added together, since any daughter could receive more than one type of legacy.

87 See also, Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 215-16, for a comparison of goods distributed by women and men. She found that women bequeathed clothing more frequently than men.

88 PRC 17/23/38 (1544).

89 PRC 17/35/194-5 (Chislet, 1561).

90 PRC 17/48/417-18 (1592).

91 For example, see, PRC 17/29/265-6 (Thomas Pyrkyne, Chislet, 1549); PRC 17/40/349 (1570).

comprising cattle and sheep, and often more than the single animal, formed an additional part of daughters' marriage portions, some testators distinguishing between the age when the flocks were to be invested, and the time of further payment at marriage.<sup>92</sup> The proportion of 23% was nearly three times that found in Wye (8%) and more than twice that in Tenterden (10%),<sup>93</sup> where testators generally gave just one cow, heifer, or bud, along with small amounts of cash or other goods, suggesting perhaps that poorer persons in Tenterden were more liable to dispose of their few animals in this way.<sup>94</sup>

Nevertheless, it remains clear that the main feature of dowry payments in sixteenth-century Kent among the will-making population, was its predominantly cash form. Although some testators gave the choice for portions to be either in cash or its equivalent value in moveable goods,<sup>95</sup> and others provided for portions in cash and goods up to a specified value,<sup>96</sup> cash dowries were by far the principal item. In Tenterden, 246 out of 275 daughters were given their portions in cash (89%), with the proportions for Wye, Whitstable, Chislet and Sturry, amounting to 93%, 70%, 79%, and 96%. It is therefore to this prime consideration that attention must now be turned.

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92 Eg. PRC 17/22/29v.-30 (John Cotenar, Chislet, 1539); PRC 17/19/2 (John Hokken, elder, Whitstable, 1529).

93 For Sturry, the numbers are too small for calculating percentages, but an exceptional bequest of 100 sheep and 10 marks was made by Thomas Gylbert of Sturry in 1465 to his daughter Johane at 16 years, PRC 17/1/151v.

94 For example, see, PRC 17/20/111-v. (Nicholas Geffrey, Tenterden, 1534); PRC 17/20/235-v. (Agnes Broke, widow, Tenterden, 1536); PRC 17/40/195v-6v. (John Lomas, whitesmith, Tenterden, 1568).

95 For example, see, PRC 17/16/181-v. (William Ketyng, Tenterden, 1524); PRC 17/37/139-41 (John Bryckenden, Tenterden, 1563). In Sturry, testators often bequeathed portions in money or its money worth.

96 See, for example, PRC 17/16/233v.-4v. (John Adam, Wye, 1525).

**Table 6.1 Mean Dowries over Time, Omitting those of 3000 Shillings or more**

Year	Total number of dowries	Mean dowry of all daughters	Mean dowry Tenterden	N. in Tenterden	Mean dowry Wye	N. in Wye
1449-74	38	94.55	92.21	24	71.11	3
1475-99	71	116.67	114.29	35	135.56	21
1500-24	76	99.56	90.71	33	113.33	22
1525-49	96	205.8	250.3	54	232.	10
1550-74	116	346.18	622.27	47	105.31	27
1575-99	77	512.34	517.11	45	269.41	17
All years	474	250.65	316.13	238	152.97	100
	Mean dowry Whitstable	N. in Whitstable	Mean dowry Chislet	N. in Chislet	Mean dowry Sturry	N. in Sturry
1449-74	20	2	118.67	5	133.34	4
1475-99	17.2	6	148.15	9		0
1500-24	69.09	11	155	8	40	2
1525-49	88.77	19	181.21	11	120	2
1550-74	78.46	13	255.56	24	182.67	5
1575-99	333.33	3	633.33	6	1133.3	6
All years	85.37	54	239.58	63	450.88	19

Examining all five parishes together, of 480 dowries found in the wills for which a cash value was specified, the bulk of given values came from Tenterden (238), and a further quarter of the evidence from Wye (see Table 6.1). The number of daughters receiving cash portions was, of course, somewhat higher, since testators who gave such legacies did not always indicate the precise amount, and it must also be remembered that the figures represent the number of dowry values for daughters, rather than the actual number of testators bequeathing them.<sup>97</sup>

Some discussion is required here of those six dowries which were omitted from the analysis. They were found in the three wills of Sir Thomas Kempe, kt., of Wye, in 1519; the gentleman William Swanne, also of that parish (will of 1597); and the dowry left by a prosperous Chislet yeoman, Robert Dodd in 1599.<sup>98</sup> Whilst making deliberate use of his will to set aside the usual custom of gavel kind, by specifying that his lands were not to be divided amongst his heirs male, but were to descend from eldest heir male to eldest heir male, Sir Thomas Kempe also provided a dowry of 300 marks to the marriage of his daughter Cecile, willing that his executor pay 'at day of her marriage', 100 marks, and the remainder to be paid out of his manor of Boughton Aluph within four years after

<sup>97</sup> Any individual will might provide more than one cash dowry, and each dowry would therefore be treated separately.

<sup>98</sup> PRC 17/14/216-18; PRC 17/51/295v.-6v.; PRC 17/51/323-4.



her marriage, at 50 marks per year, by his son William.<sup>99</sup> The four daughters of William Swanne were endowed with even larger sums. Ursula and Margaret were each to receive £300, of which £100 was to be given at the day of marriage, a further £100 a year later, and the third part, five years after marriage. Daughters Elizabeth and Tabitha were likewise to receive their portions in instalments, although theirs amounted to £250 each, and were made conditional upon them marrying with the consent of their mother and sister Ursula.<sup>100</sup> Some historians have commented upon the fact that marriage portions were not always payable at the time, but were sometimes extended over a few years in instalments,<sup>101</sup> and the Kent wills confirm that occasionally such practices occurred, especially it seems in Wye, and while they were perhaps more likely to apply to larger than average cash sums, smaller portions might also be paid over a period of up to eleven years, although up to three years only or less, was more common.<sup>102</sup> The marriage portions provided by Sir Thomas Kempe and William Swanne are not so exceptional for being spread in payment over a few years, but they do derive from a social group which is not commonly represented among the will-makers. Together with the £200 portion payable to Sara Dodd at her age of 18 or day of marriage, as bequeathed in the will of her wealthy yeoman father,<sup>103</sup> they are disproportionate in size to the rest of the figures used in the following analysis. Moreover, since five of these disproportionately large dowries come from wills made in the 1590s, their inclusion would significantly raise the mean value of dowries found in wills belonging to the last quarter of the sixteenth century, to 798*s.* (£39 18*s.*) as against the 512*s.* (£25 12*s.*) shown in Table 6.1. The exclusion of these atypical large dowries does not however, affect the trend observable in average dowry values.

Omitting then those values of 3000*s.* or more (£150+), the *mean* dowry of all daughters was 250*s.* in cash (£12 10*s.*) but this result was not consistent across the parishes. In the small parish of Sturry, for example, the average for the whole period was 450*s.* (£22 10*s.*) out of the only 19 cash dowries recorded from the wills, although some distortion may be due to the relatively small number of

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99 PRC 17/14/216-18.

100 PRC 17/51/295v.-6v.

101 Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, pp. 197-8; Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, p. 83, especially in the first half of his period; Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, pp. 288-9; Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, p. 269. But Macfarlane claims that ordinarily, compared to large aristocratic portions, portions were usually paid very quickly, and that payment was 'nevertheless usually not a long affair perpetuating links between parents and children'.

102 For example, see, PRC 17/10/30v.-1v (Richard Elgor, Wye, 1504); PRC 17/9/28-9 (John Beverley, elder, Wye, 1505); PRC 17/18/87-8 (William Dod, husbandman, Wye, 1523); PRC 17/12/566v.-8 (John Donett, Tenterden, 1517).

103 PRC 17/51/323-4.

dowries for that parish coupled with the higher sums given at the end of the period. By contrast, the lowest average dowry was found in Whitstable, being 85s. (£4 5s.) for the entire period. Otherwise Tenterden had a mean value of 316s. (£15 16s.), for Wye, it was 153s. (£7 13s.) and for Chislet, 240s. (£12). Compared to calculations of portion values given by Erickson and Macfarlane, the average figures for the Kent parishes may appear somewhat lower, but it should be remembered that they cover the years from c. 1450 to 1600, and not the seventeenth century and beyond. Of 25 portions bequeathed by husbandmen, yeomen and craftsmen in rural Yorkshire, Erickson found that 2/3 were valued at up to £20 only, and of 80 wills in the town of Selby, husbandmen, labourers, and poorer craftsmen and yeomen usually left £10, while most yeomen and leather craftsmen gave £20, with a few daughters of wealthy Yorkshire men receiving portions worth more than £100. Estimating the equivalent or somewhat higher values further south, in Bristol and Sussex, she nevertheless maintained that most portions came to less than £50, and were generally, for ordinary people, under £30.<sup>104</sup> Macfarlane's findings suggest likewise that the majority of husbandmen's daughters could expect portions of £10 - £50, and labourers' daughters probably £1-£5. In Lupton, out of the 39 mainly husbandmen's portions, 33 were under £20, while in Earls Colne, of the 13 portions given, the mode was £40-£50.<sup>105</sup> His figures are clearly derived from a later period, between the mid-sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, but corresponding figures for the sixteenth century are provided by Cicely Howell's study of Kibworth Harcourt, although the criteria she employed are not strictly comparable.<sup>106</sup> Notwithstanding, from her analysis, 55% of cash legacies in the mid-sixteenth century were worth £1-£4, with under 4% worth more than £20.<sup>107</sup> Compared to those cash portions, the values in the Kent wills are higher. In the period 1525-49, for example, 43% were under £4, and 19.8% were £20 and more, while in 1550-74, the figures were 34.5% and approximately 26% (see below Figures. 6.6d-6.6e).

Over the whole period, the *modal* dowry for all five Kent parishes was only 40s. (£2) and the *median* value, 133s. (£6 13s.), but this simply represents the enormous spread of amounts found throughout the years. Fig 6.3 charts the distribution of dowry values (omitting those of £150+), with each marking representing one or more occurrence of that particular value, and demonstrates quite clearly the wide distribution.

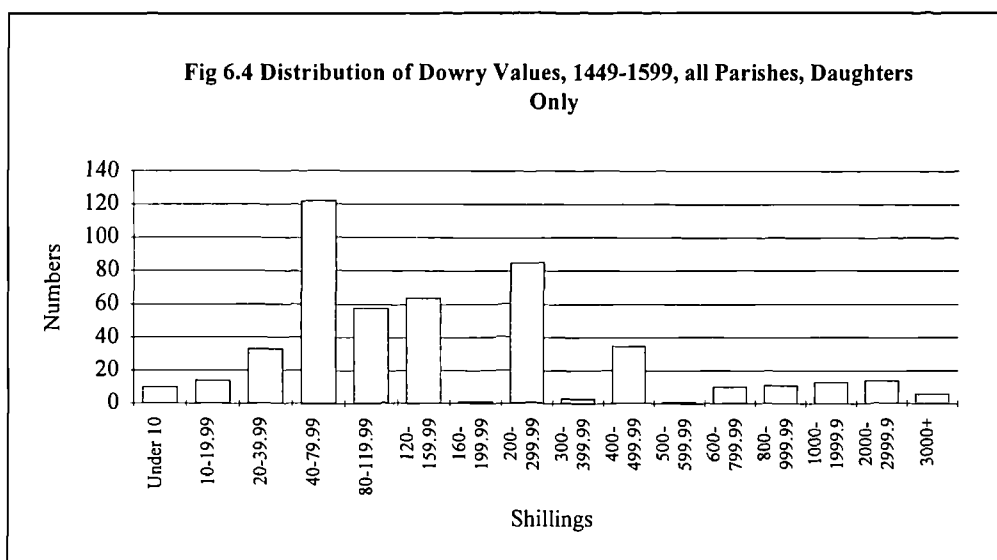
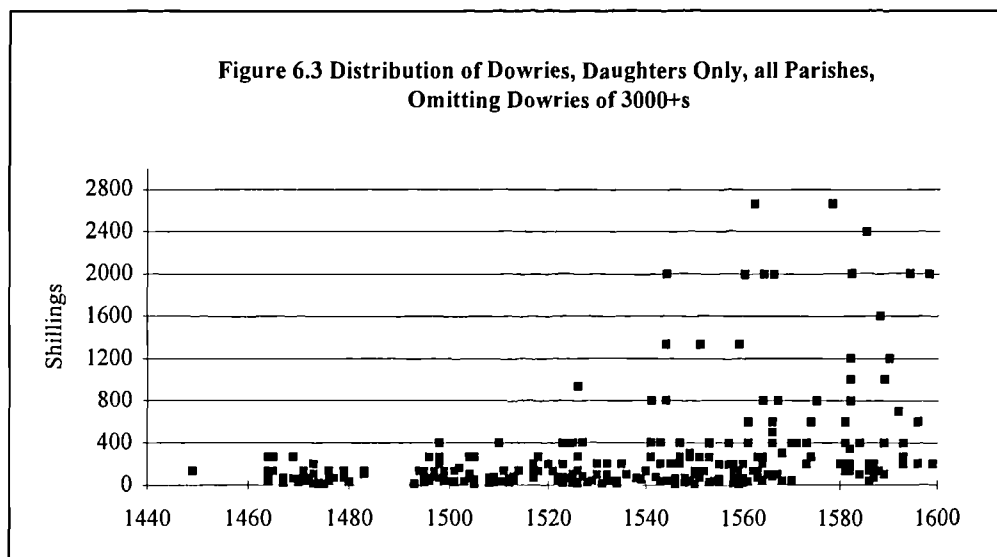
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104 Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 88-9.

105 Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, p. 264.

106 See above, p. 207, n. 25.

107 Howell, 'Peasant inheritance customs', p. 150.



As shown in Fig. 6.4, dowries most frequently fell into the 40s. to 79.99s. category over the entire period (£2-£4), but equally significant is the evident range of dowries. Such findings confirm the broad distribution of values reported by other authors,<sup>108</sup> and are to be expected given the differences in wealth and circumstances amongst testators.

The economic status of their fathers, and the number of siblings, could affect the size of portions which daughters could expect to marry with. In the Kent wills, there was considerable equality in the cash portions bequeathed by individual testators to their several unmarried daughters. In Tenterden, 52 out of 63 testators providing for more than one daughter, gave each the same amount of cash legacy. In Wye, with few exceptions, daughters received equal portions to their sisters, and the same applied to 15 out of 19 testators in Whitstable. The

108 Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, p. 264.

number of instances are fewer for the remaining two parishes, but still reflect the predominantly, but not exclusively, partible inheritance allocation of marriage portions.<sup>109</sup>

While the total number of daughters could influence the size of dowry, another important factor was clearly the socio-economic position of fathers. At the bottom extreme, the labourer Richard Mason of Whitstable in 1546 left his two daughters only 6s. 8d. each at their 'day of marriage',<sup>110</sup> in contrast to the Wye tanner, Nicholas Coke who, in 1541, provided for his three daughters to receive £20 each at their age of 18 years or marriage, and a similar cash sum to any as yet unborn daughter.<sup>111</sup> The exceptionally large dowries given at the upper levels have already been observed, showing the degree of disparity which could exist within any one parish. Generally speaking, yeomen provided larger cash dowries for their daughters than did husbandmen. In Tenterden, in the mid to late sixteenth century, husbandmen's daughters received sums of £3 6s. 8d. to £20,<sup>112</sup> while yeomen often gave portions in the £30-£100 range,<sup>113</sup> though Thomas Barrowe in 1565 left a cash portion of only £5,<sup>114</sup> compared to other yeomen like Edward Phyllypp who, in 1578, bequeathed 200 marks (£133 6s. 8d.) to his daughter Suzanne at her full age of 18 years or marriage.<sup>115</sup>

The variation in dowry values within occupations is perhaps unsurprising given the range of wealth behind bland occupational labels current in the sixteenth century. However, the very existence of such a range of dowries available, provides a graphic illustration of the way in which marriage might be the key to both upward and downward social mobility in the early modern period. Clearly, to the extent to which the provision of an acceptable dowry alone determined success in courtship, the daughters of relatively wealthy husbandmen might legitimately aspire to marry the sons of relatively poor yeomen, or vice versa, and the daughters of prosperous yeomen could prove a good catch for

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109 See also, Howell, 'Peasant inheritance customs', p. 144, on the equality of marriage portions at Kibworth, and Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 68-78 for a discussion of 'the egalitarian approach of most will-makers', whether in areas practising partible inheritance or primogeniture. Cf. Cooper, 'Patterns of inheritance', p. 312 where eldest daughters usually received more.

110 PRC 17/26/43.

111 PRC 17/23/71-3.

112 For example, see, PRC 17/26/66v.-7v. (William Pyers, 1548); PRC 17/49/35v.-6v. (Walter Morlen, 1593).

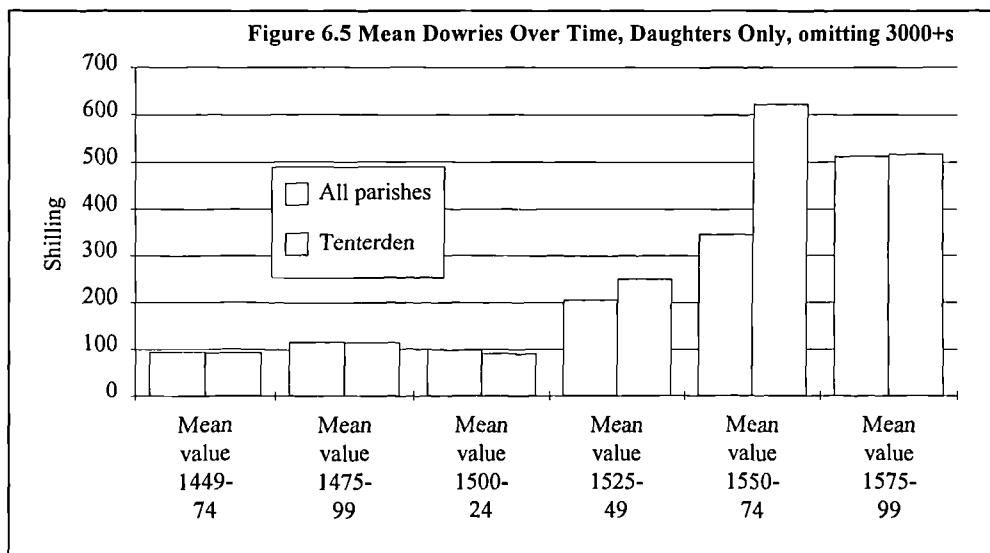
113 For a breakdown of values according to broad status categories, see Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 88-9.

114 PRC 17/39/131-2.

115 PRC 17/43/216v.-17v.

gentlemen's sons.<sup>116</sup> In what follows, therefore, any discussion of average dowry values must always be qualified by the knowledge that there was wide variation of values around the mean, within any one parish, and its constituent occupational groups. The size of dowries was itself the object of intense negotiation and speculation, determined by wealth, status, and the local marriage market, so that such variation is necessarily to be expected. Nevertheless, despite these qualifications, it should be emphasized that the study of dowry values presented here is based upon the largest ever sample of probate evidence, and moreover includes many dowries found in wills dating from the mid-fifteenth century.

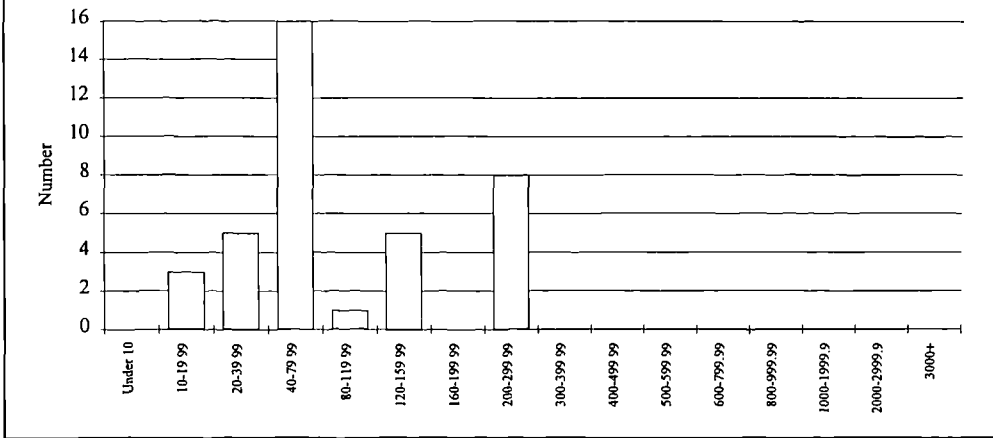
It is clear from Table 6.1 that more interesting than the average size of dowry is the change in dowry size over time, and it is to this that we shall now turn. Both Table 6.1 and Figure 6.3 show that there was considerable inflation in the value of cash portions bequeathed to unmarried daughters. The mean dowry of all daughters, for all five parishes taken together, remained relatively stable at c. 100s. (£5) from the mid-fifteenth century to the first quarter of the sixteenth century but the dowries thereafter display rapid inflation, with the mean for 1525-49 being approximately £10 5s. rising to approximately £17 6s. in 1550-74, and averaging some £25 12s. at the end of the sixteenth century. Over time, therefore, the average dowry increased slightly more than *fivefold* between the mid fifteenth and late sixteenth centuries.



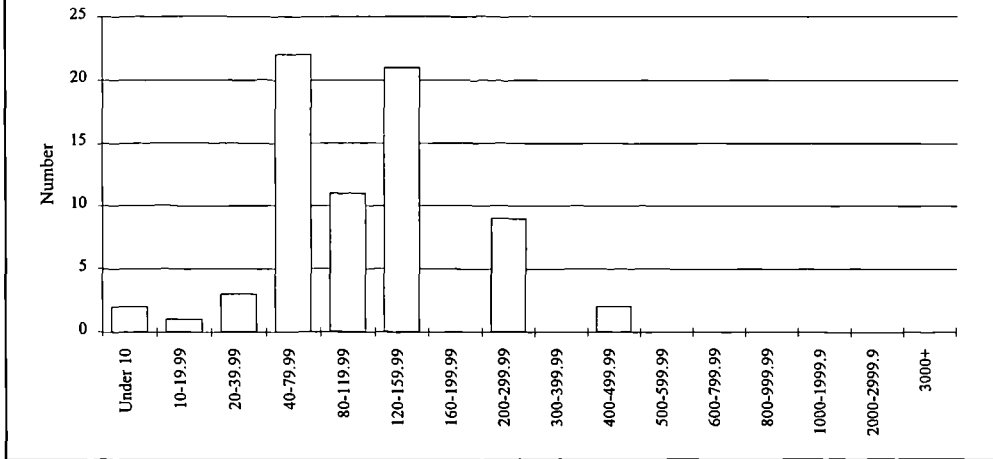
116 Erickson too, *Women and Property*, p. 87, notes the 'extensive overlap' in dowries among wealthy classes and the lower ranks of the gentry. See Elliott, 'Mobility and marriage', for social mobility at marriage.

This inflation is portrayed in Figure 6.5, where the results for all five parishes combined, and that of Tenterden alone, (by far the largest sample), are presented. While Figure 6.3 illustrates how, over time, increasing numbers of large dowries can be found (although it is still possible to find fairly small dowries as late as the 1580s), Figures 6.6a-6.6f illustrate the actual pattern of dowry inflation over time by setting out the distribution of dowry values. Essentially, they chart very clearly how the distribution of values shifts upwards, with increases in large dowries but, at the same time, a persistence of small dowry values.

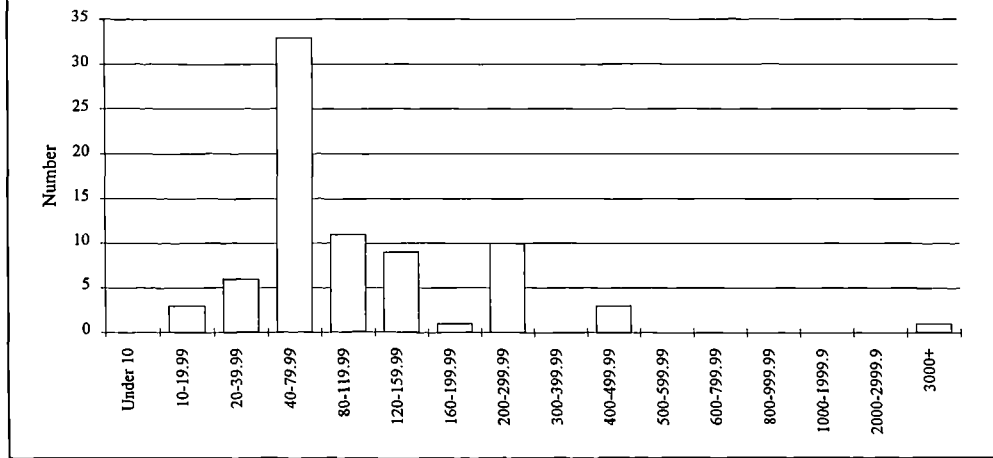
**Fig 6.6a: Distribution of Dowry Values, 1449-74, Daughters Only, all Dowries and Parishes Included**

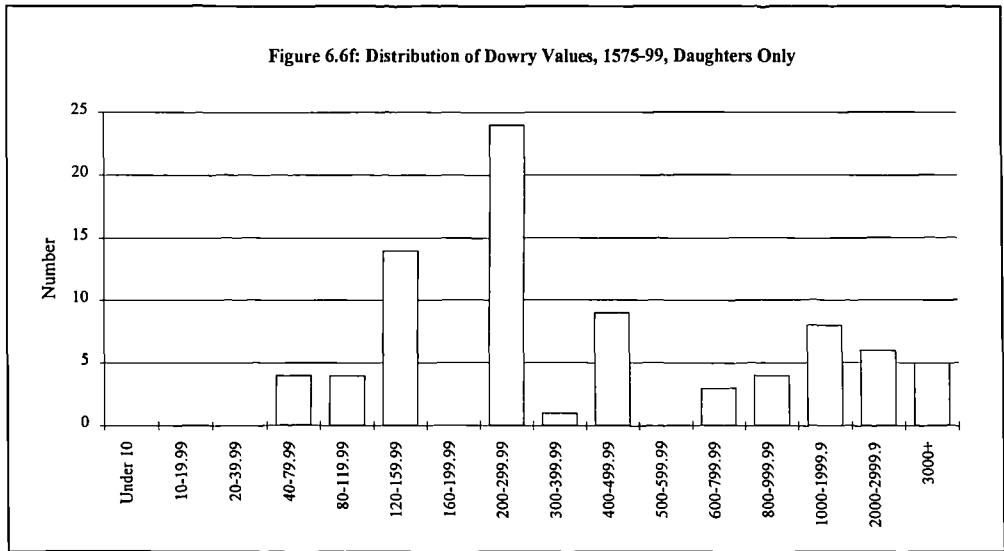
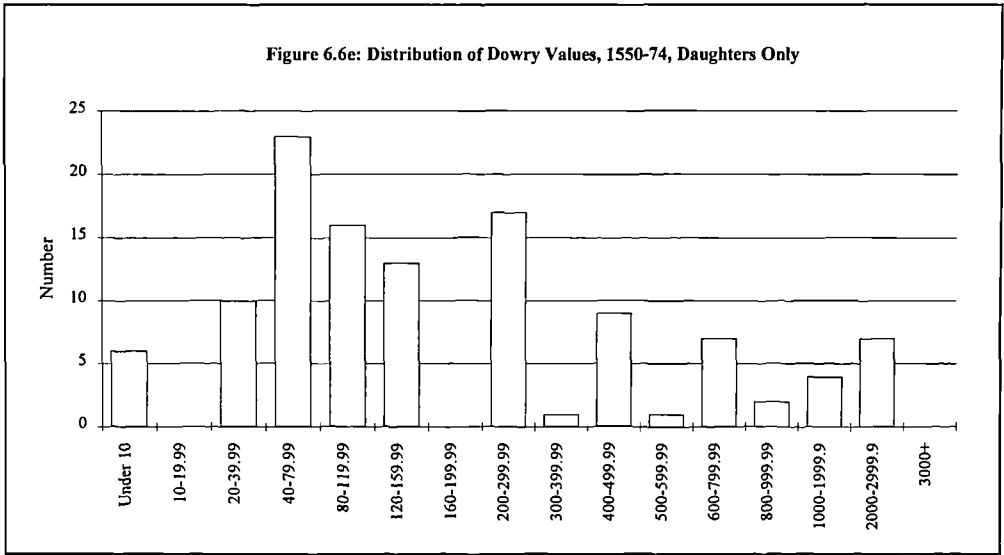
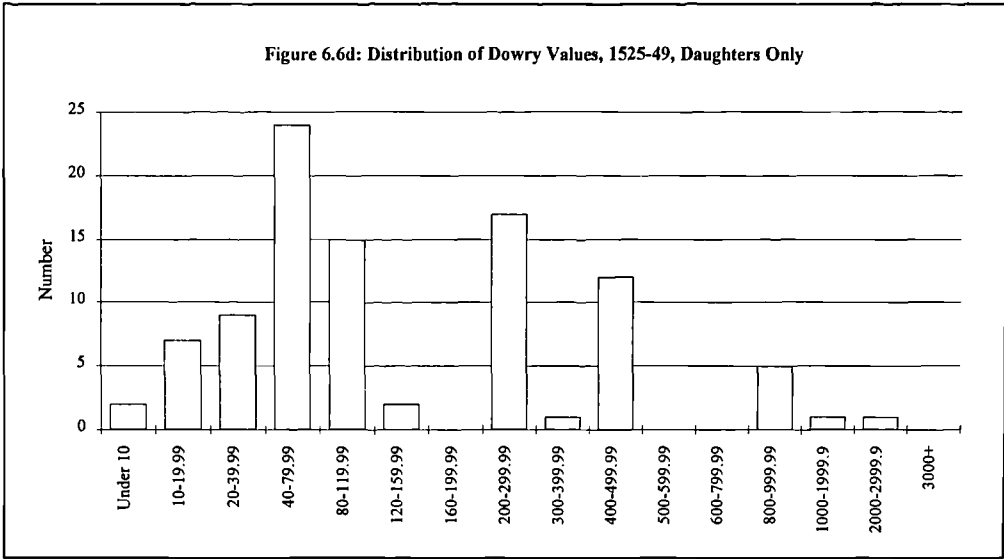


**Fig 6.6b: Distribution of Dowry Values, 1475-99, Daughters Only**



**Figure 6.6c: Distribution of Dowry Values, 1500-24, Daughters Only**







With the *modal*, most common, dowry value still at 40s. between 1500 and 1574, and 200s. in 1575-99, it suggests the way in which dowry inflation did not immediately eliminate very small dowries, and might even reflect a polarization of dowries, rather than a general inflation, with only particular social groups able to afford increasingly higher levels of payment. From the results shown, it would be unwise to place too much weight on individual parish variation, or on small movements over time, given the wide range of dowries encountered, and the way in which the size of dowries is affected so markedly by the social, economic and demographic circumstances of testators. Future research should employ an even larger sample of wills to delineate more carefully the parameters of this dowry inflation, but the reality behind it, of a five-fold increase across the period in question, seems to be incontestable.

Although no recent study has really looked at dowry inflation before 1550, Howell's analysis of the movement in the value of cash legacies at Kibworth (based on a much more limited sample), compared with the movement of prices in Leicestershire, suggests that there was also inflation in that parish. Making reference to this phenomenon from the mid-sixteenth century, she shows a steady rise in the value of cash portions from the 48% of cash-only legacies in 1551-1600 which were usually worth less than £5 each, to the 52% in 1681-1700, worth about £20 each, making it 'clear that there was an overall upward movement in the value of cash portions over the period 1520-1720'.<sup>117</sup> Erickson, on the other hand, makes reference to this phenomenon but appears to disagree, although her remarks may be more relevant to the seventeenth rather than the sixteenth century. She claimed that the inflation of portions which was an important feature among the upper ranks of early modern England, was 'irrelevant to ordinary women'. According to her, 'There is no observable rise over time either in parental bequests to unmarried daughters, or in probate accounts with a settlement for payment to the wife in widowhood. Complaints from the well-to-do about the rising costs of their daughters' portions were never echoed at an ordinary level'. Furthermore she maintains that for ordinary brides, the inflation of portions in the late sixteenth to early eighteenth centuries as experienced foremost by the aristocracy, and to a lesser extent by the gentry, 'would have been simply impossible', given the level of wages.<sup>118</sup> But as far as the Kent evidence shows, contrary to Erickson's assertions, the increase in portions among the will-making population in market towns and villages alike, was a clearly discernible phenomenon. Discussing the inflation of marriage

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117 Howell, 'Peasant inheritance customs', pp. 149-51.

118 Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 138.

portions among the upper ranks, Outhwaite was convinced of the need for future research into the marriage settlements of lesser folk, professing the 'need to know how far down the social scale such tendencies were revealed'.<sup>119</sup>

**Table 6.2 Kentish Dowries Compared to those of the Peerage**

Date	Mean dowry in shillings	PBH index	Dowry indexed to base 1449- 74 <sup>1</sup>	Real dowry values <sup>2</sup>		
1449-74	94.6	101.5	100.0	98.5		
1475-99	116.7	104.6	123.4	118.0		
1500-24	99.6	115.5	105.3	91.2		
1525-49	205.8	168.8	217.7	129.0		
1550-74	346.2	286.4	366.1	127.8		
1575-99	512.3	399.2	541.9	135.7		
	Stone's peerage portions to nearest £100	Stone's Aristocratic portion index	Coopers Peerage Portions to nearest £50	Cooper Peerage portions where 750 = 100	Cooper's Knightly families, average portion in £s	Cooper's Knightly families, average portion indexed to 1475-1500
1449-74					282.0	100.0
1475-99	500.0	100.0	750.0	100.0	282.0	100.0
1500-24	500.0	100.0	750.0	100.0	286.0	101.4
1525-49	700.0	140.0	750.0	100.0	286.0	101.4
1550-74	1300.0	260.0	850.0	113.3	859.0	304.6
1575-99	2000.0	400.0	2250.0	300.0	859.0	304.6
1600-24	3800.0	760.0	3550.0	473.3		
1625-49	5400.0	1080.0	5050.0	673.3		
1650-74	7800.0	1560.0	6250.0	833.3		
1675-1724	9700.0	1940.0	9350.0	1246.7		

Source: Cooper, 'Inheritance and settlement', pp. 307-11. PBH index figures represent the average composite price index for each twenty-five year period, taken from E. H. Phelps Brown and S. V. Hopkins, *A Perspective of Wages and Prices* (London and New York, 1981), pp. 48-52

1. Where mean dowry/94.6 x 100

2. Where indexed dowry/PBH index x 100

<sup>119</sup> Outhwaite, 'Marriage as business', p. 35.

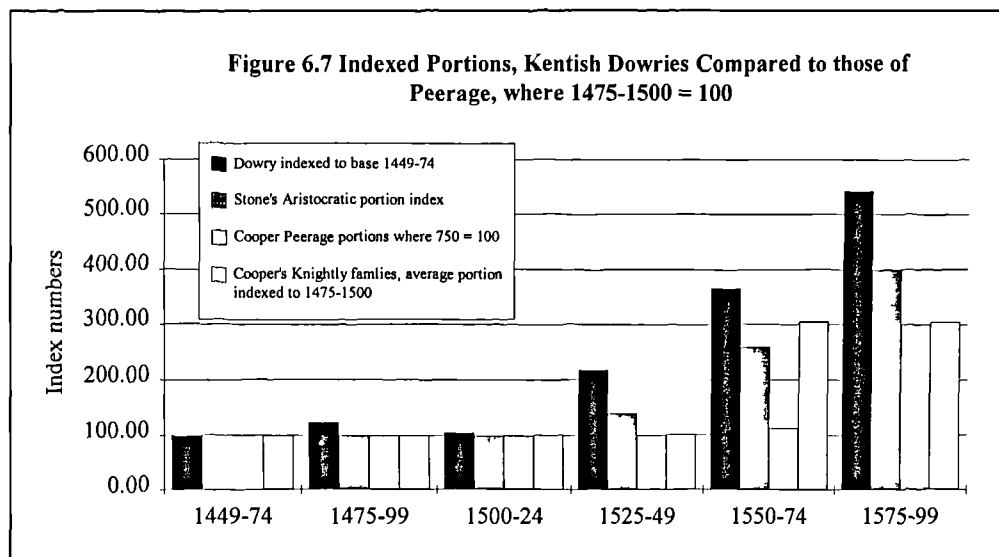


Table 6.2 and Figure 6.7 compare the indexed portions of Kentish dowries as shown in the wills, to those of the peerage presented by J. P. Cooper.<sup>120</sup> The figures for the average marriage portions among the peerage indicate an upward trend, as in Kent, though the rate of increase seems in fact to be *slower* amongst the peerage in the sixteenth century. Between 1475 and 1549, the average size of portions proposed by peers of the realm was £750, increasing to £850 in 1550-74 and, in the period of greatest inflation in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, reaching £2,250; suggesting that the peerage portion inflation multiplied by a factor of three over the whole period. For peers below the rank of earl, the rise in portions appears to have been rather more rapid, increasing fourfold from £550 in 1475-1524 to £2,350 by the end of the sixteenth century. Taking Stone's figures for the aristocracy, portion inflation showed a fourfold increase between 1475 and 1599 to match the inflation of prices. Lower down the social scale, among Cooper's knightly families, 165 portions taken from a study of 64 wills and 30 settlements in the period 1450-1600, averaged £282 in 1451-1500, inflating minimally to £286 in 1501-50, but then, as already observed, jumping three times to £859 in 1551-1600. Whichever figures are used for comparison, they clearly show the enormous differences between the size of portions at the upper reaches of society, and among the majority of ordinary folk. They reinforce the socio-economic distance between marriage markets at their extreme, and perhaps emphasize the virtual impossibility of ever crossing the financial divide which is represented by the huge gulf between the average dowry offered by, for example, knightly families in the late fifteenth century of £282, and that of about £5 belonging to Kent

120 Cooper, 'Patterns of inheritance', pp. 307-11. Also see above p. 206, n. 17.

villagers at the humble level. The same sort of portion inflation can be seen to have occurred amongst villagers as among the aristocracy in the sixteenth century, and moreover, it was apparently more rapid. In the sixteenth century, aristocratic bridal inflation did no more than keep pace with price inflation according to Stone, and would it seems have fallen behind, if Cooper's less inflationary figures are correct. The fact that cash dowries underwent considerable inflation in the last quarter of the sixteenth century is not surprising given the sharp prices rises of that period. It only remains therefore to measure the extent to which, if at all, there was a *real* increase in dowry inflation in Kent during our period.

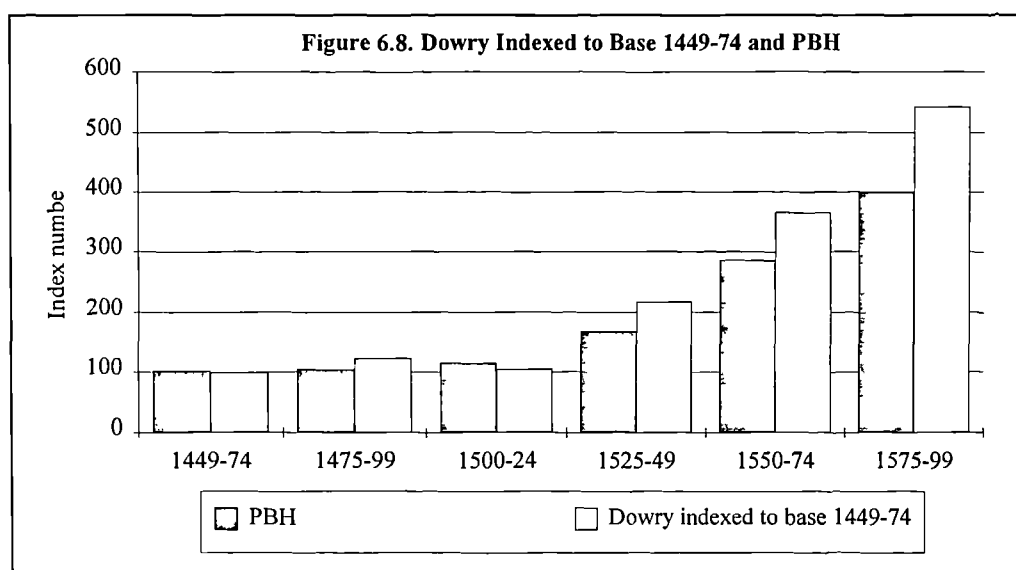
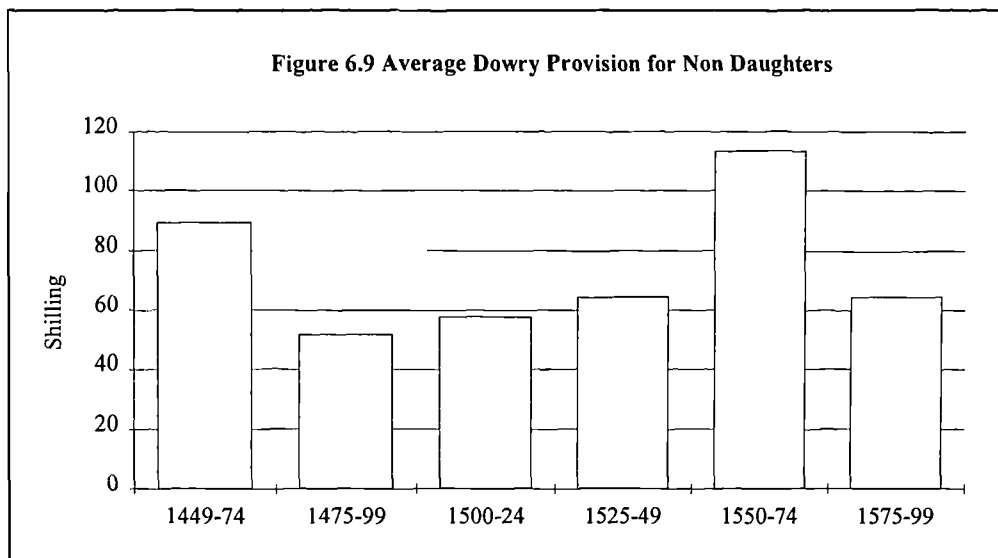


Figure 6.8 and Table 6.2 show that, if anything, dowries in the five parishes seem to have increased in *real* terms from the mid-sixteenth century by about 30%, essentially outstripping the fourfold increase in the price of a basket full of consumables between 1450 and 1600, with a comparative factor of five.<sup>121</sup> At the same time, while the average cash portions for daughters increased in nominal and real terms, there was no identifiable inflationary trend in the average value of dowry provision for non-daughters over time in money terms, but a dramatic decline in their value in real terms. Perhaps a larger study is needed though, one capable of making finer distinctions between the dowry values and various types of relationship involved, before this decline in real dowries for non-daughters can be understood fully (see Figure 6.9).

<sup>121</sup> E. H. Phelps Brown and S. V. Hopkins, *A Perspective of Wages and Prices* (London and New York, 1981), ch. 2, 'Seven centuries of the prices of consumables, compared with builders' wage rates', pp. 13-59.



The inflation of dowries in the sixteenth century in these Kent parishes may presumably serve as some sort of surrogate index of the income of rural testators, assuming that there was a constant relationship between income and the size of marriage portions. According to Macfarlane, at the husbandman level, dowry sums were probably equal to one or two years annual income, and equivalent to three years' income among the middling strata of prosperous yeomen and traders.<sup>122</sup> Along with the rise in the price of consumables, the value of land was also increasing throughout the sixteenth century. Between 1510 and 1600, Wealden land prices increased 4.3 times, nearly tracking that of food prices.<sup>123</sup> Given that money wages did not keep pace with prices,<sup>124</sup> and that dowry inflation apparently exceeded any wage inflation, this might imply that those who relied solely on wages as income in the sixteenth century, found themselves increasingly disadvantaged in the provision of dowries, with polarization in wealth and status perhaps extending too into the marriage market.

The dowry sample used in this analysis is, however, by no means a perfect one, since it does not concern a controlled group of people comprising the same number of yeomen, husbandmen, craftsmen or any other occupational-status category, in all the years surveyed. Hence, we do not yet know whether the inflation of portions was driven by a particular social strata, but if it is possible to assume that dowry inflation applied to all social levels represented in wills, this

122 Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, p. 264.

123 Zell, *Industry in the Countryside*, pp. 44-50.

124 The agricultural labourer's wage in Southern England increased just over two times between 1450 and 1600 compared to a 4.5 fold increase in the cost of living, see, C. G. A. Clay, *Economic Expansion and Social Change: England 1500-1700 I. People, Land and Towns* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 50.

may arguably have some bearing on the level of nuptiality. This may be the case since such inflation could imply that wage-earners would need to accumulate savings for longer, and likewise that some fathers might have required more time to amass sufficient marketable portions for their daughters' marriages. With the inflation of portions then, the threshold cost of setting up a household would surely have also risen, and for those saving part of their earnings for marriage, the process of accumulation would have taken a longer time. Ann Kussmaul's estimates of possible pooled savings of servants, based on average wages recorded at hiring sessions in Spalding, Lincolnshire, 1767-85, show quite clearly that women earned far less than men, that adult wages were not given till the late teens or early twenties, and that though 'it is conceivable that a male and female servant could have pooled their savings and stocked a small farm on their combined savings alone, if they both served at least ten years...' the viability of such an enterprise is questionable.<sup>125</sup> With an average annual female wage of just over £2 (in a period when wages would have been far higher than in the sixteenth century) and assuming that at least a third of the earnings were not saved, it would have taken a girl serving in husbandry several years indeed to accumulate the kind of market dowries required in the sixteenth century, given that the average portions among the will-making population of Kent in 1575-99, were somewhere between £25 and £40. For single women in London in the seventeenth century annual earnings were seldom in excess of £3,<sup>126</sup> and Erickson has suggested that women engaged in husbandry or household service usually received between £1 and £2 per annum in the early modern period.<sup>127</sup> Hence, although independent earnings in service provided the opportunity for young girls to finance their own marriage, without other means of inherited, or transferred, wealth from parents and other sources of dowry provision from relatives, friends and benefactors, any prospect of entering into marriage would have been certainly delayed or even undermined.<sup>128</sup>

In this context, it is essential to realise that the ability to enter into the married state depended *not* just on the time needed to accumulate sufficient

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125 Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry*, pp. 38-9, 81-2.

126 Elliott, 'Single women', p. 95.

127 Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 85.

128 Cf. Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love*, p. 267. He estimates a period of ten years service, and a portion of £10 needed at that social level, and argues that a girl would have been able to accumulate this herself. For estimates of annual earnings of a regularly employed labourer in Southern England, (£10 8s. in the early seventeenth century), see P. Bowden's figures in J. Thirsk ed., *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, IV, p. 657. A virgate holder's income would have been 60-70% higher than the fullest employed agricultural wage-earner, with an estimated annual net profit of £14 9s. 3d.

wealth through independent earnings, but also on the critical and paramount provision of dowries. The vast literature on the determinants of age of marriage rarely make direct reference to such provision, but usually assumes instead that the current or past state of real wages was more important than inherited wealth or ante mortem property transfer in governing the level of nuptiality in a population.<sup>129</sup> There is little evidence that the dowry of most servants was derived solely from their savings of wages. Although a proportion of servants would have been orphans, without a surviving father to provide for them, orphanage did not necessarily mean the absence of dowry provision, as the evidence of wills clearly shows. For those whose parents were still alive at the time of their marriage, entitlement to some provision would have been a universal expectation. Even the poorest members of the population would have considered the provision of a dowry an important part of the making of marriage.

While dowries may have been of somewhat less significance amongst the very poor sectors of society, the social structure of a typical village would suggest that this strata rarely formed a majority of the population.<sup>130</sup> For most of the ordinary population, even for labourers for whom portions were small, for husbandmen, and certainly for yeomen, the middling sort, and those in the higher social levels, the institutional and economic importance of the dowry was crucial. Although marriage choices inevitably included love and personal preferences among their criteria, historians who have written about those choices have so far, it seems, taken insufficient account of perhaps *the* foremost factor in contemporary marriage mentality, where decisions were constrained by material considerations and expectations.

Until now, this chapter has relied on examining wills to illustrate the extensive provision of dowries at all social levels represented by testators. In providing comparative analysis of five Kent parishes, it was shown that there were differences in the average size of dowries between the localities. The analysis of wills has also demonstrated the inflation of dowries over time, with implications for the state of the marriage market, and the ease or lack of it, with which couples could embark on marriage. By using a large number of wills made by ordinary people from the mid-fifteenth century, and with some attempt at regional comparisons, and long-term overview, this chapter has so far sought to rectify the over-emphasis on the marriage bargains of the upper classes, the statistical imprecision of single community analysis, and the hitherto neglect of an important subject and source for its study in the sixteenth century. In what

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129 Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History of England*, pp. 402-53, especially pp. 421-2.

130 Tronrud, 'Dispelling the gloom', p. 12.

remains of this chapter, the evidence provided once again by the church court depositions will be further examined to illustrate the negotiation of dowries in courtship, and the general significance of material matters in the making of marriage. The wills after all may be regarded in part as retrospective statements, or practical outcomes of transactions and negotiations at the time of courtship, referring as they sometimes do, to previous financial agreements.<sup>131</sup>

### III

'Now the yong folk be come together for love, but the parentes must cast how they shall live ...'<sup>132</sup>

If little has hitherto been known about dowry levels and trends among the ordinary classes of early modern England, still less is known about the actual process of negotiating a marriage settlement. It is generally agreed that contemporaries were concerned to establish a financial basis for marriage, and that pecuniary matters were indeed important in assessing the eligibility of prospective partners, *particularly* for the upper classes, and to some extent for the courtships of those lower down the social scale. Contemporary literature too, illustrates the practical fiscal issues embedded in courtship and marriage, both reflecting and probing the marriage bargains which might be made.<sup>133</sup> Of the middle classes, Peter Earle points out that 'whatever one may say about the relative significance of love and money in choice of partners, there is absolutely no doubt that money played a very important, if not predominant, part in the process'.<sup>134</sup> Even where the amount endowed was not great, it was, says Erickson, 'as important to the idea of marriage at middling social levels as it was among wealthy families'.<sup>135</sup>

However, while the real and ideological significance of money in marriage, and the pervasiveness of marriage settlements at various social levels are recognized, not enough attention has yet been paid to those ordinary folk who comprised the vast majority of the population, and to the process of marriage bargaining amongst them. In part, this may be due to the limitations of source.

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131 For example, PRC 17/39/18v. (William Besfilde, yeoman, Tenterden, 1565). In his will he referred to the gifts made to his daughter's sons as being 'in full discharge of my promise to the father to my son (in-law) William Bereworth to make my daughter Sibell or her heirs worth £30 after my death'.

132 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/18, f. 54v., *Giles v. Wyborn* (1577).

133 Cook, *Making a Match*, pp. 124-7, 133-50.

134 Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, p. 199.

135 Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 89-90.



Certainly there is much that escapes recovery, but although it may be impossible to quantify those premarital contracts, be they verbally agreed with a handshake, or concluded in writing,<sup>136</sup> perhaps the closest we can hope to get to their recovery is through an examination of court depositions. They provide glimpses of some of the kinds of financial negotiations undertaken, and the motivations, economic pressures and considerations at work during courtship.

For those social levels beneath that of the aristocracy and gentry, historians have assumed that the process of marriage bargaining that occurred probably resulted in marriage settlements that were, by nature, much more *varied* than the business transactions of the upper ranks, despite the comparative modesty of the amount in question.<sup>137</sup> Martin Ingram makes it clear that 'property' suits in marriage were commonly heard in the Wiltshire courts at least in the late sixteenth-century, demonstrating the prime association between property and marriage. In outlining the ideal pattern for concluding a marriage, the negotiation of property transfers was regarded as an essential requirement in proceedings.<sup>138</sup> Financial contributions from *both* sides needed to be settled with the exchange of marriage promises, for settlement depended not just on the bride's portion, but also on provision reciprocated by the groom which was in practice 'just as much a marriage portion'.<sup>139</sup> By studying the church court depositions it is possible to examine a little more closely some of that variety in the terms of agreement, to observe the manner and circumstances in which marriage bargains were conducted, and to assess the significance of both sets of contributions in the economics of marriage. In spite of the quotation cited at the start of this section, the reality behind the workings of courtship was a far more complex one than the simple polarity posited therein between youth and love on the one hand, and family, authority and materialism on the other.

The misery and anxieties suffered by the astrologer, Richard Napier's, clients, reveal that the cardinal cause of conflict between parents and children was over choice of marriage partner. Their complaints and disappointments affirm the force of love and passion, as did those of thwarted lovers in the court cases, but what was also significant was the value they attached to appropriate 'economic and social qualifications'. Regarding the courtships of young people, Michael MacDonald wrote that, whatever freedom they were permitted, was mitigated by parental influence and rights of veto. Moreover, 'their choices were

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136 See, Kaplan in Kaplan ed., *The Marriage Bargain*, p. 2; Erickson, 'Common law versus common practice', p. 35.

137 Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, p. 84; Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 102-13.

138 Ingram, *Church Courts*, pp. 196, 205.

139 Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 91.

also restricted in more subtle ways. They themselves were encouraged to internalize the social values and economic realities parents had traditionally been concerned about ...<sup>140</sup> Indeed it will be argued that the internalization of norms, and the set of conventional, moral, and economic and social prescriptions which limited the range of available choices ensured that, in the end, the majority of marriages were generally based upon a norm of 'essential parity',<sup>141</sup> and a realistic evaluation of economic sense either with or without love. As a reading of the church court depositions will confirm, while demonstrating the strength of their feelings, contemporaries usually exercised discretion in their scrutiny of prospective partners, and in their appraisal of their financial resources, although the details of marital finance were often managed under the auspices of attendant family and kin.

Of all the depositions studied for the period 1542-1600, at least a third sufficiently illustrates the weighting of financial considerations in the making of marriages, either by specifying material expectations in the form of dowry or jointure; by making promises of marriage conditional upon such assurances; by statements which directly or indirectly relay the cost of living and the setting up of a household; by exposing the attitudes and frustrations of couples and their kin regarding economic suitability; by the very language of bargaining; the consciousness of material worth; and the expressed tenet of social and economic parity. Even, as we shall see, in those individual statements which are self-consciously and deliberately anti-materialistic, and which echo the sentiments of romantic love, the very self-professed negation of economic motivation uses property as a yardstick by which to measure love. The wealth of this evidence alone emphasizes the importance and pervasiveness of financial considerations in the process of matrimonial negotiation and in the suitability of a spouse. Despite the very real existence of love in matters of courtship, it is suggested that, even among ordinary folk, a partner's financial standing and social position (determined in large part by family and kin) may have been the most crucial and pivotal consideration in the final choice of marriage partner, indeed, a basic necessity, to which all other considerations of love and physical attraction were ultimately subordinated.

What is first of all striking in the matrimony cases is the almost total absence of any mention of an individual's *personal* attributes. Contrary to our modern-day preoccupation with appearance and personality, the rhetoric in the

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<sup>140</sup> M. MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam. Madness, Anxiety and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England*, (Cambridge, 1981, ppbk. edn., 1983), pp. 88-98 (p. 97).

<sup>141</sup> Cook, *Making a Match*, p. 47.

depositions does not flourish with romanticized stereotypes, but implies instead, a society whose own ideals depended principally upon more mundane and practical criteria. In the few instances where choice of partner was apparently made on account of certain desirable qualities, the qualities which were specified may be regarded as less than individualistic, associated rather with conventional requirements underlying concepts of parity and sufficiency, and the concern with family and reputation. Suitability in age and experience appears, as we have seen, to have informed the widow, Joan Whiter's choice, while William Rolfe, in return, found her to be 'a naturall lyving woman'.<sup>142</sup> A particular 'fancy', when expressed at all, was not necessarily couched in romantic terms. Christine Marshe, also a widow, was reported to have said that she was willing to marry George Gaunt, 'that he was the man that she could be content best to fansy syns her husband dyed/ for that alwaies he did most cherist and make of her child syns her husband departed'.<sup>143</sup> Although contemporary advice literature might promote a range of favourable qualities including, amongst wealth and family, considerations of personal virtues and looks, religious persuasion and intellect,<sup>144</sup> the range of qualities commended by deponents themselves were limited, but largely consistent. Elizabeth Godfrey, was one who praised John Smith for his intelligence, a personal gift which, although she esteemed it highly, was still not her sole criterion. She was heard to say that she would 'marry him as one that she loved best above all men for his lernyng witt *and*[my emphasis] honesty; and that she and all she had shuld be at his *commandement*'.<sup>145</sup> In a separate case, the honesty of one William Synger was also advocated, but interpreted as a measure of his economic self-sufficiency, and ability to procure a living.<sup>146</sup>

The association between an individual's honesty and economic verity is, in the context of this argument, hardly surprising. Personal attributes when mentioned, may be less straightforward than they appear, for they themselves were not value-free. They need to be understood in relation to social attitudes and the expectations of material well-being in an economically hostile environment. Like the implicit equation between personal honesty and economic reliability, the virtue of 'gentleness' too may not have been without derivative connotations of upbringing, background and status. Even the concept and experience of love was not without social reference, for any qualities which might appear to provide economic security could be framed in terms of the language of love, and parties

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142 See above, chapter 3, p. 102.

143 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/ 8., f. 195, *Gaunt v. Marshe* (1560/2?).

144 Cook, *Making a Match*, p.39.

145 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/12, f. 46, *Smith v. Godfrey* (1564).

146 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/3, f. 25, *Synger v. Smyth* (1546).

might be disposed to love for precisely those qualities which were considered conventionally desirable and sound. Occasionally certain parties themselves were said to have disregarded suitors who were evidently 'pretty' or 'merry', in favour of further family opinion and approval. George Chapman, upon executing a citation, asked Alice Kenwood 'why she had cast of the yong man, saying he was a prety young man. And she therapon said that she could fynd in her hart to love hym as well as ever she did/ but it was her frends doing'.<sup>147</sup> Although in this case she may inwardly have mourned the loss of her 'prety' suitor, the choice of sobriety and safety may have been the guarded, long-term option for all who were nevertheless vulnerable to other personal charms. Marion Wright, being asked whether she loved Henry Davye or John Davye best, allegedly chose the latter at that time, replying 'Henry Davye is a wilde boye I will none of hime'.<sup>148</sup> Indeed, excess merriment was probably associated more with illicit liaisons than with approvable courtships, and it is cases of defamation which leave more record of deponents who were said to have spoken of physical, personal features as opposed to considered, socially desirable issues. Joan Robynson, for example, reported that one Bigges wife of Sturry had said to her maid while lying in bed, 'I woulde William the myllars servante were here with me for he is a lighte fellowe a cleane legged fellowe and a swete brethed fellowe, and would make us to laughe'.<sup>149</sup> In matrimony cases, where such individual characteristics were rarely commented upon, an implied tension which existed between personal inclination and more prudential foresight, was likely to be expressed in emotional outbursts, and within an evidently self-conscious and exaggerated anti-materialist context.

Contravening the conventional requirements of parity and material welfare, some deponents declared their praise of steadfast love even though their chosen partners should have nothing. The widow Joanne Symnyng was supposed to have promised Edmond Stedall, 'Now my love is set, yf thow wert not worth a peny I wold be torne *with* wild horses rather than I will forsake the'.<sup>150</sup> In the case between Margaret Smith, a servant in Dover, and Robert Richardson, a ship-owner who was thought to be wealthy and worth far more than her, the circumstance of an unequal match may have prompted an overtly generous statement from Richardson. When cautioned to speak carefully, he maintained that he was well aware of his words, saying 'I meane to make her a woman for I have enowgh for her and me, for I had maryed one afore that has a little as she, and god hath blessed me', nevertheless, the match was regarded in hindsight as 'a

147 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/6, f. 187v., *Buckner v. Kenwood* (1557-8).

148 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/6, f. 39, *Davye v. Wrighte* (1554).

149 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/3, ff. 41v-4, *Bigge v. Robynson* (1548).

150 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/8, ff. 152-3, *Stedall v. Symnyng* (1562).

drunken bargayn'.<sup>151</sup> A few deponents seemed to claim that matters of dowry and goods were not an issue. Alice Berry reported that Serafyn Marketman had promised to make her a jointure of £60 if she betrothed herself to him, 'though as he said she was not worth a grote to him'.<sup>152</sup> Joseph Pelham affirmed that he would welcome and receive the widow Christine Warrey if she came to him in bare attire, 'for it is not thy goods but for the that I looke for', said he, yet there was still a £14 matter which divided them.<sup>153</sup> As for the marriage proposed between the servants Edmund Franckling and Amy Turner, of whom there were rumours of incontinency, Franckling vouched that 'it was not for her goods that he would marry her for he had borne her goodwill a great while', however he expected her friends to 'give her somewhat', even 'make her worth £20'.<sup>154</sup>

In some cases, young couples evidently entered into, and defended, privy contracts despite the apparent displeasure incurred by friends who sought to promote alternative, richer partnerships. The eighteen-year-old Thomas Cockes, a scholar at the free school in Canterbury, may well have disregarded his family's wishes by matching himself with the daughter of a shoemaker, while they 'looked that he the said Cockes should be matched with a better, rytcher and more substantiall mans daughter'.<sup>155</sup> Anti-materialist sentiments might also be expressed in circumstances where individuals were either more concerned about other obstacles to their happiness, or concerned to demonstrate their own disinclination to marry despite possible financial advantage. Jane Mussered, for one, subordinated financial cares to the greater issue of freedom from other contacts, and provided Laurance Claringboll could prove there was no other marriage matter, she said that then 'I will have you, if I goo a begging with you'.<sup>156</sup> In the case of *Filpott v. Baull alias Cruttall*, it was commonly reported that Barbara Baull was 'of more habilyty and worth'. But denying any promise between them, William Filpot was heard to swear, 'I do not know whether my wif be borne or no, nor I wold have Barbara Baull though she had a thousand thousand pound'.<sup>157</sup> Upon hearing his declaration, Jasper Whitredge immediately went away and noted it in a paper, impressed perhaps by the extremity of the statement.

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151 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/12, f. 95, *Smith v. Richardson* (1564).

152 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/21, ff. 80-2, *Marketman v. Berry* (1581).

153 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/2, ff. 321v-3, 317-18v., *Pelham v. Warrey* (1591).

154 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/1, ff. 116-v., *Turner v. Franckling* (1586-7).

155 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, ff. 213-14v., *Richards v. Cockes* (1570).

156 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/6, f. 192v., *Claringboll v. Mussered* (1593).

157 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/16, ff. 138, 139v., 143-4v., *Filpott v. Baull alias Cruttall* (1575).

Such expressions of anti-materialistic sentiment as those cited above might seem to suggest that the motivation for marriage was by no means purely grounded on considerations of financial security and parity, yet such statements were relatively few in number, and themselves ambiguous. Although economic concerns were not always the *sole* issue, the provision of an adequate dowry and jointure was essential to the marriage plans of most couples. Partners, their families and friends, sought to protect their long-term interests and made practical plans for their future. Even when they made declarations to the contrary, by using monetary considerations in a negative way to gauge their professed love, they demonstrated in so doing, a genuine and paramount consciousness of money at the forefront of contemporary attitudes.

Far more common in the deposition cases is that bulk of evidence which illustrates directly the fundamental concern over the economics of marriage with a language which is itself one of bargaining, transaction and negotiation, and which shows the general awareness of each individual's financial standing and prospects. James Philpot declared to Elizabeth Savye's parents 'that he was com to make a bargine for mariage',<sup>158</sup> and Joanne Symnyng referred to her marriage promise as an agreement 'upon a bargayn'.<sup>159</sup> Assessing the 'worth' and 'ability' of parties, whether or not one was generally deemed 'in substance, honesty and good condicions worthy and sufficient to marry',<sup>160</sup> was crucial. It was reported that Mary Galle stayed the asking of the banns in Whitstable because her mother wouldn't consent to her marrying Richard Savor who 'was not of wealthe',<sup>161</sup> and that Anne Philpott cried bitterly when she discovered the state of her lover's indebtedness.<sup>162</sup> For some, the realization of inadequate financial resources would have frustrated romantic hopes, or caused the breakdown of further negotiation. In the case of *Divers v. Williams*, Elizabeth's mother Agnes also apparently stayed the banns upon hearing that her daughter's suitor 'was nothing worth', 'for sayd mother Williams yt was said he was worth £40 but now it is sayd he can scarce keepe and maynteyne himselfe'.<sup>163</sup> Common report judged there to be 'greate odds and difference between John Spayne's wealth and Judith Symons' wealth', but while she may have been 'reputed a very poor maid and of no ability' in that match, her master had been firmly opposed to her earlier affair with Thomas Kennet, on the grounds 'that he could not away with such beggerly

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158 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/2, ff. 32v.-3, *Savye v. Philpott* (1542).

159 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/8, ff. 156v.-7v., *Hamond v. Symnyng* (1562).

160 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/19, ff. 36v.-7v., *Vydyan v. Pym* (1583-4).

161 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/1, ff. 251-v., *Savor v. Galle* (1589).

162 See above, chapter 3, p. 120.

163 See above, chapter 2, p. 58.

maryadges'.<sup>164</sup> Yet it was not just masters and family who rejected 'beggerly marriages'. Couples themselves weighed up each other's possibilities, and were intrinsically involved in the economic practicalities of maintenance and sufficient living, subordinating their love to material well-being and future interest as necessity dictated. The prospects of each partner were at issue, as was the expectation of some financial return. Percival Denbye was alleged to have said that he was content to marry Agnes Jhonson of Thanington, 'if her frends would gyve anything with her'.<sup>165</sup> But although the actual amount required was not specified in this case, the deposition evidence makes it clear that the question of how much, was vital to proceedings. For Moses Balden, it seems that ultimate choice depended upon adequate and best provision. Joanne Brokwell claimed that she was willing to marry him, but that a week later he told her that 'except her father wold geve with her as largely as he Balden may have in an other place, he wold not have her', and thereupon they broke off.<sup>166</sup>

As well as relying on their inheritance and marriage gifts, young couples embarking on marriage were advised to accumulate means sufficient for setting up a household. According to William Gibbes of Sturry, when Richard Bonnam requested his goodwill to marry with his covenant servant Prudence Bramelo, he, Gibbes, 'advised hym for that he was but poore and litill worthe that he wold tarry so long tyme and gather somewhat together in the meane time wherewith they might then better stay themselves and be able to lyve when they shuld marry'.<sup>167</sup> Indeed, their own comments demonstrate that partners were all too acutely conscious of the veracity of such counsel. John Beeching admitted the realistic need to acquire the appropriate 'wherewithall to maynteyn a wif' before making any promises of marriage. He confessed that he had told Alice Pynnocke several times that 'yf god would prosper him with any lyvinge wherbye he might be able to keepe her, he could fynde in his harte to bestow himself upon her'.<sup>168</sup> Partners were aware, too, of the cost of living, not just the intitial outlay incurred in forming a household, but the permanent drain on resources, as they complained of financial responsibility. After two years, John Yonge continued to deliberate in his suit for marriage despite having obtained parental goodwill. Finally, in making further material demands, he complained to Joane Marshe, 'what I shall doe to marrye you saythe he with 10<sup>li</sup> what is that to kepe a woman

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164 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/5, ff. 251v., 260v.-1, 269v., *Symons v. Spayne* (1598).

165 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/3, ff. 91v-2, *Jhonson v. Denbye* (1548).

166 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/18, ff. 213v.-14v., *Balden v. Brokwell* (1580).

167 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, ff. 41v-2v., *Bramelo v. Bonnam* (1568).

168 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/14, ff. 98-9v., *Pynnocke v. Beeching* (1572).

withall all her tyme, and therupon she byd him to make no further accompt of her and lykwyse he byd her does as she lyst or wold'.<sup>169</sup>

Even given the relatively modest amount, the matter of financial provision remained a crucial consideration. For those in the lower reaches of society, the pooling of resources might represent the bare minimum necessary for household subsistence. At more respectable social levels, it was also a question of maintaining one's social status. In her letter to William Alcock, Jane Hardres, 'gentlewoman', wrote that she would 'dissolve her love' because she could not procure her father's goodwill, 'neyther was his ability sufficient to maynteyne her'. She claimed that she could not live and keep house under the expenses of £300 per annum, and that what he promised her 'wouldn't be sufficient for their maintenance'.<sup>170</sup> The combination of economic necessity and social position was the concern of the parties themselves, their family and kin, and the general community, for the making of a financial settlement was also a universal expectation. The widow Christine Burret said that '*for the speche of the world* she wold loke to be assured first of a ioyntur of foure nobles by the yere, in consideration that he (Mark Austen) shuld have a good substaunce by her'.<sup>171</sup> As settlement was also a collective priority, so the failure to negotiate it might be regarded as a matter of some shame which could 'make the cuntry to talk'.<sup>172</sup> It was vital too that there should be no great disparity in the match. Girls contemplating marriage sought to secure for themselves jointures which were worthy of their dowries.<sup>173</sup> More generally, great importance was placed upon parity and the pairing of like with like. Assessing the match between Mary Oldfield and Thomas Colly, two deponents gave the following opinions; one said that 'he thinketh there is noe disparidgment between the parties for the fathers of both are accounted honest yomenlyke men', and the other likewise said, 'he thinks no great disparidgment .. for fathers of both are accounted honest men and such as their children may match together without disparidgment yf please them'.<sup>174</sup>

Such comments as those recorded in the preceding paragraphs serve to illustrate the conscious evaluation of each partner's economic and social position and material credibility within marriage, and suggest that a large part of the rationale behind particular marriage choices did rest upon pecuniary matters. With further examination of the deposition evidence, the actual process of

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169 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/18, ff. 236-v, *Marshe v. Yonge?* (1580).

170 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/3, ff. 1-3, 5v.-7v., 56v.-7, *Alcocke v. Hardres* (1598).

171 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/6., ff. 127-v., *Austen v. Burrett* (1556).

172 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/2, ff. 317-18v., *Pelham v. Warrey* (1591-2).

173 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, ff. 273v.-4, *Cheese v. Chub* (1569?).

174 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/3, ff. 138-9, *Oldfield v. Colly* (1599).



matrimonial negotiation and bargaining may be considered more closely, and it can be demonstrated that the making of at least some kind of financial settlement and the expectation of some form of endowment were crucial to the making of any marriage. Attention to the detail of the evidence permits something to be said about the familial situation of the parties involved in the court cases, about the complex business of negotiation, those who took part, the settlements which were expected from both sides, and the role of family and friends in conducting the affairs and contributing to the marriage.

About a quarter of the sample clearly involved widows, at times also widowers or those described as elderly. While negotiations could, it seems, be conducted by the widow alone, widows were not independent of other peoples' charge or advice. In Elizabeth Chamber's case, her father was evidently instrumental in procuring a jointure of Mathew Rayner's lands and possessions worth 20s. per annum in lands, £100 in moveable goods, and a lease of his farm of Boughton court, promising Rayner in turn that he would 'have a good substance of her'. Cyriak Petit described Adye as a 'beneficial father in her preferment', who had once again done for her what he regarded to be 'a sufficient advancement with the honesty of the person'.<sup>175</sup> Where fathers were less prominent, other relatives could remain conspicuous when it came to details of the marriage 'bargayne'. Promising to redeem the widow Joan Whiter's lands with his own goods, William Rolf agreed to 'lett her and her counsaile make it and deyvyse it as well as they could', referring to her counsel of friends and cousins,<sup>176</sup> which in further instances likewise involved cousins, brothers, and other of the widow's kin.<sup>177</sup>

Arguably, widows might have been generally more experienced and financially advantaged than women entering marriage for the first time, but considered within the framework of a predominantly patriarchal and male-oriented society, their independence and effectiveness as bargainers should not be overestimated. It is quite possible that most widows felt insecure in the process of negotiation, aware of their educational shortcomings compared to their prospective partners, and the latter's surely heavier participation in economic and legal activity. Where men were involved in conducting property negotiations, the very fact of their involvement could have ensured a more advantageous settlement. If widows were indeed by no means exceptionally independent when

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175 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/8, ff. 115v.-17, 118-21v., 124-5v., 126-8, *Rayner v. Chamber* (1561). See also above, chapter 1, pp. 38-40.

176 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/4, ff. 50-1, 52-3, 58v., 60-v., 80v.-3v., 89, 94v., *Rolf v. Whiter* (1549).

177 For example, see, *ibid.*, MS. X/10/7, ff. 296v.-7, 299-300, *Tusten v. Allen* (1567).

it came to such negotiations, what was however special about their circumstances and settlements, was the often crucial issue of children surviving from previous marriages. Returning to William Rolf's agreement to fetch in the widow's lands with a payment of £21, he promised furthermore that her children should come to the lands at twenty-one years of age. Another widow, Thomasine Adams, made her promise of marriage to John Holbein conditional upon him making her a jointure of all his father's lands, and giving to her children £6 13s. 4d. 'at such convenient time as she require',<sup>178</sup> while Margaret Smith told Nicholas Nicholls 'that she'd marry with none but such a one as wolde be bounde with sufficient suerties with him to pay her childrens portion'.<sup>179</sup> It was not uncommon for widows to reject their suitors for their failure to safeguard their children's interests, or make payments over and above the legacies due to them. Most were concerned with the protection of their own children, but some also sought assurances for their kin. Besides requesting a jointure from Mark Austen, Christine Burret intended to see her grand-daughter 'a little wenche also bestowed in marriage', saying that 'because she was an old woman ~~and shulde be riche unto hym~~ she wold loke to have a ioynter acording to his promise and the money to be delivered by Marke which her daughter's daughter should have at her marriage'.<sup>180</sup> In certain cases the objective to acquire the maximum financial benefit may have been a necessary precaution for widows calculating their self-interest and those of their children. Elizabeth Overie, the widow of Simon Overie of Littlebourne, contemplating marriage with one John Terry, asked an elderly fellow parishioner of hers to speak to Terry's father, in order to get the best possible settlement 'for her and her children viz. £80 for her children, and as much as possible for her', her own friends requiring a bond of £100 for her.<sup>181</sup> Nevertheless, even relatively modest sums demanded for the widow's children could present a real stumbling-block in negotiations, and hinder the making of an amicable settlement. With the aged couple, Joseph Pellam and Christine Warrey, the so-called trifling matter of him entering into a bond to pay her children £14 apparently provoked disagreement and delay such that others began to feel ashamed.<sup>182</sup>

Although the deposition evidence presented so far shows that a sizeable proportion of the cases was concerned with the marriages of widows, demonstrating the general importance of property negotiations in remarriages,

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178 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/6, ff. 76-7, 81v-2, *Holbein v. Adam* (1554-5).

179 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, ff. 166v.-7, *Nicholls v. Smith* (1567?).

180 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/6, ff. 127-30v., 132-3, *Austen v. Burrett* (1556).

181 See above chapter 3, n. 76.

182 See above, n. 153.

and the special nature of their settlements, the majority of cases dealt with people entering marriage for the first time, (some of those clearly in their late teens), either of whom might have one or both parents still alive, who probably lived under familial or kin-based auspices, within home or service, and were presumably therefore somewhat more dependent upon the expressed consent and pleasure of their parents, 'friends', and masters, than those fully orphaned by circumstances. Since the involvement of both sets of parents of both parties is rarely mentioned in the cases, it is likely that at least one parent out of the four was already deceased, perhaps confirming the demographic finding that in the early modern period, a third of all children were at least partially orphaned before reaching the age of twenty-one.<sup>183</sup> In a few cases, the parties were said to be the children of yeomen stock,<sup>184</sup> very occasionally of 'gentle status',<sup>185</sup> but most commonly, they were the ordinary folk in husbandry and in domestic service. Although some parents denied any interference in their children's marriage plans, where matters of property and finance were concerned, surviving parents were in fact principally involved in the marriage negotiations. In an all-male agreement made between the party John Spyrer of Lyminge, his yeoman father, and Bartholomew Watts of Folkestone, father to Alice, it was settled that Watts should give with his daughter £40 worth, if Spyrer and his son would be bound to leave her so much land during her life worth £80, or alternatively £4 worth of land by the year.<sup>186</sup> Negotiations in another case involving Katherine Jhonson's step-father, and Robert Jacobb's father resulted in a dowry worth £30 in money matched by a jointure provided by old Jacobb and his son.<sup>187</sup> At times, the suitor alone apparently assumed responsibility for conducting negotiations. Helen Cocke, for example, reported how Edward Laurence required from her father £30 or £40 in marriage with her, but because her father couldn't pay that sum, he no longer persisted in his suit.<sup>188</sup> Mothers too, moreover, actively participated in the marriage bargaining, especially when the sole surviving parent. According to Pleasance Redwood's deposition, her mother did indeed grant her goodwill to Robert Sloden, but only on condition that he find sufficient surety to leave Pleasance in her widowhood 'double so much as her mother should give with

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183 Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 93.

184 C.C.A.L., MSS. X/10/4, ff. 117-20, *Spyrer v. Watts* (1550); X/11/3, ff. 130-2, 137, 138, 139, *Oldfield v. Colly* (1599).

185 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/3, ff. 1-3, 5v.-7v., 43-4, 56v.-7, 58-9; MS. Y/3/2, f. 66, *Alcocke v. Hardres* (1598).

186 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/4, ff. 117-20, *Spyrer v. Watts* (1550).

187 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/4, ff. 114v.-18, 124, *Jacobb v. Jhonson* (1550). It is not clear whether the jointure was to be worth £60, or £30.

188 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/12, f. 92, *Cocke, ex parte Edward Laurence* (1564).

her'.<sup>189</sup> Although Erickson has emphasized the role of widowed mothers, of mothers generally, and even of daughters themselves in negotiating settlements,<sup>190</sup> the Kent depositions would seem to suggest the continued and perhaps greater importance of the male figure, the father, the possible role of the step-father, brother,<sup>191</sup> master,<sup>192</sup> and of friends, cousins, and kin, in meeting together to agree upon the goods to be given in marriage.<sup>193</sup>

What then do the depositions reveal about the nature of those settlements which the parties, their parents, family and kin were so concerned with? They reveal that contentment to marry was often couched in terms of a successful financial conclusion being reached, making it evident that property bargains were not just an important part of marriage proceedings, but frequently a specified condition in promises of marriage. Such communications provoked conflict, resentment, 'brablyng' and 'controversi' among the participants, and the failure to perform financial agreements could well result in the breakdown of negotiations, as partners broke off even at the point of a fixed wedding-day. Elizabeth Overie, for example, claimed that a day had been appointed for the wedding, but that it took no effect because the conditions were not performed.<sup>194</sup> What is also apparent is that the making of settlements involved the thorough viewing of all property, whether land, houses, household stuff or cattle, as in the case where Juliane Barnes, her step-father, master and dame, went to Steven Bridgeman's house, 'and with her frends did peruse his house, lands, cattall and goods', about a week before financial agreements were reached and promises of marriage exchanged.<sup>195</sup> Often, the settlements required written agreements, bonds and sufficient suerties.<sup>196</sup> In the marriage between Robert Lawe and Alice Harris, Richard Maicot of Faversham was sent for to draw up a writing wherein Alice would give Robert all the goods she had or might have. Upon the writing being

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189 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/10, ff. 49v.-50, *Sloden v. Redwood* (1563).

190 Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 93-4.

191 For example, see, C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/10, ff. 18-v., *Aunsell v. Court* (1563); MSS. X/11/1, ff. 208-9; X.11.2, ff. 70 and v., *Fookes v. Lowes* (1588).

192 For example, see, C.C.A.L., MSS. X/10/8, ff. 115v.-17, 118-21v., 124-8, *Rayner v. Chamber* (1561); X/10/12, ff. 210v.-14, *Whetnall v. Holman* (1566).

193 See, for example, C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/4, ff. 17, 20v.-1, 34, *Clement v. Weldishe* (1549); *ibid.* f. 124v., *Bonnekar v. Lowe + Boreman* (1550).

194 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/1, ff. 336-v., *Terrie v. Overie* (1585). Also MS. X/10/19, f. 264, *King v. Otway + Wood* (1583).

195 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/7, ff. 319-23v., *Bridgeman v. Cole v. Barnes* (1560s). Also, MSS. X/10/4, ff. 117-20, *Spyrer v. Watts* (1550); X/10/8, ff. 118-20, *Rayner v. Chamber* (1561); X/10/9, ff. 56v.-7v.; *Hannyng v. Cockman* (1563); X.10.9, ff. 27v.-8, 32-v., *Rolf v. Fryer* (1563).

196 For example, see, C.C.A.L., MSS. X/10/5, ff. 51v-2, *Lucket v. Webbe* (1552); X/10/7, ff. 294v., 296v.-7, 299-300, 302v., *Tusten v. Allen* (1567); X/10/7, ff. 77v., 81, 104, *Lyon v. Cole* (1560).

made, she put her seal to it, subscribed her mark, and delivered it together with a groat 'in token of possession of her goods' as her act and deed to Robert Lawe.<sup>197</sup>

The deposition evidence illustrates clearly the expectation and necessity for endowment to come from *both* sides, with the question of a girl's marriage portion and the amount she'd be worth, matched with the question of jointure, sometimes described as a 'joynter or dowrye', provided in the event of her widowhood. Richard Tusten, for example, was said to have offered Godline Allen a 'joynter or dowrye of XX<sup>tie</sup> nobles a yere' during her lifetime.<sup>198</sup> Unfortunately the evidence of individual cases does not usually allow for the relative values of the contributions or 'worth' to be compared, as they tend to provide information either about the girl's portion, or the jointure, but not about both. Where the combined information does exist, the cases considered might arise precisely because of the 'greate odds and difference' between their wealth.<sup>199</sup> At times, the actual financial contribution is specified, but more generally, the 'worth' of particular parties is given a monetary assessment. Furthermore, the alternative forms of a lump sum, and a value in the form of an annuity which was common for jointures, make comparisons problematic. Given too, that over time, it is not really possible to compare like with like, since the information provided does not necessarily pertain to the same kind of social group, and that non-monetary contributions, as well as contributions from outside the nuclear family, cannot be valued, the evidence in depositions regarding the actual size of dowries can only be put to tentative use.

Where lump sums were specified the amount of dowry negotiated among the church court litigants and their 'friends' usually ranged between £10 and £40, entirely compatible with the average size of dowries revealed in wills from this period.<sup>200</sup> However, the assessment of moveables *combined* with land in certain cases, and the inclusion of a few more prosperous, higher-status families, meant that some prospective brides were inevitably worth far more. While at the husbandman level, a girl might be made worth £20 in marriage,<sup>201</sup> the daughter of an 'honest yomenlyke man' in the mid to late sixteenth century might be given £40 to her marriage,<sup>202</sup> and a gentlewoman a dowry worth several hundred

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197 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/1, ff. 185-7, *Lawe v. Harris* (1588).

198 C.C.A.L., MSS. X/10/7, ff. 299-300, *Tusten v. Allen* (1567). Also, X/10/7, ff. 77v., 81, 104, *Lyon v. Cole* (1560); X/10/15, ff. 1-2, *Joyce + Marchaunt* (1560s).

199 See, for example, C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/5, f. 261, *Symons v. Spayne* (1598).

200 See above, Table 6.1.

201 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/1, ff. 116-v., *Turner v. Franckling* (1586-7).

202 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/3, ff. 130-1, 138, *Oldfield v. Colly* (1599); MS. X/10/4, ff. 117-20, *Spyrer v. Watts* (1550).

pounds.<sup>203</sup> Brides-to-be were frequently promised an assured annuity as jointure, £1-£5 per annum was common, but amounts varied, and annuities were at times combined with a lump sum in moveable goods. The exceptionally detailed case of *Hannyng v. Knowler*, (1577) illustrates the possible complexities. The comparative worth of the parties and the size of the promised jointure and dowry, were evidently a matter of some dispute. Hannyng was said to have promised her a jointure of all his lands, assuring her £6, £7, £8 or £9 per annum out of his lands plus, at the insistence of her grandfather, £40 in moveables, while Godlina Knowler could expect to receive a portion worth about £80, and £6 per annum in lands and, according to one estimate, was in fact worth £120 in money and moveables and £8 a year in lands.<sup>204</sup> The will of her grandmother, Alice Oven of Chislet (will 19 June 1573) made it clear that Godlina was to inherit her great cauldron, the cupboard, the table and a half share of her remaining moveables at 18 years old, as well as money invested for her, and her grand-mother's dwelling-place.<sup>205</sup>

In their evaluations, the parties involved were careful to calculate future prospects and income upon the death of parents and kin, but as well as anticipating their inheritance, they were also aware of the possible limitations. It was said that John Spayne, as the only son of Simon, was worth £30 in lands, and £200 in money and stock at the time of the marriage allegation, but that after the death of his father and grandmother, his lands would be worth £66 13s. 4d. by the year.<sup>206</sup> Compared to Katherine Wyborn, worth £140 or £160 in goods and land, Mark Giles was accounted 'a husbandman, serves his father, and is little worth as long as his father lives'.<sup>207</sup> The negotiations made by the deponents reveal too that just as jointures might come in the form of a lump sum or an annuity incorporating house, lands, and moveable goods, the dowries might also include landed possessions and moveables, although, as established in the previous sections, cash values were most common. Some prospective grooms evidently demanded other forms of provision or assistance, such as a marriage dinner,<sup>208</sup> or a rented house to dwell in for a time,<sup>209</sup> and further contributions from masters and 'friends' were also forthcoming. Suspicious circumstances

203 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/3, ff. 1-3; MS.Y/3.2, f. 66, *Alcocke v. Hardres* (1598).

204 For full references to this case, C.C.A.L., MSS. X/10/16, ff. 284-90, 292-3, 295-303v., 308-11, 312v.-16, 326v.-9, 336v.-7; X.10.18, ff. 1-11v; Y/3/16, f. 15.

205 PRC 32/32/178, ff. 178v.-81v.

206 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/5, ff. 242v., 251v., 269v., *Symons v. Spayne* (1598).

207 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/18, ff. 49v.-52, 53, *Giles v. Wyborn* (1577).

208 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/18, ff. 236-v., *Marshe v. Yonge* (1580).

209 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/3, ff. 131v.-2, 137, *Oldfield v. Colly* (1599).

presumably prompted William Gibbes's liberality to his servants Prudence Bramelo and Richard Bonnam with the promise of 20 nobles to her marriage, in addition to timber provisions and a place to live,<sup>210</sup> but other masters assisted couples with accommodation, or agreed to bear part of the wedding dinner charges.<sup>211</sup> Henry Thompson of Lenham promised John Bradley the lease of his farm because, as he said, 'Bradley had been a good and faithful servant... these 3 years, and in regard of furtherance of marriage'.<sup>212</sup> 'Friends' offered gifts of corn, in one case, two bushels of wheat and a half seam of malt,<sup>213</sup> and in another case, a former suitor, James Lambart, gave Agnes Wills 3s. 4d. to her marriage with Richard Benet, in order to show that he was contented.<sup>214</sup>

#### IV

The provision of dowries, then, was very far from being an activity restricted to just the more wealthy social groups in early modern England. Having used the biggest ever sample of wills to examine such provision, this chapter has established that even those of relatively low social status, labourers and husbandmen, as well as yeomen and craftsmen, sought to provide portions or dowries to their daughters after their deaths. Assuming that the activities of will-makers reflect the experience of the living population, then it seems legitimate to conclude that few of those marrying in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Kent would have done so without at least some resources, mainly cash, but also moveable goods, and occasionally immovable property, inherited or transferred from parents or, indeed, from other members of the extended real and 'fictive' family. Indeed, for many brides, dowries or portions from the wider family group could have been a valuable supplement to their total dowry, although the evidence we have, suggests that the value of dowries provided by relatives may have been declining in real terms over the sixteenth century, perhaps as the extent of dowry inflation forced relatives to concentrate their resources on their immediate family. Nevertheless kin did not merely give material assistance to those relatives intending marriage, they were also clearly instrumental in influencing marriage decisions and acting as negotiators during courtship.

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210 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/11, ff. 33-5, 41v.-2v., *Bramelo v. Bonnam* (1568). It is likely in this case that Prudence was already pregnant with her master's child.

211 For example, see, C.C.A.L., MSS. X/11/1, ff. 116-v., *Turner v. Franckling* (1587); X/11/5, f. 253, *Symons v. Spayne* (1598).

212 C.C.A.L., MS. X/11/5, f. 135, *Bradley v. Shurt* (1596).

213 C.C.A.L., MS. X/10/3, ff. 91v.-2, *Jhonson v. Denbye* (1548).

214 See above, chapter 3, n. 63.

Marriage prospects must have been bleaker for more couples at the end of our period than at the beginning, given the inflation of dowries that appears to have occurred in the later sixteenth century. The portions specified in Kent wills increased about five-fold, apparently outstripping the general price inflation and the rate of dowry inflation among the aristocratic élite, and suggesting strongly that for those partly or wholly dependent on wages, the provision of an adequate dowry would have become increasingly difficult. If we can assume that dowry inflation implies a more competitive marriage market, fewer wage earners could presumably have competed with the increasing incomes of those earning greater profits from rising food prices after the mid-sixteenth century. Such dowry inflation has been established for only five Kent parishes and, even within that sample, there appeared to be substantial local variation both in the timing of the increase and in the average size of dowry found. More research is required before the actual parameters of the dowry inflation of the sixteenth century are visible clearly, but the existence of such inflation cannot be doubted, and it must have placed further obstacles in the path to the altar for the poorest members of the community in the sixteenth century.

The importance of dowry inflation goes beyond possible demographic consequences, since evidence from depositions in addition to probate material, emphasizes the ways in which the size of dowry provided, reflected contemporary concerns with social position, status and future prospects. As we have seen, the very process of courtship was a matter of financial bargaining, often for what we might regard as relatively small sums of money, and might involve estimations of worth, credit<sup>215</sup> and property on both sides. The range of dowries identified here illustrates the degree of marital endogamy prevalent in the sixteenth century, but the dowry inflation is perhaps suggestive, too, of the way in which increases in income might bring newly prosperous social groups within financial reach of those higher in the status hierarchy, and able to compete with their social betters in the provision of adequate dowries.

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215 For the general importance of credit-worthiness in the marketplace, see, Muldrew, 'Interpreting the market', *passim*.



## CONCLUSION

This thesis began by discussing the historiography of courtship in early modern England. It concludes by arguing that much of the recent work has, perhaps, placed unwarranted stress on the extent to which individuals followed their romantic inclinations and possessed relative freedom from parental, family or community interference in their choice of marriage partner. The evidence drawn from Kentish records suggests that such notions may well be inappropriate, at least for the sixteenth century. In addition to questioning that current orthodoxy, analysis of church court and probate material has enabled previously neglected aspects of courtship to be examined.

While many former studies have looked at courtship and marriage choice in terms of who took the initiative, it has been argued here, by contrast, that to understand the making of marriage in the past, we need a better appreciation of those social and financial constraints imposed on courting couples and must seek to comprehend more fully the complex legal and cultural context which informed and shaped their marriage decisions. The influence exercised by family, friends, community and more impersonal social and economic forces may have been of a positive or negative kind, but the decision to marry was too momentous, and involved too many social, cultural and economic calculations, to be left to the couple themselves.

In arguing that courtship was perhaps more constrained than envisaged hitherto, the role of persons other than the couples themselves has been addressed. Chapter 1 indicated that many individuals, parents, kin, fictive kin and neighbours might offer advice and impose pressures on marriage decisions. Such constraints were felt widely and were difficult to ignore or oppose. It has been argued, in fact, that the making of marriage took place within what may be described as the 'social-moral' community, in which a variety of groups, networks and kin might deploy both informal and formal means to influence couples embarking on marriage. Members of that community might use economic leverage, moral sanctioning or even physical intimidation to help or hinder intended matches, and many would participate in symbolic acts of ritual that could involve witnessing and mediating. In this connection, historians would surely benefit from a wider and more flexible definition of kinship, one which went beyond a mere biological definition to encompass this extensive participation by outsiders in the courtships of others.

The importance of outsiders in the making of marriage is also suggested by the evidence presented in chapter 3, which highlights the previously

underestimated role of 'go-betweens' and match-makers. Such persons, acting out their varying roles for a range of motives, appeared with great frequency in the church court cases examined here, and were, indeed, a commonplace in the literature of the period. The structure and hints of formality implied by the use of such persons in courtships well below the rank of the *élite* is again highly suggestive, demonstrating how pervasive was society's involvement in the courtships of its individual members.

Gifts and tokens, used frequently during courtship in this period, also serve to emphasize the structured nature of that process in the sixteenth century. Gifts and tokens were given and exchanged at different stages in courtship, their precise meaning being related to the circumstances and timing of the gift. The rich 'language' of tokens analysed in chapter 2 indicates the care and caution required to negotiate a marriage in the sixteenth century, and perhaps illustrates how the importance of the courtship process had generated a rich cultural tradition among the populace. This cultural context of courtship has been largely overlooked by historians.

Chapter 4 which examined courtship horizons, discussed those further restrictions imposed by the physical environment within which marriages were made. The evidence from Act books confirmed the essentially restricted horizons of courting couples. The patterns found varied by region and settlement type and courtship distances tended to differ according to marketing connections and trade routes. It was suggested that towards the end of the sixteenth century those horizons may have expanded a little. The majority of courtships, however, were always conducted between locals. Such behaviour, in addition to being constrained by the level and pace of economic activity, also seems to have occurred very much in particular places and on specific days. Couples were especially likely to meet in local 'liminal spaces' such as fairs, alehouses, market-places and less formal arenas like stiles and gates. The 'structured courtship' in sixteenth-century Kent therefore allowed transgression, licence and experimentation but tended to occur most often in prescribed arenas and locally defined spaces, at special times.

Another relatively unconsidered aspect of early modern courtship is that there existed notional ages at which individuals became eligible for marriage. Chapter 5 argued that couples, their families and 'friends' brought to the courtship process a further set of internalized assumptions regarding the appropriate minimum ages at which marriage might take place. The evidence drawn from wills suggested that testators recognized certain numerical ages as significant milestones in the achievement of maturity and marriageability. Over time,

increasingly, this was seen as 21 for men and in the late teens for women. The sixteenth century emerges as a period when fewer and fewer testators sought to endow children in their early teens and also seems to be a time when particular numerical ages emerged as especially significant thresholds. Courting couples and those wider groups involved in the making of their marriages, as deposition evidence revealed, also possessed notions of appropriate age which limited, informed and restricted choices.

The last chapter of this thesis argued that the structures and constraints of sixteenth-century courtship can be readily understood when the importance of dowry is appreciated. Chapter 6 shows that the giving of portions was by no means restricted to the social *élite*. Provision of dowries by parents, even those of relatively humble rank, seems to have been widespread and for some brides dowries from the *wider* kin group proved a valuable, although in real terms declining over the century, supplement to their marital prospects. Deposition evidence illustrates above all the fundamental concern on the part of most courting couples to get the economics of their marriage right. Material considerations, rather than personal attributes were often paramount and much of the structure of courtship in this period may be understood in the context of this transmission of property. The evidence from a large sample of wills showed that the sixteenth century was one of significant dowry inflation for the relatively humble villager as well as for the social *élite*, although more studies are needed to confirm the exact chronological and regional variations of this phenomenon. The language of bargaining, estimates of worth and reputation, the participation of parents, family and friends, the use of go-betweens and other cultural expectations and traditions associated with entry into the married state have to be considered in the context of the importance attached by all participants to the transfer of even relatively modest amounts of property at marriage. They reveal the crucial material element in the making of marriage in sixteenth-century Kent.

In sum, then, this thesis has argued that courtship and the making of marriage should be understood in the context of the restructuring of relationships, of transfers of property, and those questions of family, status, credit and reputation and community self-definition that marriage plans entailed. Unsurprisingly, given its importance, the making of marriage involved long and complex social and ritual processes, where the exchange of symbolic gifts, various forms of transactions, and the extensive participation of members of family and community occurred. Whatever the legal definition of marriage, the negotiation and communication of marriage in practice, possessed far greater cultural and social significance to those participating in its formation.

## APPENDIX 1

**Table A1.1 The Ecclesiastical Court Act Books**

1474	Y.1.12			Y.1.10
1475	Y.1.12			Y.1.10
1476	Y.1.12			Y.1.10
1477	Y.1.12			Y.1.10
1478	Y.1.12			Y.1.10
1479	Y.1.12	Y.1.13		
1480		Y.1.13		
1481		Y.1.13		
1482		Y.1.13		
1483		Y.1.13		
1484	Y.1.14	Y.1.13		
1485	Y.1.14			
1486	Y.1.14			
1487	Y.1.14	Y.1.15		
1488		Y.1.15		
1489		Y.1.15		
1490		Y.1.15		
1491		Y.1.15		
1492	Y.1.16	Y.1.15		
1493	Y.1.16			
1494	Y.1.16			Y.2.2
1495	Y.1.16			
1496	Y.1.16	Y.1.17		
1497		Y.1.17		
1498		Y.1.17		
1499	Y.1.18			
1500	Y.1.18			Y.2.2
1501				Y.2.2
1502				Y.2.2
1503		Y.2.1		
1504		Y.2.1	Y.2.8	
1505		Y.2.1	Y.2.8	Y.2.9
1506			Y.2.8	Y.2.9
1507			Y.2.8	Y.2.9
1508			Y.2.8	Y.2.9
1509	Y.2.5		Y.2.8	
1510	Y.2.5			
1511	Y.2.5			
1512	Y.2.5			
1513	Y.2.5			
1514	Y.2.5			
1515	Y.2.5		Y.2.10	
1516		Y.2.6	Y.2.10	
1517		Y.2.6	Y.2.10	
1518		Y.2.6		
1519	Y.2.4	Y.2.6	Y.2.10	
1520		Y.2.6	Y.2.10	
1521		Y.2.11	Y.2.10	
1522	Y.2.12		Y.2.10	
1523	Y.2.12		Y.2.10	
1524	Y.2.12			
1525	Y.2.12			

1526	Y.2.12		
1527	Y.2.12		
1528	Y.2.12		
1529	Y.2.13		
1530	Y.2.13		
1531	Y.2.13		
1532	Y.2.13		
1533	Y.2.13		
1534	Y.2.13		
1535	Y.2.13		
1536	Y.2.13		
1537			
1538			
1539		Y.2.16	
1540	Y.4.1		
1541	Y.4.1		
1542	Y.2.14	Y.2.16	
1543	Y.2.14		
1544	Y.2.14		
1545	Y.2.14		
1546	Y.2.14	Y.2.16	
1547		Y.2.16	
1548	Y.2.3	Y.2.16	
1549		Y.2.16	
1550	Y.2.15		
1551	Y.2.15		
1552	Y.2.18	Y.2.17	
1553		Y.2.17	
1554		Y.2.17	
1555		Y.2.17	
1556	Y.2.19	Y.2.17	
1557	Y.2.19		
1558	Y.2.19		
1559	Y.2.19		
1560	Y.2.20	Y.2.22	Y.2.25
1561		Y.2.22	Y.2.25
1562	Y.2.26	Y.2.22	
1563	Y.2.26		
1564	Y.2.26		Y.2.25
1565			Y.2.25
1566		Y.2.27	Y.2.25
1567		Y.2.27	Y.2.25
1568		Y.2.28	Y.2.25
1569		Y.2.28	
1570		Y.2.28	
1571	Y.2.29		
1572	Y.2.29		
1573	Y.2.30		
1574	Y.2.30	Y.2.21	Y.3.1
1575			Y.3.1
1576			Y.3.1
1577	Y.3.16		
1578	Y.3.16		
1579	Y.3.16	Y.3.18	
1580		Y.3.18	
1581	Y.3.20	Y.3.18	Y.3.19

1582			Y.3.19
1583	Y.3.22		Y.3.19
1584	Y.3.22	Y.3.21	
1585	Y.3.10	Y.3.21	
1586	Y.3.10		
1587	Y.3.10	Y.3.11	
1588		Y.3.11	
1589		Y.3.12	
1590		Y.3.12	
1591	Y.3.13	Y.3.12	
1592	Y.3.13		
1593	Y.3.14		
1594	Y.3.14		
1595	Y.3.15		
1596	Y.3.15		
1597	Y.3.15	Y.3.2	
1598		Y.3.2	
1599		Y.3.2	
1600	Y.3.3	Y.3.2	
1601	Y.3.3		
1602	Y.3.3		

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= volumes containing matrimony cases

Table A1.2 Types of Matrimonial Cases as Styled in the Act Books

Year	CAUSA MATRIMONIALIS	causa matrimonialis sponsalia /sponsalicia	causa matrimonialis et divorcii	causa iactacionis matrimonialis	causa matrimonialis sive reclamacionis bannorum	causa matrimonialis sive reclamacionis bannorum	causa matrimonialis et/sive impedimenti matrimonialis	causa matrimonialis cum inibicione dotacionis	causa restituionis obsequiorum conjugaliu	in negatio matrimonialis	causa divorcii	causa divorcii sive separacionis a mensa et a thoro	causa divorcii sive nullitatis matrimonialis
1474	9												
1475	13 +						+						
1476	17 [1]										1		
1477	16 [1]										2		
1478	14												
1479	8												
1480	21 [1] x												
1481	10										1		
1482	5							x			1		
1483	5										1		
1484	5										2		
1485	10 +						1 +				1		
1486	6 [1]						x				1		
1487	9 x										1		
1488	8 [2]					1							
1489	11					2+							
1490	7 [3] ++					+							
1491	6 +										1	2	1
1492	13 [2]						2				1		
1493	10 [3]										1		
1494	13												
1495	7 [1]												
1496	8 +						+						
1497	11												
1498	5 [1]												
1499	6					1							
1500	7 [1]					1							
1501	9 [1]												

Year	CAUSA MATRIMONIALIS	CAUSA												
		causa matrimonialis sive sponsalia /sponsalicia	causa matrimonialis et divorcii	causa iactationis matrimonialis	causa matrimonialis reclamacionis sive bannorum	causa matrimonialis et sive reclamacionis bannorum	causa matrimonialis et sive impedimenti matrimonialis	causa matrimonialis cum inhibitione dotacionis	causa matrimonialis doctis/causa mali sive dotacionis	causa matrimonialis restitutionis obsequiorum conjugaliu	causa matrimonialis in negatio matrimonialis	causa matrimonialis divorcii	causa matrimonialis divorcii sive separationis a mensa et a thoro	causa matrimonialis divorcii sive nullitatis matrimonialis
1502	9 [1] x				IX									
1503	15				1									
1504	7 +				3									
1505	13				3	+								
1506	20 [1]				1									
1507	15 [1]				6									
1508	21				2	1					1			
1509	16 +				2+									
1510	17 [3] +++x				3++	+		x			1			
1511	17 [1]				3						2		1	
1512	10				3									
1513	17 +				3+									
1514	18 [1] +				2	+								
1515	8													
1516	29 [5]				4									
1517	15 x				3x									
1518	10				5						1			
1519	27 [1]				5						1			
1520	17				5									
1521	26 [1]				2									
1522	17 [1]				1						x			
1523	20 +				2						1			
1524	25				1									
1525	31 [1] ++x				4+x	+							2	
1526	22				2	x					x		1	
1527	18 x				2	x								
1528	17 +				1	+								
1529	19 +				4	3+								
1530	19				2	1					1			
1531	20 [1]				1	1					4			1



Year	CAUSA MATRIMONIALIS	causa matrimonialis sive sponsalia /sponsalicia	causa matrimonialis et divorcii	causa iactationis matrimonialis	causa matrimonialis sive reclamacionis bannorum	causa matrimonialis reclamacionis bannorum/ negotio reclamacionis bannorum	causa matrimonialis et/sive impediment matrimonialis	causa matrimonialis cum inhibitione dotacionis	causa dotis/causa mali sive dotacionis	causa restitutionis obsequiorum coniugalium	in negatio matrimonialis	causa divorcii	causa divorcii sive separacionis a mensa et a thoro	causa divorcii sive nullitatis matrimonialis
1532	11				4	1				2				
1533	15 +		1		1	1+							1	
1534	17				2									
1535	5				1									
1536	8			2	1									
1537	0				1									
1538	0													
1539	1													
1540	1													
1541	12				2	1						1a		
1542	8 ++				3	++				1		1		
1543	10				1							1		
1544	13		1		1									
1545	7 [1]				1		2							
1546	18		1			1								
1547	7													
1548	29													
1549	18													
1550	15 [1]											2		
1551	21 [2]				1					1	1	1		
1552	25 [2]		1			1				1		2		
1553	6									1				
1554	17 x													
1555	10 [1]				1		3x							
1556	10 +				1		3					1		
1557	11				1+		1+							
1558	17 +				1		1							
1559	8													
1560	18 [1]				4									
1561	13 +++b				1+	1+				2		1		1

Year	CAUSA MATRIMONIALIS	causa matrimonialis sive sponsalia sponsalia	causa matrimonialis et divorci	causa iactationis matrimonialis	causa matrimonialis sive reclamatio bannorum	causa matrimonialis sive reclamatio bannorum	causa matrimonialis et/ve impedimentis matrimonialis	causa matrimonialis cum inhibitione doli facti	causa restituendi nubentium	in negotio matrimonialis	causa divorci sive separationis a mensa et a thoro	causa divorci sive nullitatis matrimonialis
1562	8											
1563	14+					5+						
1564	12					4	+					
1565	9	1			1	1						
1566	12 xxx	2			5	2xxx			2		2	
1567	17 x											
1568	9					1						
1569	12 [1]					1						
1570	4					3			1			
1571	2											
1572	4	3										
1573	1+	5x				1x						
1574	1 x	1										
1575d	7 [1]	4										
1576	2	4										
1577	9	2x										
1578	18+					1						
1579	12					2						
1580	10 x	1										
1581	9					3						
1582	7 x											
1583	8											
1584	8	1										
1585	3 [1]	4										
1586	8 x	2				2						
1587	1											
1588	4	2										
1589	4											
1590	1											
1591	2	1										

Year	CAUSA MATRIMONIALIS										
	causa matrimonialis sive sponsalia /sponsalicia	causa matrimonialis et divorcii	causa iactationis matrimonialis	causa matrimonialis sive reclamacionis bannorum	causa matrimonialis et/sive impedimenti matrimonialis	causa matrimonialis cum inhbicione dotacionis	causa dots/causa mali sive dotacionis	causa restitutionis obsequiorum coniugalium	in negatio matrimonialis	causa divorcii	causa divorcii sive separacionis a mensa et a thoro
1592	2								1	2	
1593	3		1							1	
1594	2		1						1	1	
1595	1						1				
1596	1		1x				2				
1597	2x										
1598	1		1			1	1			2	
1599	8								1		
1600	7								1		
1601	7		2				1			1	
1602	0		1				1				

Notes to Table A1.2

- a causa spoliacionis obsequiorum coniugalium
- b cf. 1562
- c et impedimenti matrimonialis
- d one case of negotio violacionis matrimonii et obsequiorum coniugalium
- e causa reclamacionis bannorum sive iactacionis matrimonialis

Counting the annual incidence of cases is complicated by the fact that some cases occur in more than one year. Although the cases have not been indexed, every attempt has been made to avoid duplication, and to record only the first identifiable occurrence.

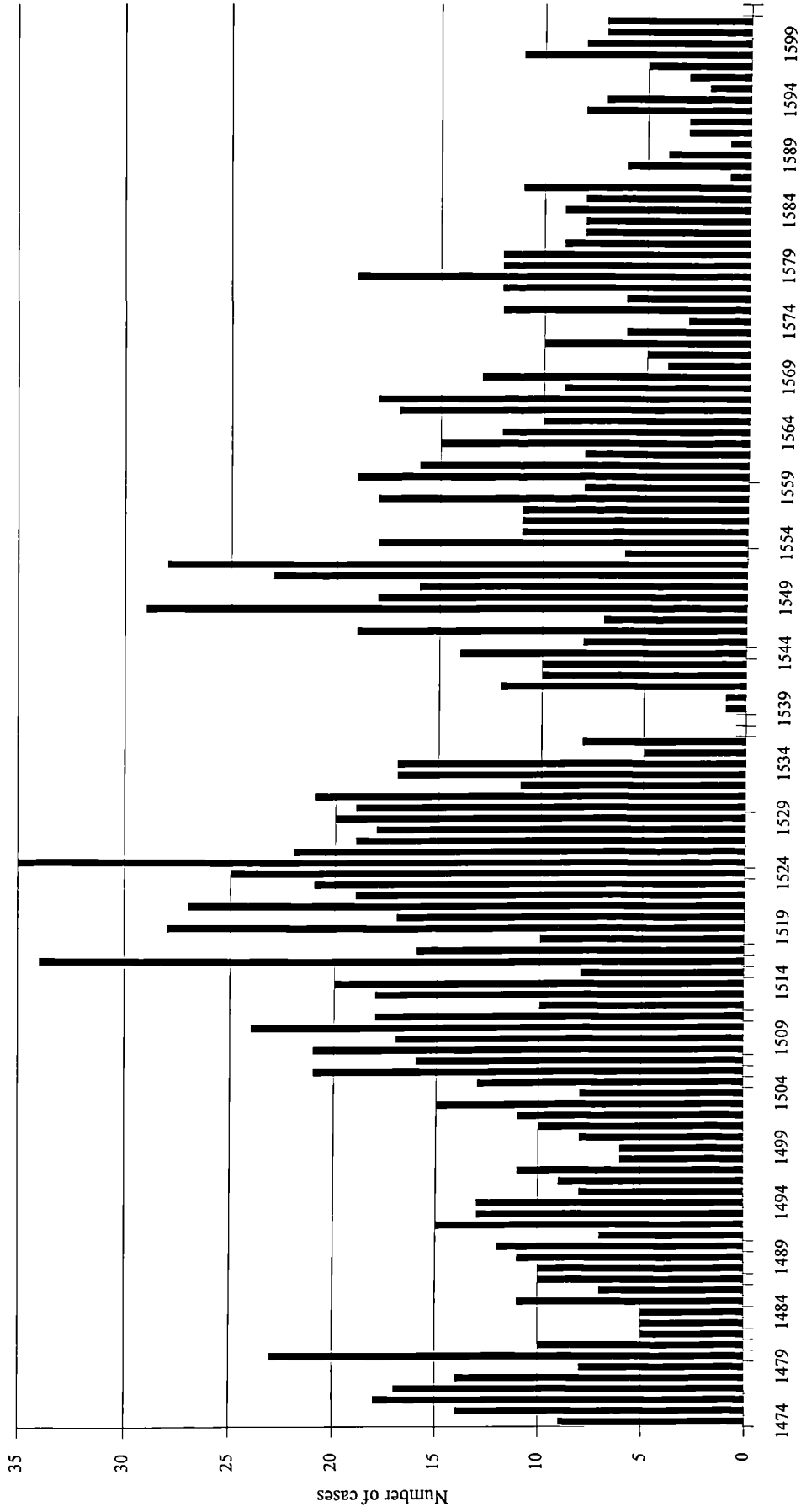
Cases which involve the same parties, styled under different categories, are symbolized thus: x

Cases which involve only one party, styled under different categories, are symbolized thus: +

Usually the overlap occurs in cases described as 'causa matrimonialis' in the first instant. Note also that the dates may not correspond exactly between alternatively styled categories where cases are handled in two consecutive years.

Cases of identifiable multi-contract are in square brackets under the heading 'causa matrimonialis'.

Figure A1.1 Total Number of Cases Styled 'Causa Matrimonialis', & 'Sive Sponsalia' & 'et Divorcii'



APPENDIX 2

Table A2.1 Frequency Distribution of Data, 1474-1601 (Where Both Domiciles are Given)

Place	In-Marriage	Out-Marriage	Total	Place	In-Marriage	Out-Marriage	Total
Acrise	0	2	2	Cheriton	1	2	3
Adisham	1	4	5	Chilham	2	10	12
Aldington	0	3	3	Chillenden	0	6	6
Alkham	0	3	3	Chislet	5	10	15
Appledore	1	4	5	Coldred	1	0	1
Ash	5	18	23	Cranbrook	15	23	38
Ashford	6	17	23	Crundale	1	3	4
Bapchild	1	3	4	Davington	0	3	3
Barfrestone	0	1	1	Deal	7	9	16
Barham	4	12	16	Denton	0	3	3
Bearsted	0	2	2	Doddington	0	1	1
Beauxfield	0	5	5	Dover	20	27	47
Bekesbourne	0	4	4	Dymchurch	0	2	2
Benenden	4	16	20	Eastchurch	4	5	9
Bethersden	8	12	20	Eastling	0	2	2
Betteshanger	0	2	2	Eastry	7	8	15
Biddenden	20	33	53	Eastwell	0	8	8
Bilsington	0	2	2	Ebony	0	2	2
Birchington	5	6	11	Egerton	4	7	11
Bircholt	0	2	2	Elham	10	13	23
Bishopsbourne	2	4	6	Elmstead	2	4	6
Blean	1	5	6	Ewell	4	4	8
Bobbing	1	3	4	Eythorn	1	4	5
Bonnington	0	2	2	Fairfield	0	1	1
Borden	1	9	10	Faversham	29	46	75
Boughton				Folkestone	5	8	13
Aluph	1	9	10	Fordwich	2	9	11
Boughton under				Frinted	0	1	1
Blean (incl.				Frittenden	7	10	17
Boughton)	6	13	19	Gillingham	0	1	1
Boughton				Godmersham	1	9	10
Malherbe	1	3	4	Goodnestone			
Boughton				near Faversham	0	1	1
Monchelsea	1	3	4	Goodnestone			
Boxley	2	6	8	near			
Brabourne	1	10	11	Wingham	0	6	6
Bredgar (incl.				Goudhurst	12	10	22
Bredgate)	0	5	5	Graveney	1	3	4
Bredhurst	0	2	2	Guston	0	1	1
Brenchley	0	1	1	Hackington	1	4	5
Brenzett	0	4	4	Hadlow	0	1	1
Bridge	1	7	8	High Halden	4	11	15
Brook	0	3	3	Ham	0	1	1
Brookland	1	5	6	Harbledown	3	13	16
Buckland	0	1	1	Harrietsham	8	5	13
Burmarsh	1	2	3	Lower Hardres	1	5	6
Canterbury	136	117	253	Hartley	0	1	1
Capel le				Hartlip	0	2	2
Ferne	1	0	1	Harty	2	3	5
Challock	2	6	8	Hastingleigh	0	1	1

Charing	2	9	11	Hawkhurst	6	8	14
Charlton	0	1	1	Hawkinge	0	5	5
Great Chart	1	12	13	Headcorn	12	16	28
Little Chart	1	5	6	Herne	6	24	30
Chartham	3	18	21	Hernehill	3	13	16
Hinxhill	2	0	2	Little			
Hoath	1	3	4	Mongeham	0	2	2
Hollingbourne	4	8	12	Monkton	0	2	2
Horsmonden	0	3	3	Murston	0	2	2
Horton	0	1	1	Nackington	0	4	4
Hothfield	2	4	6	Newchurch	2	4	6
Hougham	0	4	4	Newenden	0	2	2
Hucking	0	1	1	Newington near			
Hythe	8	14	22	Sittingbourne	1	13	14
Ickham	3	9	12	Newington near			
Ivychurch	5	2	7	Hythe	1	2	3
Iwade	0	5	5	Newnham	2	3	5
Kenardington	0	6	6	Nonington	0	6	6
Kennington	2	7	9	Northbourne	0	13	13
Kingsnorth	0	8	8	Norton	0	1	1
Kingston	0	4	4	Orlestone	0	1	1
Knowlton	0	4	4	Ospringe	3	10	13
Langdon				Otham	1	3	4
(East & West)	0	2	2	Oxenden (incl.			
E. Langdon	0	4	4	with Wingham)	0	1	1
W. Langdon	0	3	3	Oxney	1	0	1
Langley	0	3	3	Paddlesworth	0	2	2
Leeds	1	6	7	Patrixbourne	0	3	3
Lenham	6	19	25	Petham	1	5	6
Leysdown	0	1	1	Pluckley	3	8	11
Linton	0	6	6	Postling	1	0	1
Littlebourne	5	6	11	Preston nr Faversham	1	5	6
[London			8]	(incl Preston)			
Luddenham	0	1	1	Preston nr Wingham	1	4	5
Lydd	14	12	26	Rainham	3	6	9
Lydden	0	4	4	Reculver	1	3	4
Lyminge	2	9	11	River	1	3	4
Lympne	0	7	7	[Robertsbridge	0	2	2]
Lynsted	1	10	11	Rochester	0	1	1
Maidstone	2	12	14	Rodmersham	1	3	4
E. Malling	0	1	1	Rolvenden	6	7	13
W. Malling	0	1	1	New Romney	14	11	25
Marden	5	9	14	Old Romney	2	5	7
St Margaret				Ruckinge	1	3	4
at Cliffe	0	1	1	Saltwood	2	6	8
St Mary-in-				Sandhurst	0	6	6
the-Marsh	0	3	3	Sandwich	21	25	46
Mersham	6	15	21	Seasalter	0	5	5
Midley	0	2	2	Sellindge	1	0	1
Milsted	1	1	2	Selling	1	15	16
Milton (near				Selvage	1	0	1
Canterbury)	2	6	8	Sevington	0	3	3
Milton near				Shadoxhurst	1	3	4
Sittingbourne	3	24	27	Sheldwich	3	4	7
Minster, Sheppey	3	5	8	Sheppey	0	1	1
Minster, Thanet	8	7	15	Sholden	1	0	1
Molash	2	6	8	Sibertswold	2	7	9
Great Mongeham	0	3	3	Sittingbourne	1	15	16

Smarden	7	16	23	Willesborough	0	5	5
Smeeth	0	3	3	Wingham	2	8	10
Snargate	0	4	4	Wittersham	3	2	5
Snave	1	0	1	Woodchurch	1	11	12
[Speldhurst, dioc. Sussex	0	1	1]	Woodnes- borough	4	4	8
Stalisfield	3	3	6	Wootton	0	3	3
Stanford	1	1	2	Wormshill	0	3	3
Staple	0	4	4	Worth	0	2	2
Staplehurst	12	12	24	Wye	11	24	35
Stelling	1	4	5	Yalding	0	1	1
Stockbury	1	2	3				
Stodmarsh	0	4	4				
Stone [?]	6	0	6				
Stone near Faversham	0	1	1				
Stone in Isle of Oxney	0	3	3				
Stourmouth	0	5	5				
Stowting	0	2	2				
Sturry	3	14	17				
Chart Sutton	0	2	2				
East Sutton	0	6	6				
Sutton Valence	2	7	9				
Swalecliffe	0	2	2				
Swingfield	0	7	7				
Tenterden	6	23	29				
Teynham	3	8	11				
Thanet, St John	11	8	19				
Thanet, St Lawr	7	10	17				
Thanet, St Nich	6	10	16				
Thanet, St Peters	4	6	10				
Thanington	2	8	10				
Thornham	3	2	5				
Throwley	1	11	12				
Tilmanstone	2	4	6				
Tonge	1	3	4				
Tunstall	0	3	3				
Ulcombe	4	5	9				
Upchurch	3	3	6				
Waldershare	0	2	2				
Walmer	0	1	1				
Waltham	2	3	5				
Warehorne	0	4	4				
Welle	0	1	1				
Westbere	1	5	6				
Westcliffe	0	2	2				
Westenhanger	0	3	3				
Westwell	4	17	21				
Whitstable	13	12	25				
Wickhambreux	3	4	7				

**Table A2.2 Courtship Horizons by Parish**

Number of Miles	0	<5	<10	<15	<20	<25	<30	<35	<40	<45	<50	<55	>55
Acrise	0	1	1										
Adisham	2	3	1										
Aldington	0		3										
Alkham	0		1	2									
Appledore	2	1	1	1		1							
Ash	10	11	6	1									
Ashford	12	2	7	5	3								
Bapchild	2	3											
Barfrestone	0		1										
Barham	8	7	3	2									
Bearsted	0	1		1									
Bekesbourne	0	2	1										1
Benenden	8	8	2	3	3								
Bethersden	16	7	2	2									1
Betteshanger	0	2											
Biddenden	40	16	4	5	4	4							
Bilsington	0	1				1							
Birchington	10	1	3										2
Bircholt	0	2											
Bishopsbourne	4	3		1									
Blean	2	4				1							
Bobbing	2	3											
Bonnington	0		1	1									
Borden	2	5	1	2	1								
Boughton	2	3	3	2									1
Aluph													
Boughton under													
Blean	10	5	5	2	1								
Boughton	2												
Boughton													
Malherbe	2	2	1										
Boughton													
Monchelsea	2	2	1										
Boxley	4	4	1			1							
Brabourne	2	7	3										
Bredgar	0	3	1	1									
Bredhurst	0	1	1										
Brenzett	0	3									1		
Bridge	2	3	4										
Brook	0	3											
Brookland	2	1	2	2									
Buckland	0		1										
Burmarsh	2	1	1										
Canterbury	272	34	24	37	5	11	1	2				2	1
Capel le Ferne	2												
Challock	4	3	1	1	1								
Charing	4	3	3	3									
Charlton	0		1										



Great Chart	2	6	2	2	2					
Little Chart	2	3	1	1						
Chartham	6	9	5	3					1	
Cheriton	2	1			1					
Chilham	4	3	2	3	2					
Chillenden	0	4	1			1				
Chislet	10	6	2	1					1	
Coldred	2									
Cranbrook	30	13	6	2	1	1				
Crundale	2	1		2						
Davington	0	2			1					
Deal	14	5	2	1		1				
Denton	0	1	1	1						
Doddington	0		1							
Dover	40	2	9	11		4			1	
Dymchurch	0		1	1						
Eastchurch	8	1	4							
Eastling	0		2							
Eastry	14	2	4	1						1
Eastwell	0	4		3	1					
Ebony	0	2								
Egerton	8	3	2	1	1					
Elham	20	6	3	2	1	1				
Elmstead	4	2	1	1						
Ewell	8	2		2						
Eythorne	2	1	2		1					
Fairfield	0		1							
Faversham	58	14	17	6	3	3	2		1	
Folkestone	10	2	1	2		1	1	1		
Fordwich	4	5	4							
Frinted	0		1							
Frittenden	14	6	2	1						1
Godmersham	2	5	1	3						
Goodnestone										
near Faversham	0	1								
Goodnestone										
near Wingham	0	4	1	1						
Goudhurst	24	3	2	3	1	1				
Graveney	2	1		1		1				
Hackington	2	4								
High Halden	8	5	1			4	1			
Ham	0	1								
Harbledown	6	6	3	4						
Lower Hardres	2	2	2						1	
Harrietsham	16	2	1	1		1				
Hartley	0					1				
Hartlip	0	1	1							
Harty	4	1	2							
Hastingleigh	0	1								
Hawkhurst	12	3	2	1			1		1	
Hawkinge	0	3	1	1						
Headcorn	24	7	5	3	1					
Herne	12	10	6	6	2					

Hernehill	6	10	2		1		
Hinxhill	4						
Hoath	2	2	1				
Hollingbourne	8	3	5				
Horton	0				1		
Hothfield	4	1	2	1			
Hougham	0	1	1	2			
Huckinge	0		1				
Hythe	16	3	2	4	4	1	
Ickham	6	4	3	2			
Ivychurch	10	2					
Iwade	0	4		1			
Kenardington	0	3	2	1			
Kennington	4	4	1	2			
Kingsnorth	0	5	1	1	1		
Kingston	0	2	1			1	
Knowlton	0	2	2				
Langdon	0	1		1			
East Langdon	0	2	1				
West Langdon	0	2	1				
Langley	0	2	1				
Leeds	2		3	2		1	
Lenham	12	4	10	4	1		
Leysdown	0		1				
Linton	0	5		1			
Littlebourne	10	2	3				1
Luddenham	0	1					
Lydd	28	1	3	3	2	1	2
Lydden	0	1	3				
Lyminge	4	6	2	1			
Lympne	0	2	2	2	1		
Lynsted	2	5	3	2			
Maidstone	4	5	3	2	1	1	
Marden	10	6	1	2			
St Margaret at Cliffe	0		1				
St Mary in the Marsh	0	1	1	1			
Mersham	12	5	5	4			1
Midley	0	1				1	
Milsted	2	1					
Milton (near Canterbury)	4	4	1	1			
Milton near Sittingbourne	6	13	5	2	2	2	
Minster in Sheppey	6	1	4				
Minster in Thanet	16	4	1	2			
Molash	4	1	3	1	1		
Great	0	2	1				
Mongeham							
Little	0	1	1				
Mongeham							

Monkton	0	1		1			
Murston	0	1		1			
Nackington	0	2	1	1			
Newchurch	4	2	1	1			
Newenden	0	2					
Newington near							
Sittingbourne	2	7	3	2	1		
Newington near							
Hythe	2	2					
Newnham	4	1	1	1			
Nonington	0	3	3				
Northbourne	0	6	1	4		1	
Norton	0			1			
Orlestone	0	1					
Ospringe	6	8	1	1			
Otham	2	2	1				
Oxenden	0				1		
Oxney	2						
Paddlesworth	0	2					
Patixbourne	0	2				1	
Petham	2	4		1			
Pluckley	6	2	4	2			
Postling	2						
Preston (near							
Faversham)	0	5					
Preston	2						
Preston (near							
Wingham)	2	2	1	1			
Rainham	6	2	2	1		1	
Reculver	2	2	1				
River	2	1			1		
Rodmersham	2	2				1	
Rolvenden	12	3	2		1	1	
New Romney	28	4	2	2		3	
Old Romney	4	1	1	2		1	
Ruckinge	2	1	2				
Saltwood	4	2	1	3			
Sandhurst	0	2	1	1	2		
Sandwich	42	6	8	7	3		1
Seasalter	0	3	2				
Sellindge	2						
Selling	2	5	3	6	1		
Selvage	2						
Sevington	0	1		2			
Shadoxhurst	2		3				
Sheldwich	6	3		1			
Sheppey	0	1					
Sholden	2						
Sibertswold	4	4	3				
Sittingbourne	2	12	1	1			1
Smarden	14	7	6	1		1	1
Smeeth	0	2			1		
Snargate	0	3		1			

Snave	2								
Stalisfield	6	1	2						
Stanford	2	1							
Staple	0	4							
Staplehurst	24	7	4	1					
Stelling	2	1	1	1		1			
Stockbury	2	2							
Stodmarsh	0	3		1					
Stone	12								
Stone (in Isle of Oxney)	0	1	1					1	
Stone (near Faversham)	0	1							
Stourmouth	0	2	1		1			1	
Stowting	0	1		1					
Sturry	6	9	2	1		2			
Chart Sutton	0	2							
East Sutton	0	3	1			1	1		
Sutton Valence	4	2	2	1	1			1	
Swalecliffe	0	1	1						
Swingfield	0	3	2	1					
Tenterden	12	4	9	6	3				1
Teynham	6	6	1	1					
St John Thanet	22	2	3	2		1			
St Lawrence, Thanet	14	5	2	1	1	1			
St Nicholas Thanet	12	2	6	2					
St Peter Thanet	8	4		1	1				
Thanington	4	3	2	2					
Thornham	6	2							
Throwley	2	6	5						
Tilmanstone	4	2		2					
Tonge	2	2	1						
Tunstall	0	3							
Ulcombe	8	3		1	1				
Upchurch	6	2		1					
Waldershare	0	1	1						
Walmer	0			1					
Waltham	4	2	1						
Warehorne	0	3		1					
Welle	0	1							
Westbere	2	5							1
Westcliffe	0	1							
Westenhanger	0	2		1					
Westwell	8	7	5	2	3				
Whitstable	26	5	5		1	1			
Wickhambreux	6	4							
Willesborough	0	2	1	1	1				
Wingham	4	1	5	1	1				
Wittersham	6	1	1						
Woodchurch	2	2	3	3	2	1			
Woodnes-									

borough	8	3		1									
Wootton	0	3											
Wormshill	0	2	1										
Worth	0		2										
Wye	22	12	2	5	2	1			1			1	
Total	1422	721	408	277	83	68	16	3	5	1	2	4	5
%	47.2	23.9	13.5	9.2	2.8	2.3	0.5	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2

Note: The figures here and in subsequent tables, refer to the number of *people*, rather than the number of cases, since both parties in any one case are necessarily included under their respective parishes.

**Table A2.3 Courtship Horizons by Settlement Type and Region**  
**Traditional Urban Centres**

Miles	0	<5	<10	<15	<20	<25	<30	<35	<40	<45	<50	<55	>55	Total numbe
Canterbury	272	34	24	37	5	11	1	2	0	0	0	2	1	
Maidstone	4	5	3	2	1	1								
Faversham	58	14	17	6	3	3	2				1			
Hythe	16	3	2	4	3	1								
Sandwich	42	6	8	7	3	0	1							
Dover	40	2	9	11	0	4	1							
New Romney	28	4	2	2	0	3								
<b>Total</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>711</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>64.7</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Market Towns<sup>1</sup>**

Miles	0	<5	<10	<15	<20	<25	<30	<35	<40	<45	<50	<55	>55	
Appledore	2	1	1	1	0	1								
Ashford	12	2	7	5	3									
Cranbrook	30	13	6	2	1	1								
Elham	20	6	3	2	1	1								
Folkestone	10	2	1	2	0	1	1	1						
Goudhurst	24	3	2	3	1	1								
Lenham	12	4	10	4	1									
Lydd	28	1	3	3	2	0	3							
Milton near	6	13	5	2	2	2								
Sittingbourne														
Sittingbourne	2	12	1	1	0	0	0	0	1					
Smarden	14	7	6	1	0	1	1							
Tenterden	12	4	9	6	3	0	0						1	
Wye	22	12	2	5	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>402</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>48.3</b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**High Weald and Wealden Vales<sup>2</sup>**

**High Weald**

Miles	0	<5	<10	<15	<20	<25	<30	<35	<40	<45	<50	<55	>55	
Benenden	8	8	2	3	3									
Bethersden	16	7	2	2	0	1								
Biddenden	40	16	4	5	4	4								
Cranbrook	30	13	6	2	1	1								
Frittenden	14	6	2	1									1	
Goudhurst	24	3	2	3	1	1								
Hawkhurst	12	3	2	1	0	0	1	0	1					
Headcorn	24	7	5	3	1									
High Halden	8	5	1	0	0	4	1							

Marden	10	6	1	2										
Newenden	0	2												
Rolvenden	12	3	2	0	1	1								
Sandhurst	0	2	1	1	2									
Shadoxhurst	2	0	3											
Smarden	14	7	6	1	0	1	1							
Staplehurst	24	7	4	1										
Tenterden	12	4	9	6	3							1		
Woodchurch	2	2	3	3	2	1								
Total number	252	101	55	34	18	14	3	0	1	0	0	1	1	480
Percentages	52.5	21.0	11.5	7.1	3.8	2.9	0.6	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	100.0

#### Wealden Vales

Miles	0	<5	<10	<15	<20	<25	<30	<35	<40	<45	<50	<55	>55
Boughton Malherbe	2	2	1										
Boughton	0												
Monchelsea	2	2	1										
Chart Sutton	0	2											
East Sutton	0	3	1	0	0	1	1						
Sutton Valence	4	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	1				
Egerton	8	3	2	1	1								
Great Chart	2	6	2	2	2								
Pluckley	6	2	4	2									
Ulcombe	8	3	0	1	1								
Total number	32	25	13	7	5	1	1	0	1				85
Percentage	37.6	29.4	15.3	8.2	5.9	1.2	1.2	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0

#### Romney Marsh Area<sup>3</sup>

Miles	0	<5	<10	<15	<20	<25	<30	<35	<40	<45	<50	<55	>55
a)													
Appledore	2	1	1	1	0	1							
Kenardington	0	3	2	1									
Warehorne	0	3	0	1									
Orlestone	0	1											
Ruckinge	2	1	2										
Bilsington	0	1	0	0	1								
Bonnington	0	0	1	1									
Lympne	0	2	2	2	1								
b)													
Burmarsh	2	1	1										
Newchurch	4	2	1	1									
St Mary in the	0												
Marsh	0	1	1	1									
Snave	2												
Dymchurch	0	0	1	1									
New Romney	28	4	2	2	0	3							
Old Romney	4	1	1	2	0	1							
Lydd	28	1	3	3	2	1	2						
Brookland	2	1	2	2									

Fairfield	0	0	1											
Brenzet	0	3	0	0	0	1								
Snargate	0	3	0	1										
Ivychurch	10	2												
c)														
Stone	12	1	1	0	0	0	1							
Ebony	0	2												
Wittersham	6	1	1											
Total (Number)	102	35	23	19	4	7	3							193
Percentage	52.8	18.1	11.9	9.8	2.1	3.6	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0

### Isle of Thanet and Isle of Sheppey

#### Isle of Thanet

Miles	0	<5	<10	<15	<20	<25	<30	<35	<40	<45	<50	<55	>55
Birchington	10	1	3	0	0	2							
Minster	16	4	1	2									
Monkton	0	1	0	1									
St John the Baptist	0	2	3	2	0	1							
St Peter	8	4	0	1	1								
St Lawrence	14	5	2	1	1	1							
St Nicholas at Wade	0	12	2	6	2								
Total number	82	19	15	9	2	4							131
Percentage	62.6	14.5	11.5	6.9	1.5	3.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0

#### Isle of Sheppey

Miles	0	<5	<10	<15	<20	<25	<30	<35	<40	<45	<50	<55	>55
Eastchurch	8	1	4										
Harty	4	1	2										
Leysdown	0	0	1										
Minster	6	1	4										
Total Number	6	9	11										26

#### North Kent Coast (characterized mainly by salt marshes)

Miles	0	<5	<10	<15	<20	<25	<30	<35	<40	<45	<50	<55	>55
Chislet	10	6	2	1	0	0	1						
Reculver	2	2	1										
Herne	12	10	6	6	2								
Swalecliffe	0	1	1										
Whitstable	26	5	5	0	1	1							
Seasalter	0	3	2										
Graveney	2	1	0	1	0	1							
Woolendenham	0	1											
Teynham	6	6	1	1									
Tonge	2	2	1										



Murston	0	1	0	1										
Iwade	0	4	0	1										
Upchurch	6	2	0	1										
Total number	66	44	19	12	3	2	1							147
Percentage	44.9	29.9	12.9	8.2	2.0	1.4	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0

#### Rural parishes in the North Downs<sup>4</sup>

Miles	0	<5	<10	<15	<20	<25	<30	<35	<40	<45	<50	<55	>55	
Milsted	2	1												
Doddington	0	0	1											
Newnham	4	1	1	1										
Eastling	0	0	2											
Throwley	2	6	5											
Sheldwich	6	3	0	1										
Molash	4	1	3	1	1									
Chilham	4	3	2	3	2									
Godmersham	2	5	1	3										
Crundale	2	1	0	2										
Petham	2	4	0	1										
Waltham	4	2	1											
Lower Hardres	2	2	2							1				
Stelling	2	1	1	1	0	1								
Lyminge	4	6	2	1										
Barham	8	7	3	2										
Denton	0	1	1	1										
Wootton	0	3												
Sibertswold	4	4	3											
Coldred	2													
Barfrestone	0	0	1											
Eythorne	2	1	2	0	1									
Waldershare	0	1	1											
Tilmanstone	4	2	0	2										
Northbourne	0	6	1	4					1					
Eastry	14	2	4	1									1	
Woodnesborough	8	3	0	1										
Goodnestone*	0	4	1	1										
Nonington*	0	3	3											
Adisham	2	3	1											
Total number	84	76	42	26	4	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	236
Percentage	35.6	32.2	17.8	11.0	1.7	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.4	100.0

#### Notes to Table A2.3

1 The list of market towns, by no means exhaustive, is based upon Thirsk ed., *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, IV, p. 474. Only those within the Canterbury diocese, with the exception of those urban communities treated earlier, are included. The population of these market towns in the mid to late-sixteenth century could vary considerably from about 500 in Ashford in 1570; 600 or 700 in Milton near Sittingbourne in 1570; to about 1500-2000 in Cranbrook in this period. See e.g. Chalklin, *Seventeenth-Century Kent*, pp. 30-2; Collinson, 'Cranbrook and the Fletchers', p. 174.

2 Parishes in the High Weald have been analysed separately from those located in the Wealden Vales and have been taken from the map found in Robert Furley's, *History of the Weald of Kent*, p. 701; compared with K. P. Witney, *The Jutish Forest. A Study of the Weald of Kent from 450 to 1380*

*A.D.* (London, 1976), p. 323. For the demographic experience of different districts in the Weald, see, Zell, *Industry in the Countryside*, especially pp. 52-87.

- 3 a) Parishes bordering on the Weald and Marsh
- b) Parishes in Romney Marsh proper, and in Walland Marsh
- c) Parishes in the Isle of Oxney

4 These parishes may be classified as located in the North Downs, in the area predominantly south of Canterbury, and in the area stretching north of the scarpland towards West Kent, but not all the parishes in this region have been included.

\* The population size of Goodnestone in the 1570s has been estimated at between 280 and 400, and of Nonington in the 1580s, 440-540. Andrewes, 'Land, family and community in Wingham', i, pp. 245-6.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

#### Canterbury Cathedral Archives and Library

##### *Canterbury Diocesan Records*

###### *Consistory Court Depositions*

X/10/2	1541-4
X/10/3	1545-8
X/10/4	1548-50
X/10/5	1551-2
X/10/6	1552-9
X/10/7	1560 (1567 too)
X/10/8	1561-3
X/10/9	1562-3
X/10/10	1563
X/10/11	1568-70
X/10/12	1564-6
X/10/13	1569-71
X/10/14	1571-3
X/10/15	1566-7
X/10/16	1574-7
X/10/17 pt. i	1573-4
X 10/18	1577-80
X/10/19	1583-4
X/10 20	1581-3
X/10 21	1580-1
X/11/1	1585-9
X/11/2	1589-91
X/11/3	1598-9
X/11/4	1600-1
X/11/5	1595-7
X/11/6	1591-4

###### *Archdeaconry Court Depositions*

The following twenty-four volumes were consulted, (but not examined systematically) for further information bearing on the various issues discussed from the consistory court depositions. In theory, of course, all matrimonial matters were dealt with by the consistory courts.

PRC 39/1	1555
PRC 39/2	1556-60
PRC 39/3	1560-2
PRC 39/4	1563-8
PRC 39/5	1565-7
PRC 39/6	1568-73
PRC 39/7	1574-6
PRC 39/8	1576-9
PRC 39/9	1578-81
PRC 39/10	1581-4
PRC 39/11	1584-6
PRC 39/12	1586-8

PRC 39/13	1588-91
PRC 39/14	1591-2
PRC 39/15	1591-3
PRC 39/16	1593
PRC 39/17	1593-4
PRC 39/18	1595-6
PRC 39/19	1596-8
PRC 39/20	1596-8
PRC 39/21	1597-9
PRC 39/22	1598-9
PRC 39/23	1599-1601
PRC 39/24	1599-1602

*Miscellaneous Consistory Court Papers J/J (Indexed from 1595 only)*

J J1	1595
J J2	1596
J/J3	1597

*Act Books*

The Consistory Court Act Books which have been used in this study contain Instance business mostly relating to the court's sessions in Canterbury, but also to sessions held when the court went on circuit through Hythe, Romney and Dover. Separate catalogues compiled by Woodcock, Woodruff, and former archivists, have been consulted, and the information combined and amended accordingly in citing the list of self-styled volumes examined below. There is a gap in the records for the years 1537 and 1538.

MS. Y.1.10	1468-78	Con. Acta Curiae liber 11 (Hythe, Romney and Dover)
MS. Y.1.12	1474-9	Con. Acta Curiae liber 16
MS. Y.1.13	1479-84	Con. Acta Curiae liber 17
MS. Y.1.14	1484-7	Con. Acta Curiae liber 18
MS. Y.1.15	1487-92	Con. Acta Curiae liber 19
MS. Y.1.16	1492-6	Con. Acta Curiae liber 20
MS. Y.1.17	1496-8	Con. Acta Curiae liber 21
MS. Y.1.18	1498-1500	Con. Acta Curiae liber 22
MS. Y.2.1	1503-5	Con. Acta Curiae liber 23
MS. Y.2.2	1500-2	Con. Acta Curiae liber 12 (incl. 1494: Hythe, Romney and Dover)
MS. Y.2.3	1547-51	Con. Ad Instantiam Partium et ex officio liber 34
MS. Y.2.5	1509-15	Con. Acta Curiae
MS. Y.2.6	1516-21	Con. Acta Curiae
MS. Y.2.8	1504-9	Con. Acta Curiae (Hythe, Romney and Dover)
MS. Y.2.9	1505-8	Con. Acta Curiae liber 25
MS. Y.2.10	1513-24	Con. Acta Curiae liber 26 (Hythe, Romney and Dover)
MS. Y.2.11	1520-1	Con. Acta Curiae liber 27
MS. Y.2.12	1521-8	Con. Acta Curiae liber 28
MS. Y.2.13	1528-36	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 31
MS. Y.2.14	1542-6	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 33
MS. Y.2.15	1550-1	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 35

MS. Y.2.16	1538-49	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium
MS. Y.2.17	1552-6	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 36
MS. Y.2.18	1551-4	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium
MS. Y.2.19	1556-9	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 37
MS. Y.2.20	1560	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 38
MS. Y.2.21	1573-4	Con. Actae Curiae liber 48
MS. Y.2.22	1559-62	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 39
MS. Y.2.25	1560-8	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium
MS. Y.2.26	1562-4	Con. Actae Curiae
MS. Y.2.27	1566-8	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 42
MS. Y.2.28	1568-70	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 44
MS. Y.2.29	1571-3	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 46
MS. Y.2.30	1572-3	Con. Actae Curiae liber 47
MS. Y.3.1	1574-7	
MS. Y.3.2	1597-1600	Con. Acta Curiae ad Instantiam Partium liber 62
MS. Y.3.3	1599-1602	Con. Acta Curiae ad Instantiam Partium liber 63
MS. Y.3.10	1585-7	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 56
MS. Y.3.11	1587-8	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 57
MS. Y.3.12	1588-91	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 58
MS. Y.3.13	1591-3	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 59
MS. Y.3.14	1593-4	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 60
MS. Y.3.15	1595-7	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 61
MS. Y.3.16	1577-9	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 50
MS. Y.3.18	1579-81	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 51
MS. Y.3.19	1581-3	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 53
MS. Y.3.20	1580-1	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 52
MS. Y.3.21	1584-5	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 55
MS. Y.3.22	1583-4	Con. Acta ad Instantiam Partium liber 54
MS. Y.4.1	1540	Con. Acta, Comperta et Detecta
MS. Z.3.31	1563-4	Acta Curia, ad inst. liber 16*
MS. Z.4.17	1595	*

\* no matrimony cases found

### ***Parish Records***

Parish register of Chislet	U3/55/1/A1 U3/55/1/A2	1538-1562 from 1562
Parish register of Whitstable	U3/131/1/1	1549-1746
Parish register of Sturry	U3/48/1/i	from 1538
Parish register of Wye (in parish church at time of consultation)	U3/174/1/A1 U3/174/1/A2	1538-1602 1603-1726

### **Centre for Kentish Studies (formerly Kent Archives Office)**

### ***Parish Records***

Parish register of Tenterden	P 364/1/1 from 1544
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### ***Probate Records***

#### *Wills Consistory and Archdeaconry*

The wills for the following five parishes have been arranged chronologically by date of will. Where none is given, by date of probate. These have been converted to modern dating. Names are given as they appear in the original manuscript and have not been standardized. Abbreviations used are given below.

#### Tenterden Wills

Reference	Date of will	Date of probate	Testator	Status
PRC 17/1/15	12/5/1449		Laur? Lambyn	
PRC 17/1/7	15/5/1449		Wm Cok	
PRC 17/1/269v	12/4/1461		Jn Pyers	butcher
PRC 17/1/271v-2v	31/10/1461		Hen Esteagh	
PRC 17/1/128v	30/3/1463		Wm Bate	
PRC 17/1/141(X)	1/12/1463		Tho Petlesden	
PRC 17/1/97v-8	13/10/1464		Tho Gerveys	
PRC 17/1/99-v	29/10/1464		Tho Frank	
PRC 17/1/168v-9	26/1/1465		Hen atte Hale	
PRC 17/1/170	23/1/1466		Robt Ponte	
PRC 17/1/218v	31/1/1467		Wm Blossom	
PRC 17/1/448	4/3/1467		Jn Beste	
PRC 17/1/448v	25/12/1467	20/6/1468	Ric Pette	
PRC 17/1/480-1	2/6/1468		Phil Scotte	
PRC 17/1/465-6	16/1/1469		Jn atte Hale	
PRC 17/2/18-v	22/9/1469		Jn Hoore	
PRC 17/1/304v	14/5/1470	2/10/1470	Tho Jan	
PRC 17/2/29-v	14/7/1471		Johanna Pyers	wf. of Wm

PRC 17/2/54-v	7/8/1471	8/6/1472	Phil Blossom	
PRC 17/2/66v-7	10/9/1471	23/9/1472	Jn Godday	
PRC 17/2/27-v	17/9/1471	24/9/----	Jn Tilar	
PRC 17/2/131-v	17/3/1472	20/10/1472	Ste Jan	
PRC 17/2/65v-6	11/4/1472	23/9/1472	Robt Stonehouse	
PRC 17/2/67v-8	11/5/1472	23/10/1472	Agnes atte Hille	
PRC 17/2/93v-4	27/5/1472		Sara Deye	wf. of Wm
PRC 17/2/148-v	20/4/1473	5/5/1473	Tho Cok	
PRC 17/2/347-v	21/9/1473	9/10/1474	Robt Castelayn	
PRC 17/2/342	23/11/1473?	9/9/147-	Jn Ingram	
PRC 17/2/290-v	25/12/1473		Alice Wytherynden	
PRC 17/2/290v-1	30/12/1473	9/5/1474	Jn Lucas	
PRC 17/2/291	23/1/1474	9/5/1474	Tho Blussh	
PRC 17/2/351-v	24/5/1474	9/10/1474	Jn Herwardyng, sen	
PRC 17/3/36-v	30/4/1476	24/9/1476	Alex Bregges	
PRC 17/3/20-v	5/5/1476		Wm Iden	
PRC 17/3/194-v	21/4/1477	27/4/1479	Wm Harynden	
PRC 17/3/156-v	6/7/1477	2/3/1478	Tho Pellond, sen	
PRC 17/3/208-v	1/9/1477	12/7/1479	Ric Castewesill	
PRC 17/3/184-v	24/1/1478	19/10/1478	Ste Donett	
PRC 17/3/199	2/1/1479	26/5/1479	Tho Sherpey, sen	
PRC 17/3/217-v	9/3/1479	16/9/1479	Hen Pellond	
PRC 32/2/480-v	5/12/1479		Tho Wormeslee	
PRC 17/3/365-v	7/3/1481	10/7/1481	Ric Davy	
PRC 17/3/406-v	28/9/1481	17/6/1482	Ste Smyth, sen	
PRC 17/3/401v-2	14/1/1482	19/6/1482	Geoff Byrchesle	
PRC 17/3/450-v	11/11/1482	9/6/1483	Robt Brekynden, sen	
PRC 17/3/450v-1	21/1/1483	9/6/1483	Ste Smyth	fuller
PRC 17/3/448v-9	1/4/1483	9/6/1483	Margt Fynch	widow
PRC 17/3/498-v	27/1/1484	16/3/1484	Tho Davy, sen	
PRC 17/4/18-v	15/4/1484		Robt Breggis	
PRC 32/3/21v-2	12/9/1484	19/12/1484	John at Hylle	
PRC 17/5/5v	31/8/1487		Robt Castalayn	
PRC 17/4/127-v	14/9/1487	20/11/1487	Ste Jamyn	
PRC 17/5/9-v	27/11/1487	19/5/1488	Tho Chapman	
PRC 17/5/76v	8/7/1488	23/9/1488	Johanna Chapman	widow
PRC 17/5/76v	9/7/1488	23/9/1488	Alice Beche	widow
PRC 17/5/77	3/8/1488	23/9/1488	Wm Gotle	
PRC 17/5/54v	8/3/1489	4/5/1489	Hen Iden	
PRC 17/5/152v	4/1/1490	25/5/1490	Jn Pett	cloth/drap
PRC 17/5/310v-11v	12/12/1490	17/5/1491	Johanna Turnor	wf. of Hugh
PRC 17/5/275v-6	16/5/1491	16/9/1491	Ste Assherynden	
PRC 32/3/303v-4	5/11/1491	15/11/1491	Philippa Jan	
PRC 17/5/330v-1	11/6/1492	11/9/1492	Jn Davy	
PRC 17/5/360-v	10/10/1492	12/5/1493	Ste Becwell	
PRC 32/4/9-10	4/11/1493	--/--/1493	Ste Couper, eld	

PRC 17/6/10v-11v	19/12/1493	26/5/1494	Wm Preston, sen	
PRC 17/6/16v-17	24/2/1494	27/5/1494	Jn Crystian	
PRC 17/6/110-11	23/11/1494	23/9/1495	Robt Davy	
PRC 17/6/96	20/12/1494	2/6/1495	Johanna Castleyn	wd. of Tho
PRC 17/6/111-v	22/5/1495	23/9/1495	Godlena Pyers	widow
PRC 17/6/177v-9	1/6/1495	23/9/1495	Wm Gybon	
PRC 17/6/108-9v	14/9/1495	23/9/1495	Tho Pette	
PRC 17/6/164v	12/11/1495	17/5/1496	Robt Benchekyn	
PRC 17/6/133	15/11/1495	8/2/1496	Ric Jan	
PRC 17/6/162-v	16/12/1495	7/5/1496	Jn Haddon	
PRC 17/6/156-8	24/12/1495	17/5/1496	Robt Clerk	
PRC 17/6/198-v	17/3/1496	27/9/1496	Tho Dod	
PRC 17/8/2v-3	20/3/1496	15/9/1500	Tho Gybon	
PRC 17/6/158v-60v	20/3/1496	7/5/1496	Tho Strekenbold	
PRC 17/6/164	24/3/1496?	17/5/1496	Tho Gervys	
PRC 17/7/157-v	30/4/1496	24/9/----	Jn Bysshopynden	
PRC 17/6/211-12	1/6/1496	27/9/1496	Johanna Pette	wd. of Tho
PRC 17/6/281v-4	26/11/1496	26/10/1497	Wm Fowgill/Foughill	
PRC 17/6/235	3/12/1496	27/4/1497	Jn Crotehole, sen	
PRC 17/6/278	24/4/1497	20/6/1497	Jn Blusshe	
PRC 17/6/284v-5	5/5/1497	26/9/1497	Ric Austen	
PRC 17/7/50v-1	-/1497	25/9/1498	Wm Presten	
PRC 17/8/41-v	27/3/1498	14/12/1500	Jn Symme	
PRC 17/7/48v-50v	21/4/1498	25/9/----	Tho Carpenter	
PRC 17/8/2-v	8/5/1500	19/10/1500	Ric Witherden	
PRC 17/8/42v-3v	7/8/1500	13/12/1500	Jn Spert	
PRC 17/8/31	5/12/1500	16/9/1500	Tho Piers	
PRC 17/7/250-v	19/1/1501	8/3/1501	Agnes Bocher	
PRC 17/9/70-v	2/6/1501	10/9/1504	Wm Tobill	
PRC 17/8/221-2	18/10/1501	13/9/1502	Wm Davy	
PRC 17/8/199v-200v	5/12/1501	14/6/1502	Wm Gemyn	
PRC 17/9/180-v	17/2/1502?	11/4/1502?	Wm Holme	
PRC 17/8/281-v	26/10/1502	12/9/1503	Jn Brikenden, sen	
PRC 17/8/271v-2	10/5/1503	20/6/1503	Jn Jacob	
PRC 17/9/211v-13	1/6/1503	18/3/1504	Jn Tiler	
PRC 17/8/269v-70	-/1503	20/6/1503	Tho Smyth, sen	
PRC 17/9/10	4/12/1503	19/3/1504	Anne Dowle	
PRC 17/9/222	20/3/1504	10/9/1504	Juliana Brigenden	
PRC 17/10/92-v	8/4/1504	2/3/1506	Ric Baker	
PRC 17/9/79-v	11/7/1504	4/11/1504	Peter Andrewe	
PRC 17/10/19v-20	11/12/1504	16/9/1505	Johanna Garves/Gervice	widow
PRC 17/9/137-v	14/1/1505	3/6/1505	Jn Assherynden, sen	
PRC 17/10/21-2	27/1/1505	16/9/1505	Jn Lilly	
PRC 17/9/49v-50v	6/3/1505	5/5/1505	Tho Fynche, sen	
PRC 17/9/51-v	26/3/1505	5/5/1505	Jn Doungham	
PRC 17/9/119-20	8/4/1505	3/6/1505	Ric Hoke, sen	



PRC 17/10/20-1	22/4/1505	16/9/1505	Wm Claidich /Claidishe	
PRC 17/10/119v-20	27/3/1506	26/5/1506	Ric Figge	
PRC 17/9/245-v	3/6/1506	22/9/1507	Jn Haredyng	
PRC 17/9/237-v	18/2/1507	22/9/1507	Jn Gemyn	
PRC 17/9/245v-6	28/3/1507	22/9/1507	Alice Bekwell	
PRC 17/9/288	16/9/1507	14/2/1508	Ric Hoke	
PRC 17/9/280-v	2/12/1507	17/1/1508	James Dunne	
PRC 17/9/322	2/12/1507	6/6/1508	Tho Pedyll	
PRC 17/11/54v-5v	11/12/1507	12/6/1509	Jn Presten	
PRC 17/9/321v	-/-/1507	6/6/1508	Agnes Brekenden	
PRC 32/9/65-v	8/1/1508		Jn Castelyn	
PRC 17/11/29v-30	10/2/1508	11/7/1508	Walter Hogelett	
PRC 17/9/337	27/5/1508	12/9/1508	Johanna Norlond	spinster
PRC 17/11/36	26/6/1508	12/9/1508	Wm Pellond	
PRC 17/11/41-2	24/9/1508	13/11/1508	Ric Lucas	
PRC 17/12/73-4	20/3/1509	15/12/15--	Thomasina Piers	
PRC 17/11/80-1v	30/9/1509	22/10/1509	Wm Borne	
PRC 32/9/165	--/--/1509		Jn Wryght	
PRC 17/11/306-7	16/1/1510	14/5/1510	Jn Hoore	
PRC 17/11/48v-9	11/3/1510?	31/3/1510?	Johanna Davy	
PRC 17/17/20-1}	20/8/1510	--/--/1525	Jn Flechar	
PRC 32/11/44 }				
PRC 17/11/250-v	1/9/1510	17/9/1510	Nic Blechinden	
PRC 17/11/182v-3	3/10/1510	9/2/1511	Kateryn Carpenter	widow
PRC 17/12/30v-1	--/--/1511	7/10/1511	Johan Blechynden	wd. of Nic
PRC 17/11/183-v	17/1/1511	9/2/1511	Katherine Castlyn	widow
PRC 32/10/124-v	5/3/1511		Laur Phelipe	
PRC 17/11/188-9v	7/3/1511	--/--/1511	Wm Newland	
PRC 32/10/154v	30/5/1511		Jn Pellond	
PRC 32/11/41	4/5/1512		Johan Easton	widow
PRC 17/12/236v-7v	4/2/1513?	21/6/1513?	Tho Bisshopynden	
PRC 17/12/221-v	7/3/1513	13/6/1513	Tho Chapman	
PRC 17/12/227-v	4/4/1513	9/5/1513	Wm Stonehouse	
PRC 17/12/217v-18	25/4/1513	13/6/1513	Wm Holnerst	
PRC 17/12/182v-3	5/6/1513	18/7/1513	Anne Stonehouse	widow
PRC 17/12/182v	12/6/1513		Robt Brissynden	
PRC 17/12/218v-19	--/--/1513	13/6/1513	Tho Robyn	
PRC 17/12/302v	--/--/1513	24/4/1514	Jn Crocheman	
PRC 17/12/229-30	10/2/1514?	9/5/1514?	Ste Couper	
PRC 17/12/312v-13	17/3/1514	20/6/1514	Phillipe Harnden	
PRC 17/12/345v	1/12/1514?	21/5/1514?	Agnes Whitehede	widow
PRC 17/20/222v-3	25/8/1516		Ric Hore	
PRC 17/12/566v-8	7/2/1517	16/3/1517	Jn Donett	
PRC 17/13/263-4v	19/11/1517	10/2/1518	Robt Brigenden	
PRC 17/13/111-12	19/11/1517	10/2/1518	Wylmyn Caddokes	widow
PRC 17/13/99	28/12/1517	10/2/1518	Jn Denton	

PRC 17/13/260-v	16/3/1518?	14/4/1518	Robt Swoffer	
PRC 17/13/303-v	8/7/1518	5/10/1518	Jn Gybon	
PRC 17/13/232v-3	12/9/1518	5/10/1518	James Donny	
PRC 32/12/174v-8	4/10/1518		Wm Couper	
PRC 17/14/33v	11/12/1518	21/3/1519	Hewgh Parker	
PRC 17/14/26-v	14/12/1518	13/9/1519	Margt Pette	widow
PRC 17/14/50v-1v	12/1/1519	7/6/1519	Wm Beche	
PRC 17/14/7v	20/3/1519	7/6/1519	Tho Smyth	
PRC 17/14/12v-13	20/4/1519	7/6/1519	Thomasyne Adam	widow
PRC 17/14/47-v	2/7/1519		Moyse Pellond	
PRC 17/14/33-v	20/9/1519	16/1/1520	Luce Bisshopynden	widow
PRC 17/15/64v-5	12/10/1519	5/3/1520	Katherine Foule	widow
PRC 17/14/110v	4/4/1520	22/5/1520	Tho Lawles	
PRC 17/14/285-6v	12/8/1520	3/12/1520	Deonys Davy	widow
PRC 17/15/4-v	12/11/1521	11/1/1522	Margery Knyght	wd. of Ric
PRC 17/15/43v	6/12/1521	13/1/1522	Crystyan Hooke	
PRC 17/15/15-v	14/12/1521		Johane Weste	widow
PRC 17/14/192-v	23/1/1521	25/2/1521	Harry Bate	
PRC 17/14/295-7v	17/5/1521	25/6/1521	Alice Godard	widow
PRC 17/14/304v		3/6/1521	Tho West	
PRC 17/15/38-v	20/2/1522?	10/2/1522?	Julyan Dunne	
PRC 17/14/337v-8	1/4/1522	2/6/1522	Giles Fordman	
PRC 17/15/129v-30	16/4/1522	23/9/----	Jn Dunne, eld.	
PRC 17/15/120-v	1/7/1522	29/7/1522	Jn Holnerst	
PRC 17/15/176v-7	17/7/1522	30/6/----	Jn Hoigges	
PRC 17/15/128v-9v	6/9/1522	23/9/1522	Ste Blossom	
PRC 17/16/179-v	8/11/1522	6/6/1524	Jn Umfrey	
PRC 17/19/145-v	14/11/1522?}	23/5/1531	Isaac Chapman	
	14/11/1531?}			
PRC 17/15/230-v	1/1/1523	3/2/1523	Jn Hasell	
PRC 17/15/228-v	11/1/1523	3/2/1523	Tho Hickes	
PRC 17/14/338v-9	13/3/1523?	2/6/1522?	Tho Athell	
PRC 17/15/258-9	7/4/1523	1/6/1523	Robt Bisshopynden	
PRC 17/16/46-8	25/6/1523	18/10/1523	Ste Philippe	
PRC 17/16/53v	1/10/1523	9/11/1523	Sir Jas Oldam	priest
PRC 17/16/26	21/11/1523		Jn Braynford	
PRC 17/16/81-v	25/11/1523	14/3/1524	Jn Dune	
PRC 17/16/25-v	10/12/1523		Agnes Grenestrete	
PRC 17/16/131	16/2/1524	14/3/1524	Nic Lamben	
PRC 17/16/179v-80	13/3/1524	10/5/1524	Margt Pellond	wd. of Tho
PRC 17/16/114v	10/6/1524	12/9/1524	Anne Donne	
PRC 17/16/181-v	11/5/1524?	6/6/1524	Wm Ketyng	
PRC 17/16/215-v	25/9/1524	7/11/1524	Ric Hillis	
PRC 17/16/152v-3		9/1/1525	Jn Lynche	
PRC 17/16/159v-60v	19/1/1525	6/3/1525	Tho Sharpe	
PRC 17/16/269-71	18/3/1525	12/4/1525	Geo Strekenbold	

PRC 17/16/243v-4	4/4/1525	29/5/1525	Harry Bolde	
PRC 17/16/288v	5/4/1525	8/5/1525	Laur Brodestrete	
PRC 17/16/289	6/4/1525	8/5/1525	Hen Gibbon	
PRC 17/16/244-5	8/4/1525	29/5/1525	Ric Pellond	
PRC 17/16/294-v	12/4/1525	8/5/1525	Tho Couper, eld.	
PRC 17/16/274-5v	18/4/1525		Wm Gerves	
PRC 17/16/293-v	20/4/1525	8/5/1525	Ric Castelyn	
PRC 17/16/224v-5	18/5/1525	30/5/1525	Tho Chesten	
PRC 17/16/239v-40	27/5/1525	12/9/1525	Geo Fowle, ygr	
PRC 17/17/53v-4	23/7/1525	11/9/1525	Ric Fox	
PRC 17/17/71	4/9/1525	11/12/1525	Jn Hamon	
PRC 32/16/57v	18/10/1525		Wm Lambyn, eld.	
PRC 17/17/16v-17	24/10/1525	11/12/1525	Tho Haffynden	
PRC 17/17/49-50v	8/4/1526	15/5/1528	Jn Wayte	
PRC 17/17/145v-6	15/4/1526	18/6/1526	Ric Fagg	
PRC 17/17/83-6v	4/5/1526	16/7/1526	Jn Presten	
PRC 17/17/74v-5	16/5/1526	18/7/1526	Jn Freman	
PRC 17/17/158-62	19/6/1526	31/7/1526	Tho Wode/Wood	
PRC 17/17/207-v	1/7/1526	11/9/1526	Jn Brygynden	
PRC 17/17/277-8	26/3/1527	4/6/1527	Ste Couper, eld.	
PRC 17/17/277	25/4/1527	4/6/1527	Robt Asshynden	
PRC 17/17/324-v	28/4/1527	4/6/1527	Robt Hovynden	
PRC 17/17/334v-5	4/5/1527	4/6/1527	Geo Haryson	
PRC 17/17/269-v	17/6/1527	29/7/1527	Wm Blossom	
PRC 17/17/295v	22/8/1527	24/9/1527	Ric Pyers	
PRC 17/18/28v	8/1/1528	30/3/1528	Gerard Beryngham	
PRC 17/18/133v	4/3/1528	27/4/1528	Nic Garrard	
PRC 17/18/158v-9	1/9/1528	19/10/1528	Johane Brekynden	
PRC 17/18/248v-9	30/12/1528	16/9/1529	Wm Twyfford	
PRC 17/18/185v-6	7/4/1529	13/5/1529	Jas Tannar	
PRC 17/19/15	22/5/1530	7/6/1530	Wm Carpynter	
PRC 32/16/10-v	24/1/1531		Ste Smyth	
PRC 17/19/219v-20	18/8/1531	25/9/1531	Alice Pell	widow
PRC 17/19/235-v	4/11/1531	11/12/1531	Johane Bisshopynden	widow
PRC 17/19/177-v	11/1/1532	11/3/1532	Helwyse Mede	widow
PRC 17/19/54-5	11/2/1532		Tho Syre	
PRC 17/19/273	2/4/1532		Wm Fowle	
PRC 17/21/58-9v	30/5/1532		Chris Casteleyn	
PRC 32/16/8 }	--/--/1533		Bartylmew Harrenden	
PRC 32/16/78 }				
PRC 17/19/365v-6v	6/3/1533	26/3/1533	Lore Blossom	widow
PRC 17/19/366v-7	9/4/1533	28/4/1533	Wm Hampton	tailor
PRC 17/19/358v-9v	21/4/1533	29/5/1533	Tho Assherynden	
PRC 17/20/68-9	4/9/1534	16/10/1534	Jn Lowdewell	
PRC 17/20/168v-9	16/9/1534	16/7/1535	Robt Haryson	
PRC 17/20/111-v	7/12/1534	15/3/1535	Nic Geffrey	

PRC 17/20/110v-11	21/12/1534	15/3/1535	Ric Amyott	
PRC 17/20/94v-5	8/1/1535	15/3/1535	Tho Hylles	
PRC 17/20/95-v	8/2/1535	15/3/1535	Agnes Smythe	widow
PRC 17/20/153-v	16/3/1535		Jn Screche	
PRC 17/20/119-v	3/4/1535	10/5/1535	Robt Harward	
PRC 17/20/217v	2/8/1535	15/9/1535	Robt Weste	
PRC 17/20/234-5	10/12/1535	16/5/1536	Jas Ilchenden	
PRC 17/20/235-v	26/3/1536	16/5/1536	Agnes Broke	widow
PRC 17/21/201v-2	1/10/1537	28/3/1539	Jn Baker	
PRC 17/21/174-5	3/5/1538	24/9/1538	Tho Borne	
PRC 17 22/212-13	17/7/1538	27/10/----	Margt Lambyn	
PRC 17 23/32-3v	19/8/1540	12/11/1540	Edw Philipe	yeoman
PRC 17 24 6v-7	22/9/1540?		<i>Katherine Ilond</i>	
PRC 17 22 89-90v }	10/11/1540		Jn Lucas	
PRC 17 22 213 }				
PRC 17 22/184-v	18/11/1540	27/4 1541	Edw Holneste	
PRC 17 23 65v-6v	18/11/1540	27 4 1541	Margery Lucas	widow
PRC 17 22 187-9	14/2/1541	--/--/1541	Jn Austen, eld.	
PRC 17 22 78v-9v	15/3/1541	7/6 1541	Ste Meede	
PRC 17 23 26-7v	16/6/1541	27 7 1541	Edm Lewkenore	clothier
PRC 17 22 259-61	29 3/1542	4/10 1542	Robt Goodale	(shoemaker)
PRC 17 22 247v-9v	21/4 1542		Jn Byrchelye	
PRC 17 22 277v-9v	23 1/1543	1 3 1543	Ric Assherynden	
PRC 17 24 49-v	9 3 1543	17 12 1545	Wm Robyns	
PRC 17 22 292-v	12 3 1543	10 4 1543	Math Rescue	
PRC 17 23 146	9 6 1543	20 9 1543	Ric Piers	
PRC 17 23 228-v	24 11 1543	9 3 1544	Hen Saunder	
PRC 17 23 153v-4v	26 12 1543	2 10 1544	Tho Blachenden	
PRC 17 23 133-6	20 1/1544	10/7 1544	Wm Brikkenden	
PRC 17 23 215v-16	11 11 1544	2 7 1545	Jn Parker	
PRC 17 23 270v	17 1/1545	2 7 1545	Ric Gyrdler, eld.	
PRC 17 24 176-7v	14 4/1545	8 6 1546	Eliz Hampton	widow
PRC 17 24 169v-70v	20 7/1545	11 3 1546	Wm Lewknor	
PRC 32 20 2	25 7/1545	24 9 1545	Jn Charles	
PRC 17 24 46v-7	11 9/1545	17 12 1545	Alice Baker	widow
PRC 17 25 35	2/10/1545	11 3 1546	Jn Willard	
PRC 17 24 223-v	16 12 1545	8 6 1546	Ric Sponer	
PRC 17 24 139-40v	17/12/1545	11/3 1546	Geo Smythe	
PRC 17 24/57-v	17/12/1545		Pat Maninge	
PRC 17 24/154-6	8 2 1546	11 3/1546	Wm Lambyn	
PRC 17 24 74v	20/4 1546	8 6/1546	Walt Quoyffe	
PRC 17 24 222-3	19 5/1546	8 6 1546	Tho Bromfield	
PRC 17 25 160v	11/3/1547	8 7/1547	Robt Donnet	
PRC 17 26 109	20 8/1547?	8/7/1547?	Dyonise Colyar	widow
PRC 17/26/308v	2/11/1547	2/6/1548	Hen Scamberleyn	
PRC 17/26/159v-63v	27/12 1547		Jn Austen	

PRC 17/27/99-v	19/2/1548	28/5/1551	Ric Knyght, eld.	
PRC 17/26/66v-7v	21/3/1548	13/7/1548	Wm Pyers	husbandman
PRC 17/25/163v-5	22/3/1548?	14/1/1548?	Tho Finche	
PRC 17/26/146-7	11/7/1548	19/9/1548	Tho Kencham	
PRC 17/26/305v-7	12/1/1549	9/5/1549	Wm Beche	
PRC 17/26/298v-302v	28/6/1549	16/12/----	Jn Stace, eld.	
PRC 17/26/288-9	25/10/1549	29/11/1549	Tho Cowper, ygr.	
PRC 17/27/12v-13	15/3/1550	5/5/1550	Adam Raynolde	
PRC 17/27/11v-12	18/3/1550	5/5/1550	Tho Robyns	
PRC 17/27/12-v	19/3/1550	5/5/1550	Ric Younge	shipwright
PRC 17/29/241-2	2/5/1550	23/9/1551	Alice Donett	widow
PRC 17 27/210-v	12/7/1550	23/9/1550	Pet Pellond	
PRC 17 27 93-v	22/12/1550	19/3/1551	Alice Stace	
PRC 17 27 158v-9	23/5 1551	23 9 1551	Robt Wythelman	
PRC 17 27 154-v	23/5/1551	23/9/1551	Tho Marchall	husbandman
PRC 32 24 71-8v	22/7/1551	11/11/1552	Geo Fyllype	
PRC 17 27 112-v	19 8/1551	28 8/1551	Ste Cooper	
PRC 17 28 115-16v	21 12/1551	11 4 1553	Alice Assherenden	widow
PRC 17 29 19v-20	6 2/1552	18 5 1553	Edw Kindgewood	
PRC 17 30 46v-7	4/3/1552	18 5 1553	Johan Bayley	widow
PRC 17 28 13-v	4 3/1552	16 6 1552	Jn Pratte	
PRC 17 30 35-v	18 4 1552	14 9 1552	Robt Harte	
PRC 17 28 80-1v	14 5 1552	11 4 1553	Jn Castlyn	priest
PRC 17 27 229	14 5/1552	23 6 1552	Ric Lucas, aged 21	
PRC 17 28 97v-100	1 6/1552	19 6 1553	Robt Pope	
PRC 17 28 30-v	27 8 1552	14 9 1552	Jn Charles	
PRC 17 29 276-8v	6 10 1552	16 6 1554	Edw Godfrey	yeoman
PRC 17 28 39v-41	--/-- 1552	3 11 1552	Robt Duke	
PRC 17 29 2v-3	1 4 1553	17 5 1553	Wm Smythe	
PRC 17 28 142	28 4 1553		Mich Selye	
PRC 17 29 12	12 6 1553	14 9 1553	Jn Crowche	
PRC 17 29 143-v	16 9 1553	9 4 1554	Jn Caryor	
PRC 17 29 153v-4	6 12 1553	15 8 1554	Geo Frowdes	
PRC 17 29 142v	7/12 1553	11 4 1554	Johane Cade	singlewoman
PRC 17 30 11v-12v	--/-- 1553	21 3 1554	Tho Short	
PRC 17 29 143v-4	16 2/1554	11 4 1554	Ric Hoope	
PRC 17 29 58-v	11 6 1554	4 7 1554	Walt Hamond	
PRC 17 30 211-v	4 7/1554	8 11 1554	Joan Alcocke	widow
PRC 17 30 166-v	13 7/1555	22 10 1555	Jas Robyns	
PRC 17 32 276		-- -- 1556?	Jn Arnolde(Harndale)	
PRC 17/30 245v-6	29/5/1556	19 8 1556	Alice Boorne	wd. of Tho
PRC 17/34 133-4v	16 8/1556	1 2/1557	Ric Poope	
PRC 17/30/283-4v	9/1/1557	19 7/1557	Ric Girdeler	weaver
PRC 17/30/119v-21	1/4 1557	17 5 1557	Robt Trayton	
PRC 17/33/45v	10/4/1557	16 5/1557	Jn Alman	
PRC 17/33/54-5	7/8/1557	18 4 1558	Martin Dewer	

PRC 17/33/69-v	25/9/1557	23/1/1558	Tho Boycot	
PRC 17/33/43-4	18/11/1557	19/1/1558	Robt Wilson	
PRC 17/33/90-v	4/12/1557		Jn Lambarte	labourer
PRC 17/31/166-7v	26/12/1557	6/2/1558	Tho Hookestep	
PRC 17/33/52-v	10/2/1558	18/4/1558	Jas Pelland	
PRC 17/34/272v-3	22/2/1558	18/4/1558	Geo Sorrell	
PRC 17/33/12-13v	11/5/1558	21/7/1558	Jn Gervyce	husbandman
PRC 17/34/126	2/6/1558	17/6/1560	Jn Fowle	weaver
PRC 17/34/179v-81	5/9/1558	28/2/1562	Tho Lucas	yeoman
PRC 17/34/125v	26/11/1558	20/6/1559	Alice Smethe	widow
PRC 17/34/98v-9	20/12/1558	31/1/1559	Julyan Poste	widow
PRC 17/35/267v-8	27/12/1558	3/3/1562	Jn Borne	
PRC 17/33/188-9v	19/1/1559	22/2/1559	Clement Stace	
PRC 17/35/67	23/2/1559	5/1/1561	Jn Risley	
PRC 17/34/226v-7	24/8/1558?	6/3/1561	Wm Pellam	
PRC 17/33/117-v	17/6/1559	20/1/1560	Alice Philpott	
PRC 17/38/136-v	21/1/1560		Alex Vyrroll	
[PRC 17/34/167v-8v	2/2/1560	16/12/1560	Wm Hoigges]	
PRC 17/35/95v-6	10/3/1560	31/10/1560	Ste Glover	
PRC 17/34/116v-17v}				
PRC 17/34/142 }	27/3/1560	3/5/1560	Ant Chytenden	
PRC 17/34/120	7/4/1560	17/6/1560	Hen Wylverden	
PRC 17/34/201-4v	8/5/1560	25/7/1560	Jn Wood	
PRC 17/35/120	25/11/1560	17/3/1561	Robt Stockwood	
PRC 17/35/118v-19	14/1/1561	17/3/1561	Wm Glover, eld.	
PRC 17/35/158v-9	8/4/1561	25/5/1561	Tho Lamben	yeoman
PRC 17/35/244	20/4/1561	20/10/1561	Ric Cusshman	
PRC 17/38/122v-3v	27/8/1561	7/3/1565	Ric Black	
PRC 17/35/258-v	20/2/1562?	3/2/1562?	Jn Kete	
PRC 17/36/44-7v }				
PRC 17/36/87v-92 }	2/7/1562	30/7/1562	Ric Asshenden	gentleman
PRC 17/37/139-41	23/1/1563	7/6/1563	Jn Bryckenden	yeoman
PRC 17/38/107-v	1/4/1563	17/1/1565	Joanne Goodall	widow
PRC 17/37/111-v	6/3/---	16/4/1563	Tho Beche	
<del>PRC 17/37/118v</del>	<del>28/4/1563</del>		<del>Edw Bringeborne</del>	
PRC 17/38/3-v	24/5/1563	--/--/1563	Ric Downe	
PRC 17/38/117v-18	16/1/1564	12/2/1565	Tho Holnest	husbandman
PRC 17/37/170-v	20/3/1564	3/10/1564	Robt Wytt	husbandman
PRC 17/39/43v-4	23/3/1564	5/6/1564	Eliz Agnes Yonge	widow
PRC 17/38/87v-8v	8/9/1564	3/10/1564	Jn Carter	
PRC 17/39/73-4v	8/11/1564	25/5/1565	Ste Fourde	
PRC 17/39/249v-50	13/11/1564	7/5/1566	Robt Clerke	
PRC 17/39/162v-3	22/1/1565	11/4/1565	Wm Howman	husbandman
PRC 17/39/18v-20	26/1/1565	14/3/1565	Wm Besfilde	yeoman
PRC 17/39/70v-1	2/4/1565	13/10/1566	Alice Haule	widow
PRC 17/39/115v-16v	8/5/1565	1/11/1565	Hen Dowle	yeoman

PRC 17/39/131-2	7/7/1565	9/10/1565	Tho Barrowe	yeoman
PRC 17/40/61-v	17/8/1565	14/4/1567	Tho Moter	
PRC 17/39/40v	--/--/1565	7/5/1566	Wm Hooke	
PRC 17/39/225-v	16/1/1566	5/9/1566	Wm Bodell	yeoman
PRC 17/39/169-73	22/1/1566	15/5/1566	Ric Tylden	yeoman
PRC 17/39/273-5	13/3/1566	17/11/1566	Wm Fynche	yeoman
PRC 17/39/303-4v	15/4/1566		Elynor Forde	widow
PRC 17/39/275-6	18/4/1566	3/2/1567	Tho Hoigges	
PRC 17/39/102v-4	30/4/1566	6/5/1566	Johane Polley	maid/servt
PRC 17/40/47v	7/5/1566	10/5/1567	Jone Chapman	
PRC 17/40/127v	14/5/1566	12/10/1567	Ric Harte	
PRC 17/39/276-7v	18/10/1566	3/12/1566	Tho Smythe	yeoman
PRC 17/40/106-7v	15/3/1567	25/8/1567	Nic Beche	
PRC 17/40/74v-5v	17/3/1567	26/6/1567	Jn Lambyn	husbandman
PRC 17/40/135v-6v	23/4/1567	24/2/1568	Pet Knyght, eld.	yeoman
PRC 17/40/286-v	--/--/1567	24/3/1569	Jn Aforde	
PRC 17/40/195v-6v	2/3/1568	13/10/1568	Jn Lomas	whitesmith
PRC 32/31/64-5	24/5/1568?	22/9/1569	Joane Haywoode	
PRC 17/40/160v	--/--/1568	2/7/1568	Tho Olyver	
PRC 17/40/334-v	3/9/1568	18/2/1570	Katheryn Kyngewood	widow
PRC 17/40/301-v	12/12/1568	30/4/1569	Jeffery Baker	
PRC 17/40/294-5v	12/4/1569	30/4/1569	Ric Gyles	
PRC 17/40/314v	2/5/1569		Jn Meede	tanner
PRC 17/40/338-v	1/8/1569	5/3/1570	Tho Jervyse	yeoman
PRC 17/41/56-v	27/10/1570	4/12/1570	Jn Wassher	
PRC 17/41/206-7v	8/2/1571	26/3/1571	Jn Byrchelye	tanner
PRC 17/43/172	16/3/1571	17/6/1571	Robt Twaytes	
PRC 17/41/370v-2	11/9/1571	26/12/1571	Robt Haffenden	yeoman
PRC 17/41/239-v		18/2/1572	Jn Pellam	
PRC 17/41/391-v	14/7/1573	25/7/1573	Tho Baytoppe	
PRC 17/42/65-6v	3/8/1573	16/3/1574	Wm Poynett	yeoman
PRC 17/41/263-6v	11/4/1572	7/5/1572	Pet Pyers	yeoman
PRC 17/41/375v	19/7/----	20/10/1572	Eliz Peers	widow
PRC 32/32/165	--/11/1573	9/3/1574	Pet Hayman	husbandman
PRC 17/42/122-4v	13/7/1574	12/10/1574	Wm Gervise	yeoman
PRC 17/42/118-20v	2/11/1574	18/12/1574	Ric Fynche	yeoman
PRC 17/42/343v-4	--/2/1575		Robt Keete	mason
PRC 17/42/213v-14	27/4/1575	8/12/1575	Jone Besfeild	
PRC 17/42/166v-8v	3/5/1575	30/5/1575	Robt Marden	yeoman
PRC 17/42/267-v	9/5/1575	10/4/1576	Hen Mylborne	surgeon
PRC 17/42/195	18/9/1575	24/10/1575	Geo Pyers	
PRC 17/42/194v	22/9/1575	23/10/1575	Robt Holman, son.	
PRC 17/43/170v.	8/6/1576	29/10/1578	Eliz Overey	
PRC 17/45/249v-51	19/11/1577	27/9/1583	Wm Nettar	
PRC 17/42/361-v	26/12/1576	19/3/1578	Jn Crotholl	woodsetter
PRC 17/43/228-9	30/12/1577	1/11/1579	Jn Chrotholl, eld.	yeoman

PRC 17/45/310-12v	6/1/1578	23/9/1584	Ste Cooper	yeoman
PRC 17/43/216v-17v	27/8/1578	11/12/1578	Edw Phyllypp	yeoman
PRC 17/43/170	12/3/1579?	12/5/1579?	Eliz Pope	wd. of Robt
PRC 17/44/32-3	2/11/1580	8/5/1581	Jn Carden	
PRC 17/44/297v	23/1/1581	30/1/1581	Jn Harte	
PRC 17/44/217-20	7/3/1581	29/7/1582	Ric Finche	
[PRC 17/43/121	2/11/1581	5/1/1582	Augustine Mocket]	
PRC 32/34/164	13/1/1582	14/3/1582	Jn Fuller	
PRC 17/44/40-1	21/2/1582	18/6/1582	Jas Wylles	
PRC 17/44/33v-4}	2/4/1582	2/7/1582	Jn Day	tailor
PRC 32/34/250 }	2/4/1582	18/7/1582		
PRC 17/45/356-v	10/4/1582	25/6/1583	Geo Fishenden	
PRC 17/44/95v-6v	1/5/1582	31/5/1582	Ric Wells	yeoman
PRC 17/44/221v-3	5/5/1582	2/7/1582	Hen Badcocke	mercier
PRC 17/51/173v	10/6/1582	7/10/1598	Danyell Coventree	weaver
PRC 17/45/36-41v	16/6/1582	30/6/1582	Wm Henden	yeoman
PRC 17/46/46-v	18/8/1583	31/3/1584	Percivall Foreman	singleman
PRC 32/35/96	20/12/1583	28/4/1584	Wm Leedes	clothier
PRC 17/45/363v-5v	2/3/1584	10/7/1584	Wm Whoball	tailor
PRC 17/45/324v-5	10/5/1584	27/5/1584	Eliz Border	
PRC 17/45/362-v		30/6/1584	Eliz Day	widow
PRC 17/45/386v-7	13/10/1584	6/5/1585	Johan Jervase	widow
PRC 17/45/315-v	4/1/1585	17/1/1585	Jn Inglett	
PRC 17/46/92-v	18/1/1586	17/3/1586	Wm Pratt	tanner
PRC 17/46/200v-1	22/2/1586	11/10/1586?	Jas Haffenden	
PRC 17/46/181v	14/5/1586	11/10/1586	Wm Benchskyn, eld.	husbandman
PRC 17/46/330	10/6/1586	18/10/1586	Tho Woode	tanner
PRC 17/46/383-v	--/--/1586	30/7/1586	Jas Freman	
PRC 17/46/154v-5v	29/9/1586	24/10/1586	Wm Marden	yeoman
PRC 17/47/300-1	7/4/1587	2/5/1587	Jn Mylles	
PRC 17/47/31v	20/4/1587	7/5/1587	Robt Harris	husbandman
PRC 17/47/313v-14		9/7/1587	Edw White	husbandman
PRC 17/47/182v-3	10/2/1588	12/6/1588	Tho Warry	glover
PRC 17/47/285-7	23/4/1588	10/3/1589	Alex Love	yeoman
PRC 17/48/274-5	31/7/1589	27/7/1591	Tho Gyrdler	
PRC 17/48/7-8v	24/11/1589	5/3/1590	Anne Love	wd. of Alex.
PRC 17/49/130v-2	1/12/1589	26/2/1593	Jn Sharpe	yeoman
PRC 17/48/39v-40v	22/1/1590	22/6/1590	Jas Godfrey	
PRC 17/48/70-1	27/1/1590	3/3/1591	Tho Pope	yeoman
PRC 17/48/55-v	17/8/1590	6/2/1591	Agnes Frye	wd. of Clem.
PRC 17/48/102-v	8/10/1590	20/7/1591	Arthur Landes	tanner
PRC 17/49/234-6	14/11/1590	20/2/1593	Robt Pope	yeoman
PRC 17/48/66-v	27/11/1590	16/1/1591	Agnes Yonger	widow
PRC 17/48/56v-7	29/11/1590	2/2/1591	Edw Hart	
PRC 17/48/131v-2	30/11/1590	12/3/1591	Ric Hartlington	husbandman
PRC 17/48/72v-3v	12/12/1590	10/3/1591	Ric Badcock	shipwright



PRC 17/48/305v-6	13/2/1591	20/3/1592	Robt Tiball	
PRC 17/48/214	3/3/1591	5/2/1592	Eliz Peers	wf. of Peter
PRC 17/48/102v-3	25/8/1591	27/9/1591	Robt Keete	cooper
PRC 17/48/122v-3	20/11/1591	14/2/1592	Joanne Greenefield	wife of Tho
PRC 17/48/313	--/--/1591	3/4/1592	Hugh Mason	
PRC 17/48/317-18	6/1/1592	12/4/1592	Ste Simons	narrowweaver
PRC 17/49/220v-1	18/5/1592		Geo Castlen	jurat
PRC 17/48/361-v	23/5/1592	26/12/1592	Jn Buntinge	
PRC 17/48/417-18	16/7/1592	8/9/1592	Marie Slade	wd. of Wm
PRC 17/49/349v-50v	27/10/1592	18/11/1592	Chris Goodall	
PRC 17/49/432v-3	5/1/1593	3/5/1593	Jas Glover	husbandman
PRC 17/49/345-v	12/1/1593	10/4/1593	Tho Browne	yeoman
PRC 17/49/380-v	8/3/1593	31/3/1595	Jn Pellonde	
PRC 17/49/35v-6v	9/8/1593	29/9/1593	Walter Morlen	husbandman
PRC 17/49/453v-4	23(7)/8/1593	31/1/1596	Geo Haffenden	yeoman
PRC 17/49/409-v	1/10/1593	9/12/1594	Mary Hubbard	singlewoman
PRC 17/49/385v-6	28/11/1593	11/4/1595	Tho Greenvill	
PRC 17/50/236-v	8/2/1594?	29/4/1593?	Geo Morgie	
PRC 17/50/140v-1v	27/2/1595	1/4/1595	Ric Pearse	
PRC 17/50/16v-17	20/3/1595	11/4/1595	Wm Humphry	
PRC 17/51/232-v	30/13/1595	9/4/1595	Tho Earle	
PRC 17/51/81v-3v	16/12/1595	22/5/1596	Ric Ramsdenn	
PRC 17/50/392v	13/5/1596	30/4/1597	Wolforme Keete	
PRC 17/50/227v-8	11/9/1596	5/10/1596	Tho Shurt	yeoman
PRC 17/51/15v-16	9/1/1597	17/1/1597	Ric Lewkner	husbandman
PRC 17/51/244-v	22/5/1597	22/7/1597	Mildred Short	widow
PRC 17/50/177-8	16/8/1597	10/10/1597	Jn Warden	yeoman
PRC 17/50/197v-8	--/8/1597	22/10/1597	Tho Warden, ygr	
PRC 17/51/105-v	8/10/1597		Tho Simmons	carpenter
PRC 17/51/26v-7	1/4/1598	27/4/1598	Joane Finche	widow
PRC 17/51/107	23/5/1598	12/7/1598	Chris Bracie	tanner
PRC 17/51/212-v	19/12/1598	28/2/1599	Edw Gattes	
PRC 17/52/170v	26/12/1598	3/11/1600	Katherine Bracy	wd. of Chris
PRC 32/38/208-v	15/5/1599	30/5/1599	Ric Smith	yeoman
PRC 32/38/183	8/7/1599	27/7/1599	Jn Mathewe	husbandman
PRC 17/51/382-v	7/9/1599	26/3/1600	Wm Benskin	husbandman

### Wye Wills

Reference	Date of Will	Date of Probate	Testator	Status
PRC 17/1/88v-9	7/6/1464		Reg at Wode	
PRC 17/1/434v	3/3/1465		Ralph Frenshborn	
PRC 17/1/245-v	27/9/1466		Johanna Castlake	wf. of Jn
PRC 17/1/77v-8	20/5/1467}		Tho Dod	
	6/6/1467 }			
PRC 17/1/428v-9v	20/10/1467		Alice Palmer	widow
PRC 17/2/18v-19	22/4/1469		Jn Gybbes	
PRC 17/2/17v-18	18/9/1469		Jn Baldewyn	

PRC 17/1/302v-3	26/4/1470	28/7/1470	Jn Dod, sen.	
PRC 17/2/56v-7	29/4/1472	18/7/1472	Tho Selke	
PRC 17/2/81v-2	6/5/1472		Hamo Dod	
PRC 17/2/144v-5	18/2/1473	6/3/1473	Robt Barry	
PRC 17/2/175-v	26/6/1473	12/7/1473	Mich Bunteflour	
PRC 17/2/242v	24/10/1473	5/2/1474	Walter Austyn	
PRC 17/2/320v-2v	2/3/1474}	27/6/1474	Tho Wyllok	
	20/8/1473}			
PRC 17/2/323-v	6/3/1474	27/6/1474	And Bery	
PRC 17/2/404-v	8/5/1475	29/7/1475	Hen Pyttoger	
PRC 17/2/419v	12/8/1475	28/9/1475	Hamo German	
PRC 17/3/43	18/1/1476	6/4/1476	Jn Bour-	
PRC 17/2/451	29/1/1476		Tho Chapman	
PRC 17/3/35v-6	22/5/1476	14/10/1476	Hamo Bocher	
PRC 17/3/31-2	16/4/1476		Walter Millar	
PRC 17/3/65-6	31/10/1476	10/2/1477	Nic Barrey, sen.	
PRC 17/3/66	23/12/1476	10/2/1477	Jn Kent	
PRC 17/3/86v-8	10/3/1477	8/5/1477	Wm Serlys	
PRC 17/3/159-v	10/2/1478		Wm Densse	
PRC 17/3/210	21/9/1478	6/11/1478	Katherine White	
PRC 17/3/311-v	10/5/1479	11/9/1479	Ric Bakk	
PRC 17/3/251	22/10/1479	13/12/1479	Tho Hall	
PRC 17/3/266-v	29/10/1479	12/1/1480	Wm at Wode	chapman
PRC 17/3/232-v	29/10/1479	8/12/1479	Wm German	
PRC 17/3/312v-13v	27/11/1479	18/12/1479	Wm Bernys	
PRC 17/3/335-v	29/12/1479	20/3/1480	Tho at Woode	chapman
PRC 17/3/276-v	1/2/1480	20/3/1480	Jn Dodd	
PRC 17/3/276v-7	18/2/1480	20/3/1480	Sim Kete	
PRC 17/3/476v-7	4/8/1483	11/10/----	Ric Edynger	
PRC 17/3/484v-5	8/10/1483	20/12/----	Wm Sandon	
PRC 17/3/492v-3	20/1/1484	16/3/----	Tho Martyn	
PRC 32/3/5	6/9/1484	22/9/1484	Jn Selke	
PRC 32/3/42	5/11/1484	22/3/1485	Agnes German	wd. of Hamd
PRC 32/3/33	6/1/1485	21/2/1485	Margt Stevyns	
PRC 32/3/111v	16/10/1486	21/10/1486	Pet James	
PRC 17/5/79v-80v	26/4/1487	7/10/1488?	Robt Jekyn	
PRC 17/4/159	3/11/1487	26/3/1488	Sampson Halke	
PRC 17/5/80v	15/6/1488	7/10/1488?	Wm Hamond	
PRC 17/5/46v	24/7/1488	15/12/----	Alice Woode	
PRC 17/5/79-v	5/9/1488		Joan Miller	
PRC 32/3/306	1/5/1489	5/12/1491	Jn Andrew	
PRC 17/5/319-20	14/12/1491	26/5/1492	Jn Halke	
PRC 17/5/367v	16/1/1493	15/6/1493	Tho Baker	
PRC 17/5/389v	16/7/1493	7/12/1493	Jn Saunder	
PRC 17/5/389v	16/7/1493	7/12/1493	Jn Saunder	
PRC 17/5/381	20/7/1493	12/10/1493	Wm Parker	
PRC 32/4/21	20/5/1494	6/10/1494	Jn Bedford	
PRC 17/6/76-v	31/10/1494	14/2/1495	Wm Houghlett	
PRC 17/6/98v-9	18/11/1494	23/5/1495	Lawrance Whythed	
PRC 17/6/85-v	31/3/1495	11/4/1495	Johanna Sandon	widow
PRC 17/6/98v	6/4/1495	1/6/1495	Tho Whythed	
PRC 17/6/117v	2/8/1495	19/9/1495	Jn Rolfe	
PRC 17/6/131v-2	15/12/1495	8/2/1496	Laur Alsy	
PRC 17/6/212	6/4/1496	12/12/1496	Cecilia Howlet	wd. of Wm
PRC 17/6/181-v	1/6/1496	23/7/1496	Tho Cooke	
PRC 17/6/229v-30	19/12/1496	17/1/1497	Wm Jancok	
PRC 17/7/62-4	24/6/1498	22/10/1498	And Hawker,eld.	
PRC 32/4/204v	14/8/1498	19/11/1498	And Hawker, jun.	

PRC 17/7/59-v	26/8/1498	22/10/----	Wm Dod	
PRC 17/7/73-4v	6/10/1498	1/12/----	Wm Payn	
PRC 32/5/5	27/12/1498	4/2/1499	Nic Garland	chaplain
PRC 17/7/113-v	2/2/1499	15/4/1499	Margt Rolf	widow
PRC 17/7/106v-7	22/3/1499	15/4/1499	Jas Ryman	
PRC 17/7/225v-6	20/8/1499	15/2/1500	Guy Chapman	
PRC 17/7/173v-4v	20/8/1499	16/11/----	Alice Jancok	widow
PRC 32/5 55	30/8/1499	--/--/1499	Nic Wryght	
PRC 32/5/78-9	1/4/1500	2/5/1500	Johane Foule	widow
PRC 17/8/36-v	26/6/1500		Wm Hart	
PRC 17 8 128v-9	20/10/1500	6/6/----	Alice Hert	widow
PRC 17 8/307v-8	7/11/1500	19/3/1501	Jas Stobyll	
PRC 17/8/161v-2	4/7/1501	8/1/1503	Ric Smethe	
PRC 17 8 139-v	14/9/1501	23/10/1501	Jn Iglyn	
PRC 17 8 306v-7v	7 2/1504	20 3 1504	Tho Clerke	smith
PRC 17/9/64	15/8/1504	24/9/1504	Sim Austyn	
PRC 17/10 30v-1v	28/12/1504	9/9/1505	Ric Elgor	
PRC 17 9 28-9	15 2 1505	31 3 1505	Jn Beverly, sen.	
PRC 17/9 37-v	12/3/1505	25/4/1505	Robt Dryver	
PRC 17 9 36-v	20/3/1505	25/4/1505	Tho Kenet	
PRC 17 10 63v-4v	6 10 1505	15 12/1505	Sim Smethe	
PRC 17 10 81v-2	2 1 1506	9/2/1506	Ric Dodde	
PRC 17 10 102-v	25/1/1506	30/3/1506	Alice Smethe	wd. of Sim
PRC 17 11/2-v	14 11 1508	16 2 1509	Ric Cosyn	
PRC 17 11 122	20 7 1509	17 9 1509	Rog Clerke	
PRC 17 13 85-6	9/10/1509	27/11/1517	Jn Hasten	yeoman
PRC 17 11/268-v	23 1 1510	22 3/1510	Nic Payne	
PRC 17 11 163-v	1 3 1510?	21 4 1510?	Tho Maister	
PRC 17 12 29	17/3/1510	15 3 1512	Wm Fagge	
PRC 17 13 390-1v	30 3 1510	11 5/1510	Tho Bery	
PRC 17 11/248v-50	27 4 1510	1/6 1510?	Johane Bery	wd. of Tho
PRC 17 11 246-v	20 9 1510?	19 3 1510?	Jn Rayman	
PRC 17 11 208v-9v	9 4/1511	-- 5/1511	Agnes Rose	
PRC 32 10 150-v	27 4 1511		Jn Harward	
PRC 17 12 60v-1	14 6 1511	24 11/1511	Hamon Atwode	
PRC 17 11/210v	8/1/1512?	17/5/1511?	Agnes Warref	
PRC 17 12 123-v	10 4 1512	26 6 1512	Alice Halke	widow
PRC 17 12 129-v	1 7 1512	18 12 1512	Johane Dryverse	wd. of Robt
PRC 17 12 254-v	2/8/1512	17/9/1512	Jn Peake	
PRC 17 12 122	19/10 1512	6/3/1513	Johane Abryge	widow
PRC 17 12 165v-6	27 7 1513	30 9 1513	Rog Smeth	
PRC 17 12 268v	6 10 1513	12 11/1513	Tho Dod	
PRC 32 11 75v-6	19/10/1513		Wm Sowreley	chaplain
PRC 17 12 305-6	12 12 1513	13 5 1514	Jn Hert	tanner
PRC 17 12/332v	17 5/1514	19/6/1514	Wm Danby	
PRC 17 12/347-v	2 6 1514	17 9/1514	Jn Saunder, eld.	
PRC 17 12 428-v	20/9 1514	9 12 1514	Hamond Dod	
PRC 17 14 332	--/--/1517		Agnes Maister	wd. of Tho
PRC 17/16 120-v	18 4/1517	19/9 1524	Sim Howlend	
PRC 17/13 6v-7		23 5 1517	Jn Serles	
PRC 17 13/188-9v	20 8 1517	16/10 1518	Jn Beverle	
PRC 17/13 83-v	27/8/1517	15/10 1517	Ste Howlett	
PRC 17/13 84-v	31/8 1517	8 11 1517	Jn Fox	
PRC 17/14 318	22 9 1517		Tho Hall	tanner
PRC 17/14/318v-19	25 9/1517		Enswith Hall	wd. of Tho
PRC 17/13 275v	19/4/1518	5/6 1518	Wm Bryght	
PRC 17/14/125-v	13 6 1518	31 7 1518	Ste Peryn	
PRC 17/13/197v-8	13/7/1518	26/11/1518	Nic Harte	

PRC 17/13/284v-5v	18/7/1518	27/9/1518	Wm Frognall	husbandman
PRC 17/14/141-v	18/8/1518	2/10/1518	Harry Cosyn	husbandman
PRC 17/13/321v-2v	20/8/1518		Robt Dod	
PRC 17/14/141v-2	30/9/1518	8/1/1519	Pet Knyght	
PRC 17/13/129v-30	24/12/1518	7/2/1519	Jn Halke	
PRC 17/14/216-18	11/1/1519		Sir Tho Kempe	knight
PRC 17/15/63v	1/9/1520	12/10/1520	Ric Tracy	
PRC 17/14/283	16/9/1520	12/10/1520	Wm Clere	
PRC 17/14/204-5v	18/12/1520	25/2/1521	Jn Egerden	
PRC 17/15/165	22/4/1522	20/6/1522	Tho Godffrey	
PRC 32/13/128-v	2/6/1522	15/12/1522	Giles Palmer	
PRC 17/15/280v-1	10/1/1523	4/5/1523	Elis Bargar	wf. of Tho
PRC 17/18/87-8	15/3/1523	26/2/1529	Wm Dod	husbandman
PRC 17/15/262v-3		26/3/1523	Elen Bright	(widow)
PRC 17/15/263	20/4/1523	16/5/1523	Ste Cooke	
PRC 17/16/38-v	9/7/1523	26/7/1523	Jn Churcheman	
PRC 17/16/37v-8	11/7/1523	26/7/1523	Wm Turnor	
PRC 17/16/308v-9	18/4/1524	9/5/1524	Tho Pouchon	
PRC 17/16/233v-4v	30/1/1525	17/6/1525	Jn Adam	
PRC 17/16/301-2v	13/3/1525	13/5/1525	Tho a Deale	
PRC 17/17/245v-6	26/12/1526	28/1/1527	Agnes Howlen	widow
PRC 17/18/153-v	3/1/1528	23/5/1528	Wm Parker	
PRC 17/18/252v-3	10/6/1528	20/11/1529	Jn Bolden	
PRC 17/18/74-v	3/10/1528	16/11/1528	Wm Wever	
PRC 17/18/175v-6	15/1/1529	20/3/1529	Wm Philpott	
PRC 17/19/101v	18/4/1530	23/7/1530	Tho Dod	labourer
PRC 17/19/120-v	4/6/1530	10/10/1530	Ste Roff	
PRC 17/19 229-v	9/10/1530		Jn Frysell	
PRC 17 19/156v	--/3/1531		Alex Edryche	
PRC 17/19/144	8/4/1531	19/4/1531	Sim Goldefynche	
PRC 17/19 251-2		12/10/1532	Alice Serlis	wd. of Jn
PRC 17/19/303v	17/12/1532	17/2/1533	Harry Herynge	
PRC 17/28/51-2	27/4/1533?	19/11/1552?	Pet Bocher	
PRC 17/19 391-2	21/8/1533	22/9/1533	Tho Serlys, eld.	
PRC 32/16 29-30	27/8/1533		Hamond Rolfe	
PRC 17/20/229-30	14/3/1534	30/4/1536	Wm German	tanner
PRC 17/20/180v	7/6/1535		Hamon Mentyll	
PRC 32 15 362	13/9/1535	20/2/1537	Rog Twisden	gent
PRC 17/21/110v-12	15/10/1536		Johane Alarde	widow
PRC 17/21/92v-3	28/11/1536	13/1/1537?	Elyne Fagge	widow
PRC 17/21 53v-4	2/4/1537		Jas Hawkyns	
PRC 17/22/139v-40	30/4/1539	10/10/1541	Eliz Hardeye	widow
PRC 17/21/243v	31/7/1539	--/1539	Jn Bocher, eld.	
PRC 17/23/62-3	20/5/1540	8/5/1541	Wm Willis	
PRC 17/22/272-v	--/1541?		Jane Fynche	
PRC 17/22/206v-7	15/4/1541	27/3/1541?	Ambrose Amys	
PRC 17/23/71-3	7/8/1541	17/1/1542	Nic Coke	tanner
PRC 17/25/72-3v	14/7/1542	17/5/1550	Wm Bett	
PRC 17/30/191-v	--/1543	5/5/1550	Wm Kennet	
PRC 17/23/161-2v	31/8/1544	--/11/1544	Johane Whittington	widow
PRC 17/25/6-v	7/1/1545	29/3/1545	Wm Shitforde	
PRC 17/25/12-v	18/4/1545	16/6/1545	Tho Smyde	
PRC 17/25/47-v	3/5/1545	26/9/1546	Wm Dodinge	priest
PRC 17 25/11v	27/7/1545	28/9/1545	Johane Alsey	
PRC 17/26/120-1	2/9/1545		Ric Halke, eld.	
PRC 17/23/220-v	17/9/1545	28/10/1545	Jn Averye	
PRC 17/24/82v-3	28/9/1545	18/5/1545?	Sampson Fowle	
PRC 17/24/84v	24/11/1545		Wm Pyttocke	

PRC 17/26/57-8	4/3/1546	14/5/1548	Eliz Wylles	widow
PRC 17/24/94-v}	21/4/1546	7/6/1546	Wm Bocher	
PRC 17/24/181 }				
PRC 17/26/48v-9	9/8/1546	2/6/1548	Eliz Honny	
PRC 17/26/38v-40	15/8/1547	1/12/1547	Phil Dence	yeoman
PRC 17/26/40-v	7/10/1547	1/12/1547	Ste Chylton	
PRC 17/26/248-v	23/11/1548	15/1/1549	Ric Wylde	
PRC 17/26/281-v	13/4/1549	19/10/1549	Wm Whythede, eld.	
PRC 17/28/50v-1	--/1549	16/6/1552	Alice Sprotte	widow
PRC 17/27/192v-3	29/3/1550	16/7/1550	Wm Alchyon	
PRC 17/27/193v	10/4/1550	16/7/1550	Nic German	
PRC 17/27/211	24/4/1550	17/10/1550	Jn Bocher	
PRC 17/27/109	17/3/1551	28/5/1551	Sim Alsey	
PRC 17/27/154	23/5/1551	29/9/1551	Tho Cole	
PRC 17/29/108v	19/8/1552	14/9/1552	Raffe Brette	
PRC 17/29/1v-2v	3/5/1553	3/7/1553	Wm Allen	yeoman
PRC 17/29/142v-3	14/2/1554	11/4/1554	Ste Alcocke	
PRC 17/30/156v-7v	15/2/1555	30/6/1555	Chris Adeale	
PRC 17/30/97-v	10/4/1555	29/5/1555	Edw Broman	
PRC 17/30/173-v	31/5/1555	16/12/1555	Tho Halle	yeoman
PRC 17/30/216v-17	20/11/1555	4/3/1556	Robt Jaffraye	husbandman
PRC 17/30/110v-11v	3/6/1556	5/11/1556	Jn Woodcocke	
PRC 17/32/268v-9	29/10/1556	25/2/1557	And Coke	
PRC 17/35/21v-2v	9/11/1556	3/2/1558	Ric Wattes	
PRC 17/30/127v-8		16/5/1557	Jn Mathewe	
PRC 17/32/225v-6	4/9/1557	14/2/1558	Jn Bolden	
PRC 17/33/57	25/10/1557	16/11/1557	Jn Cowdell	
PRC 17/33/245v-6	24/10/1558	31/1/1559	Geo Smede	yeoman
PRC 17/33/227-v	15/11/1558	12/1/1559	Richardyne Crofte	widow
PRC 17/33/96	--/1558	2/3/1559	Wm Hubbarde	
PRC 17/35/217-v	--/1558	16/7/1561	Alice Spenser	widow
PRC 17/33/165-6	10/1/1559?	2/3/1559?	Ric Wells	shearman
PRC 17/34/107-v	4/2/1559?	31/1/1559?	Ste Tilden	
PRC 17/34/140		16/5/1559	Alice Davye	
PRC 17/34/261v-2	12/7/1559	31/1/1560	Tho Browne	
PRC 17/36/24	20/2/1561	8/7/1562	Alice Egerden	wd. of Wm
PRC 17/35/140-1	25/3/1561	30/4/1561	Wm Sharpe, eld.	
PRC 17/35/191v-2v	30/3/1561	9/10/1561	Phil Weston	
PRC 17/35/103v-4v	4/4/1561	30/4/1561	Jn Deale	
PRC 17/35/175v-6	12/5/1561	7/7/1561	Wm Kempe	
PRC 17/35/233-v	9/8/1561	26/12/1561	Jn Apantrye, eld.	
PRC 17/36/63-4	8/12/1561	2/10/1562	Eliz German	widow
PRC 17/37/8-v	23/2/1562	14/10/1562	Chris Wood, son of	yeoman of Queen' s Chamber
PRC 17/37/4-v	12/4/1562	14/10/1562	Jn Finnett	
PRC 17/37/118v	28/4/1563		Edw Bringeborne	
PRC 17/38/37-v	9/8/1563	15/12/1563	Agnes Pantry	widow
PRC 17/39/187v-8	11/4/1565	25/5/1565	Jn Saverye	
PRC 17/39/216v	15/9/1565	23/12/1565	Tho Dale	clerk
PRC 17/39/77-v	19/9/1565	19/10/1565	Ric Martyn	yeoman
PRC 17/39/224v		17/10/1565	Wm Dorrell	
PRC 17/39/62v-3	4/4/1566	27/4/1566	Edw Bellamy	weaver
PRC 17/39/112-v		15/5/1566	Edm Haye	fletcher
PRC 17/40/161-2v	7/4/1567	5/4/1568	Tho Serles	gent
PRC 17/40/63-4	22/5/1567	23/7/1567	Tho Mylles	yeoman
PRC 17/41/26-9	28/1/1568	26/9/1570	Robt Searlys	clerk, BD
PRC 17/40/280v-1	3/6/1568	13/10/1568	Wm Glover	clothier

PRC 17/40/287-8	22/6/1568	13/10/1568	Jn Sharpe	yeoman
PRC 17/41/49v-51	20/9/1570	8/2/1571	Ric Bratt	yeoman
PRC 17/41/132-v	16/10/1571	1/12/1571	Ric Woodcock	
PRC 17/41/390-1	25/2/1573	3/4/1573	Jas Parkes	yeoman
PRC 17/42/29v-30	2/4/1573	1/7/1573	Jn Potter	
PRC 17/42/338v-40v	27/2/1574	4/7/1577	Wm Mylse	
PRC 17/42/136-v	4/4/1574	20/7/1574	Hen Marche	
PRC 17/42/316v-17v	12/12/1575	9/1/1577	Johane Beverley	widow
PRC 17/43/192-v	28/3/1576	18/6/1576	Alice Mantell	widow
PRC 17/43/86v-7	12/7/1577	16/10/1577	Jn Mylls	yeoman
PRC 17/43/181-v	3/4/1578	9/9/1578	Alice Martyn	wd. of Ric
PRC 17/43/203-6	20/9/1578	8/12/1578	Ric Hawker, ygr	yeoman
PRC 17/43/419v-20v		18/7/1580	Tho Sharpe	
PRC 17/44/38v-9	18/7/1581	17/7/1582	Wm Collyns	yeoman
PRC 17/44/298-9v	20/11/1581	29/11/1581	Wm Alcock	butcher
PRC 32/34/207	24/5/1582	16/7/1582	Wm Gates	yeoman
PRC 17/44/308v-9	25/9/1582	27/11/1582	Hamon Wyllson	
PRC 17/44/191-2	27/10/1582	4/7/1583	Rog Kingsland	blacksmith
PRC 32/35/71	26/2/1584	22/7/1584	Wm Bannyster	yeoman
PRC 17/45/203v-4	21/4/1584	29/5/1584	Greg Cooke	yeoman
PRC 17/45/371v-2	25/6/1584	4/7/1584	Ant Easton	yeoman
PRC 17/46/44-v	14/10/1584	20/11/1584	Jn Hardres	glover
PRC 17/46/85-6	20/1/1586	6/4/1586	Jn Dunck	
PRC 17/47/248-v	2/3/1586	5/3/1589	Ste Gyles	butcher
PRC 17/47/302-4	19/4/1586	22/2/1587	Greg Brett	yeoman
PRC 17/46/379v-80v	3/6/1586	27/7/1586	Geo Egerden	
PRC 17/47/28v	13/3/1587	29/4/1587	Rodolphe Watson	
PRC 17/47/94-v	15/10/1587	29/11/1587	Ric Jerman	shoemaker
PRC 17/47/146v-7	19/3/1588	2/5/1588	Laur Byrte	husbandman
PRC 17/47/190-1		3/6/1588	Tho Kennett	husbandman
PRC 17/47/180-v	1/1/1588	3/7/1588	Paul Pylcher	yeoman
PRC 17/47/234v-5	7/3/1589	10/4/1589	Geo Dawson	yeoman
PRC 17/48/352-v	18/3/1589	13/1/1591	Ric Hawke	
PRC 17/48/137-v	--/--/1590?	12/1/1591	Agnes Bowes	widow
PRC 17/49/225-6	2/9/1590	17/9/1591	Sybill Alcock	spinster
PRC 17/51/216-17v	8/4/1591	14/12/1597	Kath Sharpe	wd. of Jn
PRC 17/49/427-v	20/4/1592	13/8/1594	Kath Swan	widow
PRC 17/48/350v-1	18/9/1592	5/10/1592	Hen Wood	
PRC 17/49/209-10v	10/1/1593	23/7/1593	Robt Allard	yeoman
PRC 17/50/25v-6v	15/7/1593	13/5/1594	Agnes Bridgman	widow
PRC 17/50/234v-6	21/9/1593	14/5/1595	Joan Kingsland	wd. of Rog
PRC 17/49/377v-8	22/4/1594	11/4/1595	Helen Allard	widow
PRC 17/50/5	30/4/1594	28/6/1594	Tho Tirroll	
PRC 17/50/164		8/10/1594	Jn Jones	gardener
PRC 17/50/59v-61	16/1/1596	3/5/1596	Jn Achely	butcher
PRC 17/49/383	19/4/1596	21/5/1596	Greg Winter	
PRC 17/50/74-5	22/4/1596	17/5/1596	Jn Wattson	
PRC 17/50/401v	--/4/1597	9/5/1597	Tho March	
PRC 17/51/295v-6v	10/10/1597		Wm Swanne	gent
PRC 32/38/223v-4v	22/6/1598	31/3/1599	Wm Morehouse	gent
PRC 17/51/360-2v	27/11/1598	8/9/1599	Jn Kempe	esquire
PRC 17/52/195v-8	20/1/1600	9/4/1600	Tho Tyser	gent
PRC 17/52/36v-7	17/6/1600	18/8/1600	Ric Smyth	
PRC 17/52/124-5v	12/8/1600	10/9/1600	Ric Harrison	yeoman

## Whitstable Wills

Reference	Date of will	Date of probate	Testator	Status
PRC 17/1/29-v	24/7/1455		Jn Salman	
PRC 17/1/31	4/6/1459		Wm Stephyn	
PRC 17/1/119	8/7/1461		Johanne Stephyn	wf. of Robt
PRC 17/1/282	12/8/1462		Tho Elmer	
PRC 17/1/125	5/7/1463		Jn Edward, sen.	
PRC 17/1/61	23/4/1464		Jn Porker	
PRC 17/1/438	27/2/1466		Tho Roger, jun.	
PRC 17/1/74	18/5/1467		Wm Brodstrete	
PRC 17/1/319 }				
PRC 17/2/5 }	6/6/1469		Tho Baker	
PRC 17/2/132	27/9/1470	27/9/1471	Jn Elmer	
PRC 17/2/144	4/6/1472	26/1/1473	Jn Bolle	
PRC 17/2/199	3/11/1472	20/11/1473	Jn Carewe	
PRC 17/2/182	4/1/1473	13/10/1473	Wm Stevyn	
PRC 17/2/178	8/1/1473	8/5/1473	Jn Taylour	
PRC 17/2/210	19/4/1473	7/11/1473	Jn Moyse	
PRC 17/2/198	4/5/1473	20/11/1473	Ric Aleyn	
PRC 17/2/243	16/11/1473	5/2/1474	Wm Whithals, jun.	
PRC 17/2/299	27/1/1474	13/6/1474	Jn Bredford	
PRC 17/2/323	28/3/1474	4/6/1474	Dionisia Bretford	wd. of Jn
PRC 17/2/426-v	13/2/1475	28/10/1475	Salamon Ryche	
PRC 17/2/384-v	2/4/1475	17/4/1475	Wm Whithale	
PRC 17/2/414-v	15/4/1475	15/7/1475	Jn Smelt	
PRC 17/3/126-v	20/2/1478	19/7/1478	Ric Fanyng	
PRC 32/2/457	12/9/1479		Pet Jarmyn	
PRC 17/3/311v-12	1/11/1479	15/4/1480	Elias Balser	
PRC 17/5/210v	4/2/1481	28/1/1491	Tho Roger	
PRC 32/3/23	25/6/1484	11/1/1485	Jn Stephyn	
PRC 17/4/121-2	1/6/1487	--/8/1487	Tho Martyn, sen.	
PRC 17/4/128	16/10/1487	12/1/1488?	Hamond Aleyn	
PRC 17/4/170v-2	25/1/1488		Ric Elmere	
PRC 17/5/37v	22/6/1489	19/9/----	Wm Moys	
PRC 17/5/333	20/11/1491	2/11/1492?	Joan Coke	widow
PRC 17/5/402-v	10/11/1493	21/2/----	Wm German	
PRC 17/5/395	6/12/1493	18/1/1494	Jn Copyn	
PRC 17/5/395	13/12/1493	18/1/1494	Ric Coting	
PRC 17/6/8v	24/12/1493	20/5/1494	Jn Roger	
PRC 17/6/2-3v	20/2/1494	20/4/1494	Alice Stephyn	widow
PRC 17/6/1	15/3/1494	19/4/1494	Hamond Pyers	
PRC 17/6/55v-6	19/3/1494		Tho Mersh	
PRC 17/6/1	20/3/1494	19/4/1494	Katherine Piers	
PRC 17/6/23v-4	13/5/1494	8/6/1494	Wm Gentyll	
PRC 17/6/114v-15	13/2/1495	9/9/1495	Jn Mepeham	
PRC 17/6/106v	10/4/1495	9/6/1495	Walt Elmer	
PRC 17/6/125-v	9/7/1495	12/9/1495	Wm Felton	
PRC 17/6/241	8/10/1496	11/2/1497	Alice Elmer	wd? of Ric
PRC 17/6/263v-4	20/2/1497	20/5/----	Alice Gentill	widow
PRC 17/7/7v	9/1/1498	17/3/1498	Margery Aleyn	
PRC 17/7/22v	10/3/1498	12/5/1498	Hen Colyn	
PRC 17/7/58v-9	7/7/1498	6/10/----	Katherine Blande	
PRC 17/7/38-v	--/--/1498	21/8/----	And Aylmer	
PRC 17/7/120v-1	7/4/1499	24/5/----	Jn Smelt	
PRC 17/7/207-v	12/6/1500	24/7/1500	Jas German, sen.	

PRC 17/11/291	25/9/1500?		Tho Martyn	
PRC 17/16/352-3	10/12/1500		Chris Aleyn	
PRC 17/8/165-6	19/10/1501	4/12/1501	Wm Palmer	
PRC 17/16/346	3/11/1501		Ric Riche	
PRC 17/8/189	28/12/1501	16/4/1502	Isabel Whetals	wf. of Tho
PRC 17/8/206v	20/6/1502	23/7/1502	Jn Colyn	
PRC 17/9/94v-5	7/12/1504	11/1/1505	Jn Hockyng	
PRC 17/9/46-v	28/3/1505	13/5/1505	Juliane Baker	wd. of Jn
PRC 17/10/41v-2	20/7/1505	22/11/1505	Jn Sayer	
PRC 17/10/192v }		9/1/1507		
PRC 17/11/215 }	18/8/1505	9/1/1512	Jn Pette	
PRC 17/10/126-v	13/2/1506	13/6/1506	Jas Smyth	
PRC 17/10/105-v	8/3/1506	24/4/1506	Jn Samwell	
PRC 17/10/126v-7	12/5/1506	13/6/1506	Ellys Balsar	
PRC 17/9/254v-5v	18/3/1507?	13/11/1507	Maculyne Balsar	
PRC 17/9 296v-7	3/3/1508	1/4/1508	Ste Bode	
PRC 17 9/347	22/12/1508	13/1/1509	Tho Glynott	
PRC 17 11/316	12 6/1509	22/6/1509	Jn Cooke	
PRC 17/11/118	12/7/1509	4/8/1509	And Goldysborowe	
PRC 17/11 196	--/--/1510	26/10/1510	Austen Notte	
PRC 17/12 46	10/7/1511	20/12/1511	Robt Balsere	
PRC 17/12/107	8/5/1512	12/6/1512	Ric Balsar	
PRC 17 12/131	11/11/1512	8/1/1513	Jn Fylbert	
PRC 17 12 287	12 12/1513	4 2/1514	Jn Pers	
PRC 17 12/338	12/4/1514	4 8/1514	Sim Hokkyng	
PRC 17 13 149	--/--/1518	20 6/1518	Jn Baker	
PRC 17 13/186	20 8/1518	16/10/1518	Wm Hockyng	
PRC 17 13 331	15/10/1518	13 11 1518	Tho Elmer	
PRC 32 13 97	1 9/1519	16 6/1522	Wm Edward	
PRC 17 13 336	18 2 1520	31/3/1520	Margt Samewell	
PRC 17 14 231	9/4/1520	21/4/1520	Ste Swanton	
PRC 17 15 111	3/1/1522	24 1/1522	Jn Bradcock	
PRC 17 16 177	28 2/1522?	10 7/1524	Jn Frenshe	
PRC 17/14 335	10/4/1522	16 5/1522	Wm Roger	
PRC 17/15/235	--/--/1523		Tho Alen	
PRC 17/16/3	6 7 1523	18 7 1523	Jn Breade	
PRC 17 17/38	12 9 1525	16 12 1525	Wm Balsar	
PRC 17/17 95	26/6/1526		Wm Lucas	
PRC 17/17/188	22/1/1527	4 4 1527	Ric Hokkyng, eld.	
PRC 17/17/179	11/2/1527	30 3 1527	Jn Marshe, eld.	
PRC 17/17/187	4/3/1527	30/3 ----	Pet Harry	
PRC 17/17/157	--/4/1527	4/4/1527	Margery Haliday	widow
PRC 17/17/157	--/--/1527	4/5/1527	Johane Elmer	widow
PRC 17/18/160	4/6/1528	17/10/1528	Wm Gylmyn	
PRC 17/18/155	18/7/1528	8/10/1528	Andreas Moyes	
PRC 17/18/88	15/12/1528	23/1/1529	Ric Bownd	
PRC 17/19/2	9/12/1529	5/2/1530	Jn Hokken, eld.	
PRC 17/18/266	12/12/1529	5/2 1530	Jn Smelt	
PRC 17/19/51	7/12/1530	6/5/1531	Jn Saynt	
PRC 17/18/274	20/1/1530	5/3/1530	Wm Meken	
PRC 17/19/96	19/4/1530	2/7/1530	Jn Coppyn	
PRC 17/19/228	8/7/1531	18/11/1531	Jn Goodhew	
PRC 17/19/194	22/1/1532	23/4/1532	Wm Able	
PRC 17/19/204	10/4/1532	4/5/1532	Ric Gylmyn	
PRC 17/19/263	30/9/1532	26/10/1532	Salmon Lytelwodd	
PRC 17/19/323	20/12/1532	26/4/1533	Wylmyn Gylmyn	widow
PRC 17/19/327	4/2/1533	4/7/1533	Johane Goodhew	widow
PRC 17/19/328	11/4/1533	24/5/1533	Jn Paramore	



PRC 32/16 64	14/1/1534	18/5/----	Johane Goodhewe	
PRC 32/16/50	14/3/1534	7/6/----	Tho Colyn	yeoman
PRC 32/16/51	22/3/1534	22/6/----	Wm Knepe	
PRC 17/20 71	10/5/1534	21/11/1534	Ric Bowle	
PRC 17/20 20	2/11/1534	21/11/1534	Herry Moys	
PRC 17/20/230	20/3/1536	1/4/1536	Johane Harry	widow
PRC 17/22 24	15/9/1539	12/1/1540	Chris Kennet	
PRC 17/24 1	19/4/1540	5/7/1540	Jn Andrewe	
PRC 17 21 222	27/7/1540	26/2/1541	Wm Whytalls	
PRC 17 24 2	3/3/1541	22/3/----	Alice Johnson	widow
PRC 17 30 33	14/3/1541?	28/12/1549	Tho Wood	
PRC 17 23 254	30/10 1541	20/2/1545	Jn Boll	
PRC 17 22 305	19/11/1541	15/5/1543	Tho Hockyn	
PRC 17 23 191	1/7/1543		Margt Burton	widow
PRC 17 23 208 }				
PRC 17 25 82 }	13/2/1544?	9 12 1544?	Robt At Hawe	yeoman
PRC 17 25 86	--/--/1544	3 5 1544	Wm A Church	husbandman
PRC 17 23 38	--/--/1544	3 5 1544	Jn Swanton	mariner
PRC 17 23 127	--/--/1544	27 7 1544	Tho Alen	mariner
PRC 17 25 110	17/4/1545	8 8 1545	Jn Browne	mariner
PRC 17 25 116		5 6 1545	Jn Sexten	shipwright
PRC 17 24 30	12/7/1545	30 3 1546	Jn Collyn	husbandman
PRC 17 26 43	5 1/1546	28 4 1547	Ric Mason	labourer
PRC 17 24 158	4 4 1546	26 4 1546	Wm Freman	labourer
PRC 17 25 155	22/9/1546	11 5/1547	Wm Napleton	mariner
PRC 17 25 66	2 11/1546	7 12 1546	Geo Coppyn	husbandman
PRC 17 26 41	7 1/----	20/12 1547	Katherine Firminger	
PRC 17 26 127	26/3/1548	24 3/1549	Edw Bredyn	
PRC 17 26 169	10/5/1548	17 5 1548	Tho Collen	
PRC 17 26 85	13 6/1548	18 7 1548	Ric Swanton	
PRC 17 29 174	16 8/1549	29 9 1554	Jn Moyse, eld.	
PRC 17 26 336	8 9/1549	1 2 1551	Jn Norwodde	
PRC 17 29 231	--/--/1550	23 11/1550	Alice Athawe	widow
PRC 17 27 45	20 2/1550	19 4 1551	Robt Whittallis	
PRC 17 29 110	14 2/1551?	21 12/1551	And Bredcocke	
[PRC 17 30 46	28 4/1553	14 6 1553	Hen Lasebe]	
PRC 17 30 18(pt.1)	25 5/1553	28 6 1553	Tho Bolle	
PRC 17 29 235	31/10/1553	13 12 1553	Wm Marten	
PRC 17 30 67	8 1/1555	2 3 1555	Jn Norwode	
PRC 17 30 64	25/1/1555	23 2/1555	Tho Tarye	
PRC 17 30 178	14 8/1555	30 10/1555	Jn Saver	
PRC 17 31 14	14/2/1556	16 10/1557	Agnes Moyce	widow
PRC 17 30 50	20/2/1556	16 6/1556	Jn Athawe	
PRC 17 30 250	15 3 1556	16 6/1556	Tho Litlewood	
PRC 17 30 276	15 5 1556	10 4 1557	Katherine Boll	widow
PRC 17 32 152	24/9/1556	5 12/1556	Wm Athawle	yeoman
PRC 17 32 262	--/--/1556-7	27 10/1557	Wm Selherste	
PRC 17 32 234	6/3 1557?	2/4/1557?	Jas Peers	
PRC 17 35/1 }				
PRC 17 35/7 }	16/3/1557?	18 4/1557	Ric Goldinge	
PRC 17/34 22	3 3/1558	7/9/1558	Ric London	
PRC 17/32 81v	26/11/1558	17/12/1558	Jn Porte	
PRC 17/33/164	20 3/1559?	3/6/1559	Ric Blowfelde	
PRC 16 29(orig.)}				
PRC 17/34 237 }	11/6/1559	13/7/1559	Wm Gyllman	
PRC 17/35/66,64v	21/12/1559	20/1/1560	Alice Shopwashe	widow
PRC 16/29(orig.)}				
PRC 17/34/238v }	31/12/1559	3/2/1560	Geo Church	bach.

PRC 17/34/237	19/1/1560	20/1/1560	Wm Symon	
PRC 16/33(orig.)}				
PRC 17/35/134,135v}	13/3/1561?	20/4/1561	Phyllippe Church	
PRC 17/35/175v	13/4/1561	26/6/1561	Robt Hallydaye	
PRC 17/35/141v,143	24/2/1562?	7/6/1562?	Jn Swanton, eld.	
PRC 17/36 20	7/4/1562	27/6/1562	Jn Payne	
PRC 17/36/37	12/6/1562	1/9/1562	Tho Swanton	
PRC 17/37/3	14/7/1562	10/10/1562	Jn Haule	
PRC 17/37/19	31/12/1562	9/1/1563?	Margery Gylman	wd. of Wm
PRC 32/30 222v	26/7/1564		Nic Cryspe	esq.
PRC 17 38 146	9/8/1564	23/10/1564	Nic Lyttlewood	
PRC 17 38 82v	1/11/1564	13/1/1565	Wm Wicks	
PRC 17 39 165-v	8/1/1566	12/1/1566	Jn See	
PRC 17/39 71	2/4/1566	25/5/1566	Jn Baker	
PRC 17 40 55v	3/4/1567	3/5/1567	Jone Swanton	widow
PRC 17 40 131v	21/5/1567	10/1/1568	Jn Mershe	
PRC 17 40 184	20/4/1568	12/6/1568	Wm Lytlewoodd	
PRC 17 40 207	17/5/1568	16/10/1568	Martyn Myles	
PRC 17 40 337	1/3/1569	18/2/1570	Tho Ilenden	
PRC 17 40 349	7/4/1570	17 4/1570	Jn Smelte	
PRC 17 41 16	28/5/1570	12/8/1570	Wm Coppyn	
PRC 17 41 45	6/1/1571		Walt Gape	
PRC 17 41 169	16 2/1571		Tho Bassett	
PRC 17 41 306	3/4/1571	18/1/1573	Margt Coppin	widow
PRC 17 42 18	26/12 1572	27/6/1573	Katheren Tarrye	widow
PRC 17 42 259	20/2/1574		Wm Hollowaye	
PRC 17 43 282	1/5/1580	27/5/1580	Jn Bredge	
PRC 17 43 293	29/5/1581	13 7/1581	Jn Smelt	
PRC 17 44 73	10/10 1581	17/1/1582	Bastyan Bonde	
PRC 17 45 21	4/3/1582	26/1/1583	Jn Turner	
PRC 17 44 2	15/5 1582	16/6/1582	Tho Burr	
PRC 17 46 47v	2 9/1584	19/1/1585	Helinor Basset	widow
PRC 17 46 354v	4 6/1585	17/3/1586	Jn Gylman, eld.	yeoman
PRC 17 46 115v	3 6/1586	15 6/1586	Ric Spencer	
PRC 17 47 38	21 8/1586	10 6/1587	Wm Clifforde	
PRC 17 46 220	9 12/1586	13/2/1587	Tho Roger	
PRC 17 47 78	3 5/1587	2/12/1587	Jn Gale	
PRC 17 47 100v	17/9/1587	17 1/1588	Catherine Stevens	widow
PRC 17 47 99v	4 12/1587	13/2/1588	Tho Collyns	yeoman
PRC 17 47 225	19/2/1589	4/3/1589	Alice Turnor	widow
PRC 17 48 45v	7/4/1590	6/6/1590	Tho Spice	
PRC 17/48 203v	27/7/1590	5 9/1590	Mathewe Pie	yeoman
PRC 17 48 192	14 8 1590	20 9/1590	Jn Stedman	husbandman
PRC 17 48 49	29 9/1590	31/10/1590	Tho Godman	
PRC 17/48/407	21/10/1591	11/3 1592	David Robertes	yeoman
PRC 17 50/56v	14/10 1593	13/5/1594	Robt Tibbold	labourer
PRC 17 50/270	4/10/1594	29/9/1595	Jn Menfeld	
PRC 17/49/398	5/11/1594	2/12/1594	Robt Spice	
PRC 17 51/111	30/12/1596	17/5/1597	Jn Hallsnothe	yeoman
PRC 17/51/163	17/10/1598	18/11/1598	Mich Church	labourer
PRC 17/51/284	30/10/1598	4/6/1599	Timothy Lowe	yeoman
PRC 17/51/419v	13/3/1599	3/4/1600	Margaret Menfeild	wd. of Jn
PRC 17/51/370	2/12/1599	29/12/1599	Wm Simons	husbandman
PRC 17/51/333	29/12/1599	8/1/1600	Joane Sharpie	widow
PRC 17/51/383v	19/3/1600	19/4/1600	Wm Bradlye	

## Chislet Wills

Reference	Date of Will	Date of Probate	Testator	Status
PRC 17/1/161v	2/11/1460		Dionisia Dobbyn	wd. of Ste
PRC 17/1/95v-6v	11/9/1463		Tho Beggynden	
PRC 17/1/153-4	12/4/1464		Tho Cok	
PRC 17/1/191	10/5/1464		Ric Dobyng	
PRC 17/1/50v-1v	12/12/1464	19/10/1465	Jn Gylbart	
PRC 17/1/50-v	6/2/1465		Laur Nasshe	
PRC 17/1/185-v	1/3/1465		Tho Litylwod	
PRC 17/1/489v-90v	20/4/1468		Ric Undyrdowne	
PRC 17/1/287v-8	16/3/1469	17/5/1470	Robt Dod	
PRC 17/1/375v-7	18/4/1471	22/6/1471	Tho Bonior	
PRC 17/2 434-v	20/3/1475	2/12/1475	Tho Litolwode	
PRC 17/2 442-v	11/10/1475	16/12/1475	Johanna Notynggham	wf. of Wm
PRC 17 3/25v-6	6/5/1476		Laur Austyn	
PRC 17 3 172v	12/4/1477	27/6/1478	Tho Dovyng	
PRC 17 3 226-v	21/10/1479	20/11/1479	Nic Copyn	
PRC 17 3 281v-2v	22/10/1479	8/1/1480	Tho Dodd	
PRC 17 3 259v	24/10/1479	29/1/1480	Ste Skynner	
PRC 17 3 431-2	28/6/1480	24/1/1483	Ric Knyght	yeoman
PRC 17 3 387v-8	28/7/1481	22/12/----	Robt Graunt	
PRC 17 4 23v	2/5/1484	18 11/1484	Wm Pegyll	
PRC 17 4 48v	16 8/1484		Jn Cantes	
PRC 17 4 81-v	5/2/1486	6/5/1486	Alice Skynner, sen.	
PRC 17 5 19v	23/1/1487	28/7/1487	Jn Warner	
PRC 17 5 398v	6/5/1488	2/5/1489	Johanna Frye	wd. of Wm
PRC 17 5 178-v	30/4/1489	24/10/1489	Jn Hobbe	
PRC 17 5 133v-4	11/5/1489	28/2/1490	Alice Hobbe	wd. of Jn
PRC 32 3 252-3	6/12/1489	28/3/1490	Tho Consaunt, sen.	
PRC 32 3 264	17/7/1490	25/10/1490	Ric Fayre ware	
PRC 17 5 337v	22/9/1492	12/1/1493	Joanna Warner	
PRC 17 6 47-v	22 3/1494	14 2/1495	Tho Stede	
PRC 17 9 84-5	8/6/1496	9 11/1504	Margery Steid	widow
PRC 17 6 207-v	30 9/1496	24 11/1496	Alice Knyght	widow
PRC 17 6 305v	27/2/1497		Tho Consant	
PRC 17 7 6v-7	29/12/1497	10 3/1498	Robt Cobbe, ygr	
PRC 17 7 42v-3	26/1 1498	6/10/----	Juliane Grenham	wd. of Tho
PRC 17 8 11-v	17 4 1498	14/11/----	Cicely Skynner	widow
PRC 17 7 172v-3	30/4/1498	24 5/----	Jn Crowcher	
PRC 17 7 133v-4v	9/5/1499	29 7 ----	Jn a Bere	
PRC 17 7 185v-6	28 9 1499	3 1/----	Tho Knyght	
PRC 17 10 113v-14	30 3 1500	9 5/1506	Sim Graunte	
PRC 17 8 80v	18 1/1501	20 2/----	Wm Rooke	
PRC 17 8 61	6 4/1501	13/6/----	Wm Hersing	
PRC 17 8 80-v	11 4 1501	13 6/----	Tho Abregge	
PRC 17 8 206	14 1 1502	25 6/1502	Edm Oxtey	
PRC 17 8 60v-1	1/3/1502	24/4/1502	Tho Steneday	
PRC 17 8 265v-6	8/4/1503	29/4/1503	Tho Graunt	
PRC 32 7/71	3 6/1503	16/10/1503	Jn Kydwelly	
PRC 17 9/190-v	14/1/1504	8/3/1504	Wm Notynggham	
PRC 17 9 179v	24/2/1504	8/3/1504	Isabell Frankelen	
PRC 17 9 220v-1	10 8/1504	31/8/1504	Jn Salkyn	
PRC 17/10/104-5	7/2/1505	1/5/1506	Ric Knyght	
PRC 17/10 27v-8	20/3/1505	24/4/1505	Tho Abbott	
PRC 17 9/235-6	23/4/1506	3/7/1507	Jn Bongeour	
PRC 17/10/114-v	2/4/1506	9/5/1506	Ric Rigdon	

PRC 17/10/151v-2v	--/--/1506	23/5/1506	Jn Maye	
PRC 17/10/127-v	--/--/1506	13/6/1506	Chris Calcot	
PRC 17/9/309-10v	14/1/1508	27/5/1508	Ric Consaunt	
PRC 17/9/313v-14	--/--/1508	23/6/1508	Jn Graunt	
PRC 17/11/19v-21	7/2/1509	5/5/1509	Robt Werchynden	
PRC 17/12/207v-8v	12/4/1511	19/2/1513	Alice Notyngham	dau of Wm
PRC 32/10/146v-7	7/9/1511		Jn Greke	
PRC 17/12/122-v	10/5/1512	26/6/1512	Tho Tym-	
PRC 17/12/444-5	23/8/1512	18/9/1513	Tho Barker	curat
PRC 17/12/342-v	12/8/1514	30/9/1514	Cristiane Young	widow
PRC 17/12/357v	--/--/1514	10/3/1515	Simon Wood	
PRC 17/12/390-v	5/3/1515		John Graunt	
PRC 17/12/404v	10/6/1515	1/3/1516	Tho Strike	
PRC 17/13/199-200v	15/7/1518	2/10/1518	Tho Skynner	
PRC 17/14/144v-5	17/1/1519	5/3/1519	Wm a Clive	
PRC 17 14 321v-4	1/3/1521	5/10/1521	Wm Lacy	
PRC 17 14 330v-1v	17/7/1521		Elynore Everard	widow
PRC 17 16 6v	11/8/1522(3)?	3/10/1523	Tho Hawker	
PRC 17 16 48v-9v	7/10/1523	28/11/1523	Isabelle Fayreware	widow
PRC 17 16 31v-2	18/12/1523	19/2/1524	Wm Johnson	
PRC 17 17 38-v	1/3/1524	27/5/1524	Ric Lyncoln	
PRC 17 16 137v-9	2/3/1524	18/3/1524	John Gillyngton	
PRC 17 16 194-v	24 4/1524	23/6/1524	Ric Yong	
PRC 17 16 194v-5v	14 5 1524	25/6/1524	Alice Lacy	widow
PRC 17 16 209-v	2/9 1524	28/10/1524	Wm Dod	
PRC 32 14 200v	5/4 1525		Jn Webbe	
PRC 17 17 254-v	27 4/1527		Wm Consaunt	
PRC 17 18 102v-3	13/3/1529?	18/5/1529?	Jn Davye	
PRC 17 19 35-6	2/4 1530	27/9/1530	Geo Cok	
PRC 17 19 161-v	28/12/1530		Tho Rolff	
PRC 17 19 210-v	22/4 1532	3/6/1532	Jn Cotton	
PRC 17 19 296-7	26 4 1532	2/4/1533	Robt Skynner	
PRC 17 19 211v-12	9/6 1532	18 7/1532	Tho Whyttalle	
PRC 17 19 209v-10	--/-- 1532	3/7/1532	Ric Boniour	
PRC 17 20 172v-3	6/10/1534	24 7/1535	Tho Morley	
PRC 17 20 106v-7	15 2/1535	3/3/1535	Robt Brewer	
PRC 17 20 114-v	23/3/1535	20/4/1535	Pet Baker	
PRC 17 21 90v-1	8/4 1535	28/6/1536	Wm Tomlyn	
PRC 17 20/137v-8	1/2/1536	12/2/1536	Jn Skynner	
PRC 17 21 31v-2	6/2/1536	8/4/1536	Sir Jn Welles	curat
PRC 17 20 228-9	10/2/1536	29/4/1536	Margery Bonior	widow
PRC 17 21/16v-17v	28 2/1536?	1/7/1535?	Nic Church	
PRC 17 22 7	20/3/1539	24/4 1539	Tho Smyth	
PRC 17 22 29v-30	11/10/1539		Jn Cotenar	
PRC 17 22 77-v	30/1/1541	3/5/1541	Jn Aparys	
PRC 17 22 75-7	4 2/1541	3/5/1541	Tho Consaunte	
PRC 17/22 202-3	6/5/1541	14 6/1541	Margt Jenkyn	wd. of Ric
PRC 17/23/12-13v	9/11/1541	10/12/1541	Robt Roose, eld.	
PRC 17 22/196-7	12/1/1542?	15/10/1542?	Ric Dod	
PRC 17 23/116v-17	21/12/1543	25/1/1544	Ric Underdowne	yeoman
PRC 17/25/16-17	23/5/1545	--/--/1545	Wm Graunte	
PRC 17/24/26v-7	10/10/1545	6/3/1546	Wm Ashe	
PRC 17/25/60v-1	12/11/1546	29/1/1547	Giles Peers	
PRC 17/26/122v-3	25/11/1547	18/2/1548	Jn Platte	
PRC 17/29/265-6	18/8/1549	26/7/155-	Tho Pyrkyne	
PRC 17/27/4v-5	24/2/1550	29/4/1550	Robt Allsope	gent
PRC 17/27/30v-1	14/4/1550	21/6/1550	Ric Newcombe	
PRC 17/29/206v	15/7/1550	20/9/1550	Tho Kempe	

PRC 17/27/148-v}	22/2/1551	16/8/1551	Edw Harris	
PRC 17/27/145 }				
PRC 17/29/239v-40v	25/12/1551	28/2/1552	Robt Younge	
PRC 17/29/126v-7	1/9/1553	19/10/1553	Edm Brydge	
PRC 17/30/93v	27/3/1555	26/6/1555	Tho Jermyn	
PRC 17/30/223v-4	24/1/1556	25/3/1556	Gylbert Platte	
PRC 17/35/9		20/10/1557?	Wm Godfrey	
PRC 17/32/257v-8	24/3/1557	26/6/1557	Jn Hopkyng	husbandman
PRC 17/33/149v-51	17/4/1558	19/1/1559	Wm Penye	
PRC 17/33/118-v	26/12/1558	15/2/1559	Robt Webb	
PRC 17/34/260-1	9/3/1559	15/1/1560	Tho Rose	
PRC 17/35/47	17/3/1559	17/1/1560	Wm Collyn	
PRC 17/35/266v	4/5/1559	8/4/1562	Robt Alsopp	
PRC 17/35/194-5	20/1/1560	29/9/1561	Joan Pennyne	wd. of Wm
PRC 17/35/178-v	24/3/1561	14/6/1561	Ric Mysselbroke	
PRC 17/35/151-v	29/3/1561	18/6/1561	Tho Grape	
PRC 17/35/155	14/4/1561	20/6/1561	Tho Percye	
PRC 17/35/188-9	10/5/1561	10/9/1561	Alex Knowler	
PRC 17/35/168-v	6/3/1561	17/7/1561	Robt Elmer	
PRC 17/35/153-4v	28/3/1561	28/6/1561	Ant Yonge	
PRC 17/37 4v-5	8/10/1562	17/10/1562	Isabell Salkyn	wf. of Jn
PRC 17/37/16-v	10/11/1562	5/12/1562	Eliz Abbot	widow
PRC 17/37/107-v	29/12/----	11/12/1563	Ste Rose	
PRC 17/38/97-8	16/2/1564	21/9/1564	Robt Bongeor	yeoman
PRC 17/39/259v-60	2/4/1565	3/4/1566	Lyne Taylor	
PRC 17/39/135	20/7/1565	18/10/1565	Jas Bucke	
PRC 17/39/63-4	16/1/1566	7/8/1566	Robt Rose	yeoman
PRC 17/39 285v-6	26/9/1566	27/11/1566	Jn Salkyn	
PRC 17 40 303v	9/5/1569	28/5/1569	Jn Dane	labourer
PRC 17/41/114-15	25/1/1571	7/2/1571	Mich Usbone	yeoman
PRC 17/41/222v-3		31/10/1571	Wm Consente	gent
PRC 17 41/299-v	15/2/1572	10/5 1572	Zacharye Alingham	
PRC 17/41/325v-6	5/8/1572	29/9/1572	Robt Saunder	
PRC 17/41/320-2v	30/1/1573	4/4/1573	Tho Hardyman	
PRC 32 32/178-81v	19/6/1573	14/11/1573	Alice Oven	widow
PRC 17/42/225v-6	17/3/1575	5/8/1575	Alex Consant	
PRC 17/42/201v-2	7/5/1575	29/10/1575	Math Browne	
PRC 17/43/169	27/12/1578	28/2/1578	Jn Sander	labourer
PRC 17/44/140-1	16/9/1579		Ric Hammon	
PRC 17/44/256v-8v	3/7/1580	30/7 1581	Nic Pyrkyn	yeoman
PRC 17/44/34-5	6/3/1582	25/4/1582	Jn Tayler	
PRC 32/36/256	16/3/1582	6/3/1591	Jn Gibs	
PRC 17/45/352-v	11/4/1583	18/9/1583	Jn Bungler	
PRC 17/45/293-4	17/1/1584?	25/3/1584	Isabell Fowler	virgin
PRC 17/46/75-9v	16/7/1585	9/10/1585	Jas Wylkinson	yeoman
PRC 17/47/387v-8	18/4/1587	4/10 1589	Pet Saunder	labourer
PRC 17/47/48v-9v	9/5/1587	27/5/1587	Jn Woode	yeoman
PRC 17/47/149v-50v	20/10/1587	11/5/1588	Mich Marten	carpenter
PRC 17/47/161v-2v	14/5/1588	15/6/1588	Geo Pelling	
PRC 17/48/234-5	21/12/1589	29/12/1591	Wm Browne	
PRC 17/48/161v-3v	11/11/1590	19/4/1591	Ste Sollie	yeoman
PRC 17/48/203-v	1/2/1592	1/4/1592?	Jn Barnes	
PRC 17/49/289v-93	9/6/1593	24/7/1593	Hen Parramore	yeoman
PRC 17/50/43v-4	28/7/1593	15/9/1593	Edm Goolson	yeoman
PRC 17/49/93v-4	3/12/1593	19/12/1593	Hugh Pelling	husbandman
PRC 17/50/94-v	--/12/1593	17/12/1593	Robt Keele	
PRC 17/51/423v-4	17/2/1595	15/12/1599	Wm Paine	husbandman
PRC 17/50/208v-9v	3/4/1597	4/5/1597	Jn Lockett	yeoman

PRC 17/51/234v-5		1/2/1599	David Dodd	yeoman
PRC 17/51/279-80	15/4/1599	5/5/1599	Wm Cooper	
PRC 17/51/323-4	22/5/1599	3/10/1599	Robt Dodd	yeoman
PRC 17/51/364-v	3/7/1599	13/10/1599	Tho Younge	yeoman
PRC 17/51/194v	5/8/1599	3/11/1599	Ric Webbe	husbandman
PRC 17/51/379v	23/4/1600	26/5/1600	Ric Joneson	yeoman
PRC 17/52/48-9	15/5/1600	31/5/1600	Eliz Dod	widow
PRC 17/52/117	10/8/1600	4/4/1601	Frances Luckett	wd. of Jn
PRC 17/52/88	18/1/1603	29/1/1603	Tho Saunder	husbandman

### Sturry Wills

Reference	Date of Will	Date of Probate	Testator	Status
PRC 17/1/424v	30 8 1464		Wm Etard	
PRC 17/1/151v	26/5/1465		Tho Gylbart	
PRC 17/1/248v	18/10/1466		Wm Blakyslond, sen.	
PRC 17/2/135v	3/1/1471	4/1/1473	Tho Forstall	husbandman
PRC 17/1/357	4 2/1471		Tho at Nash	
PRC 17/2/144	12/1/1472	16/1/1473	Wm Wilman	
PRC 17/3 222v	14/9/1472	2/10/1479	Jn Bate	
PRC 17 2/429v	17/9/1473	27/10/1475	Alice Danyell	
PRC 17 2 363-v	26/10/1473	10/12/1474	Johanna Maycott	wf. of Alex
PRC 17 2 447-v	9 9/1475	9/1/1476	Eliz Berham	wf. of Jn
PRC 17/3/390v-1	10/11/1475	9/2/1482	Sim Kenett	
PRC 17 3/43v-4	6 6/1476	6/10/1476	Jn Hoton	
PRC 17 3/29v-30	10/6 1476	20/9/1476	Laur White	
PRC 17 3 347v-8	22 9 1479	29/7/1480	Robt Petyman	
PRC 17 3/398-9	6 12/1482?	3/5/1482?	Jn Ovend, sen.	
PRC 32/3 40	7/5/1484	21/3/1485	Ric Berton	
PRC 32 3 152v-3v	10/1/1487(8)		Wm Estwell	
PRC 17/4/129	4 9/1487	--/11/1487	Tho Stephyn	
PRC 17/5/105v	10/10/1488	20/12/1488	Christine Benge	wd. of Jn
PRC 17 5/179	29 9/1489	5/12/1489	Jn Danyell	
PRC 17/5/134-5	10/1/1490?	6/3/1490	Wm Estwell	
PRC 17/5/335v	24 8/1492		Tho Pax	
PRC 17/5 357v	6/12/1492		Jn Ovend, sen.	
PRC 17 6/192-3	26/7 1496	4/10/1496	Tho Childmell	
PRC 17/7/89	22/8 1497	22/3/---	Ste Willes	vicar
PRC 17/6/272	--/--/1497	10/6/1497	Ric Dardyll	
PRC 17/6/309v	--/--/1497	2/11/1497	Johanna Elpham	
PRC 17/7/75		21/12/1498?	Harry Raynes	butcher
PRC 17 8/33-4v	24/11/1499	19/9/1500	Alex Maycote	
PRC 17 7/200v-1	17/3/1500	29/5/1500	Laur Nesshe	
PRC 17 8/76v-7v	24/1/1501	24/4/1501	Wm Feld	
PRC 17 8/72-v	24/2/1501	24/4/1501	Jn Gylwyn	
PRC 17/8/194v-5	12/3/1502	28/5/1502	Jn Ovende, eld.	
PRC 17/8/94v-5	19/8/1501	29/8/1501	Jn Foster	
PRC 17/8/194	14/4/1502	28/5/1502	Ste Baker	
PRC 17/13/338-9	4/5/1503	26/5/1503	Jn Ive	
PRC 17 9/194-5	8/5/1504	7/6/1504	Jn Marley	tanner
PRC 17/9/140v-1v	22/6/1505	19/7/1505	Wm Maxsey	
PRC 17/10/87v-8	24/1/1506	21/2/1506	Jn Button	
PRC 17/10/129	13/4/1506	13/6/1506	Tho Maye	
PRC 17/10/135v-6	26/6/1506	22/7/1506	Wm Denwod	
PRC 17/10/233		8/5/1507	Nic Chapman	
PRC 17/11/226	8/2/1510	24/3/1510	Robt Brencheley	

PRC 17 12 99-v	12 1 1512	21 2 1512	Robt Alegh	
PRC 17 13 385v-6	15 9 1517	19 9 1517	Ste Blakesland	
PRC 17 14 131-v	2 6 1518	26 6 1518	Roc Wylstom	
PRC 17 13 170v-1	2 8 1518	18 9 1518	Wm Blakesland	
PRC 17 13 228v-9	3 8 1518		Wm Reynold	
PRC 17 13 170v	14 9 1518	23 0 1518	Alex Eastwae	
PRC 17 13 372-3	8 9 1518		Jm May	
PRC 17 15 79v	— 1518	16 10 1518	Wm Martym	
PRC 17 15 224v-5v	29 7 1522	13 12 1522	Tho Owend	
PRC 17 16 221	3 1525	8 4 1525	Jm Owynd	
PRC 17 17 324v-5	2 6 1527	5 7 1527	Wm Canties	
PRC 17 17 3 8v	23 10 1527	29 10 1527	Alex Owende	
PRC 17 9 131v-2	25 4 1530	8 2 1531	Wm Maxe	
PRC 17 19 261	9 2 1532 <sup>o</sup>	25 10 1532 <sup>o</sup>	Gulbert Alye	
PRC 17 2 126v-7	2 8 537	17 1 1537	Jm Ame	
PRC 17 2 175-6v	22 8 1538	26 0 1538	Jm Frankekeyne	
PRC 17 22 27v	12 1 1540	7 5 1540	Roc Owende	
PRC 17 21 273v-4	2 3 1540	4 12 1540	Hugh Owende	
PRC 7 21 274-5v	28 7 1540	1 12 1540	Mugbell Charllys	
PRC 7 23 230v	— 540 <sup>o</sup>		Tho Cruphum	
	1545 <sup>o</sup>			
PRC 17 22 297v	29 4 543	26 5 1543	Jas May	
PRC 17 22 213	16 1 1544	14 3 1545	Roc Wylsom	
PRC 17 23 211	20 545	14 3 1545	Wm Brugge	singleman
PRC 17 22 211v-12	6 2 545	14 3 1545	Tho Wiggat	
PRC 7 25 42-v	14 8 1545	13 17 1545	Jm Charles	
PRC 7 24 92v-3v	8 1 546	26 6 1546	Jas Blakysland	
PRC 7 25 66v-7	6 0 546 <sup>o</sup>	20 9 1546 <sup>o</sup>	Margt Saumder	widow
PRC 7 26 17- 8v	12 12 1546	31 7 1547	Jm Churche	
PRC 7 26 225v	3 5 547	19 1 1549	Elymor Broke	
PRC 17 26 246v-7v	15 1 1549	5 3 1549	Roc Muns. eld	
PRC 7 26 317v	20 3 1549	4 5 1549	Jm Callot	
PRC 7 26 339-40	28 3 1549	22 2 1550	Wm Owende	yeoman
PRC 7 26 200-v	25 4 1549	4 6 1549	Katherine Churche	wid. of Jm
PRC 7 29 183	20 2 1550		Jm Broke	
PRC 17 28 2-3	4 9 551	23 3 1553	Rog Owende	
PRC 17 29 34	3 10 1552	26 11 1552	Bart White	
PRC 7 29 275	2 2 1554	— 1554	Jas Owend	
PRC 7 29 158-v	7 5 1554	25 7 1554	Jm Robynsom	
PRC 17 30 163	14 8 1555		Margt Sheapoe	
PRC 7 30 259v-60v	11 8 1556	13 2 1557	Margery Franckelun	wid. of Jm
PRC 7 35 29	7 1557	3 11 1558	Tho Dedncks	
PRC 7 33 253-4v	6 1 559	11 3 1559	Jm Owym	
PRC 17 33 28-4 v	14 3 559	27 3 1559	Greg Huson	
PRC 7 34 56v-60v	20 3 1559	21 7 1559	Chris Blakeslande	yeoman
[PRC 7 28 132v-3v <sup>o</sup>	— 1559	13 3 1560	Eliz Brettem	wid. of Jm]
PRC 7 35 204v-5	4 9 1561	13 11 1561	Jm Allen	labourer
PRC 17 38 3 -v	4 5 1563		Jm Bassocke	
PRC 17 39 288-9	14 5 1566	27 2 1567	Jm Clerke	
PRC 7 38 24-5	20 6 1566	19 9 1566	Robt Elmor	
PRC 7 39 264v	14 10 1566	25 1 1566	Chris Clarke	
PRC 7 40 133-4	4 3 1567	11 2 1568	Nic Nashe	
PRC 17 4 270v-1	17 10 1568	30 7 1572	Margery Harryson	widow
PRC 17 41 292-v	15 1 1573	28 2 1573	Robt Mylles	
PRC 17 42 303v <sup>o</sup>	26 8 1576	17 10 1576	Hew Lambymge	
PRC 17 43 87v-8	28 7 1577	11 12 577	Wm Barbytt	yeoman
PRC 17 44 136	12 1 580	16 4 1580	Walter Wheeler	
PRC 7 43 392-v	15 2 1580	28 5 1580	Wm Newman	tanner

PRC 17/43/299-300v	19/5/1581	9/10/1581	Jn Allen at Hawe	yeoman
PRC 17/44/15-19	12/6/1582	26/6/1583	Harrye Harryson	yeoman
PRC 17/44/307v-8v	2/10/1582	31/10/1582	Walter Gooderidge	
PRC 17/44/162v-3v	21/10/1582	8/12/1582	Wm Oven	husbandman
PRC 17/45/322-v	10/3/1584	4/4 1584	Beatrice Franklen	widow
PRC 17/46/9v-10	6/11/1585	2/12/1585	Wm Fall	yeoman
PRC 17/47/142-v	3/2/1588	20/3/1588	Margt Fall	widow
PRC 17/50/105-10v}	29/12/1590	8/12/1593	Baldwyn Gross	tailor
	cod:25 9/1593			
PRC 17/48/62-3	28/12/1590	5/1/1591	Eliz Newman	widow
PRC 17/48/300v-1	8/6/1591	21 10/1591	Ric Trapes	yeoman
PRC 17/49 425-v	28/8/1591	20 9 1591	Wm Allen	labourer
PRC 17/49/356-7	30/1/1593	10/3 1597	Jn Cittie, eld.	
PRC 17/50/86	5/11/1593	14 11/1593	Tho Quinie	yeoman
PRC 17 49/114-v	5/3/1594	25 3 1594	Jn Downe	
PRC 17 49 297-301v	15/3/1594	25 5/1594	Jn Harryson	yeoman
PRC 17 51 70v	d.5 3 1598	1 4 1598	Margt Nashe	singlewoman
PRC 17 52 47-v	7/5/1600	12 7 1600	Eliz Drayton	maiden
PRC 17 52 145	d.20 6 1601	11 7 1601	Jn Onion	yeoman
PRC 17 52 92	16 11 1601	21 11 1601	Tho Bassocke	



The 501 Wills, 1503-9 (archdeaconry volumes 9-10)  
 These have been arranged in consecutive foliation.

Reference	Date of Will	Date of Probate	Testator	Status	Place
PRC 17/9/69v	26/7/1502	10/9/1504	Wm Wevynden		Hawkhurst
PRC 17/9/70-v	2/6/1501	10/9/1504	Wm Tobill		Tenterden
PRC 17/9/70v-1	20/3/1504		Isabella Thornton	wd. of Tho.	Cranbrook
PRC 17/9/71-2	12/9/1504	10/10/1504	Wm Gayte	yeoman	Oare
PRC 17/9/72-v	12/7/1504		Peter Sharpe		Elmstead
PRC 17/9/72v-3	20/7/1504	-/10/1504	Jn Setnor		Lynsted
PRC 17/9/73	13/9/1504	25/9/1504	Wm Cufrede		Stowting
PRC 17/9/73-v	20/8/1504	-/10/1504	Robt Lake		Borden
PRC 17 9/73v-4v	10/6/1504	10/9/1504	Tho Reade		High Halden
PRC 17/9/74v-5	23/7/1504	24/9/1504	Jn Child		Molash, Chilham?
PRC 17/9/75v-6	24/7/1504	8/10/1504	Peter at Woode		Lenham
PRC 17 9 76-7	9 6/1504	7/10/1504	Tho Hovynden		Ulcombe
PRC 17/9 77-v	12/8/1504	5/10/1504	Jn Chese		Nackington
PRC 17 9 78	10/8/1504	25/10/1504	Jn Hardman		Minster
PRC 17 9 78	5/10/1504	8/11/1504	Harry Clerke		Newnham
PRC 17 9 78v-9	24/10/1504	4 11/1504	Nic Dyne		Stone
PRC 17 9 79-v	11/7/1504	4/11/1504	Peter Andrewe		Smallhithe
PRC 17 9 79v-80	1/9/1504	6/11/1504	Hen Abell		Eastchurch
PRC 17/9 80v-2	11/8/1504	4/11/1504	Johanne Hendle	wd.	Cranbrook
PRC 17 9 82-v	25/9/1504	6/11/1504	Jn Eliett	elder	Minster, Sheppey
PRC 17 9/83-v	23/10/1504	6/11/1504	Wm Atwood		Upchurch
PRC 17/9 83v	8/8/1504	6/11/1504	Nic Redffyn		Queen- borough
PRC 17 9 84	10/10/1504	4 11/1504	James Brisynden		Smarden
PRC 17/9 84-5	8/6/1496?	9/11/1504	Margery Steid	wd.	Chislet
PRC 17/9 85	6/11/1504	22/11/1504	Tho Bracye		Fordwich
PRC 17 9/85	12/6/1504	22/11/1504	Wm Sampson		Chillenden
PRC 17 9 86-v	3/8/1502?	27/4/1502?	Cecily Morgan	wd.	Northbourne
PRC 17 9 86v-7	20/3/1504		Tho Haselden		Rolvenden
PRC 17 9 87-v	5/12/1504	12/12/1504	Robt Newman		Faversham
PRC 17 9 87v-8	2/10/1504	9/12/1504	Agnes Holvherst		Orlestone
PRC 17/9 88v-9	-/1503	10/12/1504	Jn Elston		Lenham
PRC 17/9/89-90	10/8/1504	9/12/1504	Jn Glover		Bethersden
PRC 17/9/90-1	8/11/1504	10/12/1504	Jn William		Staplehurst
PRC 17/9/91-v	8/10/1504	10/12/1504	Godleff Horpe	wd. of Wm	Langley
PRC 17/9/92	4/11/1504	10/12/1504	Gilbert Paknam		Lenham
PRC 17/9/93	12/9/1504	9/12/1504	Peter Ricard		Frittenden
PRC 17/9/93v	23/10/1504	10/12/1504	Ric Lomherst		Staplehurst
PRC 17/9/93v	4/11/1504	11/12/1504	Tho Granton		Sitting- bourne?
PRC 17/9/94-v	2/3/1498		Robt Gocher		River
PRC 17/9/94v-5	7/12/1504	11/1/1505	Jn Hockynge		Whitstable
PRC 17/9/95v	12/3/1501	14/1/1505	Alice Adame	wd. of Wm	Brookland
PRC 17/9/96-v	22/3/1505	6/5/1505	Tho Maister		Headcorn
PRC 17/9/97v	29/10/1502	-/5/1505	Jn Palmer		St Peter, Sandwich
PRC 17/9/97v-8	19/3/1505	8/5/1505	Tho Godfrey		Upchurch
PRC 17/9/98v	18/3/1505	6/5/1505	Tho Harman		Biddenden
PRC 17/9/98v	26/4/1505	5/5/1505	Ric Gabriell		Stone

PRC 17/9/99	-/5/1502	7/5/1505	Wm Jordeyn		Marden
PRC 17/9/99v-100	13/3/1505	8/5/1505	Harry Pratt		Wormeshill
PRC 17/9/100	13/10/1504	6/6/1505	Robt Bedill		Luddenham
PRC 17/9/100v-2	26/3/1505	19/5/1505	Wm Passhley		St Thomas, Harty
PRC 17/9/102	13/4/1483	20/5/1505	Geo Abarough		Folkestone
PRC 17/9/102v	4/1/1505	20/5/1505	Tho Elmer		River
PRC 17/9/103	13/4/1505	10/6/1505	Rose Mayhewe		Wood- nesborough
PRC 17/9/103v-4	1/4/1505	10/6/1505	Jn Holway		Elham
PRC 17/9/104v	20/2/1505	10/6/1505	Ric Richer		Kingsdown in Ringwould
PRC 17/9/104v-5v	2/3/1505?	16/5/1505	Chris Sharpe		Chilham
PRC 17/9/106-v	8/3/1505	10/6/1505	Tho White		Kingsdown in Ringwould
PRC 17/9/106v	20/4/1502	19/5/1505	Jn Meredike		Barham
PRC 17/9/107	-/3/1505	5/6/1505	Johanne Cotyng	wd.	Milton
PRC 17 9/107v-8v	17/7/1504	5/6/1505	Wm Batteman		Rodmersham
PRC 17/9/108v	10/1/1503	2/5/1505	Robt Quayckman		Brookland
PRC 17/9 109-10v	2/5/1505	3/6/1505	Wm Skorme		Sandhurst
PRC 17 9 110v	7/5/1505	4/6/1505	Ste Woddehouse	labourer	Otham
PRC 17 9 111-v	10/4/1505	3/6/1505	James Taylour		Frittenden
PRC 17/9 113-14	12/5/1505	3/6/1505	Jn Maplisden		Bethersden
PRC 17 9 114-15	-/3/1505	3/6/1505	Jn Loder	elder	Bethersden
PRC 17/9 115-v	20/3/1505	3/6/1505	Ric Marketman		Headcorn
PRC 17 9 116-v	4/9/1504	3/6/1505	Wm Newynden		Smarden
PRC 17 9 116v-17	6/4/1505	3/6/1505	Edward Chetynden		Headcorn
PRC 17 9 117-v	5/3/1505	3/6/1505	Jn a Brigges		Headcorn
PRC 17 9 118	-/3/1505	3/6/1505	Wm Blachynden		Headcorn
PRC 17 9 119-v	8/4/1505	3/6/1505	Ric Hoke	elder	Tenterden
PRC 17/9 120	-/4/1505	4/6/1505	Hen Colyn		Marden
PRC 17/9 120v-1	14/3/1505	4/6/1505	Wm at Lee		Langley
PRC 17/9/121-v	25/4/1502	7/7/1505	Alice Upton	wd.	Westcliffe
PRC 17/9/122	11/6/1505	26/6/1505	Wm Jacobbe		Folkestone
PRC 17/9/122	2/5/1505	21/6/1505	Isabella Terrey	wd. of Tho	St Laurence, Thanet
PRC 17/9/122v	4/3/1505?	4/6/1505	Tho Mere		Leeds
PRC 17/9/123-v	-/12/1504	18/2/1505	Ric Flemyng		St Peter, Sandwich
PRC 17/9/123v-4	2/6/1505	26/6/1505	Jn Goodsir		Folkestone
PRC 17/9/124	1/5/1505	7/7/1505	Jn Gyll		Rolvenden
PRC 17/9/124v-5v	1/4/1505	4/6/1505	Wm Bukherst		Marden
PRC 17/9/125v-6	1/12/1504	2/7/1505	Agas Raynwell		Marden
PRC 17/9/126-v	14/5/1505	-/6/1505	Gregory Lamberd	elder	Dymchurch
PRC 17/9/127	10/5/1505	-/6/1505	Jn Bocher		Pluckley
PRC 17/9/127	16/5/1505	-/6/1505	Wm Scott		Pluckley
PRC 17/9/127v-9	3/4/1505	6/6/1505	Simon Church		Oare
PRC 17/9/129-30	20/3/1505	-/6/1505	Wm Sprott		Kennington
PRC 17/9/130v	20/5/1505	7/7/1505	Thomesyn Hardy	wd. of Ric	Biddenden
PRC 17/9/130v-2	20/3/1505	4/6/1505	Jn Kyngesdown		Eastchurch
PRC 17/9/132v-3	20/5/1504	3/6/1505	Johane Melle	wd. of Simon	Smarden
PRC 17/9/133v	8/4/1505	3/6/1505	Jn Austen		Hothfield
PRC 17/9/134	7/3/1505	1/7/1505	Alex Naishe		Cranbrook
PRC 17/9/134	20/3/1505	-/6/1505	Alex Tagge		Bonnington
PRC 17/9/134v-5	3/4/1505	1/7/1505	Tho Tuysnothe	elder	Bethersden
PRC 17/9/135v	28/4/1505	1/7/1505	Tho Pett	elder	High Halden
PRC 17/9/136	10/4/1505	3/6/1505	James Horde		Biddenden

PRC 17/9/136v-7	12/2/1505	2/6/1505	Jn Bayle		Kingsnorth
PRC 17/9/137-v	14/1/1505	3/6/1505	Jn Assherynden	elder	Tenterden
PRC 17/9/137v	20/2/1505	18/7/1505	Jn Hamond		Upper Hardres
PRC 17/9/137v-8	-/3/1505	2/6/1505	Nic Selsey		Bilsington
PRC 17/9/138v	5/2/1505?	-/6/1505	Wm Shalford		Ruckinge
PRC 17/9/139	5/7/1505	19/7/1505	Alex Love		St Mary Bredin, Canterbury
PRC 17/9/139-v	2/2/1505	-/6/1505	Jn Wyndey		Warehorne
PRC 17/9/139v-40	25/11/1504	2/6/1505	Ric Raygate		Kenardington
PRC 17/9/141-v	22/6/1505	19/7/1505	Wm Maxsey		Sturry
PRC 17/9/141v	2/2/1505	24/5/1505	Jn Jakes		St And. Cant.
PRC 17/9/142-v	4/4/1505	10/7/1505	Roger Fawar		Minster, Thanet
PRC 17 9/143	13/6/1505	24/7/1505	Wm Freman		St John, Thanet
PRC 17 9/144-5	16/3/1502?	12/1/1505	Agnes Trewonwall		Canterbury?
PRC 17 9/145	14/10/1504	14/1/1505	Johanna Hasilden		Biddenden
PRC 17 9/145v-6	22/1/1504	14/1/1505	Robt Taylour		Cranbrook
PRC 17 9/146	4/10/1504	13/1/1505	German Glover		Bethersden
PRC 17 9/148	7/5/1498	16/1/1504	Jn Gibbon		Faversham
PRC 17 9/148	26/1/1501	16/1/1505	Jn Hobenett		Selling
PRC 17 9/149	22/9/1504	15/1/1505	Ric Lowe		Borden
PRC 17 9 150-2	12/6/1502	16/1/1505	Robert Billesden		Faversham
PRC 17 9 153v		25/1/1505	Johane Frensh	wd. of Jn	Sandwich?
PRC 17 9/153v-4v	-/10/1504		Wm Gotley	bower	St Margt. Cant.
PRC 17 9/155	-/12/1504	30/1/1505	Robert Raynold		Ospringe
PRC 17 9/155-v	10/11/150-	29/1/1505	Andreas a Downe		Doddington
PRC 17/9/155v-6	-/10/1504	28/1/1505	Jn Lambard		Staplehurst
PRC 17/9/156-8	1 8/1504	29/1/1505	Tho Smythson	shoemaker	Sittingbourne
PRC 17 9/158v-9	-/-1496	29/1/1505	Wm German		Minster, Sheppey
PRC 17/9/159-60	18/10/1504	-/1/1505	Jn Padeam	smith	Biddenden
PRC 17/9/160v-1v	21/12/1504	25/2/1505	Tho Sonne		Sandhurst
PRC 17/9/162-3	13/1/1505	25/2/1505	Ric Andrewe		Biddenden
PRC 17/9/163v	25/9/1505?	26/2/1505	Margery Austeyn	wd. of John	Goudhurst
PRC 17/9/164-v	8/2/1502	25/2/1505	Robt Willeverden		High Halden
PRC 17/9/165	18/1/1505	25/2/1505	Robt Admond		Brookland
PRC 17/9/165-v	14/1/1505	27/2/1505	Jn Knepe		Murston
PRC 17/9/166-v	29/1/1505	25/2/1505	Jn Pelle		Biddenden
PRC 17/9/166v	-/-1504	27/2/1505	Jn Bradfelde		Iwade?
PRC 17/9/166v	3/1/1505	27/2/1505	Jn Tory		
PRC 17/9/167	24/10/1504	8/2/1505	Jn Grene		Upper Hardres?
PRC 17/9/167v-9	14/12/1504	7/3/1505	Jn Broke	elder	St Peter Sandwich
PRC 17/9/169v	-/1/1505	26/2/1505	Tho Moor		Rolvenden
PRC 17/9/170	1/8/1504	4/4/1505	Tho Landen		Barham
PRC 17/9/171	10/7/1500	-/3/1505	Ste Austyn		Benenden
PRC 17/9/171-v	2/1/1505	2/4/1505	Tho Keteriche		Queen- borough
PRC 17/9/172-4v	21/1/1505	28/2/1505	Robt Colwell		Goodnestone
PRC 17/9/174v-5	25/1/1504	3/4/1505	Eliz Hutson		Faversham
PRC 17/9/175-v	22/12/1504	-/3/1505	Wm Hochon		High Halden
PRC 17/9/176-v	8/3/1504		Jn Lambe		Eastchurch

PRC 17/9/177	20/2/1504	27/3/1504	Jn Colver	elder	St Peter, Thanet
PRC 17/9/177v	12/1/1504	19/3/1504	Tho Adrian		Orlestone
PRC 17/9/177v	14/12/1503	27/3/1504	Robt Curtes		St Mary, Sandwich?
PRC 17/9/178-v	20/9/1500?	12/7/1500?	Alice Godfrey	widow	Stone, Oxney
PRC 17/9/178v	29/1/1504	19/3/1504	Wm Hayward		Appledore
PRC 17/9/179	4/9/1503	13/12/1503	Wm Hucking	elder, carpenter	Newington?
PRC 17/9/179v	24/2/1504	8/3/1504	Isabell Frankelen		Chislet
PRC 17/9/180	17/2/1501?	11/4/1501	Wm Holme		Tenterden
PRC 17/9/180v	2/1/1501	20/2/1502	Wm Fyney		Chilham
PRC 17/9/180v	13/5/1500	12/2/1504	Tho Asherst	elder	Great Chart
PRC 17/9/181-v	16/12/1503	17/1/1504	Katherine Clenche	wd.	Milton
PRC 17/9/181v-2	6/2/1504?	18/4/1504	Tho Watt		Oare
PRC 17/9/182-3	20/4/1504	20/5/1504	Tho Garland		Midley
PRC 17/9/183-v	6/5/1504	22/5/1504	Jn Harold		Staplehurst
PRC 17/9/184	2/10/1503	23/5/1504	Wm Strutton		Stockbury
PRC 17/9/184v	6/3/1503	23/5/1504	Jn Eliet	elder	Minster, Sheppey?
PRC 17/9/185-v	10/6/1496?	22/12/1503	Tho Raynold		Elham
PRC 17/9/186-7	12/4/1503	25/7/1503	Ste Wright		Elham
PRC 17/9/187v		23/3/1503	Wm Kember		Bridge?
PRC 17/9/187v-8	20/7/1503	18/9/1503	Jn Horopoldar		Molash
PRC 17/9/188	-/-/1503	26/9/1503	Agnes Chese		Elham
PRC 17/9/188v-9	6/6/1503	2/8/1503	Robt Feraff		St Pauls, Cant.
PRC 17/9/189	-/-/1500	9/10/1503	Robt Tepinden		Smarden
PRC 17/9/190-v	14/1/1504	8/3/1504	Wm Notyngham		Chislet
PRC 17/9/191	17/8/1503	17/5/1504	Sir Didier Bargier	parson	St And., Cant.
PRC 17/9/192-v	23/4/1503	28/5/1504	Jn Dawye	carpenter	Petham
PRC 17/9/193	5/4/1504?	23/5/1503?	Robt Wrenke		
PRC 17/9/193	27/4/1504	20/5/1504	Hen Alen		Appledore
PRC 17/9/193v	15/4/1504	7/6/1504	Agnes Swanton		Seasalter
PRC 17/9/194	3/5/1504	10/6/1504	Christine Lynman	wd. of Jn	St Peter Sandwich
PRC 17/9/194-v	8/5/1504	7/6/1504	Jn Marley	tanner	Sturry
PRC 17/9/195-6	15/4/1504	7/6/1504	Tho Moriell		Elham
PRC 17/9/196	2/1/1501	7/6/1504	Robt Heryng		Upper Hardres
PRC 17/9/196v-7v	4/5/1504	15/6/1504	Jn a Mayton		Cosmus & Damian, Blean
PRC 17/9/197v-8	12/12/1503	20/6/1504	Chris Clifford	gentleman	Bapchild
PRC 17/9/198	18/4/1504	21/6/1504	Jn Bromefeld		Faversham
PRC 17/9/199-v	20/8/1501	17/6/1504	Wm Sayer		
PRC 17/9/199v	18/9/1501	28/10/-	Jn Kyng		Chilham
PRC 17/9/200	17/12/1503	13/2/1504	Peter Yong		Harrietsham?
PRC 17/9/200-v	11/5/1504	28/6/1504	Alice Holyngden	widow	Stelling
PRC 17/9/200v-1	23/3/1504	21/6/1504	Jn Rowghede		Eastchurch
PRC 17/9/201v	10/4/1503	20/6/1504	Tho Cardon		Minster, Sheppey
PRC 17/9/202	9/1/1504	5/7/1504	Wm Bonam		Ewell
PRC 17/9/202	11/5/1503	19/6/1504	Jn Ayott		Ulcombe
PRC 17/9/202v	16/4/1504	7/6/1504	Jn Mantyll		Westgate, Cant.

PRC 179 203	3 4 1504	5 7 1504	Harry Staple		St George, Cant.
PRC 179 2 3v	17 3 15 4	5 7 1504	Cecyle Dave	widow	St Paul, Cant.
PRC 179 204v-5	11 4 1504	12 7 1504	Robt Baker		Folkestone
PRC 179 2 5v	28 4 1504	16 7 15 4	Walter Munde		Pluckley
PRC 179 206	1 5 1504	16 7 1504	Tho Cupper		H gh Halden
PRC 179 2 6v-7	25 2 1504	16 7 1504	Robt Mawyd		Biddenden
PRC 179 207v	1 3 1504	16 7 1504	Simon Chapman		Bethersden
PRC 179 2 8	24 3 1504	19 7 1504	Johanna Raynold		Selling
PRC 179 2 8	27 5 1504	18 7 1504	Ric Eastond		Eastchurch
PRC 179 2 8v-9	25 4 1504	- 7 1504	James Nooke		St John, Thanet
PRC 179 2 9	1 7 1504	- 7 1504	Jn Grawnt		St Peter, Thanet
PRC 179 210-11v	1 12 15 3	22 3 1504	Ric Toke	gentleman	Throwley
PRC 179 212-13	1 6 15 3	18 3 1504	Jn Tiler		Tenterden
PRC 179 213	5 5 1497		Jn H lwe l		Faversham
PRC 179 213v	1 9 15 3	19 3 1504	Wm Sorell		Biddenden
PRC 179 214v	15 11 15 3	19 3 1504	Ste Austyn		Benenden
PRC 17 214v	11 3 1504	17 6 1504	Tho Colle		
PRC 179 215-16	27 10 1503	18 7 1504	Robt Henekyr		Bredgar
PRC 179 216v	9 5 1504	22 7 1504	Jn Pote		
PRC 179 216v	4 3 1504	2 6 1504	Robt Debdale		Stringbourne
PRC 179 217	6 7 1504	- 7 1504	Tho Terry	elder	St Laur Thanet
PRC 179 217v	14 5 1504		Elena Aleyn	w. of Tho	St John, Thanet
PRC 179 217v	22 4 1495	- 7 1504	Wm Wellys		St Laur Thanet
PRC 179 218v	13 4 1504	- 7 1504	Gilbert Ferdbroke		St Laur Thanet
PRC 179 219-2	6 3 1504	27 7 1504	Tho a Power		St Mary Magd. Cant.
PRC 179 22	24 6 1504	17 7 1504	Agnes Bettenam		Otham
PRC 179 22 v-1	10 8 1504	- 8 1504	Jn Salkyn		Chislet
PRC 179 221-2	22 8 1504	11 9 1504	Tho Croucheman		Goudhurst
PRC 179 222	2 3 15 4	10 9 1504	Juliana Brigenden		Smallthorpe, Tenterden
PRC 179 222-v	10 8 1504	10 9 1504	Ric Glover		Bethersden
PRC 179 223-v	12 7 1504	10 9 1504	Ste at Snoth		Bethersden
PRC 179 223v-4	22 6 1504	17 9 1504	Agnes Slepyn den		Smarden
PRC 179 224v	2 6 1504	13 9 1504	Wm Crast	elder	Stalstfield
PRC 179 224v-6	12 1 1504	22 3 1505	Tho Reade		Faversham
PRC 179 226	-- 1504	10 9 1504	Jn Maidwell		
PRC 179 226v	3 3 1503	9 9 1504	Hen At Water		Shadoxhurst
PRC 179 227	23 5 1507	13 7 1507	Jn Aburne		Linton
PRC 179 227v	15 8 1505	13 7 1507	Alice Scott		Chart Sutton
PRC 179 227v-8	27 4 1507	14 7 1507	Ric Knyght		Upchurch
PRC 179 228-9	11 6 1506	14 7 1507	Jn Champnes		Hartlip
PRC 179 229v	1 6 15 7	14 7 1507	Wm Yonge		Halstowe
PRC 179 229v	12 3 1507	15 6 1507	Jn Burdown		Northbourne
PRC 179 230-v	12 10 1506	15 6 1507	Jn Cobbes	brewer	Sandwich
PRC 179 230v-1v	22 8 1506	15 6 1507	Wm Ferebroke		St Laur, Thanet
PRC 179 231v	4 4 1507	1 10 1507	Robt Harvy		Northbourne
PRC 179 232-v	22 11 1506	15 6 1507	Margt Pallyn	widow	St Laur, Thanet

PRC 17/9/232v-3	26/3/1507	15/6/1507	Wm Curlyng	elder	St Laur. Thanet
PRC 17/9/233v-4	9/4/1507	-/9/1507	Agnes Yocklett	widow	St Pet. Thanet
PRC 17/9/234	11/10/1506	27/7/1507	Roger Swynforth		St Pet. Thanet
PRC 17/9/235-6	23/4/1506	3/7/1507	Jn Bongeour		Chislet
PRC 17/9/236-v	28/3/1485?	-/2/1507	Jn Colman		Chilham
PRC 17/9/237-v	18/2/1507	22/9/1507	Jn Gemyn		Smallhithe, Tenterden
PRC 17/9/237v-9	10/7/1507	23/9/1507	Tho Carynge		Leeds
PRC 17/9/239	9/8/1507	23/9/1507	Wm Blechenden		Leeds
PRC 17/9/239v-40	2/5/1507	3/7/1507	Guy Wyddlyngh		Molash
PRC 17/9/240	8/2/1507	18/9/1507	Ric Stonard		Preston nr. Wingham
PRC 17/9/240v	29/4/1507	14/7/1507	Hen Hayne		Stourmouth
PRC 17/9/241	1/6/1507	24/9/1507	Tho Aley		Bapchild
PRC 17/9/241v-2v	23/5/1507	27/9/1507	Ric Moyse		Harty
PRC 17/9/242v-3	23/4/1507	27/7/1507	Julyan Baker	wd. of Jn	Minster, Thanet
PRC 17/9/243v-4	18/4/1507	27/7/1507	Jn Sayer	mariner	St John, Thanet
PRC 17/9/244	21/5/1507	3/7/1507	Agnes Philyppys	widow	Sibertswold
PRC 17/9/244v-5	2/6/1507	23/9/1507	Agath Parker		Ulcombe
PRC 17/9/245-v	3/6/1506	22/9/1507	Jn Haredyng		Tenterden
PRC 17/9/246	28/3/1507	22/9/1507	Alice Bekwell	widow	Tenterden
PRC 17/9/246v	7/6/1507	23 9/1507	Roger Honynden		Ulcombe
PRC 17/9/247	15/8/1507	24/9/1507	Ric Thomlyn		Borden
PRC 17/9/247v-8	-/1/1507	9/11/1507	Jn Mason		Leeds
PRC 17/9/248v	8/2/1507	8/11/1507	Tho Elys		Warehorne
PRC 17/9/248v-9v	2/10/1507	9/11/1507	Tho Halsnoth		Staplehurst
PRC 17/9/249v	22/8/1507	8/11/1507	Laur. Coper		Appledore
PRC 17/9/250-1	28/5/1507	9/11/1507	Agnes Carynge	wd. of Ric	Leeds
PRC 17/9/251	-/1/1507	2/7/1507	Ric Cokke		St Margt, Cant. Chilham
PRC 17/9/251v-3	25/6/1507	4/12/1507	Arnulph Alen		Chilham
PRC 17/9/253	8/8/1507	29/12/1507	Ste Raynold	clerke, vic.	Bekesbourne
PRC 17/9/253v-4	2/6/1507	13/12/1507	Clement Gyfford		Ashford
PRC 17/9/254v-5v	18/3/1507?	13/11/1507?	Maculyne Balsar		Whitstable
PRC 17/9/255v	24/12/1507	8/1/1508	Wm Aylewyn		Fordwich
PRC 17/9/256-7	15/8/1507	18/9/1507	Alice Miller	widow	St Dunstan Cant.
PRC 17/9/257-8v	10/4/1507	18/11/1507	Ric Harte	smith	Canterbury
PRC 17/9/259-v	5/8/1504	11/1/1505	Wm Smyth		Mongeham?
PRC 17/9/259v	1/10/1507	13/11/1507	Tho Andrewe		St Geo. Cant.
PRC 17/9/260-1	3/6/1507	8/1/1508	Jn Rygdon	yeoman	Lower Hardres
PRC 17/9/261v	-/1/1507	18/9/1507	Eliz Necoll		St Mild. Cant.
PRC 17/9/262-v	3/5/1507	-/7/1508	Hen Balgey		Appledore
PRC 17/9/262v-3	20/5/1507	24/7/1507	Wm Brokeman		Holy Cross,Cant
PRC 17/9/263-4	26/11/1507	8/1/1508	Robt Rygdon		Folkestone
PRC 17/9/264	20/11/1507	8/1/1508	Jn Charlys	fuller	St Mild. Cant.
PRC 17/9/264v	13/12/1506	5/6/15-	Ric Garard		Holy Cross,Cant.
PRC 17/9/265-6	19/9/1506	9/1/1507	Ric Lurkyn		St Paul, Cant..
PRC 17/9/266v-7	20/5/1504	6/10/1507	Wm Harlakynden		Elham
PRC 17/9/267-8	22/10/1507	16/12/1507	Jn Longe		Luddenham

PRC 17/9/268v	10/9/1507	16/12/1507	Ric Kevell		Stone nr Faversham
PRC 17/9/269	11/6/150-	16/12/1507	Wm Lowde		Graveney
PRC 17/9/269v	12/10/1507	13/12/1507	Margery Whatlove	widow	Pluckley
PRC 17/9/269v	-/9/1507	13/12/1507	James Lowys		St Mary in the Marsh
PRC 17/9/270v-1	28/4/1507	13/12/1507	Jn Symond		Kingsnorth
PRC 17/9/271-2v	2/8/1507	14/12/1507	Jn Lambe		Sutton Valence
PRC 17/9/272v-3	4/12/1507	17/1/1508	Harrey Wattes		Ruckinge
PRC 17/9/273v	7/9/1507	14/12/1507	Johanna Yonge	widow	Harrietsham
PRC 17/9/274	-/1/1507	17/2/1508	Jn Lange		Teynham
PRC 17/9/274v	8/10/1507	21/2/1508	Tho Lyllyng		Preston nr. Wingham
PRC 17/9/275	28/11/1506	11/1/1507	Sir Peter Coltherst	rector	Brook
PRC 17/9/275-6	12/3/1507	17/1/1508	Symond Jordan		Eastwell
PRC 17/9/276-v	-/11/1507	19/1/1508	Roger Clerke		Minster, Sheppey
PRC 17/9/277-9	20/11/1506	3/7/1507	Wm Philpot		Holy Cross, Cant.
PRC 17/9 279v-80	2/8/1507	17/1/1508	Mark Salomon		Ashford
PRC 17/9 280-v	2/12/1507	17/1/1508	James Dunne		Tenterden
PRC 17 9 280v	5/2/1507	19/1/1508	Tho Atteth		Rainham
PRC 17/9 281	29/12/1507	17/2/1508	Edmunde Laborne		Teynham? Eastchurch?
PRC 17/9 281v-2v	23/9/1507	19/1/1508	Jn Benett		
PRC 17/9 283	-/1/1507	19/1/1508	Tho Hayward		Minster? Harty?
PRC 17 9/283v-4	1/10/1507	14/2/1508	Alis Gylbert	widow	Brookland
PRC 17 9 284-5v	11/1/1508	17/2/1508	Tho Oven		Harty
PRC 17/9 285v	1/12/1507	11/3/1508	Jn Godenowe		Stowing
PRC 17/9/286	3/2/1508	11/3/1508	Robt Marten	wax- chandler	St Margt, Cant..
PRC 17/9/286-7v	8/1/1508?	11 3/1508?	Tho Colard		Swingfield
PRC 17/9/287v	-/1/1506		Jn Crypes		Loose
PRC 17/9/288	16/9/1507	14/2/1508	Ric Hoke		Tenterden
PRC 17 9/288v	29/12/1507	14/2/1508	Christina Elys	widow	Mersham?
PRC 17/9/288v-9	22/11/1507	16/2/1508	Ric Elbryzth		Bredgar
PRC 17/9/289-v	30/10/1507	16/2/1508	James Revell		Eastchurch
PRC 17/9/289v-90	29/12/1507	16/3/1508	Jn Brande		Teynham
PRC 17/9/290-1	21/1/1508	16/3/1508	Jn Samuell		Graveney
PRC 17/9/291	6/12/1507	15/3/1508	Wm Ruffyn		Eastchurch
PRC 17/9/291v	1/9/1507	15/3/1508	Johanna Kyppanyng		Sittingbourne
PRC 17/9/292-v	2/8/1507	13/3/1508	Tho Water		Smarden
PRC 17/9/292v	-/3/1508	15/4/1508	Jn Pargate		Folkestone
PRC 17/9/293-v	26/1/1508	1/4/1508	Dennyce Twesnott		Canterbury
PRC 17/9/294	20/2/1508?	13/3/1508?	Wm Browne		Appledore
PRC 17/9/294	7/4/1503	14/3/1508	Tho Stephyn		Stapehurst
PRC 17/9/294v	6/10/1502	14/3/1508	Jn Mason	jun., s of Jn	Broomfield
PRC 17/9/295-6	-/12/1507	19/1/1508	Jn Wyn-		Milsted
PRC 17/9/296	18/12/1507	10/4/1508	Thomysyn Hall	widow	Hothfield
PRC 17/9/296v	12/4/1508	10/5/1508	Sir Jn Laundry	vicar	Bredgar
PRC 17/9/297	3/3/1508	1/4/1508	Ste Bode		Whitstable
PRC 17/9/297-v	24/2/1508	2/5/1508	Hubbarde Fonteney		St Pet. Sandwich
PRC 17/9/297v	19/3/1508	3/5/1508	Jn Stretend		Folkestone
PRC 17/9/298-v	-/1/1501	2/5/1508	Alice David	wf. of Barnard	Sandwich

PRC 17/9/298v-9	3/3/1508	-/3/1508	Wm Puntowe	miller	Westgate
PRC 17/9/299	8/3/1508?	15/4/1508	Hen Norys		Alkham?
PRC 17/9/300	5/4/1508	10/4/1508	Wm Armynard		Orgarswicke
PRC 17/9/300-1	17/12/1507	6/5/1508	James Holman	hosier	St George, Cant..
PRC 17/9/301-v	3/2/1508	10/4/1508	Tho Baker		Pluckley
PRC 17/9/301v-2	10/5/1508	27/5/1508	Jn Elys		Eythorn
PRC 17/9/302v	20/3/1508	11/4/1508	Wm Kyng		Broomfield
PRC 17/9/303	18/2/1506	12/4/1508	Tho Mason		Newington?
PRC 17/9/303v	13/2/1508?	10/5/1508	Wm Mores		Warden
PRC 17/9/303v-4	11/4/1508	8/5/1508	Ric Dowyll		Pluckley
PRC 17/9/304v-5	13/8/1507	19/6/1508	Wm Semer	grocer	St And. Cant.
PRC 17/9/305	7/4/1507	19/6/1508	Jn Bowreman		St John, Thanet
PRC 17/9/305v-6v	1/5/1508	8/6/1508	Jn Tylman		Pluckley
PRC 17/9/307	10/6/1506	11/1/1507	Jn Sampson	clerk	Cranbrook
PRC 17/9/307v-8	10/6/1508	15/7/1508	Tho Knyght	junior	Faversham
PRC 17/9/308	15/10/1507	11/3/1508	Robt Rowe		Northgate, Cant.
PRC 17/9/309-10v	14/1/1508	27/5/1508	Ric Consaunt		Chislet
PRC 17/9/311	4/5/1508	19/6/1508	Nic Pyttocke		Tilmanstone
PRC 17/9/311v-12	18/7/1506	19/6/1508	Wm Brok		St Peter Sandwich
PRC 17/9/312-13	28/4/1508	14/6/1508	Philip Strett		
PRC 17/9/313-v	23/3/1508?	7/7/1508	Sim Caysshe		
PRC 17/9/314	-/1508	23/6/1508	Jn Graunt		Chislet
PRC 17/9 314-v	27/7/1502?	8/5/1508	Jn Coke		Kennington
PRC 17/9/315	10/1/1508	11/5/1508	Wm Apsley		Newnham
PRC 17/9/315-v	19/3/1508?	11/5/1508	Ric Rayner		Newnham
PRC 17/9/315v	8/3/1508?	11/5/1508	Jn Bachelor		Doddington
PRC 17/9/315v	20/8/1507	11/5/1508	Alex Kyng		Ospringe
PRC 17/9/316	28/4/1508	5/6/1508	Nic Atwode		Ebony
PRC 17/9/316v	1/3/1508?	5/6/1508	Ric Bolden		Snargate
PRC 17/9/316v-17	1/5/1508	5/6/1508	Ste Atwyde		Warehome
PRC 17/9/317-v	28/4/1508	23/6/1508	Jn Parys		Petham
PRC 17/9/317v	7/7/1508	29/7/1508	Herry Screvener		Preston nr Wingham
PRC 17/9/318	25/1/1508	19/6/1508	Matthew Froste		St Laur. Thanet
PRC 17/9/318v-19	23/6/1508	10/7/1508	Geo Selsy		Bilsington
PRC 17/9/319-v	17/4/1508	11/5/1508	Nic Kodde		Teynham
PRC 17/9/319v-20v	11/1/1508	5/6/1508	Robt Trewman		Appledore
PRC 17/9/320v-1	26/4/1508	6/6/1508	Jn Breggis		Bethersden
PRC 17/9/321v	6/5/1508	6/6/1508	Geoff Stokes		Cranbrook
PRC 17/9/321v	-/1507	6/6/1508	Agnes Brokenden		Tenterden
PRC 17/9/322	2/12/1507	6/6/1508	Tho Pedyll		Tenterden
PRC 17/9/322-v	10/5/1508	6/6/1508	Mr Geo Weldyshe	priest	Cranbrook?
PRC 17/9/323	9/5/1508	7/6/1508	Wm Wildbor		Harrietsham
PRC 17/9/323	2/6/1508	29/7/1508	Wm Puppyll		Folkestone
PRC 17/9/323v	19/4/1508	7/6/1508	Tho Langus?		Lenham
PRC 17/9/324	27/5/1508	18/8/1508	Sir Wm Clerke	chaplain	Faversham
PRC 17/9/324	-/1508	7/6/1508	Tho Ford		Marden
PRC 17/9/324v	19/2/1508	7/6/1508	Walter Swederinden		Chart nr Sutton Valence
PRC 17/9/325-v	27/3/1508	8/6/1508	Robt Style		Leysdown
PRC 17/9/325v-6	12/3/1508?	9/6/1508	Tho Wynston		Lynsted



PRC 17/9/326-v	4/3/1508	5/7/1508	Peter Styll		Stone
PRC 17/9/327	4/5/1508	13/7/1508	Wm Benskynd		Goudhurst
PRC 17/9/327v	6/3/1508?	11/5/1508	Wm Songer		Harty
PRC 17/9/327v	8/5/1508	14/7/1508	Anne Wynnysbury	widow	Minster, Sheppey
PRC 17/9/328	14/5/1508	29/7/1508	Sir Peter Lawnday		Davington?
PRC 17/9/328v-9v	12/6/1508	15/7/1508	Eugeny Cok alias Makely	clerk	Stalisfield
PRC 17/9/330-v	12/3/1508?	9/6/1508?	Jn Bell		Lynsted
PRC 17/9/330v	17/6/1508	-/1508	Edward Morys		Sutton Valence
PRC 17/9/331	8/9/1507	16/9/1508	Ste Baret		
PRC 17/9/331	-/1508	29/9/1508	Edmund Chese		Bekesbourne
PRC 17/9/331v	26/8/1508	16/9/1508	Chris Clerke	servant to my Lord Prior of Christ- church	Canterbury
PRC 17/9/332	4/7/1508	16/9/1508	Tho Gilbert		Holy Cross, Westgate, Cant.
PRC 17 9/333-v	21/8/1508	14/10/1508	Ste Mellar		Bridge
PRC 17/9/333v-4	12/6/1508	14/10/1508	James Stonarde		Preston nr Wingham
PRC 17/9/334-6	14/4/1508	-/9/1508	Jn Hardy	butcher	Faversham
PRC 17 9/336	8/3/1508	8/6/1508	Laur Letcott		Upchurch
PRC 17 9/337	20/7/1508	11/9/1508	Ric Pratte		Ruckinge
PRC 17/9/337	27/5/1508	12/9/1508	Johanna Norlord	virgin	Tenterden
PRC 17/9/337v-8	6/7/1508	16/9/1508	Geo Busshe		St Dunstan, Cant.
PRC 17 9/338-9v	2/6/1508	18/9/1508	Jn Lull		Eastling
PRC 17/9/339v- 40v	30/3/1508	13/9/1508	Tho Pokyll	elder	Bearsted
PRC 17 9/340v-1	14/8/1508	12/9/1508	Wm Murcoke		Great Chart
PRC 17/9/341v-2	23/9/1508	11/10/1508	Tho Adamson		Bapchild
PRC 17/9/342v	26/9/1508	13/11/1508	Ricard Barkelett		Smarden
PRC 17/9/342v-3	5/9/1508	13/11/1508	Tho Roger		Stone
PRC 17/9/343-v	1/7/1508	13/11/1508	Garrard Ebben		Cranbrook
PRC 17/9/343v	15/10/1508	13/11/1508	Tho Cushman		Benenden
PRC 17/9/344	8/9/1508	14/11/1508	Wm Pers		Lenham
PRC 17/9/344	21/9/1508	13/11/1508	Jn Gybson		Little Chart
PRC 17/9/344v-5	4/10/1508	30/11/1508	Jn Wodar		Dymchurch
PRC 17/9/345-v	28/10/1508	7/12/1508	Wm Bremonyngham		St And. Cant.
PRC 17/9/345v	22/4/1508	28/9/1508	Garard Mens alias Wye		St Mary Magd. Canterbury
PRC 17/9/346	1/9/1508?	-/9/1508	James Johnson		Holy Cross, Westgate, Cant.
PRC 17/9/346	26/2/1508	26/9/1508	Jn West		Barham
PRC 17/9/346-v	-/1508	26/9/1508	Beaton Coteas		St Mary in the Marsh?
PRC 17/9/346v	20/3/1508	23/12/1508	Jn Stokis		Berston? Barfrestone
PRC 17/9/347	22/12/1508	13/1/1509	Tho Gylnot		Whitstable
PRC 17/9/347v-8	10/9/1504	18/12/1508	Johane Howgham	wd. of Edw.	Minster, Thanet

PRC 17/9/348	11/8/1508	16/9/1508	Ste White		Postling
PRC 17/9/348v-9	17/7/1508	25/9/1508	Wm Wilmott		Newington
PRC 17/9/349	22/9/1508	13/2/1509	Robt Maxsted		Chilham
PRC 17/9/349-50	-/1/1508	25/9/1508	Laur William		Brabourne
PRC 17/9/350-v	13/10/1508	13/12/1508	Tho Turner		Harrietsham
PRC 17/9/350v-1	17/3/1508	-/3/1509	Anne Broke		
PRC 17/9/351-v	8/1/1509	17/9/1509	Wm Atwodde	jun	Elham
PRC 17/9/351v-2	10/12/1508	13/1/1509	Robt Pery		St Paul, Cant.
PRC 17/9/352v-3v	20/2/1509	10/3/1509	Giles Ricard		Capel le Ferne?
PRC 17/9/353v	23/9/1508	5/2/1509	Roger Edward		Brookland
PRC 17/9/354-v	-/1/1509	3/3/1509	Robt Robard		Hougham
PRC 17/9/354v	1/8/1508	13/12/1508	Nic Spice		Lenham
PRC 17/9/355-v	17/1/1509	5/3/1509	Jn Wattis		Hothfield
PRC 17/9/355v-6v	13/2/1509	5/3/1509	Ste Sisely		Hawkhurst
PRC 17/9/357-v	24/9/1508	5/3/1509	Ste Marchall		Brookland
PRC 17/9/357v-8	20/2/1509	16/4/1509	Agnes Sprott	widow	Kennington
PRC 17/9/358v	21/3/1509?	22/5/1509?	Julian Jacobe		Biddenden
PRC 17/10/1-v	24/9/1505	17/11/1505	Jn Thacchar		Sandhurst
PRC 17/10/2-v	27/3/1505	5/6/1505	Wm Fisher	priest	Minster, Sheppey
PRC 17/10/2v	5/3/1505	5/6/1505	Johnes? Baker		
PRC 17/10/3	20/3/1505	5/6/1505	Tho Bussher		Sittingbourne
PRC 17/10/3-v	20/4/1505	2/6/1505	Johnes? Noke		Kenard- ington?
PRC 17/10/3v-4	7/2/1505	9/5/1505	Wm Costanteyne	hermit	Ospringe
PRC 17/10/4-v	26/5/1505	3/7/1505	Rose Redfyn	late wf. of Nic	Queen- borough
PRC 17/10/5-6	24/4/1505	1/7/1505	Jn Gebon		Biddenden
PRC 17/10/6v	9/6/1505	29/7/1505	Wm Ridden		Ulcombe
PRC 17/10/7-v	16/4/1505	29/7/1505	Ste Fox		Staplehurst
PRC 17/10/7v-8	7/6/1505	29/7/1505	Wm Jemett		Ulcombe
PRC 17/10/8v	14/5/1505	30/7/1505	Wm Pasheley		Eastchurch
PRC 17/10/9-v	20/3/1505	29/7/1505	Margery Fordred		Fristed
PRC 17/10/10-11	3/4/1505	28/7/1505	Jn Pope		High Halden
PRC 17/10/11-v	25/11/1504	29/7/1505	Parnell Partriche	widow	Staplehurst
PRC 17/10/12-v	29/3/1505	3/6/1505	Ric Barnys		Smeden
PRC 17/10/13-v	26/4/1505		Jn Thaccher	elder	Sandhurst
PRC 17/10/13v-14v	18/5/1504	30/7/1505	Custans Eston		Minster?, Eastchurch?
PRC 17/10/14v-15	-/1/1505	1/7/1505	Tho Wethynbroke		Headcorn
PRC 17/10/15-v	18/5/1505	28/7/1505	Alice Cowper		Ebony
PRC 17/10/16	20/6/1505	28/7/1505	Isabelle Taylour	widow	High Halden
PRC 17/10/16-17	3/8/1505?	-/6/1505?	Jn atte Melle	elder	Hothfield
PRC 17/10/17-v	4/6/1505	30/7/1505	Laur Plotten		Minster, Sheppey
PRC 17/10/17v-18	1/10/1504	30/7/1505	Elyn Hogyn	wd. of Laur	Bobbing
PRC 17/10/18v-19	4/6/1505	2/7/1505	Clemens Franklen		Chart Sutton
PRC 17/10/19	5/1/1505	29/1/1505	Ric Brokholl		Bapchild
PRC 17/10/19v	11/7/1505	15/9/1505	Elena Fayrechilde	widow	Appledore
PRC 17/10/19v-20	11/12/1504	16/9/1505	Johanna Garves	widow	Tenterden
PRC 17/10/20-1	22/4/1505	16/9/1505	Wm Claidich		Tenterden
PRC 17/10/21-2	27/1/1505	16/9/1505	Jn Lilly		Tenterden
PRC 17/10/22-3	20/2/1505	16/9/1505	Jn Herpynhope	elder	Hawkhurst
PRC 17/10/23-4	-/3/1505	16/9/1505	Wm Willcok	elder	Biddenden
PRC 17/10/24-v	10/6/1505	18/9/1505	Roberth? Bocher		Newington

PRC 17/10/24v-5v	24/5/1505	20/9/1505	Salamon Symon		Cosmus & Damian in Blean
PRC 17/10/26	-/1490?	19/4/1505	Nic Plomet		Kennington
PRC 17/10/26-v	22/7/-	20/9/1505	Tho Shipman		Thanington
PRC 17/10/27-v	21/12/-?	5/9/1505	Agnes Byrche		Canterbury
PRC 17/10/27v-8	20/3/1505	24/4/1505	Tho Abbott		Chislet
PRC 17/10/28v	29/4/1492	26/9/1505	Jn Prentice		
PRC 17/10/29-v	10/9/1505	24/9/1505	Jn Ingram	elder	Folkestone
PRC 17/10/29v-30	7/6/1504	22/2/1505	Tho Chadborn		St And. Cant.
PRC 17/10/30-v	3/5/1505	3/10/1505	Tho Bellynge		Hastingleigh
PRC 17/10/30v-1	28/12/1504	9/9/1505	Ric Elgor		Wye
PRC 17/10/31v-2	10/4/1505	20/10/1505	Galfus Grigge		Hothfield
PRC 17/10/32	8/9/1505	22/10/1505	Jn Mesynger		Sittingbourne
PRC 17/10/33-v	14/2/1505	21/10/1505	Laur Halsnoth		Staplehurst
PRC 17/10/33v	12/5/1505	21/10/1505	Wm Hovynden		Ulcombe
PRC 17/10/34v-6	3/5/1505	21/10/1505	Ste Payne		Frittenden
PRC 17/10/36-8	3/9/1505	23/10/1505	Margery Baker	widow	Faversham
PRC 17/10/38-9v	19/7/1503	27/9/1503	Johnes? Goldworth		Folkestone
PRC 17/10/40-1v	5/3/1505	25/10/1505	Tho Seynt	yeoman	Swalecliffe
PRC 17/10/41v-2	20/7/1505	22/11/1505	Jn Sayer		Whitstable
PRC 17/10/42-v	10/7/1505	17/11/1505	Wm Dorley		Kennington
PRC 17/10/42v-3	27/7/1505	15/11/1505	Tho Sowthowse		Chartham
PRC 17/10/43	9/10/1505?	15/11/1505	Tho Parot/Parotte		Holy Cross, Westgate, Cant.
PRC 17/10/43v-4v	6/10/1505	22/11/1505	Wm a Bere		Ripple
PRC 17/10/45-8v	-/1505	17/11/1505	Laur at Helle		Biddenden
PRC 17/10/49-v	-/1504	12/12/1504	Alexandra Gayye	wd. of Wm	Oare
PRC 17/10/49v	4/10/1504		Johanna Kenet	widow	Linton
PRC 17/10/50	6/9/1504	4/11/1504	Barnabe Pollarde		Warehorne
PRC 17/10/50	22/9/1504	4/11/1504	Margt Skeyle	wd. of Ric	Appledore
PRC 17/10/50v	2/6/1505	20/10/1505	Margery Pellant	widow	Smarden
PRC 17/10/51-v	-/1504	5/5/1505	Jn Dyne		Stone, Oxney
PRC 17/10/51v-2	26/7/1486?	16/9/1505	Alice Sharpe		St Mary Bredin, Cant.
PRC 17/10/52-3	27/3/1505	5/5/1505	Hen at Hill		Stone
PRC 17/10/53	3/12/1504	-/9/1505	Jn Panyell		St Laur, Thanet
PRC 17/10/54v	3/6/1505	22/10/1505	Ric Besett		Queen- borough
PRC 17/10/55	17/5/1504	28/7/1505	Isabel Pope		Great Chart

Abbreviations used in wills:

Alex	Alexander
And	Andrew
Ant	Anthony
Bart	Bartholomew
Chris	Christopher
Edm	Edmund
Edw	Edward
Eliz	Elizabeth
Geoff	Geoffrey
Geo	George
Greg	Gregory
Hamd	Hamond
Hen	Henry
Jas	James
Jn	John
Kath	Katherine
Laur	Laurence
Magd	Magdalen
Margt	Margaret
Math	Mathew
Mich	Michael
Mild	Mildred
Nic	Nicholas
Pat	Patrick
Pet	Peter
Phil	Philip
Reg	Reginald
Ric	Richard
Robt	Robert
Rog	Roger
Sim	Simon
Ste	Steven
Tho	Thomas
Walt	Walter
Wm	William
bach	bachelor
Cant.	Canterbury
cloth/drap	clothier/ draper
d.	died
dau	daughter
eld	elder
esq	esquire
gent	gentleman
jun	junior
nr	near
sen	senior
servt	servant
vic	vicar
wd.	widow
wf.	wife
ygr	younger
[ ]	uncertainty as to whether testator of given parish

*Inventories Consistory and Archdeaconry*

Probate Inventories for Whitstable, Wye and Chislet

All dates have been converted to modern dating. Where specific dates have not been provided, the dates of the volumes have been inserted in brackets instead.

Reference	Name	Year	Status	Occupation
<b>Whitstable</b>				
PRC 10/13/319	Thomas Burr	1582		
PRC 10/20/122	David Robards	1592		yeoman
PRC 10/3/80	John Allen	1568		
PRC 10/10/482	John Allin	1682		
PRC 10/26/204	Richard Allen	1595		
PRC 10/2/48	John Baker	1566		
PRC 10/6/86	Thomas Bassett	1571		
PRC 10/10/771	John Bredges	1580		
PRC 10/14/349	Agnes Brooman	1582	widow	
PRC 10/14/316	Elinor Bassett	1584	widow	
PRC 10/15/184	William Bassett	1585		
PRC 10/17/202v	William Bassett	1589		
PRC 10/17/80	Helen Bassett	1587	widow	
PRC 10/22/14	John Bloakes	(1558-96)		
PRC 10/23/160	Gylles Barrett	1595		
PRC 10/29/67	William Bradlie	1600		sailor
PRC 10/5/157	William Coppyn	1570		
PRC 10/6/567	Margaret Coppyns	1573	widow	
PRC 10/17/109	Hellen Collins	1587	widow	
PRC 10/17/108	Thomas Collins	1587		
PRC 10/17/211	Martyn Caggas	(1586-9)		
PRC 10/17/388v	William Clifforde	1587		
PRC 10/20/396	Richard Careleys	1593		
PRC 10/22/497	Richard Farras	1594		husbandman
PRC 10/3/353	Henry Garche	1569		
PRC 10/5/332	Walter Grapes	1571		
PRC 10/14/486	John Gylman	1585	elder	
PRC 10/17/78	John Gale	1587		
PRC 10/19/91v	Thomas Godman	1590		
PRC 10/6/281	John Harris	1572		
PRC 10/6/124	Richard Athawe	1571		
PRC 10/7/270	William Holowaye	1574		
PRC 10/15/116	Peeter Henman	1585		
PRC 10/25/23	William Hallsnothe	1599		
PRC 10/27/226	John Halsnoth	1597		
PRC 10/29/431	John Harker	1601		
PRC 10/27/181	John Harker	1597	younger	
PRC 10/3/105	William Lytlewodd	1568		
PRC 10/9/429	Nicholas Lull	1578		
PRC 10/26/249v	Timothie Lowe	(1593-9)		
PRC 10/3/211	Martayne Mylles	1568		
PRC 10/3/437	Jaymes Moyce	1569		
PRC 10/4/327	John Mershe	1567		
PRC 10/9/202	John Martyn	1577		
PRC 10/19/200	William Meriden	1590		
PRC 10/18/307	John Menfyeld	1589	younger	
PRC 10/22/718	John Menfield	1595		

PRC 10/26/259	William	Menfilde	1599		
PRC 10/27/214	Thomas	Mendfylde	1598		
PRC 10/28/219	Margaret	Menfeild	1600	widow	
PRC 10/17/225v	Charles	Nutto	1588		
PRC 10/23/198	William	Norryngton	1594		
PRC 10/30/318	John	Newstreete	1602		
PRC 10/19/68v	John	Pickle	(1589-92)		
PRC 10/19/89v	Mathue	Pye	1590		
PRC 10/15/466	Thomas	Roger	1586		yeoman
PRC 10/1/141	John	See	1566		
PRC 10/5/74	John	Smelt	1570		
PRC 10/5/192	Beatrix	Saver	1570		
PRC 10/10/561	Richard	Smelt	1581		yeoman
PRC 10/11/17	John	Smelte	1581	elder	yeoman
PRC 10/13/665	John	Simons	1584		
PRC 10/15/196	Thomas	Sainte	1585		
PRC 10/16/217	Richard	Spencer	1586		
PRC 10/17/85v	Catherine	Stevens	1588	widow	
PRC 10/19/98	John	Stedman	1590		
PRC 10/19/120v	John	Savedge	1591		
PRC 10/19/188	John	Spices	1589		
PRC 10/19/413	John	Sharpie	1590		
PRC 10/21/288	John	Saynt	1593		
PRC 10/23/224	Robert	Spice	1594		
PRC 10/28/297	Joane	Sharpie	1600	widow	
PRC 10/29/418	William	Simons	(1599-1602)		
PRC 10/4/206	Joane	Swanton	1567		
PRC 10/15/267	Thomas	Swanton	1586		
PRC 10/24/439	William	Swanton	1597		
PRC 10/28/301		Swanton	1600	widow	
PRC 10/7/98	Katherine	Tarye	1573	widow	
PRC 10/13/116	John	Turner	1583		
PRC 10/17/235v	Alice	Turnor	1589	widow	
PRC 10/23/72	Robert	Tybolde	1594		
PRC 10/3/288	John	Weekes	1569		
PRC 10/15/269	John	Wilkins	1586		
PRC 10/18/592	John	Whiter	1589		yeoman
PRC 10/19/1v	Margaret	White	1589	widow	

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Wye

PRC 10/19/239v	Sibell	Alcocke	1591	spinster	
PRC 10/20/176	Robert	Allards	1593		yeoman
PRC 10/23/91	Helene	Allard	1595	widow	
PRC 10/23/55	Katherin	Swan	1594	widow	
PRC 10/23/128	Gregory	Winter	1596		
PRC 10/23/166	John	Archlie	1596		
PRC 10/24/79	Richard	Mace	1597		
PRC 10/24/12	William	Kempes	1598		gentleman
PRC 10/24/272	Thomas	Castle	1596		husbandman
PRC 10/24/353	William	Paynes	1597		
PRC 10/24/432	Thomas	March	1597		
PRC 10/4/33	Thomas	German	1567		
PRC 10/4/42v	Thomas	Mylles	1567		yeoman
PRC 10/4/50v	John	Alleyn	1567		
PRC 10/5/80v	John	Rolf	1569		
PRC 10/5/97	Robert	Serles	1570	B.D.	clerk
PRC 10/5/183	Richard	Brett	1570		yeoman

PRC 10/5/190v	Thomas	Hodiam	1570		
PRC 10/6/78	Richard	Woodcocke	1571		cooper
PRC 10/6/296	James	Parker	1573		
PRC 10/7/68v	Robert	Aunsell	1573		
PRC 10/7/122	John	Potter	1573	younger	
PRC 10/7/209	Henry	Mershe	1574		
PRC 10/8/108	William	Prowde	1575	elder	yeoman
PRC 10/9/21v	Johane	Beverley	1576	widow	
PRC 10/9/57	Richard	Howell	1577		
PRC 10/9/171v	Thomas	Awsten	1577		
PRC 10/9/192	Richard	Berling	1578		
PRC 10/9/209	Leonard	Lambe	1577		
PRC 10/9/247	John	Mylls	1577		
PRC 10/9/248v	Alce	Mantle	1576		
PRC 10/9/299v	Richard	Barrowe	1578		yeoman
PRC 10/9/324v	William	Munes	1579		
PRC 10/10/255	John	Pyne	1579		
PRC 10/10/277	William	Collens	1581		
PRC 10/11/211v	Thomas	Sharpe	1580		
PRC 10/12/25	Gregorye	Cooke	1584		
PRC 10/12/112	Roger	Kyngesland	1583		blacksmith
PRC 10/13/365	Gregory	Burges	1584		chapman
PRC 10/13/220v	John	Pynde	1579		
PRC 10/13/216v	William	Alcocke	1581		
PRC 10/14/14	Michaell	Charder	1583		
PRC 10/14/38	William	Nitingall	1582		
PRC 10/14/61	Hamon	Wilson	1583		husbandman
PRC 10/14/115	Anthony	Eston	1584		yeoman
PRC 10/15/100	Roger	Watts	1585		
PRC 10/15/149v	George	Egerden	1586		
PRC 10/15/330	Stephen	Dodde	1586		
PRC 10/16/287	Gregory	Bretts	1587		
PRC 10/16/312	Rafe	Persciffall	1585		yeoman
PRC 10/16/185	William	Thompson	1586		
PRC 10/16/162	Robert	Beere	1586		
PRC 10/16/135	John	Duncks	1587		
PRC 10/16/515	Raphe	Watson	1587		
PRC 10/16/176	John	Hardres	1584		
PRC 10/17/42	Robert	Cosen	1587		
PRC 10/17/345v	John	Amias	1587		
PRC 10/17/184	George	Dawsons	1589		
PRC 10/17/373v	Stephen	Dodd	1587		
PRC 10/18/137	Thomasine	Dylnott	1589	widow	
PRC 10/18/262	Thomas	Kennytt	1588		
PRC 10/18/188	Stephen	Gyles	1589		
PRC 10/18/48	Laurence	Byrtes	1588		
PRC 10/18/370	Paule	Pylcher	1588		
PRC 10/18/256	Richard	Jerman	1587		
PRC 10/19/431	Annis	Browne	1591	widow	
PRC 10/19/40	Elizabeth	Cooke	1588		
PRC 10/21/1	John	Marten	1592		
PRC 10/21//27	Thomas	Wells	1593		shearman
PRC 10/21//50	Henry	Wood	1592		
PRC 10/21/407	Robert	Cleveland	1592		
PRC 10/22/267	Alice	Howe	1596	widow	
PRC 10/22/606	Agnes	Bridgeman	1594	widow	
PRC 10/22/495	John	Joans	1594		
PRC 10/22/446	Joan	Kyngeslands	1595	widow	

PRC 10/22/73v	William	Maplesden	1593		
PRC 10/22/143	Jacob	Pilcher	1594		
PRC 10/22/142	Robert	Roundoe	1594		
PRC 10/22/222	John	Watson	1595		glover
PRC 10/22/610	Thomas	Terowle	1594		
PRC 10/25/211	Katrine	Sharpe	1597		
PRC 10/25/344	William	Swan	1598		gentleman
PRC 10/26/65	Anthony	Godderd	1594		
PRC 10/26/154	Alice	Triper	(1593-9)		
PRC 10/26/188	Edward	Dabbs	1599		
PRC 10/26/309	Godfrey	Johnson	1599		
PRC 10/26/362	Ralph	Sowthie	1599		
PRC 10/26/211	Richard	Jermans	1587		
PRC 10/26/324	Dorothie	Hardes	1585		
PRC 10/27/307	John	Kempe	1599		esquire
PRC 10/27/198	John	Marbrooke	1599		
PRC 10/28/256	William	Price	1601		
PRC 10/28/323	Richard	Smyth	1600		
PRC 10/28/471	Richard	Pilcher	1600		
PRC 10/28/361	Thomas	Tyser	1600		
PRC 10/30/182	Robert	Fryar	1602		
PRC 10/30/198	George	Howlyn	1602		husbandman
PRC 10/30/362	Amye	Paynes	1601	widow	
PRC 10/29/156	Arthur	Francklen	1601		
PRC 10/29/222	William	Howe	1600		yeoman
PRC 21/7/54	William	Bannester	1584		
PRC 21/6/94v	William	Gates	1582		
PRC 22/1/21v	William	Knyght	1569		
PRC 10/1/241	Edward	Bellamye	1565		
PRC 10/1/361	Edmond	Haye	1566		fletcher
PRC 10/1/116	Thomas	Dale	1565		clerk
PRC 10/1/36	William	Dorrell	1565		
PRC 21/14/481	William	Morehowse	1599		gentleman

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Chislet

PRC 10/24/287	Marie	Stephens	(1596-8)		
PRC 10/14/218	Isabel	Fowler	1585	virgin	
PRC 10/26/24	George	Brodshewe	1598		
PRC 10/26/286	William	Cooper	1599		
PRC 10/26/38	David	Dodd	(1593-9)		
PRC 10/21/441	William	Raynouldes	1593		
PRC 10/22/342	John	Adey	1595		
PRC 10/22/477	John	Shaft	1595		
PRC 10/24/335	Mathew	Wood	1597	singleman	
PRC 10/24/429	John	Luckett	1597		yeoman
PRC 10/30/283	Maximllian	Lyllie	1603		
PRC 10/29/526	Thomas	Younge	1599		
PRC 10/29/250	Richard	Johnson	1600		
PRC 10/30/373	Gervase	Rose	1602		
PRC 10/30/417	Thomas	Saunder	1603		husbandman
PRC 10/1/242	Lyne	Taylor	1565		
PRC 10/1/42	James	Bucke	1565		
PRC 21/2/277	Mychaell	Clarke	1575		
PRC 21/5/233	Alice	Oven	1581		
PRC 10/21/409	John	Barnes	1591		
PRC 10/21/329	Robert	Keyle	1593		
PRC 10/21/305	Thomas	Rooke	1594		husbandman



PRC 10/21/327	Hugh	Pellinge	1593	husbandman
PRC 10/21/248	Henry	Parramore	1593	yeoman
PRC 10/21/211	Edmond	Goolson	1593	
PRC 10/18/303	Micheal	Martin	1587	
PRC 10/17/389	Mychell	Newe	1587	
PRC 10/17/250v	George	Pellinge	1588	
PRC 10/17/239v	Thomas	Crippes	1588	yeoman
PRC 10/17/134v	John	Wood	1587	yeoman
PRC 10/17/104	William	Stevens	1587	husbandman
PRC 10/17/164v	William	Pellinge	(1586-9)	
PRC 10/15/99	William	Swanne	1585	
PRC 10/15/63	James	Wilkinson	1585	yeoman
PRC 10/14/52	John	Taylor	1582	
PRC 10/13/274v	William	Pennye	1584	
PRC 10/13/233	John	Bonger	1583	
PRC 10/10/50v	Richard	Hammone	1579	
PRC 10/10/10	John	Sanders	1579	
PRC 10/9/37v	William	Dodde	1577	
PRC 10/8/83v	Alexander	Consaynte	1575	
PRC 10/7/285v	Mathew	Browne	1575	
PRC 10/6/177	Robert	Saunder	1572	
PRC 10/6/136	Zachary	Alingham	(1571-3)	
PRC 10/6/114	William	Lambyns	1572	
PRC 10/5/283v	William	Consaunt	1571	gentleman
PRC 10/5/203	Micheal	Usbonne	1571	
PRC 10/5/186	John	Hill	1570	
PRC 10/2/102v	John	Salkyn	1566	
PRC 10/2/81	Robert	Rose	(1566-7)	
PRC 10/22/680	Thomas	Uffington	(1588-96)	
PRC 10/22/676	William	Webb	1595	husbandman
PRC 10/22/538	George	Suresbie	1594	
PRC 10/19/238v	Gregory	Harrys	1591	
PRC 10/19/93	Hugh	Webbe	1590	
PRC 10/19/89v	John	Mason	(1589-92)	
PRC 10/19/9	Peter	Saunders	1589	husbandman
PRC 10/28/430	Richard	Webb	(1599-1601)	
PRC 10/28/274	Robert	Randall	1600	husbandman
PRC 10/28/276	John	Royse	1599	husbandman
PRC 10/28/242	William	Paine	1599	
PRC 10/22/800	John	Godherd	1595	
PRC 10/22/42v	Stephen	Sollie	1591	yeoman
PRC 10/24/104	Stephen	Hinxhell	1597	parish clerk
PRC 10/28/105	Elizabeth	Dodd	1600	widow
PRC 10/22/11v	William	Browne	1591	
PRC 10/28/197	Francis	Luckett	1601	widow
PRC 10/29/139	Robert	Dodd	1599	

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