

**Representations
and
Experiences of Place:**

**The Islands of Sheppey in the late
medieval and early modern period**

**Written by
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**Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D.
in Medieval and Early Modern Studies
at the University of Kent, Canterbury, 2009**

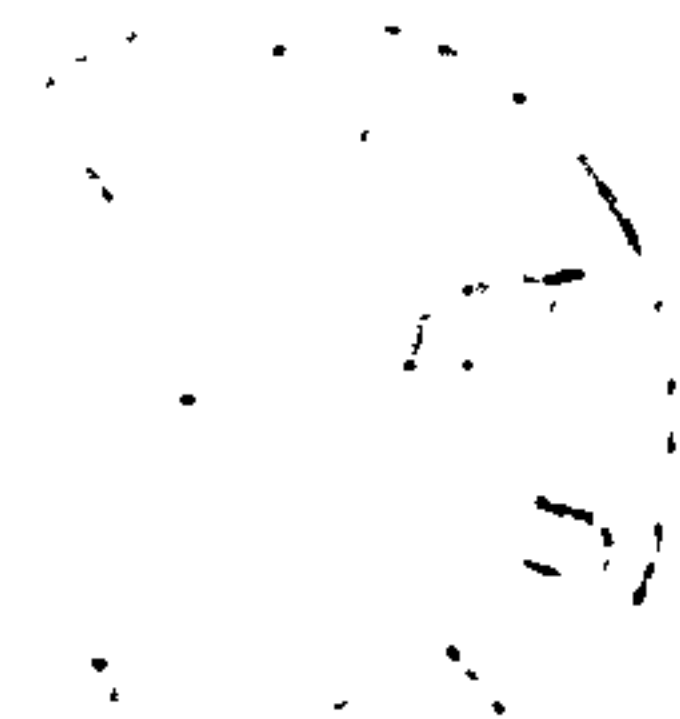


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Abstract

Places were important physical and cultural spaces in the late medieval and early modern period. This thesis examines the diversity, complexity and evolution of making meaning in relation to specific places, land and dwellings, within a small island community in northeast Kent known as the Islands of Sheppey, Harty and Elmley. The method used was thematic; with each chapter presenting a case for the understanding of places as physically and culturally complex spaces. Chapter 1 provides a context for localised study in relation to wider research which has focused on the study of island settlements, landscape and cultural history. Chapter 2 introduces a theoretical framework for visual and textual conceptualisations of landscape spaces whilst also introducing how biographical writings, such as the last will and testament, imaginatively narrate landscape spaces on the islands. Chapter 3 presents a chronological history of the evolving physical landscape into specific social settlements on the islands. Chapter 4 examines how the relationship between religious places, such as the Minster on Sheppey, shaped local religious practices unique to the island, such as burial at the Minster church and naming of daughters after local Anglo-Saxon women saints. The changes and continuities in beliefs and practices were intrinsically linked to the physical and local landscape. Chapter 5 examines estate maps of the islands; visually exploitive spatial perspectives commissioned by the Crown and wealthy landholders whilst Chapter 6 investigates indigenous textual mappings of the islands, specifically the last will and testament. Chapters 7 and 8 examine the relationship between inheritance strategies and locally adapted descriptions of places, with particular reference to the role of the family as integral to place description, remembrance and inheritance. It is suggested, by the collective and cumulative nature of all eight chapters, that medieval and early modern island studies are an important contribution to national religious and social history.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In 1998, I approached my then supervisor for my MA dissertation, Andrew Butcher, with an idea to research a place often shunned by local people, the Island of Sheppey. Coming from a large cosmopolitan area such as Southern California I was intrigued that a small island location could provoke such strong reactions of prejudice and community isolation from the rest of Kent.

I would like to thank the Canterbury Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies for an overseas award during my first year as a Ph.D. student. There have been so many people that have been helpful and encouraging throughout my research and writing-up period that I hope I do not forget anyone. To all the staff at the Canterbury Cathedral Archives, especially Mark Bateson, and also the staff at the British Library and Westminster Library and Muniments, for their patience and helpfulness during my initial research. In addition, I would like to thank Malcolm Mercer at the National Archives for his assistance. Simon Pratt at the Canterbury Archaeological Trust has been very knowledgeable, offering me his own unpublished research, and has let me use some of his photographs and maps in this thesis. I am also grateful to him for his shared enthusiasm about Sheppey.

Without the assistance of John Hills in the Geography Department at Canterbury Christ Church University College, I would not have been able to include reconstructed maps of Sheppey within this thesis; so to him I'm very grateful for his time and patience with all my map requests and demands.

To all my friends within the Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies and also at King Alfred's College, Winchester, for their support and help particularly with organising a successful series of papers for a session entitled 'Power and Place: Experiences of Authority in Medieval Landscapes' at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds, 2003. A special thank you also goes to Nick Corcos, an independent landscape historian who chaired the session but most importantly inspired my enthusiasm for phenomenology and landscape studies, both locally and from an archaeological perspective.

Also a very special thank you to Lynne Bowden, Stephen Kelly, Jessica Malay, and Sheila Sweetinburgh for their help in reading drafts of my thesis chapters at a difficult time for me when I did not have a supervisor.

I would especially like to thank Catherine Richardson for taking the time to meet with me over the last year and for being the fundamental driving force in securing a final date for submission. I am truly grateful for her patience and support.

As of late, my colleagues and pupils at work at St. Edmund's School, Canterbury have also helped to keep me enthused whilst also generally being interested in my thesis research.

Most of all I would like to thank my husband Richard for his never-ending support and patience throughout my research and especially during my writing-up period. Without him this thesis could never have been completed. And to all my friends and family back in California for their interest in my thesis research as well and for wondering how I have endured the English climate for so long.

Abbreviations

All bibliographic references or footnotes are given in full followed by abbreviated form when possible throughout this thesis.

<i>Arch Cant</i>	<i>Archaeologia Cantiana</i>
<i>AHR</i>	<i>Agricultural History Review</i>
<i>Cal Pat Rolls</i>	<i>Calendar of Patent Letters</i>
<i>EHR</i>	<i>Economic History Review</i>
<i>JBS</i>	<i>Journal of British Studies</i>
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Economic History</i>
<i>JFH</i>	<i>Journal of Family History</i>
<i>JMRS</i>	<i>Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies</i>
<i>Lands Hist</i>	<i>Landscape History</i>
<i>OS</i>	<i>Ordnance Survey</i>
<i>PNK</i>	<i>The Place-Names of Kent</i> [by J.K. Wallenberg (Upsala, 1934)]
<i>VCH</i>	<i>Victoria County History: Kent</i>

The following archives and record offices are represented thus:

CCAL	Canterbury Cathedral Archives and Library
CKS	Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone, Kent
NA	The National Archives, Kew
WAM	Westminster Abbey Muniments and Library

Explanatory note:

The dating has been standardised so that years begin on the 1st of January and end on the 31st of December. Modern spellings have been adapted for Christian names where they are not directly quoted within the text.

Chapter One

Introduction

This thesis attempts to understand the meaning of place within a distinctive and specific set of islands in north Kent known as the Isles of Sheppey, Harty, and Elmley, during the late medieval and early modern period.¹ It is the intention of this thesis to examine how places are perceived as conscious spaces, constructed and reconstructed over time and amongst individuals and groups. The individuals and groups relating to this study about the Islands of Sheppey include those who lived and worked within particular places on the islands, specifically local landowners and their families. Also amongst these groups were specific map makers, usually working for the Crown with a distinctive set of objectives predefined in their own perception of how the Islands of Sheppey should be visually defined. Fundamentally, this thesis contributes to wider historical research into spatial identification, including mapping and identity studies and the conceptualising of and writing about space within the late medieval to early modern period and beyond.² Furthermore, as most of these studies use large-scale cartographical sources, expansive areas of land and fine art as their case studies, this thesis explores local constructions and perceptions of place within the context of a naturally bound geography, specifically the Islands of Sheppey, as a case study. In addition, this thesis reconstructs places of personal significance using the last will and testament as its most important source of evidence; this is currently unique to mapping and narrative writing

¹ The Islands referred to collectively within this thesis as the Islands of Sheppey consisted of the three distinctive Isles mentioned. These Isles are now one island known as the Isle of Sheppey, with Harty and Elmley constituting separate parishes rather than islands.

² For more background on this see: E.Edson, *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers Viewed Their World* (London, 1997); D. Wood, *The Power of Maps* (London, 1993); P.D.A.Harvey, *Maps in Tudor England* (London, 1993); B.Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2001); A.Gordon and B.Klein, eds., *Literature, Mapping and the Politics of Space in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2001); E.Carter, et al., eds., *Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location* (London, 1993); D.Massey and P.Jess, *A Place in the World? Places, Cultures and Globalisation* (Oxford, 1995); T.Barnes and J.Duncan, eds., *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text, and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape* (London, 1992).

studies. The personal records and narrative writings found within the last will and testament provide one of the most valuable sources of evidence available to historians in reconstructing 'perception and experience'.³ Each chapter within this thesis will provide a thematic focal point and they will be cumulative in revealing how places have been constructed, contested, mapped and interpreted on the Islands of Sheppey.

Places are 'frequently contested' and their meaning is variable between different groups.⁴ In addition, places usually conjure up feelings of 'rival interpretations of the past' where meanings are reconstructed, establishing the important link between geography, self and group identification.⁵ Individuals and groups have been described as the dominant influence behind the continuity and change of meaning within places, 'producing images and creating identities which then form the basis both of the future character of those pieces of space and of the behaviour of people towards them'.⁶ In addition, places provide the framework for the formation of personal experiences. However, it is an individual, or a group, which establishes the meaning of the place, as Muir has suggested: 'places do not have inherent meaning and possess only the meanings that humans give to them'.⁷ Furthermore, Schama has also stressed the contestation of landscape as a cultural rather than a natural occurrence, with the primary shaping and signifying factors as politics, language, feelings, rhetoric, shape and perceptions.⁸

Historical research into spatial constructions has concentrated on the physical mapping process or 'paper landscapes' of texts and maps as a focal point for discussion on the construction and politics of space.⁹ Mapping studies have highlighted how Renaissance interests in nationhood, gender and empire can be explored cartographically,

³ E.Salter, *Cultural Creativity in the Early English Renaissance: Popular Culture in Town and Country* (Basingstoke, 2006), p.15. Also on page 15, Salter crucially states, 'In the absence of other personal records, the last will and testament constitutes the single most abundant source of evidence for the reconstruction of individual lives in popular culture.'

⁴ D.Massey and P.Jess, eds., *A Place in the World?* (Oxford, 1995), p.2; Also see E.Carter, et.al., eds., *Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location* (London, 1993); T.Barnes and J.Duncan, eds., *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text, and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape* (London, 1992).

⁵ D.Massey and P.Jess, ed., *A Place in the World?* (Oxford, 1995), p.2.

⁶ D.Massey and P.Jess, *A Place in the World?* (Oxford, 1995), pp.2-3.

⁷ R.Muir, *Approaches to the Landscape* (Basingstoke: Macmillian, 1999), p.274.

⁸ S.Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York, 1995), pp.10-18.

⁹ A conference organized by Queen Mary and Westfield College and the University of London in July 1997 was entitled *Paper Landscapes: Maps, Texts and the Construction of Space 1500-1700*. This conference formed the basis for a book published by Andrew Gordon and Bernhard Klein entitled, *Literature, Mapping and the Politics of Space in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2001).

visually and textually, drawing links overall between writing and landscape construction, metaphorically and metaphysically, in notion and product.¹⁰ Current research into the spatial formation of places has concentrated on modern geographical issues such as the effects of war, capitalism, globalisation, migration, and concepts of homeland in relation to major world changes.¹¹ Post-industrial and post-modern studies focus on issues of urban planning, city versus countryside, wilderness and the deconstruction of geographical dynamics of power in representations of places from a post-structuralist standpoint.¹² Philosophical texts, such as Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*, have discussed 'spaces of intimacy' related to domesticity, and the phenomenological, theoretical understanding of an individual's consciousness of their experience of space.¹³ Overall, the theoretical frameworks mentioned above are intrinsically linked to the enquiries of this thesis, which attempts to further dialogue about the complexities of local places, and therefore intimate landscape space and its subjectivity, from within group and individual networks.

Island studies present a unique opportunity to test the understanding of the complexity of cultural spaces, especially those with a distinctively bound geography and seemingly exclusive practices. Contemporary studies into modern island communities have provided insight into notions of island distinctiveness, such as that found on Whalsay Island in the Shetland Islands and on Tory Island, Northern Ireland. Anthony Cohen in his book *Whalsay: Symbol, Segment and Boundary in a Shetland Island Community* suggested that the island boundary 'marks the people as different from elsewhere' and this use of symbolism 'formulates and celebrates the terms of their difference'.¹⁴ Fox, in his research about Tory Island, which is located nine miles from

¹⁰ See A.Gordon and B.Klein, eds., *Literature, Mapping and the Politics of Space in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2001), pp.2-3.

¹¹ See E.Carter, et.al., eds., *Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location* (London, 1993); D.Massey and P.Jess, *A Place in the World? Places, Cultures and Globalisation* (Oxford, 1995), p.5.

¹² See B.Jarvis, *Postmodern Cartographies: The Geographical Imagination in Contemporary American Culture* (London, 1998) and T.Barnes and J.Duncan, eds., *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape* (London, 1992).

¹³ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. by M.Jolas (Boston, USA, 1969), p.xv. Additional theoretical discussion on the concept and meaning of place in terms of urban and political spaces may be found within Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*, trans. by D.N.Smith (Oxford, 1991) and Michel de Certeau, *The Practices of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, USA, 1988).

¹⁴ A.Cohen, *Whalsay: Symbol, Segment and Boundary in a Shetland Island Community* (Manchester, 1987), p.209.

the Northern Irish border at the far northwest, found that Tory islanders shared marriage and kinship practices which were distinctive to the Island. A complex system of ranking cousins provided familial authority and marriage links, whilst the choices for establishing fishing crews adhered to a strict social code which was significant only to the Island inhabitants.¹⁵

Surprisingly little work has been done on medieval and early modern islands as distinctive places worthy of investigative research, despite the medieval geography of England containing many small islands (visibly separated) from the mainland.¹⁶ The few medieval social historians who have researched specific islands have been cautious about discussions which might suggest that islands have an important contribution to make to regional or national history. Brief reference to the distinctive character of islands has been made only under the pretext of major social and economic changes which have affected a specific local geography.

The Isle of Axholme, in the northwest corner of Lincolnshire, has been described by Thirsk as having 'a distinct economy from its neighbours and retains to this day its island situation, and something of the insularity which marked its former way of life'.¹⁷ Due to the controversial drainage of Hatfield Chase by Vermuyden in the seventeenth century, the Isle of Axholme has been the focus of attention by historians interested in the social and economic changes resulting from this important event while overlooking the cultural peculiarities of its island nature. Thirsk stated that the Isle of Axholme islanders had 'old ways' which may have caused them not to see the benefits of drainage by Vermuyden; however, she was not specific in her conclusion.¹⁸ Thirsk only briefly acknowledged differences in the ecological and economic interests of the Isle of Axholme inhabitants, compared to that of the mainland population. In addition, the conclusions drawn by Thirsk regarding the resistance of the islanders to the drainage programme suggest that the preservation of agricultural life for local people was at odds with modern

¹⁵ R.Fox, 'Principles and Pragmatics on Tory Island' in A.Cohen (ed.), *Belonging: Identity and Social Organization in British Rural Cultures* (Manchester, 1982), pp.50-71.

¹⁶ Some of these small medieval islands might include the following, however, not all have become part of the mainland: Wallot Island and Fulness in Essex, Portland Island and Bransey Island in Dorset, Walley Isle near Liverpool, The Isle of Ely in Cambridgeshire, and in Kent, the Isle of Thanet, located to the east of the Islands of Sheppey.

¹⁷ J.Thirsk, 'The Isle of Axholme before Vermuyden' in *AHR*, vol.1 (1953), pp.16-28; p.16-17.

¹⁸ See J.Thirsk, 'The Isle of Axholme before Vermuyden' in *AHR*, vol.1, (1953), pp.16-28; p.16-17.

and national industrial interests. Unlike Thirsk's research into the major engineering changes that affected the Isle of Axholme, its cultural and ecological space, this thesis focuses on consistencies and changes present on the Islands of Sheppey on a smaller scale. The complexities, continuities and changes within the inheritance of land and structural property, as recorded within the will-making population's bequests and descriptions of their landscape, are compared and contrasted with Crown (outside) interests in the mapping of a fictional and non-fictional island history.

Further to Thirsk's ground-breaking work, Lloyd's research into the impact of drainage on the Isle of Axholme focused on the changes within one manor, particularly the manor of Epworth. She attempted to contextualise the effects of the drainage by placing them 'within a broad picture of the development of the social relations that characterized the manor and its settlements over the course of the seventeenth century.'¹⁹ Lloyd argued for a more fluid model of community, one that identified itself as a 'process in which continuity and change are constantly interacting within individuals and in their relationships with one another.'²⁰ Although Lloyd does not specifically describe her thesis as an island study, her research emphasises the value of local landscape research. The differing community responses to ecological changes on the Isle of Axholme provided a conclusion highlighting how places provide a complex arena for the examination of changing relationships between individuals and groups, specifically islanders and mainland inhabitants, similar to the cultural ideas explored within this thesis.

Hockey, a historian of Quarr Abbey and its lands on the Isle of Wight, described his work as a deliberate island study which he hoped contributed to English national history. Hockey states in the preface, 'Still less do I intend to apologise for my use here, in the Isle of Wight, of the word 'Island'...I shall be only too happy if these chapters in the story of the Island will help to make its role in the general history of England better appreciated'.²¹ Hockey implies the metaphorical omission of the Isle of Wight, a major island of the English southern coastline, in contributing to the writing about and making

¹⁹ J. Lloyd, 'The Communities of the Manor of Epworth in the Seventeenth Century', (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Sheffield University, 1998), p.1.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ S.F.Hockey, *Quarr Abbey and its Lands 1132-1631* (Leicester, 1970), p.xi.

of English nationhood and thereby calls for a re-mapping of national pride which takes into account the Isle of Wight's history too. In addition, Hockey's research into Quarr Abbey and its lands, is an island study that provides a comprehensive overview of the relationship between the Cistercian monastic house and the economic and agrarian life of the wider island community. This is not too different to the socio-economic factors which affected the people of the Islands of Sheppey, particularly in light of the Minster and its hinterland. Overall, Hockey's use of administrative records, chronicles, tithe records and deeds to reconstruct the relationship between institutional places and people within the island and their relationship to the mainland provides an interesting community narrative.

To briefly return to the subject of mapping studies, island mapping is usually the subject of research when it fits within the context of new developments in Renaissance science, particularly cartography and cosmography of the world. Renaissance cartographers made distinctive maps of islands, particularly in the Mediterranean and South America, for navigational purposes, and to record the reality of new discoveries.²² In addition to the use and exploitation of islands for cartographical purposes, there is also a lack of research into distinctive cultural and social aspects of medieval and early modern islands. Archaeological and prehistoric research has identified islands as segregated and bounded places worthy of special attention. However, most research on islands has been conducted within the last thirty years and has concentrated on Mediterranean and Pacific Islands.²³

Evans was the first to suggest that small islands could contain cultural practices unique from those of the mainland within his essay titled, 'Islands as Laboratories for the Study of Culture Processes' in Renfrew's edited book *The Explanation of Culture Change: Models in Prehistory*.²⁴ Evans found that small islands were distinctive from mainland

²² F.Lestringant, *Mapping the Renaissance World: The Geographical Imagination in the Age of Discovery* (Oxford, 1994), p.108-112. French cartographer, Thevet, made a collection of maps in the sixteenth century called the *Grand Insulaire* or 'Carta da navigare' for what he considered to be practical purposes; however, the collection of island maps was also to demonstrate the efficiency of a new science.

²³ See J.Evans, 'Islands as Laboratories for the Study of Cultural Process' in A.C.Renfrew, ed., *The Explanation of Culture Change: Models in Prehistory* (London, 1973), pp.517-520; P.V.Kirch, ed., *Island Societies: Archaeological Approaches to Evolution and Transformation* (Cambridge, 1986); M.Patton, *Islands in Time: Islands Sociogeography and Mediterranean Prehistory* (London, 1996).

²⁴ J.Evans, 'Islands as Laboratories for the Study of Cultural Process' in A.C.Renfrew, ed., *The Explanation of Culture Change: Models in Prehistory* (London, 1973), pp.517-520.

communities in terms of their cultural development, stating that 'island communities often displayed a tendency towards the exaggerated development of some aspect of their culture.' Therefore, islands did present themselves as distinctive and existing in some degree of isolation from the mainland.²⁵ Using Evans' model for small island studies, Patton further examined the possible ecological and cultural developments of prehistoric Mediterranean Islands.

Patton's research was based, hypothetically, on that of Evans' theoretical ideas regarding the significance of small island case studies compared to wider archaeological and anthropological enquiries. Patton emphasised the 'relationship between human society and the natural environment' by placing it at the forefront of his island studies, where he further suggested that 'insularity more than other environmental variable is clearly definable,' presenting island case studies as natural and organic.²⁶ Patton examined the cultural processes of islands in relation to their colonisation in the Mediterranean. Patton found that the unique ecological features of islands promoted distinctive social interaction, between islands and the mainland, which encouraged trade and cultural exchange.²⁷ Patton's study provides an essential theoretical model for the examination of the Islands of Sheppey where 'the potential of island studies in understanding the dynamics of human societies' presents islands, and places within them, as a natural testing ground for cultural changes and continuities.²⁸

Recent landscape history research has emphasised the humanistic element of geography in an attempt to redress the understanding of cultural landscapes, such as the argument made by Bourassa within *The Aesthetics of Landscape* that 'objective scientific detachment [of geographical landscape studies] fails to grasp the fundamental matter of

²⁵ J.Evans, 'Islands as Laboratories for the Study of Cultural Process' in A.C.Renfrew, ed., *The Explanation of Culture Change: Models in Prehistory* (London, 1973), pp.517-520; p.519.

²⁶ M.Patton, *Islands in Time: Islands Sociogeography and Mediterranean Prehistory* (London, 1996), p.2. Also see P.V.Kirch, ed., *Island Societies: Archaeological Approaches to Evolution and Transformation* (Cambridge, 1986). Kirch makes a similar point to Patton stating that the natural boundedness of islands makes them a perfect assemblage for social and cultural enquires.

²⁷ In addition to prehistoric Mediterranean Island societies that have been studied by archaeologists and anthropologists, oceanic anthropologists have studied small island studies within the Pacific, such as Fiji, Easter Island, and the Hawaiian Islands. See P.V.Kirch, 'Introduction: the Archaeology of Island Societies' in P.V.Kirch, ed., *Island Societies: Archaeological Approaches to Evolution and Transformation* (Cambridge, 1986).

²⁸ M.Patton, *Islands in Time: Island Sociogeography and Mediterranean Prehistory* (London, 1996), pp.2-3; 190.

what it is to exist in or experience the landscape.'²⁹ In addition, prehistoric models have been applied to recent medieval landscape research to broaden perspectives on religious or 'ritual' landscapes; however, this research limits relationships between people and their environment to that which is special rather than common.³⁰ Evidence from the Islands of Sheppey suggests that individuals formed networks of experiences within nucleated and distinctive places in the island landscape, through the identification of boroughs, hamlets, villages, marshes, hills and fieldsapes; their everyday environment rather than places which were judged to be unique. However, the significance of local religious places cannot be underestimated. The importance of the physical landscape in determining, shaping or sustaining medieval and early modern family relationships and social and religious attitudes, specifically in Kent, has been identified by O'Hara's local research.³¹ O'Hara's research into courtship and marriage practices in Kent found that five parishes within the diocese of Canterbury, including Sturry, Tenterden, Whitstable, Wye and Chislet, held 'peculiarities of particular places' both geographically and socially.³² O'Hara suggests further that 'if the character of individual parishes was, in some measure, fashioned by the physical environment, the contrasting features of the Kent landscape offered much diversity.'³³

In addition to O'Hara's conclusions on the importance of acknowledging the physical landscape in shaping cultural processes, Weiss has made similar conclusions whilst researching Cathar history. Weiss stated that there is a need for the 'convergence of the documents and the landscape' where connections between physical environment and specific changes in social and religious processes become important to the reading of

²⁹ S.C.Bourassa, *The Aesthetics of Landscape* (London, 1991), pp.2-3; also see R.Muir, *Approaches to Landscape* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999).

³⁰ Within the last fifteen years, phenomenological approaches to the landscape have come to dominate new landscape and archaeological research. For more information see B.Bender, ed., *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives* (Oxford, 1993) and D.Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (London, 1988) both provided new theoretical methodologies for landscape studies where people, ritual, and symbol were at the forefront to landscape research. C.Tilley in his book, *A Phenomenology of Landscape* (London, 1994), suggested that people held special relationships with sites or landscapes of ritual importance. Also, N.Corcus in 'Churches as Pre-Historic ritual Monuments: A Phenomenological Perspective From Somerset' in *Assemblage*, issue 6, August 2001, pp.1-30, provides a good general overview of the theoretical debate surrounding phenomenological approaches to the medieval landscape using prehistoric landscape research.

³¹ D.O'Hara, *Courtship and Constraint* (Manchester, 2000), p.17 and p.21.

³² *Ibid*, p.17.

³³ *Ibid*.

historical documents.³⁴ The connection between beliefs and landscape, where Catharian beliefs were strongly maintained in such a selectively small area in southern France, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, is a direct result of its physical landscape.³⁵ Weis's study into the preservation of Cathar beliefs in southern France includes recent photographs of the local landscape of Montaillou, Lordat, the Comba Del Gazel and the Haute Montagne over Montaillou.³⁶ Weis argues that the landscape physically and conceptually enclosed Catharism in southern France, theoretically linking peculiar and distinct religious practices to the isolation of villages within the Pyrenees.³⁷ Similar to the island case study presented by this thesis, the intricacy of small and localised place studies should not be underestimated within the larger scope of research hypotheses into social and religious evolution.

In relation to understanding the notions of locality and the special nature of places, the antiquarian tradition cannot be underestimated, especially within Kentish studies. Leland's travelogue of Tudor England did not include a stop on any of the Islands of Sheppey but rather offered a narrative of writing on the transportation system connecting the Islands to the Kentish mainland, and mention of Sexburga's Minster on Sheppey.³⁸ Almost two hundred years later, Hasted provided a more systematic topographical survey compared with Leland. Everitt has pointed out that Hasted 'furnishes us with an unrivalled historical record in its own right, and one to which there is little parallel in most other counties,' especially since Hasted was writing during a 'critical period' in Kentish history, where most of the 'ancient jurisdictional structure of the county' remained

³⁴ R. Weis, *The Yellow Cross: The Story of the Last Cathars 1290-1329* (London, 2000), p.xxxviii. Also see previously published research combining physical landscape with historical documents by W.G.Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (London, 1955); G.C.Homans, *English Villagers of the Thirteenth Century* (Harvard, USA, 1942); M.Aston, *Interpreting the Landscape: Landscape Archaeology in Local Studies* (London, 1985), p.8; M.Aston, D.Austin, C.Dyer, eds., *The Rural Settlements of Medieval England* (Oxford, 1989).

³⁵ E.Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French Village* (London, 1987); R.Weiss, *The Yellow Cross: The Story of the Last Cathars 1290-1329* (London, 2000).

³⁶ R.Weiss, *The Yellow Cross: The Story of the Last Cathars 1290-1329* (London, 2000). Weiss includes no less than twenty-five photographs of various Cathar and other medieval sites to help the reader understand her historical analysis in relation to the mountainous landscape, which metaphorically and physically enclosed Cathar beliefs and practices.

³⁷ R.Weiss, *The Yellow Cross: The Story of the Last Cathars 1290-1329* (London, 2000), p. xxxiii –xlvi.

³⁸ L.T.Smith, ed. *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-1543*, Volume 4 (London, 1964), p.58

intact.³⁹ Although writing at the end of the eighteenth century, Hasted made distinctive observations of the Islands of Sheppey, Harty, and Elmley, not just concerning its general topography and historical events but also the connection between each parish, its history, and the character of its communities of manors and people, including population estimates for each.⁴⁰ Since Hasted there have been other local enthusiasts who have focused their Kentish writings on the history of the Island of Sheppey. Such local historians include Daly and Vigar. Writing in 1904, Daly wrote a survey of the Island of Sheppey from the Roman occupation until the reign of Edward VII, placing the Island of Sheppey at the centre of national, historical narrative writing by stating, 'I have dealt with great and important national factors...from a purely insular point of view'.⁴¹ Eighty-four years later, Vigar, a local history enthusiast, described the Islands of Sheppey as 'one of the most historical and interesting areas to study...this is often the case with an island, for it usually forms an insular community with well defined limits which evolved without much outside influence'.⁴² Daly and Vigar were intrigued by the potential of island studies in encompassing unique insularity whilst also promoting the value of local history to nation building through historical narrative writing.

Social historians of the medieval period have traditionally examined the history of local places through their research into the evolution and continuity of settlement history. This research has largely concentrated on changes in medieval settlement patterns and its consequential impact on social structures, particularly how settlement nucleation was realigned or expanded leaving deserted villages or farmsteads.⁴³ In addition, medieval landscape studies have traditionally been the interest of historical geographers and have often been limited to scientific investigations into settlement, concentrating on field

³⁹ A.Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization: The Evolution of Kentish Settlement* (Leicester, 1986), p.xviii. Also see Hasted, E., *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, 12 vols. (Canterbury, 1972 [1797-1801]).

⁴⁰ Hasted, E., *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, 12 vols. (Canterbury, 1972 [1797-1801]), vol.6, pp.207-275.

⁴¹ A.Daly, *History of the Isle of Sheppey* (Sheerness, 1904), p.xiii.

⁴² J.Vigar, *Curious Kent* (Maidstone, 1988), p.50.

⁴³ M.M. Postan, *Medieval Economy and Society* (London, 1972); M.W.Beresford and J.G.Hurst, eds., *Deserted Medieval Villages* (London, 1971); C.J.Bond, 'Deserted Medieval Villages in Warwickshire and Worcestershire' in P.J.Jarvis and T.R.Slater, eds., *Field and Forest: An Historical Geography of Warwickshire and Worcestershire* (Norwich, 1982); C.C.Taylor, 'Medieval Rural Settlement: Changing Perceptions' in *Lands Hist*, vo.14, 1992, pp.5-17; R.Muir, *Approaches to Landscape* (Basingstoke, 1999).

systems and agricultural developments.⁴⁴ However, sociological questions about settlement evolution have turned to the interdisciplinary approach offered by the integration of archaeological and historical data for more probing exploration into specific localities and their unique history of settlement growth and human occupation.⁴⁵ In considering the importance of Kentish studies, more research is necessary into the 'complexity and diversity' of 'locational factors' in the county's settlement history.⁴⁶

Within the last two decades sociological enquiries into settlement studies, such as those conducted by Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer, have raised the profile of localised historical research, emphasising the 'daily existence of ordinary people' whilst suggesting that they cannot be neglected if 'considering their living space.'⁴⁷ Settlement is referred to as an artefact 'to help us understand medieval ideas and culture.'⁴⁸ Everitt has emphasised in *Continuity and Colonization* the importance of understanding the landscape as an historical document and to envision 'the real world beyond the documents, the world of peasants and colonists, and to reconstruct the evolving landscape.'⁴⁹ In doing so Everitt emphasises the use of place-names and pre-Conquest evidence in conjunction with *Ordnance Survey* maps and, most importantly, the interpretation of the landscape in terms of its 'relationships' between settlements.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Traditional studies into medieval settlement history include J. Thirsk, ed., *Agricultural Change: Policy and Practice 1500-1750*, Volume 3 of *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* (Cambridge, 1990); R.Muir, *Portraits of the Past: The British Landscape Through the Ages* (London, 1989), p.112, 147; R.B.Outhwaite, 'Progress and Backwardness in English Agriculture, 1500-1650' in *Econ Hist Rev.*, 39 (1986), pp.1-18, p.2; M.M. Postan, *Medieval Economy and Society* (Aylesbury, 1972), p.104; S.Oosthuizen, 'Medieval Settlement Relocation in West Cambridgeshire: three case-studies' in *Lands Hist*, 19 (1997), pp.43-55, p.43-44; C.Taylor, *Village and Farmstead: A History of Rural Settlement in England* (London, 1983); H.E.Hallam, *Rural England 1066-1348* (Brighton, 1981), p.251; L.Canter, ed., *The English Medieval Landscape* (London, 1982); H.C.Darby, *A New Historical Geography of England Before 1600* (Cambridge, 1976); E.Miller and J.Hatcher, *Medieval England: Rural Society and Economic Change, 1086-1348* (London, 1978).

⁴⁵ See the following for more information: J.M.Wagstaff, ed., *Landscape and Culture: Geographical and Archaeological Perspectives* (Oxford, 1987); C.Taylor, *Village and Farmstead: A History of Rural Settlement in England* (London, 1983); C.Lewis, P.Mitchell-Fox, C.Dyer, *Village, Hamlet and Field* (Manchester, 1997).

⁴⁶ A.R.Baker and R.A.Butlin, *Studies of Field Systems in the British Isles* (Cambridge, 1973), p.378.

⁴⁷ C.Lewis, P.Mitchell-Fox and C.Dyer, *Village, Hamlet and Field: Changing Medieval Settlements in Central England* (Manchester, 1997), p.7.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p.8.

⁴⁹ A.Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization: The Evolution of Kentish Settlement* (Leicester, 1986), p.11. G.Astill, and A.Grant, have also discussed the problem of evidence survival and its impact on how the researcher sees the countryside in the introduction of their edited book, *The Countryside of Medieval England* (Oxford, 1988), p.1.

⁵⁰ A.Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization: The Evolution of Kentish Settlement* (Leicester, 1986), p.12.

Furthermore, these authors also make the case that settlement studies, through the examination of smaller scale patterns including rows, tofts, streets, greens, planned or unplanned features, provide insight into social relationships between peasants, their households, neighbours, and the larger manors and estates.⁵¹ In addition, the differentiation of rural settlement patterns such as that between fields and crofts, and the making and significance of boundaries, have all made an important contribution to how settlement patterns might be understood in terms of their cultural significance.⁵² Moreover, the relationship between descriptions of landscapes found in documentary records and the physical evidence still surviving presents a unique opportunity for local historians to explore evolving change within the socialisation of places. This thesis attempts to bridge the gap between these possibilities using the Islands of Sheppey as a significant and fascinating case study.

The importance of using both physical and documentary evidence together in historical research has been successfully achieved by Beresford and Hoskins. Both historians examined the physical presence of deserted medieval settlements, as seen in the mounds and hollows within modern fields.⁵³ Hoskins suggested that the English landscape was metaphorically the 'richest historical record we possess.'⁵⁴ Furthermore, documentary historian Harvey later commented on historical documents, particularly maps and their interpretation of past landscapes, as offering modern readers an insight into past perceptions and representations of specific places.⁵⁵ Interdisciplinary research and evidence, provided for example by archaeology and documentary sources, have their own limitations both in the survival of physical remains and written evidence. However, the accumulation of evidence from both disciplines presents a new form of engagement with not only the evidence but also the landscape. Medieval historians studying the

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p.8.

⁵² G.Astill and A.Grant, eds., *The Countryside of Medieval England* (Oxford, 1988), pp.50-54.

⁵³ See the following for more information: M.W.Beresford, *The Lost Villages of England* (London, 1954); M.W.Beresford, 'A Draft Chronology of Deserted Village Studies', in *Medieval Settlement Research Group Annual Report*, 1 (1986), pp.18-23; W.G.Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (London, 1955).

⁵⁴ W.G.Hoskins in 1955 that 'The English Landscape itself, to those who know how to read it aright, is the richest historical record we possess' in his book, *The Making of the English Landscape* (London, 1955), p.14.

⁵⁵ P.D.Harvey, 'The Documents of Landscape History: Snares and Delusions' in *Landscape History*, 1991, vol.13; pp.47-52, wrote that maps in particular 'people the landscape' and help to present a picture of how the past landscape was used', p.51.

sociological aspects of settlement and landscape have all suggested that the study of physical remains combined with that of documentary sources added important dimensions to the comprehensive understanding of medieval history and settlement planning.⁵⁶ Both disciplines present an opportunity to rethink the medieval use of the landscape, settlement, and particularly the evolution and sustainment of local diversity and mentalities. Landscape and documentary evidence present new questions through their readings of the historical past which, when combined, present an often multifarious picture and interpretation of a single place, whether it is a village, town, hamlet, field, croft or garden. This further emphasises the need for the amalgamation of evidence which can trace the existence of a single place and its contemporary use over a given time span in order to fully understand settlement diversity and continuity, particularly amongst the peasant population. Within its investigations this thesis considers the physical location of places, in particular important sites such as the Minster, as well as written documentation, to collect and reconstruct social settlement experiences of the late medieval and early modern island communities of Sheppey, Harty and Elmley.

An important theoretical aspect of this thesis, which has not been considered within the scope of landscape studies previously mentioned, is the relationship between the contemporary purpose of a document's production and its content. Furthermore, the use of the last will and testament, in particular, has not been used in reconstructing landscape history and the cultural processes involved in identifying, negotiating and inheriting places over a specific time period.⁵⁷ Harvey has suggested that historians of landscape history limit their evidence so that 'sources' are used as 'an information retrieval service.'⁵⁸ In addition, Dyer has also commented on the authoritative aspect of using documentary evidence in the research of settlement history by stating that 'reading

⁵⁶ C.Lewis, P.Mitchell-Fox, and C.Dyer, *Village, Hamlet, and Field* (Manchester, 1997); T.Williamson, *Shaping Medieval Landscapes: Settlement, Society, Environment* (Macclesfield, 2003).

⁵⁷ Recent work by Elisabeth Salter has revealed the importance of testamentary material in understanding cultural processes at work in the late medieval and Renaissance period. See E. Salter, *Cultural Creativity in the Early English Renaissance: Popular Culture in Town and Country* (Basingstoke, 2006). Also see J.Ford's PhD thesis which concludes that testamentary material is often used only for statistical purposes at the expense of recognising individuality present in the gift-giving process which leads to 'distortion and misuse of the evidence', p.224. See J.Ford, 'A Study of Wills and Will-making in the period 1500-1513 with Special Reference to the Copy Wills in the Probate registers of the Archdeacon of Bedford 1483-1533' (unpublished PhD thesis, Open University, 1992).

⁵⁸ P.D.Harvey, 'The Documents of Landscape History: Snares and Delusions' in *Landscape History*, 1991, vol.13; pp.47-52, p.47.

fifteenth-century manorial records is an exercise in distinguishing between theory and reality.⁵⁹ Documents such as those used for the research undertaken for this thesis - wills, maps, manorial accounts, charters and lay subsidies - present emerging implications for the reading of landscape and social experiences, similar to Harvey's conclusion regarding the fluidity of social reality: 'the amount of corn that the tax-assessor recorded on a manor may differ from the amount in the owner's own records.'⁶⁰ Overall, documentary evidence provides a perception of social reality, a contemporary voice, which is specific to its intended production not necessarily inclusive of all individuals or groups which are supposed to be represented by the information it provides. This will be explored in relation to perceived intentions for the writing of the last will and testament by Island inhabitants and the mapping of places within the Islands of Sheppey.

To research the relationship between cultural processes of an environment, like a specific local settlement within a landscape, is to look for the representation of a place within a document, within both its content and context. A reading of historical documents in this way provides a view or perception of contemporary social reality of a reflected past, present and also a future. Moreover, the differences in information provided by several types of documents concerning the same place provide knowledge about cognitive processes or interactions with spaces. These spaces may be communicated as a symbol, a picture or within the visual provocation of a textual description of a place. Furthermore, the combination of local research and detailed reading of limited historical evidence has provided considerable depth to the understanding of individuals and groups as well as highlighting the complexity of local distinctiveness within a bounded community and in relation to regional studies.⁶¹ Each chapter within this thesis provides a unique focal point for the discussion and evaluation

⁵⁹ C.Dyer, *Lords and peasants in a Changing Society: The Estates of the Bishopric of Worcester, 680-1540* (Cambridge, 1980), p.162.

⁶⁰ P.D.A.Harvey, 'The Documents of Landscape History: Snares and Delusions' in *Landscape History*, 1991, vol.13; pp.47-52, p.49.

⁶¹ C.Ginzburg argued that 'a close reading of a relatively small number of texts can be more rewarding than the massive accumulation of repetitive evidence', p.viii-ix in E.Muir and G.Ruggiero eds., *Microhistory and the Last People of Europe* (London, 1991). Also see E.Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou*, and C.Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worm* for microhistorical studies. A.Cohen has also written about 'local distinctiveness' in his edited book, *Belonging: Identity and Social Organisation in British Rural Cultures* (Manchester, 1982), pp.1-2.

of aspects of visual and textual conceptualisation of space on the Islands of Sheppey including: a geographical and social settlement history of the islands; religious places and their contribution to local practices; the inheritance of land and structural property,⁶² and the narrative and imaginative local and family histories recorded by local people through their last wills and testaments; and finally the evolution and continuation of social networks linked by places of specific individual importance. Overall, the research presented within this thesis emphasises the importance of place, specifically local place, in the defining and inheriting of local values and interests.

The six types of documents used in research for this thesis include testamentary material, maps, lay subsidies, deeds, manorial and town records. Specific and important relevance has been given, throughout chapters, to the detailed reading of a reduced amount of documentary evidence; the last will and testament and the map are central to the arguments found within this thesis. In some chapters photography of specific places and relevant landscapes on the Islands of Sheppey has been included to provide a visual perspective to the topographical and settlement history. Interestingly, the modern Islands of Sheppey where there is a lower population were also unpopulated during the late medieval and early modern period, such as on the Isle of Elmley and the southern marshes of Minster parish. Each chapter presents a case for the medieval to early modern social and cultural experience of places within the Islands of Sheppey, where conclusions are drawn from the cumulative nature of the evidence within each chapter.

Chapter 2 will introduce an interdisciplinary theoretical framework for this thesis by focusing on the nature of cognitive and unconscious experiences of space; phenomenologically, anthropologically and contextually. In addition, an exploration of the nature of the mapping process, visually and textually within the production of places, will also be introduced. The theoretical framework discussed within this chapter will look at how visual images and written sources, particularly the last will and testament, might be examined to contextualise and reconstruct experiences of place from between

⁶² Structural property is the collective name used throughout this thesis in reference to named buildings, not necessarily of specified usage but nevertheless referred to and bequeathed to named individuals within a personal last will and testament.

c.1400-1600.⁶³ The physical geography and its influence on the social settlement structure of the Islands of Sheppey from the sixth to the sixteenth century will be the focus of Chapter 3, providing a comprehensive context for further chapters which explore more detailed aspects of Islanders' relationships with landscape, inheritance and culture. The reason for such a broad timescale is that in order to understand the late medieval and early modern Island landscape one must understand the influence of the Anglo-Saxon administrative structure which continued to provide the foundation for a real and imagined history which influenced both religious and social practices on the Islands. This is particularly relevant when considering the naming of girls and burial requests throughout the late medieval and early modern period. Chapter 3 will also examine how the marshlands of the islands were exploited early in their island history by non-islanders for economic gain. This practice had implications for the pre-determinacy of isolation and the evolving of unique cultural practices found only on the Islands of Sheppey.

Chapter 4 will examine how specific places, their physical location and historical relevance, impacted on religious practices particularly in relation to the Minster on the Island of Sheppey in the late medieval period. Burial practices and the naming of daughters after the Royal Anglo-Saxon patroness, Sexburga, are all important to the discussion of relationships between the religious and lay communities on the Island, including how the monastery fashioned a unique devotional system based on deconstructions and reconstructions of its past heritage. In addition, the practice of assigning patron saints to specific places such as hamlets, in the case of St Peter's of Ossenden in Minster, will also be examined in Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 examines the construction of place within chorographical descriptions and maps, mostly commissioned by Crown officials or large estate owners, of the Islands of Sheppey. Chorographical surveys and maps surviving of the Islands start from c.1525 and extend to c.1780; they tell the story of distinctive Island experiences involving sea navigation, institutional and family histories, proposed and detailed defences for the protection of London, which never materialised, and also include a wealthy landowner's view of the islands, pending the sale of his estate. This chapter will be succeeded, in

⁶³ The principal timeframe researched for this thesis is between c.1485 and 1600; however, some maps produced after this period are mentioned within the context of imagined island history narratives, as relevant.

Chapter 6, by a close examination of textual mapping, where land and structural property is carefully described, within individual last wills and testaments of Sheppey inhabitants. The particular detail involved in locating places within the wills, and within the islands, is unique to the Islands of Sheppey, revealing a small island landscape in tension and the anxiety of will-makers to secure an imagined narrative future for their families, at the time of death.

The partible and impartible inheritance patterns of land and/or structural property inheritance on the Islands of Sheppey is investigated in Chapter 7, including comparative studies with mainland inhabitants where relevant. This chapter will investigate how patterns of partible inheritance involved detailed descriptions and mappings of land or structural property by testators. In addition, inheritance patterns and detailed land or property descriptions found within wills were specifically linked to family will-making traditions. The significance of family land and structural property inheritance played an important role in the naming process of specific places and in relation to their inheritance. Will-making provided freehold landowners a rare opportunity to exploit a legal document for their own biographical purposes within a highly visible age.⁶⁴ Chapter 8 will examine how family influence was integral to the description of places. The diversity of individual mapping techniques used by testate parishioners will also be discussed in relation to detailed case studies involving more than one generation of will-making families. The wills left by these family members provide conceptual maps of their land or structural property as part of a continuum of postmortem biographical writing which it was hoped would ensure future familial well-being and security.

All eight chapters present a collective and cumulative conclusion on the complexity of representation and experience of place within a set of small island communities at the end of the medieval, and the beginning of the early modern period. Moreover, the evidence also justifies the significance and importance of small and local landscape and settlement studies.

⁶⁴ E.Salter first suggested that wills were a form of biography or 'life writing' in her book *Cultural Creativity in the Early English Renaissance: Popular Culture in Town and Country* (Basingstoke, 2006)

Chapter Two

The Construction of Space: Defining and Mapping the Islands of Sheppey

I. Introduction: defining landscape spaces

This chapter attempts to introduce a framework for understanding how spaces were experienced and represented within the Islands of Sheppey. Fundamentally, this framework is concerned with how places within the islands were constructed as 'social spaces,' providing a variability of experiences, for both inhabitants of the Islands and those with wider economic and government interests.¹ To understand space is to understand how people made sense of specific surroundings; how places were organised, named, interpreted and re-interpreted throughout local history. In essence this is how spaces were translated into places of religious, social, economic and military significance. Overall, this promoted a range of practices and rituals unique to the Islands of Sheppey.

Landscapes have been described as the 'richest historical record' in our possession, as Hoskins suggested when he stated that they provide evidence for 'who peopled the landscape and the landscape in use.'² Research since Hoskins has further explored notions of social landscape and settlement, in terms which extend beyond the physical, by suggesting that landscapes are 'cultural images...never inert' since 'people engage with it, re-work it, appropriate and contest it.'³ In addition, the medieval

¹ The concept of 'social space' refers to B.Klein's idea of land surveying and 'cartographic representation' in which the records of administration provided not only 'a map' but explained 'land as a social space', pp.10 and 44 in B.Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2001). Also see H.Lefebvre who developed a theory of social space in *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, 1991 [French original 1974]); E.W.Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London, 1989), p.7; J.B.Harley and D.Woodward, 'Preface' in J.B.Harley and D.Woodward, eds., *History of Cartography, vol. 1: Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean* (Chicago, 1987), xvi.

² W.G.Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (London, 1955), p.14; P.D.A.Harvey, *Maps in Tudor England* (London, 1993), p.21.

³ See A.J.L.Winchester, *Landscape and Society in Medieval Cumbria* (Edinburgh, 1987). D.Cosgrove and S.Daniels, have described landscapes as 'cultural images' in their edited book, *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments* (Cambridge, 1998); B.Bender wrote that landscapes were never inert in her edited book, *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives* (Oxford, 1993), p.3. In addition, G.King in *Mapping Reality: An Exploration of Cultural Cartographies* (London, 1996) has written that 'worlds we inhabit are largely cultural rather than natural', p.41.

landscape has also been described as a product of both lords and peasants who organised and reorganised settlement.⁴ Dedication to the surveying and mapping of cultural features such as boundaries, field systems and deserted villages have catalogued a 'continuous record of human behaviour, co-varying with ecological conditions' within landscape archeology.⁵ Therefore, landscapes are essentially cultural spaces. The natural geography provides a canvas for making meaning within communities and the ever-changing spaces that are interpreted, constructed, reinterpreted and reconstructed are dramatically and organically altering the cultural context of any landscape. Hirsch and O'Hanlon have defined landscapes as cultural by suggesting that 'culture was the agent, the natural area was the medium, and the cultural landscape was the result'.⁶ Furthermore, Duncan and Duncan have argued that landscapes possess social ideas and values which can be interpreted in terms of how a society might organise themselves.⁷ This thesis will expand this dialogue on landscapes as cultural spaces by introducing new documentation, such as testamentary material, which records perceptions of freehold land and property by individuals.

Landscapes therefore encapsulate the interaction of people within a place, whether it is on a large social scale, through administrative boundaries such as parishes or estates, or more intimately through personal spaces. All types of interaction contribute to notions of belonging by which a shared identity can be promoted amongst its members.⁸ To fully understand landscapes is to contextualise engagement with it.⁹ Therefore all interaction with nature has been structured by people to establish their social relationships and identities; to develop cultural meaning in the everyday aspects of their lives. This thesis

⁴ C.Dyer, *Lords and Peasants in a Changing Society: The Estates of the Bishopric of Worcester, c.680-1540* (Cambridge, 1980); C.Dyer, *Everyday Life in Medieval England* (London, 1994), p.xiv.

⁵ J.Thomas, 'The Politics of Vision and the Archaeologies of Landscape' in B.Bender, ed., *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives* (Oxford, 1993), pp.19-48; p.20. Also see M.Aston and T.Rowley, *Landscape Archaeology: An Introduction to Fieldwork Techniques on Post-Roman Landscapes* (Oxford, 1989).

⁶ E.Hirsch and M.O'Hanlon, eds., *The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Place and Space* (Oxford, 1995), pg.1.

⁷ Duncan, N. and J. Duncan, '(Re)reading the Landscape', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol.6 (1998), 117-126.

⁸ P. Groth, 'Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study' in P.Groth and T.W.Bressi, eds., *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes* (New Haven, 1998), pp.1-21, p.1.

⁹ Bender has stated that 'landscape has to be contextualized', p.2 in B.Bender, ed., *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives* (Oxford, 1993). Also see J.Thomas's essay, 'The Politics of Vision and the Archaeologies of Landscape' in B.Bender, ed, *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 19-48.

is concerned with what may be described as the contextualisation of everyday spaces, or the ordinary environment, including buildings, rooms, streets, fields or yards. Research, as that conducted within this thesis on ordinary environments, culminates in a deeper understanding of the engagement between people, place and their culture.¹⁰ Defining the 'ordinary' or 'everyday,' according to Groth, can be identified as that which is distinctive from monumental style designs, which could overshadow the environment and are often overlooked by those spaces deemed highly stylized or more ostentatious.¹¹ In addition to this, the understanding of physical spaces within a landscape is really to define and interpret the symbolic and signifying representations of places. McRae has suggested that in order to decipher the 'rich plurality' and representations of the land in the early modern period it is essential to interpret the processes by which meaning was constructed.¹²

Understanding space as a social phenomenon has been explored and discussed within the context of mapping studies. Mapping studies, in the form of looking contextually and visually at the geographical past, have successfully revealed the importance of human histories, locally and nationally.¹³ The theoretical framework for this thesis intends to expand on spatial and mapping studies as already established by Klein, Gordon and Zerubavel whilst also introducing and promoting a new textual cartography for the late medieval and early modern period, specifically the last will and testament. The last will and testament is not only a 'social maplike structure' which organises someone's wishes at the time of their death but it also maps the past, present

¹⁰ B.Bender, ed., *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives* (Oxford, 1993) p.2.

¹¹ P. Groth, 'Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study' in P.Groth and T.W.Bressi, eds., *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes* (New Haven, 1998), pp.1-21, p.3.

¹² A. McRae, *God Speed the Plough: The Representation of Agrarian England 1500-1660* (Cambridge, 1996), p.3.

¹³ See A. Gordon and B.Klein, eds., *Literature, Mapping, and the Politics of Space in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2001); B.Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2001); R.L.Sanford, *Maps and Memory in Early Modern England: A Sense of Place* (Basingstoke, 2002); P.Laxton ed., *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of cartography* (London, 2001); E.Edson, *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers Viewed Their World* (London, 1997); E. Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (London, 2003). A.D.Smith in *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford, 1999) has also emphasised the central role of myth-making by communities in claiming territory and promoting notions of local loyalty, see pps. 3-27.

and the future of one's life.¹⁴ It is therefore suggested that the last will and testament is a 'sociomental topography of the past.'¹⁵ Zerubavel has examined how communities structure time and found that societies organised their own histories 'where the emphasis is on collective remembrance rather than through first-person experience.'¹⁶

The will-making process was naturally collective since many testators did not write their wills alone. Executors and witnesses needed to be there and family bequests needed to be described carefully in order to secure family stability for the future. In addition, Salter has commented on the tendency towards a more 'scientific' or 'cartographic' approach to understanding places and has effectively researched the 'individual's perception of property...descriptions of property and living space' within testamentary material.¹⁷ However, this thesis has carefully consulted over 1,400 wills to reveal the complex social networks of island inhabitants with the mainland, archaic religious practices and family customs, particularly on Sheppey. Furthermore, the theoretical discussion of this chapter will attempt to examine the nature of mapping as a process in relation to geographical visualisation and cognitive processes of interpretation, including a final construction of meaning through either visual maps or descriptions in documentation. Theoretical discussion will also focus on how spatial identification of place is not limited to graphic representations. Various documents, specifically testamentary evidence, manorial records and deeds provoke graphic visualisations through textual descriptions of space, and therefore place.¹⁸

Differentiation between what is described here as graphic and textual mapping needs to be understood in the following way: graphic explicitly refers to pictures used for locating property, land or other structures, and textual refers to the written word in the

¹⁴ Zerubavel has researched the 'social maplike structures in which history is typically organized in our minds', p.1. See E. Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (London, 2003).

¹⁵ See E. Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (London, 2003), p.1-2.

¹⁶ See E. Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (London, 2003), p.1-2.

¹⁷ E.Salter, *Cultural Creativity in the Early English Renaissance* (Basingstoke, 2006), p.63.

¹⁸ Differentiation between graphic and textual mapping needs to be understood in the following way: graphic explicitly refers to pictures used for locating property, land or other structures, and textual refers to the written word or descriptive writing of a particular location such as land, property or other structure specifically named through a prose style of writing.

identification of a particular location such as land, property or other structure specifically named through a prose style of writing, such as that found within the testamentary evidence.

The theoretical framework suggested here is one in which the mapping process involves the transmission of space into a represented form (graphically or textually). The process of mapping involves metaphorical aspects of organising, planning and presenting information through visual or textual transformation.¹⁹ Also, the mapping process may include the 'converting [of] personal knowledge to transmittable knowledge' which could be communicated graphically or textually.²⁰ Maps were designed to convey information, implying communication as its fundamental purpose. Furthermore, the tradition of producing a medieval or Tudor map relied on a process of production which was based on gathering information, usually textual descriptions, of a physical location, so the map-making process was one of textual transformation too.²¹ The graphics of a map document functioned as a final product of the mapping process.²² In addition, textual evidence, such as that found within personal last wills and testaments, provides specific descriptions of places which may be identified in visual categories. This visualization presented a context to the interpretation of a place otherwise never considered within the sphere of peasant freehold property owners and their perception of places.

The following principle explains in simple terms how a variety of documents present different interpretations on the conception of space within the Islands of Sheppey.

¹⁹ See A.H.Robinson and B.B.Petchenik, *The Nature of Maps: Essays Towards Understanding Maps and Mapping* (London, 1976), p.ix for discussion on the philosophical aspects of how maps communicate the transmission of knowledge. Also see J.B.Harley, *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography*, ed. by P.Laxton (London, 2001), p.21-22 for commentary on Harley's last writings about cartographers and how they 'create a spatial panopticon' from the knowledge embedded into a map's production. Laxton's discussion is drawn from J.B.Harley's 'Maps, Knowledge, and Power' in D.Cosgrove & S.Daniels (eds.), *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design, and Use of Past Environments* (Cambridge, 1998), 277-312.

²⁰ A.H.Robinson and B.B.Petchenik, *The Nature of Maps: Essays Towards Understanding Maps and Mapping* (London, 1976), p.4

²¹ E.Edson, *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers Viewed Their World* (London, 1999), p.9.

²² *Ibid*, p.9.

Mapping, as a final conceptualised product concerned with recording spatial interpretation, is therefore defined in two forms:

- 1.) The conception of space in planning and final construction of a navigational map, as a flat and visually detailed design of the physical dimensions of the Islands of Sheppey.
- 2.) The conception of space where information pertaining to the Islands of Sheppey is described within a document, either as an object in or an event which took place within a certain place. People, objects or events are described as existing within a certain place on the Islands of Sheppey. This affiliation between people, objects, events and places is multifunctional, complex and distinctive within surviving testamentary material from the Islands of Sheppey.

Overall, mapping as a process, including physical maps, presents an opportunity to engage with the evolving Island landscape to become more aware of all the subtleties in space transmission, from the collective to the personal.

II. Mental mapping, spatial cognition and navigation

The theoretical model of processing spatial information or 'mental mapping' has been established by Gell, in 'How to Read a Map: Remarks on the Practical Logic of Navigation'.²³ Gell designed the mental map theory in response to a better understanding of the processes involved in spatial cognition and navigation of symbols and images found within maps. This theory may also be extended, for the purposes of this thesis, in reading textually descriptive language found within testamentary material.

²³ A.Gell, A.Gell, 'How to Read a Map: Remarks on the Practical Logic of Navigation' in *MAN, The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. 20 (1985), pp.271-286.

The following four phases are described below and attributed to Gell's initial research. Firstly, before any type of map is produced, a mental working of the spatial information is configured into a mental map, and in the case of wills, a mental map is made of past, present and future concerns for soul, family and property. It is worth noting here that the implicit mapping of the character of the person who produced a will may also be described as a mental map. For the purposes of this thesis it is important to understand that the clear identification of land or property, through the textual description of land or property, was to ensure precise inheritance. Therefore, a 'mental map' of landed and structural property was created within the textual will descriptions.

The second and third phase of mental mapping is the processing stage of the mental map or the construction of the images in a visual mapping or the processing of land or property description in textual form, as in the case of will evidence. The fourth phase is the use of navigable keys by readers of maps or wills which validate the imagination of the producer of each map and will. Symbols are used to identify physical objectivity and location of a place. In the case of will evidence the testator followed a prescribed layout or textual order which also served a navigational function for executors to ensure that the exact postmortem family provisions were made on behalf of the deceased will maker. In addition, descriptions of land or structural property were mapped or described in relation to specific features such as boundaries, ownership of land by other individuals or within geographically descriptive terms.

III. Types of mapping evidence: maps and wills

III.i. Maps

Maps are considered to be a scientifically objective measurement of space.²⁴ However, this thesis proposes that maps, in particular Tudor maps, also recorded the

²⁴ A.H.Robinson and B.B.Petchenik, *The Nature of Maps: Essays Towards Understanding Maps and Mapping* (London, 1976); A.M.Maceachren, *How Maps Work: Representation, Visualization and Design* (London, 1995); E.Edson, *Mapping Time and Space* (London, 1999); S.Tyacke, ed., *English Map-Making 1500-1650* (London, 1983); P.D.A.Harvey, *Maps in Tudor England* (London, 1993); P.D.A.Harvey, 'Estate Surveyors and the Spread of the Scale-Map in England 1550-1580' in *Land Hist*, vol.15, 1993, pp.37-49;

intuitive experiences of human beings as they lived and moved within a space. Maps represent culture through its discourses, images and texts.²⁵ The complex signage, coding and marks of maps have enforced their position as representational of relationships regardless of purpose.²⁶ Despite the ambiguities shown within Tudor maps they recorded the immediate environment of a place in time, encompassing immediate sensory experiences and responses to local distinctiveness and history by map readers, through the map design and essentially the designer.²⁷ King has suggested that maps may be considered collective and unconscious cultural productions within themselves, frequently including both natural and human made landscapes, commissioned for wider audiences and involving social, economic and political interests.²⁸

Maps, in the past, were rarely read as 'socially constructed forms of knowledge' and are only just being recognised as an essential discourse for the interpretation of culture.²⁹ Furthermore, maps have also been described as 'metaphors for the territory and the culture that created it' implying subjectivity and representational knowledge which might be religious, ideological, cultural and political.³⁰ In addition, to map is to 'take the measure of a world in such a way that it maybe communicated between people, places or times.'³¹ The maps of the Islands of Sheppey communicate not only the interests of map commissioner and maker but also the diversity of early modern Island life and its cultural surroundings; according to the wealthy and the outsider.

²⁵ D.Wood, *The Power of Maps* (London, 1992), p.140 and 143.

²⁶ D.Wood, *The Power of Maps* (London, 1992), p.132. D.Wood explains how 'maps are about relationships. In even the least ambitious maps, simple presences are absorbed in multilayered relationships integrating and disintegrating sign functions.'

²⁷ See J.B.Harley, 'Meaning and Ambiguity in Tudor Cartography' in S.Tyacke, ed., *English Map-Making 1500-1650* (London, 1983), pp.22-45.

²⁸ G. King, *Mapping Reality: An Exploration of Cultural Cartographies* (London, 1996), p.185; P.D.A. Harvey, 'The Documents of Landscape History: Snares and Delusions' in *Lands.Hist*, (1991), vol.13, pp.47-52, pp.47-49.

²⁹ J.B.Harley, 'Maps, Knowledge, and Power' in D.Cosgrove & S.Daniels, eds., *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments* (Cambridge, 1998), pp.227-312, pp.277 and 300.

³⁰ See D.Turnbull, *Maps as Territories: Science is an Atlas* (Chicago, USA, 1989), pp.48-49. In addition D.Turnbull has also stated that 'maps are a way of ordering knowledge or making cognitive statements about space', pp.48-49.

³¹ D. Cosgrove, ed., *Mappings* (London, 1999), p.1.

The large-scale early modern estate map has in the past only been recognised for its detailed visual form, within the context of the map-making revolution of the sixteenth century.³² The authors and designers of early modern maps constructed a cultural text, where social knowledge was incorporated within map production. The ‘momentous shifts in the European understanding of what it meant to chart, describe and analyse the physical world and its human inhabitants’ cannot be assessed without discussion of the political world of mapping as well.³³ In addition, maps of the early modern period reflect a shift in map-making trends ‘where inscriptions of boundary lines on the ground and their visualization in maps’ presented ‘new economic forces.’³⁴ It is proposed, within this thesis, that early modern maps communicated contemporary perceptions of landscape, land use and its inheritance from one map maker to the next. The early modern map designer was an interpreter of space since how they perceived a location, and how it was communicated within a map, reconstructed place through a language of signs and symbols historians often overlook; including what has also been referred to as ‘cartographic semiotics.’³⁵ Semiotics, or reading signs and symbols, requires the understanding that there is a certain ambiguity between the sign and object, where the sign represents itself as wholly separate from the object which it depicts, yet it communicates.

³² Meaning and ambiguity within Tudor maps is examined in J.B.Harley, ‘Meaning and Ambiguity in Tudor Cartography’ in S.Tyacke, ed. *English Map-Making 1500-1650* (London, 1983), pp.22-45; P.D.A.Harvey refers to map-making in the sixteenth century as ‘revolutionary’ in the ‘development of cartographic technique including keys, symbols, and pictures’ within his book, *Maps in Tudor England* (London, 1993), p.7; P.D.A.Harvey, in ‘Estate Surveyors and the Spread of the Scale-map in England 1550-1580’ in *Lands Hist*, vol.15, 1993, pp.37-49, does state that the Tudor survey was the ‘closest, fullest, most exact view we can get of the detailed landscape of Tudor England’, p.37.

³³ In Lestringant’s *Mapping the Renaissance World*, the beginning of the late sixteenth century antiquarian ethos of mapping was dominated with the preoccupation of representing reality. This ‘obsession’ across Europe has been arguable due to worldly travel and the discovery of a the other; a ‘foreign reality’ beyond the European world, p.1.

³⁴ This idea is intriguingly suggested by B.Klein when he states further that this change in map making is evidence of the progression from ‘feudalism to capitalism’ creating ‘new economic forces,’ see page. 45 in B.Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2001).

³⁵ J.B.Harley, ‘Meaning and Ambiguity in Tudor Cartography’ in *English Map-Making 1500-1650*, ed. by S.Tyacke (London, 1983), pp.22-45. J.Harley suggests that the use of Erwin Panofsky’s iconology maybe used by cultural historians in their interpretation of maps since iconology concerns itself ‘with the subject matter or meaning of works of art, as opposed to their forms’, see p. 26. Also Harley suggests that map reading may be referred to as ‘cartographic semantics’ within this article. Klein has also expanded on notions of ‘cartographic semantics’ within the introduction to his book, B.Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2001), pp.1-11.

Signs and symbols, used as keys within maps represent a language and a code for several different types of information which is visually read within a map, including the physical, social, economic and powerful. The keys found within maps are representational and fall within two categories, according to Turnbull in his book, *Maps as Territories* : 1) that which is *iconic*: attempting to directly portray a visual object or aspects of a particular territory or 2) that which is *symbolic*: using graphics or other features to represent aspects of a territory.³⁶ The signs and symbols found within maps of the Islands of Sheppey represent several human dimensions in conflict, such as the success and power of wealthy landlords and the impact of their property on the Islands, including the distribution of fields and land use.

III.ii. Wills

The individual last will and testament is the culmination of an entire individual lifetime. Wills are essentially an individual's map of their past, present and future, created at a critical point in the lifecycle, at the point of death. The production of a last will and testament was one of the only opportunities for an individual to express their intentions for the distribution of their personal goods, property and freehold land after death.

The imagery of a will is found within the words of the document. The personal visualisations of the past, present, and future of relationships, including the descriptions of personal belongings and who is intended to receive them, is all mapped in detail within the text of the will document. Moreover, the specific detail found within Sheppey wills of land and structural property and its location, including its boundaries with surrounding land or property, maps people to others in social and family network groups, bound by testator bequests. The patterns of people-centred relationships found within wills may be traced through object bequests where a relationship pattern emerges as a model for expectations after a testator's death. Relationships between people, family and kin are

³⁶ See D.Turnbull, *Maps as Territories: Science is an Atlas* (Chicago, 1989), p.3, for information about the two types of representation in maps known as iconic and symbolic.

also found to be centred on not only objects but also land or structural property and its inheritance. Models or expectations established before death and sustained through the inheritance of land or structural property are found within individual bequests. Furthermore, patterns of inheritance amongst families in terms of the prescribed use of partible or impartible inheritance are also established and differ within local communities.

Individual wills also provide knowledge about landscapes in use through classification systems, such as naming places and descriptive detail used within the post-mortem inheritance process. This process acts as a map of personal freehold land and/or structural property. Wills, through textual or descriptive language, trace and make explicit the personal and mental construction of a place, thus enabling the will reader, as executor or probate court, to locate the precise location of a place in order to ensure its correct inheritance. The last will and testament maybe defined as containing within it an individual's personal map of their freehold property, its position and location. D.Wood has suggested that the concept of maps is about understanding what is 'known instead of what is merely seen.'³⁷ Wills textually map areas which are individually known and important to the testator and by doing this establishes that place's history after their death.

Wills contain their own social system which formulates conceptions of personal value including objects, land or structural property. Comprehension of these value-objects, including land or property, are contained within a facade of imagined factuality, including the personal relationship between testator and beneficiary, yet these are narratives of reality at the time they were written.³⁸ Wills do present some complexity since personal choices exist within formulaic testamentary language; however, it is important to remember that the existence of will evidence 'in the absence of other personal records' provides 'abundant personal and biographical evidence.'³⁹ Individuals decide who to bequeath gifts to and what the gifts shall consist of, sometimes including highly descriptive detail and instruction, including conditions which should take place

³⁷ D.Wood, *The Power of Maps* (London, 1992), p.7

³⁸ This concept has been adapted by C.Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture* (London, 1975), p.23.

³⁹ E.Salter, *Cultural Creativity in the Early English Renaissance* (Basingstoke, 2006), p.13 and 15.

after the individual's death if a recipient was to inherit a certain gift, whether it be land, structural property, occupational equipment or personal belongings.⁴⁰

IV. The differences and similarities between maps and wills

There is an obvious distinction between the final product of a map and will. The production of maps involved the transmission of place from a physical position to a symbolic and visualised form. Although maps are spatial representations communicating through symbols, wills are texts communicating through descriptions which were visualised and then re-visualised in their reading.

Both types of evidence describe spatial arrangements within a landscape and define and locate space in relation to other spaces. Maps visually reveal the location of places in relation to others by proportionate scale, whilst wills describe places textually in relation to other places using different methods of picturing which may be categorised as symbolic. However, Robinson and Petchenik argue that maps are clearly different from words since words lack 'image, the most comprehensible form in which spatial arrangements can be encoded or transmitted'.⁴¹ Robinson and Petchenik, both cartographers, have limited their argument by focusing only on the image itself rather than how images and imagery are subjected to a mental mapping process regardless of the final medium. The following table 2.1 below considers that the final medium that communicates spatial arrangements, either visual or textual, can both make use of symbolic language. Both maps and wills provide spatial knowledge encoded and symbolised in pictures and/or words which may be conceptual.

⁴⁰ For example Robert Buckmer of Eastchurch left a will in 1536, where he bequeathed his tenement with 10 acres and 3 rodes of land to the two sons, Robert and Thomas, of his daughter Marion, under the condition that their father was to be 'excluded and putt owt' if he returned home. Will reference: CKS PRC 17/21/96.

⁴¹ A.H.Robinson and B.B.Petchenik, *The Nature of Maps: Essays Towards Understanding Maps and Mapping* (London, 1976), p.55.

Table 2.1 Spatial Cognition of Map and Will Production

<u>Map Production</u>	<u>Will Production</u>
1.) Spatial information/ ‘mental mapping’.	1.) Spatial information/ ‘mental mapping’.
2.) Processing ‘mental map’.	2.) Processing ‘mental map’.
3.) Knowledge transformed into symbol.	3.) Knowledge transformed into symbol.
4.) Navigation of images for perceptual information.	4.) Navigation of images for perceptual information.

The information provided by Table 2.1 demonstrates that research into the meaning of place requires an understanding of how meaning may be communicated through details describing places. These descriptions can be found in documents that have prescribed communication and cognitive systems, such as maps and wills. However, looking beyond the technical nature of cartographical enquiries and into the tools of ‘dynamic information processing’ expands the researcher’s capacity for reconstructing local landscape and its cultural connotations.⁴²

V. The identification of places within maps and wills; relevant to the Islands of Sheppey

Maps of the Islands of Sheppey and wills produced by islanders may be referred to as evidence that generated images of territory physically present in the landscape. These images are perceptions or thoughtfully constructed imaginings of contemporary experiences of a specific locality within the Islands of Sheppey. As already suggested in earlier sections of this chapter, maps and wills provide evidence relating to all aspects of a landscape - physically and culturally.

In order to fully understand the similarities of the evidence in identifying places on the Islands of Sheppey, a chart has been constructed below which describes the kind of

⁴² A.M.Maceachren in *How Maps Work: Representation, Visualization and Design* (London, 1995) wrote that the cognitive and semiotic structure of map reading offered a ‘framework for extending cartography from emphasis on visual display to dynamic information-processing tools’, p.398.

information about place which may be found within maps and wills. In addition, the following table ‘Visualising Places within the Islands of Sheppey’ is unique to information about the Islands of Sheppey since it highlights the compatibility of maps and wills as equally visual documentation.

Table 2.2 Visualising Places within the Islands of Sheppey

<u>Maps</u>	<u>Wills</u>
naming of landlords and their property	naming of landlords and their property
naming of tenant property	naming of freehold property
naming of fields/ enclosures	naming of fields/ enclosures
naming of hills, marsh, pits	naming of hills, marshes, pits, hedges
-----	naming of streets and boroughs
family naming of land or property	family naming of land or property
identifying family with a property	identifying family with a property
size of individual property	size of individual property
-----	places named after animals
locating mills	locating mills
-----	locating crosses
locating beacons	-----
locating routeways/ streets	-----
identifying types of transportation	identifying types of transportation
directional references to landscape	directional references to landscape
individual prevention of land disputes	individual prevention of land disputes
Place names	Place name
agricultural practices	individual agricultural involvement
natural land use	individual natural land use
imagined (futurist) use of land	imagined (futurist) use of land
settlement structure	settlement structure
property distribution	property distribution
religious buildings (inc. monastic)	religious buildings (inc. monastic):
(not the internal and external fabric)	their internal and external fabric
-----	occupational self-identity
-----	religious convictions
-----	kin and social networks
-----	preparatory arrangements for soul
	after death such as <i>obits</i> ,
	prayers, charity

The table above clearly shows how both maps and wills visualise landscape in terms of its physical, social and religious spaces. Maps function as visually and culturally

descriptive devices, including both the physical and human-imagined landscape that takes shape in its locality. Wills provide a textual mapping of the past, present and imagined future pictured by an individual when reflecting on their life and death.

VI. Conclusion

Landscapes are social spaces which provide a framework for the cultural process shared amongst communities. In addition, it has been established that landscapes contain interactions between people and place, enabling notions of locality unique to a landscape and the people who lived within it. It has been argued within this chapter, that the defining of ordinary space is just as symbolically complex as landmark locations which usually represent only the sacred and the privileged. Therefore it is important to consider the evidence which contains the descriptions and transmission of places within the Islands of Sheppey, especially from freehold property and land owners living within the Islands. Further chapters within this thesis examine the nature of everyday local and family networks within a variety of ordinary spaces, such as parish churches and within land and property named in map and will evidence. Map and will evidence, in particular, contains significant representations of places, explicitly or inferred, which define the meaning of space for local people and those living outside of the Islands with an economic and military interest in the Islands' geography. This outside interest was explicitly linked to the prominent and strategic position of the Islands of Sheppey in the north of Kent.

This aim of this chapter was to provide a framework for the better understanding of how cultural processes may be understood through documentation which describes places within the Islands of Sheppey. The mapping of the Island landscape has been visually and textually recorded, by local and non-local individuals. There is a need to think about cartography as a process rather than a final product. The mapping of an individual's past, present and future within their personal last will and testament not only provided a social topography of links to family and community but also to named places. The textual product of the will was a perceptual visualisation of individual, community and everyday landscape. The last will and testament, like a map, presented a navigational

tool by which a timeline of one's life and perception of the future could be narratively imagined. Overall the mapping process, as found within wills and actual physical maps, in the traditional sense, of the Islands of Sheppey present an opportunity for the historian to engage and understand the evolving Island landscape which has not been widely researched before now. Becoming more aware of social spaces and their transmission from the physical to the collective and personal, is the essential point of further analysis within the chapters of this thesis. In addition, this also includes as its starting point, within this thesis, a history of landscape settlement as a basis for contextualised landscape studies.

To differentiate between mapping styles found within maps and wills, there is an overall thread of enquiry established within this chapter which acknowledges that physical maps (visual mappings) and testamentary or other written sources (textual mappings) are inherently linked by their process of production. The Islands of Sheppey were mapped through visualised surveys or maps for a range of public and private interests including the Crown, wealthy landowners and other individuals. In addition textual documents, such as the last will and testament, provide a symbolic picture of an individual's past, present and future at a significantly heightened moment of their lifecycle, at the point of death. Not only were personal relationships and objects held up in tension and bequeathed to specific persons, but also land and structural property was named and described and therefore mapped descriptively, and to individuals, providing an imagined narrative experience between the person and the place. The mapping of places, textually and visually, by inhabitants of the Islands, in conjunction with those living outside of the islands, work to organise a set of histories or narratives about specific places important to the map or will makers; for their use and to secure territorial positioning for a particular interest.

Chapter Three

Physical Landscape and the History of Social Settlement on the Islands of Sheppey

I. Introduction

The connection between the geology of the Islands of Sheppey, Harty and Elmley and its early social settlement cannot be underestimated. A comprehensive and chronological look into geology and topography, with a brief discussion of the periods of settlement development on the Islands, is the focus of this chapter. The primary objective is to explore and discuss early human landscape production. The generating of land assessment, both secular and ecclesiastical, is chronologically examined to determine the evolution and continuities of the landscape character of the Islands between the Anglo-Saxon period to c.1600. Although the Anglo-Saxon period is earlier than the focus period for this thesis, it is nevertheless essential that this period, when popular ecclesiastical foundations were established, is closely analysed. This is in light of the Minster's authority over the Island of Sheppey, in particular, which extended well beyond the Reformation period. Furthermore, an analysis of the geological and social changes on the Islands of Sheppey has required the inclusion of the sea as part of the Islands' natural and/or physical boundaries.

This chapter attempts to provide an overview of how the physical geography of the Islands of Sheppey pre-determined cultural processes. The physical landscape presented a medium through which cultural processes were developed and sustained over time. Previous research into medieval places has largely focused on large-scale changes or actions in medieval settlement and their consequential impact on social structures, including and often limited to settlement nucleation and expansion, field systems,

agricultural and engineering developments.¹ However, more sociological questions about settlement evolution have recently been explored by archaeologists and historians, providing additional understanding of specific localities and their own unique history of settlement growth and human occupation.² Everitt and Dyer have suggested that successful and more systematic studies into settlement history are those where broad ideas and local study are combined since settlement varies greatly between regions and at the local level.³

In considering the place of Kent, as an important regional unit, it seems that more research is necessary into how the physical landscape, with its 'complexity and diversity,' influenced social development within the county's own settlement history, with special attention given to local level analysis.⁴ It has been suggested by Everitt, in *Continuity and Colonization: The Evolution of Kentish Settlement* that the marshes of Kent were 'tributary countryside,' where dependent regions were never fully colonised as an 'indigenous and independent society.'⁵ Although this study is intended to focus on island

¹ Such studies include: T. Williamson, *Shaping Medieval Landscapes: Settlement, Society, Environment* (Macclesfield, 2003); C.C. Taylor, *Village and Farmstead: A History of Rural Settlement in England* (London, 1983); M.W. Beresford and J.G. Hurst, eds., *Deserted Medieval Villages* (London, 1971); C.J. Bond, 'Deserted Medieval Villages in Warwickshire and Worcestershire' in P.J. Jarvis and T.R. Slater, eds., *Field and Forest: An Historical Geography of Warwickshire and Worcestershire* (Norwich, 1982); C.C. Taylor, 'Medieval Rural Settlement: Changing Perceptions' in *Lands Hist*, vo.14, 1992, pp.5-17; H.E. Hallam, *Rural England 1066-1348* (Brighton, 1981), p.251; L. Canter, ed., *The English Medieval Landscape* (London, 1982); H.C. Darby, *A New Historical Geography of England Before 1600* (Cambridge, 1976); E. Miller and J. Hatcher, *Medieval England: Rural Society and Economic Change, 1086-1348* (London, 1978); M.M. Postan, *Medieval Economy and Society* (Aylesbury, 1972); S. Oosthuizen, 'Medieval Settlement Relocation in West Cambridgeshire: three case-studies' in *Lands Hist*, 19 (1997), pp.43-55; J. Thirsk, ed., *Agricultural Change: Policy and Practice 1500-1750*, Volume 3 of *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* (Cambridge, 1990); R. Muir, *Portraits of the Past: The British Landscape Through the Ages* (London, 1989); R.B. Outhwaite, 'Progress and Backwardness in English Agriculture, 1500-1650' in *Econ Hist Rev.*, 39 (1986), pp.1-18. R. Muir, *Approaches to Landscape* (Basingstoke, 1999). The impact of major engineering projects within rural and marshland island environments may be found within J. Thirsk, 'The Isle of Axholme Before Vermuyden', *AHR*, vol.1 (1953), 16-28.

² See A.J.L. Winchester, *Landscape and Society in Medieval Cumbria* (Edinburgh, 1987); Also see A. Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization* (Leicester, 1986); J.M. Wagstaff, ed., *Landscape and Culture: Geographical and Archaeological Perspectives* (Oxford, 1987); C. Taylor, *Village and Farmstead: A History of Rural Settlement in England* (London, 1983); C. Lewis, P. Mitchell-Fox, C. Dyer, *Village, Hamlet and Field* (Manchester, 1997). For further discussion, see A. Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization* (Leicester, 1986), p.333.

³ For further discussion, see A. Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization* (Leicester, 1986), p.333; See Chapter two, 'The Retreat from marginal Land': The Growth and Decline of Medieval Rural Settlement' in C. Dyer, *Everyday Life in Medieval England* (London, 1994), pp.13-26.

⁴ A.R. Baker and R.A. Butlin, *Studies of Field Systems in the British Isles* (Cambridge, 1973), p.378.

⁵ A. Everitt, *Continuity and Colonisation: The Evolution of Kentish Settlement* (Leicester, 1986), p.59 and 67.

cultural processes at the end of the Middle Ages, using the island boundaries as natural case studies, evidence from Kentish settlement history has already suggested that specific types of terrain, such as the marshes, contributed to isolating the local population due to external exploitation of natural resources. Everitt has also suggested that the marshlands of Kent, particularly in the Romney Marsh and in North Kent, were 'historically speaking' set 'apart from the rest of the county' since this land was exploited by outside interests, specifically the Crown, ecclesiastical institutions and wealthy landowners from different regions within and without Kent.⁶ O'Hara's recent work on the cultural practices of marriage and courtship in Tudor England showed that within the diocese of Canterbury local custom varied considerably.⁷ O'Hara's Kentish research has shown the value of localised study in revealing just how complex and contextualised settlement history may be. O'Hara noticed that the cultural practices of courtship and marriage were not as consistent in Kent and she thought and concluded that the Kent landscape offered 'much diversity' with regard to future research 'if the character of individual parishes was, in some measure, fashioned by the physical landscape' of the county.⁸

In the case of the Islands of Sheppey, the diversity of change and continuity was multi-operational and multi-dimensional within nucleated settlements, already considered sub-divisional, like boroughs and ancient farmsteads, regardless of larger settlement change. This chapter will focus on how the geology dictated, formed and assisted in the evolution of these complex changes of time on the Islands of Sheppey.

II. The physical geology and landscape of the Islands of Sheppey, Harty and Elmley

The Islands of Sheppey, Harty and Elmley are situated in the southeast of England, to the north of the county of Kent. The islands are surrounded by variously named water routes encircling the island. In the west, Sheppey is located at the entrance to the River Medway and the route of the Thames is located to the north of the island.

⁶ A.Everitt, *Continuity and Colonisation: The Evolution of Kentish Settlement* (Leicester, 1986), p.59.

⁷ The five parishes within the diocese of Canterbury included Sturry, Tenterden, Whitstable, Wye, and Chislet. See D.O'Hara, *Courtship and Constraint: Rethinking the Making of Marriage in Tudor England* (Manchester, 2000).

⁸ D. O'Hara, *Courtship and Constraint* (Manchester, 2000), p.17.

The river Swale is located south of the islands of Sheppey, Elmley and Harty. The Islands of Sheppey, Harty and Elmley are approximately ten miles long and four to five miles wide inclusively consisting of an oval shape (please refer to the two maps - pages 1 and 2, at the start of the map portfolio, in the separate volume accompanying this thesis). In the Middle Ages, the Islands of Sheppey, Harty and Elmley were separate islands surrounded on all sides by water up until the last two hundred years during which time creeks around Elmley and Harty Islands became substantially silted.

The Islands of Sheppey consist of a combination of London clay soil in the northern areas and rich alluvium in the southern marshland (please refer to Map 3.1 of the Kentish Countryside).⁹ Sheppey's northern coast suffers from erosion whilst the River Swale has contributed to the major silting of the southern half of the Islands of Sheppey, Harty and Elmley particularly at Windmill Creek to the north of the Island of Elmley and Harty Creek dividing the Islands of Sheppey and Harty.¹⁰ The London clay extends along the greater part of the northern coastline for six miles from what is today Sheerness in the west to the northeastern coast of Minster parish to the far eastern corner of Warden parish. Due to the hard London Clay in the northern areas of settlement, both now and during the late medieval period, the existence of earthworks is virtually non-existent. There is no evidence of fossilized ridges and furrows or evidence of late medieval field systems on the island. Kent Air Surveys conducted in 1967 show evidence of the castle moat at Queenborough and also a moated farmstead to the south of the Island of Harty.¹¹ In addition, there is some evidence of modern settlement realignment at the northeastern end of Warden parish which is now the only wooded area of the Island of Sheppey and has been a place of rapid erosion for at least 300 years.¹² Writing at the end of the eighteenth century, Hasted commented on the combination of strong winds and rough seas on the northern Sheppey shoreline which caused a great loss of land at the highest

⁹ All maps referred to within this chapter and all proceeding chapters of this thesis may be found in the 'Map Portfolio' which is a supplementary volume to be read with this thesis.

¹⁰ B.Phillip and M.Chenery, *Prehistoric and Monastic Sites at Minster Abbey, Sheppey, Kent*, Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit, 1998, p.1.

¹¹ Kent Air Survey, June 1967, run 30, no.1086-1100; run 33, no.1263-1277. Photographs are located within the Department of Heritage and Conservation at Kent County Council, Maidstone. Air surveys for 1948 and 1967 were examined with the former date providing the best quality photographs.

¹² Kent Air Survey, June 1967, run. 32, no.1403, Department of Heritage and Conservation at Kent County Council, Maidstone; CKS, Kent Sheet.xiv.s.w., OS Map, 1898

points, particularly Warden and Minster, where up to one acre of land fell into the sea 'with the corn remaining entire on the surface of it.'¹³ In addition, the weakening and eventual devastation of Warden parish church, which fell into the sea in 1874, is a further testament of the ever-changing, exposed and volatile physical island landscape that continues to exist throughout the Islands of Sheppey (please refer to Map 3.2, Site of St. James Church, Warden).¹⁴ Over the last 700 years the water has been gaining land to the north whilst the south has become closer to the northern Kentish mainland due to silting in the River Swale. Alluvium deposits dominate the southern marshland areas of the Islands of Sheppey, Elmley and Harty. Between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries, the Island of Elmley, consisting entirely of alluvium soil, has had an extensive history of drainage projects and ditches built on various parts of the island to counter spring flooding or to secure sea defenses. Large landowners and often the Crown regulated wall and ditch maintenance on the Islands of Sheppey as a whole.¹⁵

All three islands inclusively contained 22,000 acres of land of which 16,000 acres are rich and fertile marsh and pasture land, predominantly in the south, and up to 6,000 acres comprise foothills or cultivated upland, especially in the north of the Island of Sheppey.¹⁶ The Island of Elmley consisted entirely of marshland at 4,700 acres of which 2,600 acres were salt marshes. The marshlands of the southern half of Sheppey and the entire Isle of Elmley were notoriously unhealthy and uninhabitable, particularly on Elmley, during the time of Hasted and up until the early twentieth century.¹⁷ Livestock numbers on the islands often exceeded the human population where some individuals had from 300 to 1,200 sheep within their inventories and wills during the sixteenth century.¹⁸ In the fourteenth century, Canterbury Christ Church Priory owned up to 700 sheep on

¹³ Hasted, vol.6, p.208.

¹⁴ Site of Warden's 'ryned church' is clearly marked on the following map: NA MPF 240; Also see W.Kennett, 'The Lost Church of St. James' in *Bygone Kent*, vol.1, no.7 (1980), pp.425-426, p.425.

¹⁵ In 1361, The monastery at Minster, Sheppey, was granted a license to make four dikes from rainwater overflow, See *Cal Pat Rolls*, 35 Edw.III; no.19, p.27. Sir Thomas Cheyney owned land as far south as the southern Eastchurch marshes between the Islands of Elmley and Harty. Sir Thomas oversaw sea wall repairs which were taken over by the Crown after Cheyney's son Lord Henry sold his inherited land. In 1579, the Crown leased Eastchurch and Minster land under the agreement that repairs were made to the sea walls. See NA C66/1177; 21 Eliz., 6 May 1579.

¹⁶ *VCH*, vol.1, p.463.

¹⁷ *VCH*, vol.1, p.463.

¹⁸ E.Melling, 'Inventories of Various Farmers 1565-1729' in E.Melling, ed., *Kentish Sources III: Aspects of Agriculture and Industry* (Maidstone, 1961), pp.7-17, p.11.

Sheppey marshes between their two manors at Barksore and Leysdown.¹⁹ In addition, less than 100 years ago, the sheep population on the Island of Sheppey was 21,000, the equivalent of one sheep per acre. In the eighteenth century, Hasted noted that 6,000 sheep occupied the whole of 4,700 acres on the Island of Elmley which were in the custody of one man, William Cromer of Teynham, located on the mainland Kentish coast.²⁰ Overall, the marshland of the Islands of Sheppey were amongst the richest in Kent, equal only to that of the Romney marshes in terms of economic potential and fertility; often exploited by large landowners living elsewhere in Kent, Surrey, Sussex, and Essex.²¹ The marshland became valuable in contributing to the success of the wool trade and thus county economy; however, the local marshland populations never benefited from the exploitation of the marshes.²² This has led to a modern defining of medieval and early modern marshland society throughout Kent as an 'absentee society'.²³ Aspects of late medieval marshland society including discussion on local culture and popular religious practices will be the topic of further chapters within this thesis.

The West and East River Swale were divided between the southern Islands of Sheppey, Elmley, and Harty and the northern Kentish marshland coast. At its widest the river Swale extended up to two miles particularly at the east, south of the Isle of Harty. During the medieval and early modern period, large vessels on route to London would shelter themselves from the harsh north winds by taking a route down the Swale.²⁴ The modern continual low tides and silt in the River Swale would not be able to accommodate the sea traffic that islanders were once used to in the Middle Ages. In addition, medieval travellers also had a choice of three ferries operating between the Islands of Sheppey and Harty and the Kentish mainland coast. At the present time there are no ferries in operation between Harty and the mainland. In southern Minster, on Sheppey, the King's

¹⁹ R.A.L.Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory* (Cambridge, 1943), p.151-152. On Barksore Manor on Sheppey, 600 sheep were in custody in c.1322, and within Leysdown manor, also on Sheppey, 100 sheep were in custody of the priory during the same year.

²⁰ Hasted, Kent, vol.6, p.272.

²¹ A.Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization: The Evolution of Kentish Settlement* (Leicester, 1986), p.45. Also see BL Lansdowne 42, no.12-13, p.26-30 which is an inventory of landowners holding 300 or more acres of fresh land on the Islands of Sheppey, Elmley, and Harty in 1584. Forty-one people were counted as holding a total of 10,039 acres of land, almost half of all the acres of the islands inclusively whilst no persons listed were inhabitants of the Islands.

²² A.Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization: The Evolution of Kentish Settlement* (Leicester, 1986), p.45

²³ Ibid, p.63.

²⁴ *VCH*, Kent, vol.3, p.38.

Ferry Bridge has been built in more or less the exact location of the King's Ferry. In the southern marshland area of Eastchurch, near the Island of Elmley, the Rede, Rythe, or Ryde Ferry, as it was formerly known changed its name to the modern, yet no longer operative, Elmley ferry.



PHOTO 1: View looking across the watery divide between the southern marshes of Eastchurch parish on the Island of Sheppey towards the marshland of the the former Island of Harty, now known as Harty parish.²⁵



PHOTO 2: View from Eastchurch marshland looking south towards the Island of Harty.

²⁵ All photographs, unless otherwise stated, were taken by Melanie G. Caiazza (2002).



PHOTO 3: View from the Harty marshland looking north to Eastchurch foothills on the Island of Sheppey.



PHOTO 4: Looking south towards the Island of Harty from Eastchurch, Sheppey.



PHOTO 5: Western Minster parish marshland with view of Minster village, foothills to the east (right side).



PHOTO 6: The north Minster coastline looking towards Warden parish, Island of Sheppey.



PHOTO 7: View from Warden, looking south towards Eastchurch parish. The tower of Eastchurch parish church is encircled in photograph.



PHOTO 8: View of the Swale and mainland from the Harty marshes.

III. Early indications of settlement and land use

The diversity of natural geographical features from foothills to rich marshland within the Islands of Sheppey was an organic precursor to defining social settlement and organisation within the Islands. Prehistoric salt works within the Islands provide an outline of the early establishment of larger settlement areas which continued to develop from ancient times and throughout the early to late medieval period (please refer to Map 3.3 of the Prehistoric Saltworks). Within the lower foothill areas of the Island of Sheppey, early dispersed farmsteads developed in addition to the establishment of the early Minster foundations, on the highest foothill area of the Island of Sheppey. The development of settlement on Sheppey will be discussed further within this chapter. The Island of Elmley did not contain a village nor any other smaller farmstead within its predominantly marshland territories. In addition, the Island of Harty contained mixed terrain of marsh and foothill like the Island of Sheppey with dispersed settlements, a parish church and a moated complex but without a nucleated village structure. This pattern of settlement on Harty remained in place throughout the early to late medieval period and extends into modern times even today with only agricultural buildings, the parish church and an inhabitable house remaining in the southern marshes.

Place-names of the Islands of Sheppey also provide a better understanding of settlement since they indicate overall land use and function.²⁶ In Kent alone it has been estimated that there are approximately 12,000 settlement names within county place-names including woodland, pasture, foothill, marshland, and weald settlement names,

²⁶ N.Corcus, has stated in his book, that place-names 'provide a kind of overview that is needed to enable us to discern wider relationships even if flawed', in *The Affinities and Antecedents of Medieval Settlement: Topographical Perspectives from Three of the Somerset Hundreds* (Oxford, 2002), p.161. A.Everitt in *Continuity and Colonization* (Leicester 1986) has expressed the importance of place-name studies to understanding the early settlement of Kent, stating that 'In Kent itself there is infinitely more primitive evidence incorporated in the *corpus* of some 12,000 settlement names, than there is in a Midland county', p.12. Forthcoming mention of place names in this chapter have been taken from J.K.Wallenberg, *The Place-Names of Kent* (Upsala, 1934), where the abbreviation *PNK* and the page number is listed throughout. Research which has involved the reading of social relationships into place-names has been included within the following studies by S.Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, p.105; E.M.J.Campbell, 'Kent' in H.C.Darby, ed., *A New Historical Geography of England before 1600* (Cambridge, 1976), pp.483-562; H.E.Hallam, *Rural England 1066-1348*, (Cambridge, 1981), pp.32-34. For the study of place-names in establishing the nature of the countryside see D.Hooke, 'The Anglo-Saxon Landscape' in T.R.Slater and P.J.Jarvis, eds., *Field and Forest* (Norwich, 1982), pp.79-104.

however, this figure does underestimate local complexity.²⁷ Place-names of and within the Islands of Sheppey provide a profile of the colonisation of the islands and indicates early relationships with the island landscape. Pre-parochial settlements may be found within the place-names related to the Islands of Sheppey, Elmley and Harty; however, the use of place-names in defining island areas in larger land surveys does vary through the medieval to late medieval period. In addition, local place-names within the nucleated settlements of the Island of Sheppey, particularly within Minster and Eastchurch parishes, became increasingly complex throughout the late-medieval period after c.1400. Aspects of this complexity which is religious and social will be explored in more detail throughout this thesis.

The ancient names for both the Islands of Sheppey and Harty indicate ancient pre-occupation with sheep or cattle. The Island of Sheppey was *Sceapia* or 'Sheep Island' as it was recorded in early Kentish charters from the seventh century.²⁸ The modernising of the Island's name slowly developed from *Scapia* to the *Isula de Shapeheye* and eventually Sheppey.²⁹ Sheppey's place name presents an initial indication of the Island's early pastoral use. The Island of Harty place name is also associated with pasture land and use. *Harty* or *Harteigh*, *Heord-tu*, *Herteye* or *Heorot* means an island full of herds of cattle or sheep.³⁰ The Island of Harty was over two-thirds pasture land with one central foothill area and a small moated farmstead settlement beside the parish church. In addition to the two islands, the eastern parish of Leysdown on the Island of Sheppey also indicated early pasture areas. Leysdown or *Leag* means meadow and *dun* or *down* is associated with pasture.³¹ In the late middle ages, Leysdown parish consisted of both pasture and arable, mostly owned by Canterbury Christ Church Priory including custody of thirty-five acres of wheat, oats, and legumes within the manor and 100 sheep in 1322.³² In addition to

²⁷ See A.Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization* (Leicester, 1986), p.11-12.

²⁸ BL Stowe Ch.2, c.697; A.Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization* (Leicester, 1986), p.34.

²⁹ Various deeds and grants of land such as that located in BL Cotton xxvii.iii, c.1309 - *Ins. de Shapeheye*; BL Add. 44557, Shurland Manor, *Scapia*, c.1313; and BL Add.39960(51), the Isle of Sheppey, c. 1576.

³⁰ Hasted, *kent*, vol.6, p.276; *PNK*, p.250-251.

³¹ *PNK*, p.252-253.

³² R.A.L.Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory*, p.140 and 152. In Leysdown or *Leisdon*, according to the priory survey, a total of 35 acres of arable farming could be divided into the following parts: 13 acres of wheat; 10 acres of oats; and 12 acres of legumes.

pasture, *den* or *dene* may also be associated with woodland topography.³³ Warden, the smallest parish located to the far northeast of Sheppey, may have been the mostly likely area for woodland. However, *weard* or *ward* means a 'watch point', which also identifies a place consistent with Warden's physical landscape of high cliffs offering an advantageous lookout over the North Sea and foreign or domestic ships approaching or leaving the Thames Estuary. The southwest corner of Warden parish did contain pasture land by the eighteenth century in addition to a deep watery vale in the southeast of the parish between Leysdown and Warden which was salt marsh and prone to flooding in high tide.³⁴

Early indications of topography and woodland clearing may be found in the ancient place names of the marshland areas of the Islands, particularly on the Island of Elmley. Elmley meaning *Elmele*, or *elm* + *leah*, ascertained an ancient settlement of elm-tree woodland and probably cleared during Roman occupation or even after the Anglo-Saxon period. The Island of Elmley was probably once woodland topography that was cleared for the purpose of greater pasture capacity in north Kent. It has been mentioned previously that the Island of Elmley contained approximately 4,700 acres with over half of its land salt marsh, including rich pasture land from at least the medieval period well into the eighteenth century.³⁵ The Island of Elmley was also uninhabited and desolate in the medieval period, associated with unhealthy marshland fevers and ague.³⁶

The two place-names of Minster and Eastchurch on the Island of Sheppey describe early social organisation within the densely populated upland areas of north Sheppey. A seventh-century charter records the ancient name of the Isle of Scapia in relation to the founding of the *monasterium* at Minster on Sheppey.³⁷ The founding of the Anglo-Saxon *monasterium* in Minster and the location of Eastchurch to the east of the

³³ See PNK, p.274; R.Muir, *The New Reading the Landscape: Fieldwork in Landscape History* (Exeter, 2000), p.14.

³⁴ Hasted, Kent, vol.6, p.259.

³⁵ Hasted, Kent, vol.6, p.272.

³⁶ M.J. Dobson, *Contours of Death and Disease in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1997). In addition, M.J.Dobson discussed illness and marshland society within a paper 'Death and Disease on the Marshes' given for the Romney Marsh Research Trust annual meeting and conference in November 2000.

³⁷ BL Stowe Ch.2, c.697; stating prividges granted at the council at Bapchild in Kent. The Isle of Sheppey is stated as *scepei*.

early monastic settlement of Minster illustrate the development of local religious settlement on the Island of Sheppey.

IV. The Early Social Organisation of the Islands of Sheppey: The Anglo-Saxon Administration

One of the first administrative establishments within the Islands of Sheppey's social settlement history was the founding of the Minster at Sheppey through Royal Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical power in c.664.³⁸ The natural topography of the Islands, being contained on all sides by the sea, may have contributed to the development and evolution of the Minster's authority over the earliest settled areas or the establishment of parish boundaries particularly within Sheppey.³⁹ The authority of the Minster, both administratively and symbolically, included the visual presence of its high geographical position on Sheppey before the Conquest and remained so afterward and beyond the Reformation. Moreover, Minster, on Sheppey was part of the 'Thames Corridor' of Minsters as explained by J.Blair where importance of the Minster foundation was strategic to its close proximity towards the Thames Estuary (please refer to Map 2.4, The Minster and the Northern Coastline of Sheppey).⁴⁰

Previous research has suggested that Anglo-Saxon monasteries may have been built on re-used Roman sites which is the case with Reculver on the Island of Thanet in Kent and also the Minster on Sheppey.⁴¹ The Roman Island of Sheppey, known as *Insula Ovium*, served as a defensive stronghold where there is evidence to suggest that the Minster site may have previously been used as a Roman fort. The Roman occupation of Sheppey was considered to have been limited and strategically planned to only a few of the highest hilltops on the northern coast also suggesting defensive reasons for settlement

³⁸ Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford, 1994), p.122.

³⁹ See D.Hooke, 'The Anglo-Saxon Landscape' in T.R.Slater and P.J.Jarvis (eds.) *Field and Forest* (Norwich, 1982), pp.79-103, p.79, for details regarding the history of parish boundaries which were known to have been determined by pre-Conquest settlement, also known as the 'primary development areas' within Anglo-Saxon Communities.

⁴⁰ J.Blair, 'The Minsters of the Thames' in B.Golding and J.Blair, eds., *From the Cloister and the World: Essays in Honour of Barbara Harvey* (Oxford, 1996), pp.5-28; p.8.

⁴¹ Rollason, *Mildrith Legend: A Study in Early Medieval Hagiography in England* (Leicester, 1982), p.322; J. Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Settlements*, p.4.

on the islands.⁴² Excavation work carried out around the ancient site of Minster abbey (just north of the parish church) during 1991-1992, unearthed more than 500 Roman coins, tile, brick, and Roman Samian ware and pottery which was found just northwest of Minster Abbey church.⁴³ The evolution of the ecclesiastical foundations which were to be known as the Minster on Sheppey were most likely founded on ancestral authority within the landscape, both in its physical positioning and established links to previously important sites of settlement.⁴⁴

The origins of the monasterium on the Island of Sheppey date to the seventh century when Sexburgh, the eldest daughter of King Anna of East Angles (now East Anglia) married King Eorcenbergt of Kent and asked permission from her son in c.664, to be granted royal land for the founding of the religious establishment.⁴⁵ At the time of completion, the nunnery at Minster housed seventy-seven nuns and in 1537, at the time of the dissolution, only eight nuns lived at Minster.⁴⁶ Similar to the Island of Sheppey, the Island of Thanet in the far northeast corner of Kent also had an early Minster foundation from the seventh century and both are fairly comparable in size with Thanet's total acreage at 29,000 and Sheppey's at 22,000.⁴⁷ Like the Islands of Sheppey, the Isle of Thanet consists of higher hills and southern marshland, but not of London Clay like Sheppey but in outcrop of chalk.⁴⁸

The Islands of Sheppey and Thanet both had Anglo-Saxon Minsters on the highest foothills of their islands above sea level and both overlooked the sea in addition to an

⁴² B.Slade, *Minster Abbey*, p.15.

⁴³ B.Slade, *Minster Abbey: An Account of the Excavations* (Sheerness, 1993), p.15.

⁴⁴ A.Everitt notes that some Minsters were founded on places that were often the last remnants of a subordinary territory that never acquired an independent life of its own', p.155-156 in A.Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization* (Leicester, 1986). In addition, N.Corcus wrote that ecclesiastical foundations provide a testimonial in 'helping to impose a fundamental order...sometimes ancient transhumance and resource links to outlying areas may have proceeded church foundation', p.48 in N.Corcus, *The Affinities and Antecedents of Medieval Settlement*, BAR British Series 337, 2002.

⁴⁵ Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford, 1994), p.122.

⁴⁶ Hasted, *The History and Topography of the County of Kent*, vol.6, p.218; E.C.Walcott, 'Inventory of the Benedictine Priory of SS Mary and Sexburga in the Island of Sheppey for Nuns', *Arch Cant*, vol.vii, pp.290-306. K.P.Witney, 'The Kentish Royal Saints', p.10; A.Daly, *History of the Isle of Sheppey*, p.23; F.Jessup, *Kent History*, p.32; F.Barlow, *The English Church 1000-1066* (London, 1979); J.Cave-Browne, 'Minster in Sheppey' in *Arch Cant.*, vol.xxii, pp.144-168, p.144-145; Rollason, *Midrith Legend*; Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford, 1994), p.122.

⁴⁷ *VCH, Kent*, vol.1, p.463 Sheppey; Thanet, p.462.

⁴⁸ *VCH, Kent*, vol.1, p.462.

efficient communications and trade route.⁴⁹ However, the road systems on the Islands differed. All traffic expecting to travel to Eastchurch, Warden and Leysdown parishes had to pass through Minster parish first. More importantly, the only road allowing access to these parishes sloped up to the Minster church and gatehouse. Furthermore, the sea view from this vantage point, at the Minster church, allowed clear and visible access to all approaching and departing traffic to and from Sheppey. The Island of Thanet's road system was circular around the island where traffic passing on and off the Isle at Sarre would have had to approach the northern coastline or the southern coastline which would have taken it by Thanet's Minster.

Although both Minsters, on Thanet and Sheppey, were relatively similar in their established Anglo-Saxon foundations, the impact of these ecclesiastical centres within their local island communities differed widely especially throughout the medieval period and in terms of their relationship to popular and local religious practices. St. Mildred, the abbess of Minster-in-Thanet and also the daughter of Domne Eafe or Ermenburga, founder of the nunnery, was often associated with many miracles unlike St. Sexburga. St. Mildred's popularity in hagiography and as a medieval saint was most likely associated with her purity and youth, unlike St. Sexburga who was a widow by the time she founded Sheppey's monastery. St. Mildred's tomb became a place of pilgrimage, where miracles of healing were attributed to her relics. Her relics were eventually translated to St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury in 1035 for safe keeping, while some relics were given to Holland.⁵⁰ St. Sexburga's popularity as a locally revered saint remained constant on Sheppey whilst the cult of St. Mildred died out on Thanet by the late medieval period. St. Sexburga and popular devotional practices on Sheppey will be discussed further in Chapter 4. Furthermore, there is no evidence from Thanet which suggests that the Minster centre controlled administrative and religious obligations such as baptism, marriage, and burial, for the entire island, in the late medieval and early modern period

⁴⁹ J.Blair, 'The Minsters of the Thames' in B.Golding and J.Blair, eds., *From the Cloister and the World* (Oxford, 1992), pp.5-28; p.8; D.W. Rollason, *Mildrith legend*, p.322.

⁵⁰ D.Farmer, *Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford, 1992), p.340-341.

and beyond the Reformation.⁵¹ This was unlike Sheppey where the Minster controlled all burials on the Island.

V. Domesday Settlement and parish boundaries up to c.1300

The *Domesday* survey was the largest national survey to be imposed on the British landscape - providing a legalised inventory of national landed wealth which used classification systems already in place before the Conquest.⁵² The Island of Sheppey was mentioned in the *Domesday* survey in relation to its land only, not as an administratively separate island.⁵³ Before the Normans, the Islands of Sheppey were within the lathe of Scray, yet distinctively separated by hundreds at the time of the *Domesday Monachorum*. The division of the islands into hundreds was under the influence of ecclesiastical institutions such as that of the Minsters at Newington, Milton Regis, and Faversham on the mainland coast.

The Minster was identified in the *Domesday Monachorum* as 'Sexburgamynster' in addition to its daughter churches at Eastchurch, Leysdown, and Warden.⁵⁴ The Minster on Sheppey was in decline by the eleventh century, and not to be rededicated to SS Mary and Sexburga until after 1130, with possible complete abandonment after continual Viking raids in the ninth century, the first in 835 and again in the winter of 855.⁵⁵ A substantial portion of the Island of Sheppey and all of the Island of Elmley were within the hundred of Milton and dependent on the Minster at Milton. The southern marshland area, later to be known as 'Eastchurch' parish on the Island of Sheppey, was within the hundred of Teynham and dependent on the Minster at Newington, and the Island of Harty was within the hundred of Faversham, dependent on Faversham Minster.⁵⁶ However, Newington Minster was also dependent on Milton Regis, receiving

⁵¹ I'm grateful to Gill Wyatt, Ph.D. candidate at the University of Kent at Canterbury, who shared her current research with me into sixteenth and seventeenth century baptisms and naming on the Isle of Thanet.

⁵² J.C.Holt, *Domesday Studies* (Woodbridge, 1987), p.4-5.

⁵³ P.Morgan, *Domesday Book*, Kent, vol.1 (Chicester, 1983), p.4 b, c.

⁵⁴ G.Ward, 'The Lists of Saxon Churches in the *Domesday Monachorum* and the White Book of St Augustine', *Arch Cant*, xlv (1933), pp.60-89; H.C.Darby, *The Domesday Geography of South-East England* (Cambridge, 1962), pp.496-499.

⁵⁵ G.N.Garmonsway, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 3rd ed. (London, 1972)pp.62-3, 66-67.

⁵⁶ See A.Daly, *History of the Isle of Sheppey* (Sheerness, 1904), p.3; Also see P.Morgan, *Domesday Book*, Kent, vol.1 (Chicester, 1983), p.4 b,c.

the chrism oil at Milton according to St. Augustine Abbey's *White Book*.⁵⁷ It would not be until the middle medieval period, from approximately c. 1300 onward, that the Minster in Sheppey's retained authority would become more unusual and more noticeable especially as a 'locally directed' status symbol for wealthier families and testate parishioners and other local inhabitants.⁵⁸

The earliest secular settlement on the Island of Sheppey was Kingsborough Manor, which was also known as 'Cyninsburg' and described as being situated 'in the very midst of the Ile' where it was 'most commodiously for the assembly of the inhabitantes'.⁵⁹ In addition, the location of Kingsborough extended beyond both Minster and Eastchurch parish boundaries. Since Anglo-Saxon times, Kingsborough held a yearly court which by the sixteenth century was known as 'law day' which was held in the late spring or summer. During law day, a new King's ferry warden was chosen along with two men to assist him, in addition to a new island constable and a deputy of the Island.⁶⁰ Furthermore, costs were laid out by the outgoing ferry warden as to maintenance of the ferry and the road leading to and from it on the Island of Sheppey. It is unclear as to when this court was established but surviving records date back to 1546 and continue for another 200 years.⁶¹

The Island of Harty had a moated farmstead to the south of the island adjacent to the parish church known as Sayles Court. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries it was fashionable for prosperous farmers to construct moated farms while also being practical for drainage.⁶² It is difficult to identify the purposes for the moat at Saye's Court. Due to its position at the entrance to the eastern Swale on the coast of Harty, it suggests that its structure was built for defensive purposes.

⁵⁷ G.Ward, 'Lists of Saxon Churches in the Domesday Monachorum and the White Book of St. Augustine', *Arch Cant*, vol.45 (1933) pp.60-91.

⁵⁸ J.Blair, 'Local Churches in Domesday Book', in J.C.Holt, ed., *Domesday Studies* (Woodbridge, 1987), pp.265-278, p.269; Also see J.Blair, ed., *The Local Church in Transition: Minsters and Parish Churches 950-1200* (Oxford, 1988).

⁵⁹ W.Lambarde, *A Perambulation of Kent* (Chatham, 1826), p.226

⁶⁰ CKS U47/2/M5.

⁶¹ The first recorded court was held on the 14th day of June in 1546: CKS U47/2/M4; the last recorded court was on the 25th of May, 1795: CKS U47/2/M7.

⁶² C.Taylor, *Village and Farmstead: A History of Rural Settlement in England* (London, 1983), p.191.



PHOTO 9: Aerial view of moated Sayles Court Site adjacent to Harty parish church on the Island of Harty.

The Islands of Sheppey had two moated sites, one castle at the western end of the Swale, at Queenborough, and the other at the eastern Swale end at Harty, the positions of both moated sites collectively appeared to serve strategic purposes as a defense for the Swale and in connection to the high volume of sea traffic on route to London or to the continent. However, the isolation of the moated site on Harty is similar to other isolated and moated sites in England which were attributed to ‘the process of colonization of the woodlands’.⁶³ The Island of Elmley, near to Harty’s moated site, was once elm-tree woodland, although of ancient origins and colonisation. From the fourteenth century, the moated site of Sayle’s Court was associated with the Champion family who married into the Chevin family eventually causing a family feud over the sale of the manor and its lands when a John Chevin in 1560 sold the manor to Thomas Paramour.⁶⁴

The division of the parish boundaries existing on all the Islands of Sheppey appeared to have been engineered strategically, for economic potential, to divide the islands into cross-sections of a combination of open arable fields, rich pasture land, dispersed farmsteads and village centres.⁶⁵ The largest parish of Minster was divided

⁶³ Ibid, p.191.

⁶⁴ Hasted, Kent, vol.6, pp.278-279.

⁶⁵ According to A.R.H.Baker and R.A.Butlin, open fields were characteristic of the North Kent lowlands and subdivided meadows were found on low-lying alluvial lands bordering the rivers and the marshes which was the case on the Islands of Sheppey., see above edited authors, *Studies of Field Systems in the British Isles* (Cambridge, 1973), p.385.

between a major monastic community of nuns, a parish church, a central village, a small hamlet and a farming community of tenants working for the monastery and also including freehold landholders. The ecclesiastical land belonging to the nunnery at Minster will be discussed in the next section on land ownership within the islands. The boundaries of Minster parish extended over three different views of the coast and sea. From the northern coastline, one could view the entrance to the Thames Estuary and the Essex coast, to the west, Queenborough town and castle held views of the harbor there, and to the south, the north Kentish mainland coast could be viewed across the west Swale. Minster parish contained the most marshland of the Island of Sheppey extending south to the King's Ferry and the border creeks between the Islands of Sheppey and Elmley.

Minster parish was the largest parish; however, it did not have as many hamlets as the second largest parish of Eastchurch which had four distinct hamlets. The first appearance of Ossenden was in the lay subsidy of 1346, where John Belt de Ossindon paid 18*d*, the fifth largest tax paid by an individual within that year from a total of 27 recorded names.⁶⁶ In 1352, William Neet 'de Osyndon' paid 6s, and he was the only person described as being from Ossenden within the individual assessment tax for that year.⁶⁷

Next to Minster parish, to the east, the parish of Eastchurch extended from the northern coastline downward over most of the centrally located marshland until the watery divide at Elmley creek which bordered Eastchurch with Elmley. Eastchurch also extended southeast towards the Isle of Harty where it reached the watery divide between its and the Island of Harty. The view of the extent of Eastchurch parish would have made it possible to see west as far as the Minster abbey and as far south as the Islands of Harty and Elmley. Eastchurch parish church was also located on some of the highest foothill levels of the Island of Sheppey besides that of the monastic and parish church of Minster. The parish church of Eastchurch was dedicated to All Saints and appropriated to the Cistercian Abbey of Dunes in Flanders in 1196 suggesting by its association, an isolated position in keeping with the Cistercian order.⁶⁸ By 1315, the Abbey of Dunes transferred rights of patronage to the Kentish Cistercian Abbey of Boxley since it was deemed that

⁶⁶ NA E179/123/20.

⁶⁷ NA E179/123/24.

⁶⁸ D.Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, 1966).

the abbot and convent of Dunes could not benefit any longer from holding this church in their possessions since the distance between the church and their abbey was too great.⁶⁹ By 1431, full rights to operate as a parish church were granted by royal license and by 1432 a new church was build complete with three aisles and three chancels, a western tower, and unusually, three porches.⁷⁰

Eastchurch contained more boroughs than any other parish on the Island of Sheppey which sub-categorised and differentiated pastureland in accordance with the larger areas of dispersed settlement such as Kingsborough, Norwood and Shurland Manor with Eastchurch parish. Eastchurch had a total of four boroughs named Rithe or Rythe (including a southern ferry of the same name) Holt, Sedon, and Wardown (not be confused with the parish of Warden bordering the northeast of Eastchurch parish).

The formation of Eastchurch's four distinct settlements, hamlets, or what was locally known as 'burgs' or 'borow' grew out of the surrounding farmsteads of Norwood, Shurland, and Kingsborough and served useful for administrative organisation. In the taxation material of 1435-1436, William Cheyney paid 18*d* on the 7th of November for a tenth of his profits from within 'the burg of Holte and Wardone and burg of Ryde'.⁷¹ Also, on the 19th of March, William Cheyney paid part of tenth and fifteenth tax in 'borgo of Holte, 10*s*, and Borgo of Rythe 5*s* 10*d*, in Borgo of Wardon 10*s*,' and a Robert Petard 'in Borg of Ryde' paid 18*d*.⁷² From 1546, the surveys from Kingsborough court list fines by that of borough identifying Ossenden in Minster, and Holt, Ride, Wardown, and Sedon in Eastchurch.⁷³ Furthermore, the hamlets were already serving administrative roles within manorial court records by the fourteenth century since the Middleton hundred list of individual fines contained separate hamlet categories in 1329.⁷⁴ The categories or subheadings were written as that of 'Wardone', 'Rythe', 'Elmie', 'Ossendone', 'Sedone', 'Holte' and also that of the prioress of Minster were also included.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Rev. Canon Scott Robertson, 'Church of All Saints, Eastchurch, Sheppey', *Arch Cant*, vol.14, (1882), pp.374-388, p.375; Hasted, Kent, vol.6, p.255.

⁷⁰ Rev. Canon Scott Robertson, 'Eastchurch', p.376; Hasted, Kent, vol.6, p.254.

⁷¹ NA E179/226/89.

⁷² NA E179/226/89.

⁷³ CCAL U47/2/M4.

⁷⁴ CCAL U15/24/1-6.

⁷⁵ CCAL U15/24/1-6, no.6

VI. The middle medieval to early modern period, from c.1300 - c.1600

Three significant social and economic developments mark this phase of settlement particularly within Sheppey history. Dispersed farmsteads and manors were most likely established by the late Saxon period; however the island's farmsteads and manors were becoming more distinguishable in relation to growing settlement patterns.⁷⁶ In addition, settlement growth amongst the less wealthy landowning population of Sheppey, which will be the focus of the following chapters, became more distinguishable within this late medieval to early modern period. Firstly, in addition to the established Kingsborough, major and dispersed secular farmsteads within Minster and Eastchurch parish, particularly Norwood and Shurland manors contributed to growing settlements patterns. Both Norwood and Shurland manors and the settlements surrounding them were physically situated on a west to east axis just below the Minster on foothills above the southern marshes of the Island of Sheppey. Furthermore, other smaller farmsteads such as Nutts Court and ecclesiastical land holdings prompted the development of further areas of development. Secondly, the growth of hamlets or 'borows', as they were referred to by local people, surrounded and extended out from the major farmsteads and contributed to distinctive places of settlement areas within the islands' landscape. The third phase of development was the establishment of a Royal corporate town at Queenborough on the Island of Sheppey in the 1360's.

VI.i. Secular farmsteads on Sheppey and Harty

The major secular farmsteads of the Island of Sheppey were located within the northern half of the island and included Kingsborough, Norwood Manor, and Shurland Manor. (please refer to Map 3.5, Kingsborough and Norwood Manors and Map 3.6,

⁷⁶ C.Taylor has explained that farmsteads were 'part of a dispersed pattern of settlement that has been there since at least late Saxon times' in *Village and Farmstead: A History of Rural Settlement in England* (London, 1983), p.175.

Shurland Manor).⁷⁷ These scattered farmsteads were located along the major route between what is now Queenborough and Minster and is also consistent with ancient salt work settlements previously discussed within this chapter (also refer back to Map 3.3). The manors of Norwood and Shurland had a general impact on the rural development of both Minster and Eastchurch parishes which was also reflected by the generations of landlords which owned and occupied them.⁷⁸

The evolution of the place which came to be known as Norwood Manor was identified with its first landlord, Jordan de Northwood, who was recorded as having possession of the land and property in 1126.⁷⁹ The Northwood family or Norwood family were one of the oldest to have remained settled on the Island over a 350 year period, however sometime between 1380 and 1480, the family seat moved to the Kentish mainland while retaining Norwood manor within family possession until 1493 after the last male Norwood descendent died without an heir.⁸⁰ By 1488, the Norwood family seat moved from Sheppey to Milton across the King's Ferry to the coastal mainland.⁸¹

Shurland Manor was the residential seat of Sir Jeffrey de Shurland who was recorded to have lived here in 1224.⁸² Sir Robert de Shurland was the son of Sir Jeffrey de Shurland and his effigy remains in Minster church today. Sir Robert's only heir was his daughter Margaret who married William, the son of Sir Alexander Cheney of Patricbourne, Kent. From 1323, Shurland Manor remained in the hands of the Cheney family heirs for almost 250 years until it was sold to the Crown by Lord Henry Cheney in 1572.⁸³

⁷⁷ There were other farmsteads visible in addition to these listed here where most dispersed areas lay within the two roads between the Minster church and monastery, north of Kingsborough and Norwood Manor and directly south of them as seen in the map portfolio, Map 2.5.

⁷⁸ For further discussion on the making of rural settlement by landlords and peasants see C.Dyer, *Everyday Life in Medieval England* (London, 1994).

⁷⁹ J.G.Dempsey, *Norwood-Northwood Families of Kent, Warwickshire, and Gloucestershire* (Ohio, USA, 1983); unknown author, *A Brief History of Norwood Manor*, given to me by the current owners of Norwood Manor, Mr. and Mrs. M.Hawkins.

⁸⁰ NA PROB 11/11.

⁸¹ John Norwood, the elder, made a will in Milton and did not request burial with his ancestors in the Minster. Also, John Norwood bequeathed Norwood Manor on Sheppey to his son John who remained in Milton during his lifetime. John, the elder's will reference NA PROB 11/8.

⁸² Hasted, Kent, vol.6, p.246.

⁸³ *Ibid*, p.248.

Unlike Norwood manor, Shurland Manor appeared to be growing and developing its farming, grain and corn production throughout the medieval period, whilst also becoming a luxurious place of residence with defensive capacities. Shurland Manor reached its peak as Sir Thomas Cheney's career was becoming more influential at home and abroad. Sir Thomas decided to re-develop Shurland's medieval hall into a grand building complex which mirrored his success and influence between 1485 and 1558. Sir Thomas Cheney managed to adapt himself successfully to four sovereigns, including Henry VIII, Edward VI, Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, during a turbulent time in English history.⁸⁴ Most of Sir Thomas' success was achieved within the reign of Henry VIII, who saw Thomas as one of his henchmen and was knighted and made governor of Queenborough Castle in succession to his brother Francis Cheney. Sir Thomas' career started as a military man in 1512 but by 1513 he became a diplomat to the Crown where he consequently travelled to Rome and Spain and France with his duties.⁸⁵ In 1515, Sir Thomas was made Sheriff of Kent and Esquire to the King and after 1520 he was made Treasurer of the Royal Household, and in 1539 Sir Thomas was made Knight of the Garter.⁸⁶

Sir Thomas Cheney had one of the largest farming and security forces on the Island of Sheppey, and not surprisingly, the manor, its park and lodge, were also the largest enclosed areas on the island.⁸⁷ Only one manorial record of Shurland survives, recording a year's rents and yields with an unknown date. The manor of Shurland with all lands, rents, and farms in total money for this unknown year were recorded as bringing in an income of £44, 14s, 1d.⁸⁸ In addition, Shurland Manor lands also yielded from the farm: 100 quarters of wheat which was estimated to be worth 4s for every quarter, written as £20 in total profits.⁸⁹ Also, an additional entry for the farming of corn at Shurland brought in £20 per year.⁹⁰

⁸⁴ S.C.Wyatt, *Cheneys and Wyatts: A Brief History in Two Parts* (London, 1959), p.28.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p.28-29.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*.

⁸⁷ NA MPF 240.

⁸⁸ WAM no.5119.

⁸⁹ WAM no.5119.

⁹⁰ WAM no.5119.

Shurland Manor was the largest and most profitable manor of Sir Thomas Cheney. Rents at Sittingbourne, the closest manor on the Kentish mainland to Shurland Manor, only brought in an income of £3 42s, 4d, while barley yields brought in 14 semes of barley estimated at 2s 8d were recorded as totalling '82s 4d'.⁹¹ Only two of Cheney's manors were as large as Shurland which included the manor of Bilsington and Patrixsbourne. Bilsington's lands, rents, and farms were worth £63, while Patrixsbourne was worth £12, making Shurland Manor the second most profitable of all this lands while also occupying a prominent position within the eastern half of Eastchurch.⁹²

Correspondence between the Crown and Sir Thomas illustrates the size and impact Shurland Manor had on the rest of the island. It was estimated that Sir Thomas's private resources in the county of Kent brought extensive military protection to defenses overall and on the Island of Sheppey. Up to 160 serving men were kept in Shurland, with additional 'retainers, gentlemen, and others' ready to serve Sir Thomas in any time of need, bringing the total number of available men to 300.⁹³ By 1584, and after the sale of Shurland Manor to the Crown by Sir Thomas' son Henry, a view of able men to serve the Crown in the case of military invasion was estimated at 40 men; however, the count of able men for Eastchurch parish totaled 49, while Minster had 100.⁹⁴ In addition to this head count, an inventory of weapons was also taken at this time where 25 muskets were counted at Shurland House; no muskets were counted anywhere else on the Islands of Sheppey. Other items counted as possible weapons at Shurland (referred to as 'corceletes' and 'calivers') were estimated at a total of 80, while Eastchurch had 33 and Minster had 60. Shurland's past as a military and security stronghold was still fresh in the mind of contemporaries during the time of inventory production where Shurland House appeared to still be harbouring weapons in case of emergency.

Sir Thomas Cheney re-developed the gatehouse and hall, as mentioned previously, and it was most likely completed sometime before 1523, since it was rumoured that Sir Thomas entertained King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn just before they were married.⁹⁵ The gatehouse and manor house were built of superb quality. Diaper brickwork was

⁹¹ WAM no.5119.

⁹² WAM no.5119.

⁹³ NA SP 12/75/43.

⁹⁴ BL Lansdown 42, folio10.

located throughout the gatehouse entrance in addition to windows on both ground and first floors and three fireplaces just amongst the western building complex adjacent to the gatehouse (please refer to Map 3.7 Shurland Manor with photographs of the gatehouse).⁹⁶ According to the estate map, Shurland Hall was complete with a cupola, an unusual domestic feature for this period since most sixteenth century buildings had cupolas sitting on towers rather than on pitched roofs.⁹⁷ Due to the fact that most cupolas were tacked onto tower complexes, their purpose was possibly for far-ranging observation.⁹⁸ The placing of the cupola at Shurland hall may have been geophysical in terms of its function as a tower lookout over the park and other Shurland lands to the south of the hall, which were on a hill. In addition, considering the military/security role played by Cheney's retainers, the tower would have covered a view over the approaches to Shurland manor.

To a lesser extent than Minster and Eastchurch dispersed farmsteads, Leydown also held one secular farmstead known as Nutts Court which was located on the eastern coast of Leysdown. Nutts was a Norman farmstead which continued to exist beyond the late medieval and early modern period and became part of the possessions of the Cheney family by the sixteenth century. Nutts contained a farm called 'Bartholomew's' which was bought by Sir Thomas Cheney in 1536, including the entire manor of land and structural property.⁹⁹

VI.ii. Ecclesiastical land on Sheppey and Harty

Ecclesiastical institutions and landlords held the majority of the land on the Islands of Sheppey compared with secular landlords. The Minster nunnery held the largest amount of land of any other landlord. Within the bounds of the Minster nunnery and its parish church were dove houses with a gatehouse at the western entrance to the monastic complex. Land owned by the prioress included farms, messuages, barns,

⁹⁵ S.C.Wyatt, *Cheneys and Wyatts: A Brief History in Two Parts* (London, 1959), p.29.

⁹⁶ NA MPF 272.

⁹⁷ M.Howard, *Early Tudor Country Houses* (London, 1987).

⁹⁸ Other Tudor cupolas may be found at Gosfield Hall and Eastbury Manor House which has a tower tacked on to the rear of the hall.

⁹⁹ Hasted, Kent, vol.6, p.265.

orchards, and gardens, and the windmill in Minster on the same hill as the monastery.¹⁰⁰ In addition, to the Minster's land holdings on Sheppey, other manors were held on the mainland including the manor of 'Upberye', 'Pyscocke' in Rodmersham, the parsonage of Gillingham and of Grain, and Bobbing. The profits from the Minster windmill were at the time of the dissolution recorded as 56s 8d.¹⁰¹ Despite the nunnery's closure at the dissolution there is evidence to suggest growth and a certain level of stability for the monastic community from its revenues. Between 1511 and 1536, the profits of the manor at Minster grew from 41*li* 14*s* to 62*li* 10*s* 8*d* in 1536.¹⁰² The value of Minster manor included rents, farms and demesne land. In addition, the SS Mary and Sexburga was a major employer on the Island, particularly within the village of Minster. Thirty-eight people were paid a wage by the monastery in 1535, a substantial number of employees for a relatively small monastery valued at £127 7*s* 10*d* and housing only 8 nuns at the time of the dissolution.¹⁰³ At that time, SS Mary and Sexburga had yearly rents from demesne land valued at 36*li* and other rents and farms of the same manor of Minster valued at 19*li* 2*s* 9*d*.¹⁰⁴ These figures suggest a small monastic community with some level of sustainability but it does not compare with the legacy of the Minster heritage captured within the imagination of the local people. This idea will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Canterbury Christ Church priory held a manor in Leysdown of mixed arable and pasture, at the eastern end of the Island of Sheppey, and a small portion of land on the western side of Sheppey known as Barksore manor. In addition to this, Christ Church priory also held land in the Island of Harty known as Barton Court, however Barton court was also identified as being partially within the Island of Sheppey in Leysdown, most possibly crossing over the thin watery divide between Leysdown parish in the south and the Island of Harty.¹⁰⁵ In 1535, the manor of Leysdown brought in rents worth 15*li*, while Barksore, located in the Minster marshes below Queenborough on the Island of Sheppey,

¹⁰⁰ BL Add.CH.57307.

¹⁰¹ *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, vol.1, p.77.

¹⁰² K.L.Wood-Legh, ed., *Kentish Visitations of archbishop William Warham and his Deputies, 1511-1512* (Maidstone, 1984), p.31; *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, Kent, vol.1, pp.77-78.

¹⁰³ *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, vol.1, p.77; Walcott, p.290-306.

¹⁰⁴ *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, vol.1, p.77.

¹⁰⁵ CCAL U15/20/2-6, court rolls of Leysdown, no.2, date c.1376 where a view of frankpledge identified a court in Leysdown called 'Berton'.

was worth 20*li* 6*s* 8*p*.¹⁰⁶ Also, another portion of Barton Court, called Southmarsh, was worth 4*li* but was located entirely on the Island of Harty. In total, Barton Court was worth 33*s* 4*d*.¹⁰⁷ Detailed rentals survive for Barton's Court between c.1450-1500 where individual tenant's names are recorded alongside the total acreage. The crossing over of Barton Court between the Islands of Harty and Sheppey at Leysdown contained in total 41 acres of land including salt marshes and a brewery where rents were recorded as brewing payments including the volume produced per annum.¹⁰⁸ In one undated list of tenants in Barton Court on Harty, there were ten tenants recorded while Barton in Leysdown had twenty one tenants recorded who had paid rent in a year not specified except that it was before 1500.¹⁰⁹

The abbot of St. Saviour's in Faversham also held land in Harty which was in 1535, worth 20*li* 6*s* 8*d*.¹¹⁰ The abbot of Faversham's land on Harty included a messuage called 'Abbatiscourte' and marsh and other pastureland including one marsh called 'Julyan marsh'.¹¹¹ The location of the abbot's land on Harty was described in a rental as being located to the west and north of the Isle next to Barton's court belonging to Canterbury Christ Church Priory.¹¹² In addition, to the prior of Canterbury and the Abbot of Faversham having land holdings on Harty, the priory of Davington, next to Faversham had pastureland and held responsibility for the parish church.¹¹³ Davington priory's land on Harty included 140 acres of pasture which was valued at 15*li* yearly in 1344.¹¹⁴

VI.iii. Queenborough castle and town

Queenborough's development as a town within Minster parish's rural community may be understood in three distinct cultural developments in the fourteenth century. The purpose for developing a royal borough and corporation on this small island was to boast

¹⁰⁶ CCAL U15/20/6.

¹⁰⁷ *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, Kent, vol.1, p.11.

¹⁰⁸ CCAL U15/122/6/11, c. 1500-1550; CCA Cartulary Register D, c.1250-1500, ff.428.

¹⁰⁹ Harty: CCA U15/122/2/11; Leysdown: CCA Cartulary Register D, c.1250-1500, ff.427-430.

¹¹⁰ *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, Kent, vol.1, p.83.

¹¹¹ CCAL U15/122/6/11, rental, c.1450-1500.

¹¹² CCAL U15/122/6/11, Harty rental, c.1450-1500.

¹¹³ Hasted, Kent, vol.6, p.280.

¹¹⁴ Hasted, Kent, vol.6, pp.280-281.

economic possibilities for the inhabitants while also presenting opportunities for growth in context with the popular contemporary development of corporate boroughs within the late fourteenth century. The first phase of development involved the construction of a castle in 1361 by Edward III, and shortly after in 1368 the second phase of development was the presentation of boundaries of the new borough and corporation. The third development within the borough was the development of civic record keeping which extended in various forms ranging from Charters to Statute books to other bound volumes of town activities and policies, dating from the fourteenth century and covering 500 years of town affairs.¹¹⁵ Please refer to Map 3.8 of Queenborough town, including the site of the castle.

a.) Queenborough castle

The surge in reinforcing defenses in the 1360s and 1370s around southern England, and in particular the securing of the Thames Estuary, has been attributed to a general response to war from the beginning years of the Hundred Years War around 1337 and 1338.¹¹⁶ In 1338, the south of England was invaded by a French fleet in the summer and autumn, sacking Portsmouth and Southampton prompting fears of further pillage and leading to the entire closure of some ports from a sea approach.¹¹⁷ As his grandfather did, Edward III began a castle building strategy in response to war-faring times and invasion uncertainty from across the Channel. Queenborough Castle was built during this time by Edward III's recommendation that the Thames Estuary needed defending in particular due to the proximity of London. The building of this castle at Queenborough in 1361 was the first significant investment in the new town's future. Unfortunately, Queenborough castle no longer exists except for its earthworks. Since Queenborough was built during this time

¹¹⁵ The Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone, contains all surviving Queenborough Records under CKS Qb/ including various calendars, memorandum, enrollment books, court books, charters, statute books, and judicial records, ranging in dates from c.1325 to 1885.

¹¹⁶ C.Platt, *The Castle in Medieval England and Wales* (London, 1982), p.108.

¹¹⁷ Southampton had its town walls reinforced after 1338, thus closing the port from its sea approach, p.108 in C.Platt, *The Castle in Medieval England and Wales* (London, 1982), p.108.

of war tension, the castle has easily been associated primarily with a strictly military function, however there is nothing in England to compare with Queenborough, and Edward did pay special attention to this castle as his frequent visits testified.¹¹⁸

Queenborough castle was 'uncompromisingly military' due to its precise circle of the great six-towered central rotunda and how it was matched perfectly to the outer curtain (please see Map 3.9 of Queenborough Castle and Reconstruction).¹¹⁹ In addition, trebuchets and mangonels were built, attributing to its military purpose. The castle was unusual in that most English castles modeling this design were not built until Henry VIII, except for Restormel which was a luxurious domestic space.¹²⁰ However, Queenborough did resemble other castles built in Europe during the 14th century such as in Bellver, Majorca, in 1309-1314, and Castel del Monte.¹²¹ As at Bellver and Restormel, accommodation was always within the most inner ward which consequently had one inner moat and an outer one before leaving through its gate and beyond the high outer walls. Inside the inner ward were the King's great hall, several chambers, a chapel, a kitchen, guardrooms and stores. It is reputed that Queenborough castle had fireplaces and glazed windows.¹²² The castle was richly accommodating to luxurious living and after 1365, Edward III stayed at the castle quite regularly.

Queenborough Castle was more of a royal residence than a military defensive for two reasons, one being the state of its accommodation, and the other being its location, not strategically high but rather on low ground set back a quarter of a mile from the River Swale. The castle was known for having a large and noble hall or dining area with arms of nobility and gentry of Kent on display, and even after Henry VII restored Queenborough castle during his own defensive program of reinforcing coastal defenses in fear of foreign invasion, the castle was never more than a royal residence, usually for the residing constable of the castle who was usually chosen from a range of wealthy and high ranking military men who were to oversee its effective administration.¹²³

¹¹⁸ C.Platt, *Ibid*, p.110.

¹¹⁹ C.Platt, *Ibid*, p.110.

¹²⁰ C.Platt, *Ibid*, p.30-32.

¹²¹ According to C.Platt, Edward III had met the King of Majorca and other kings at Amiens in the summer of 1329, see p.100 in C.Platt, *The Castle in Medieval England and Wales* (London, 1982).

¹²² C.Platt, *The Castle in Medieval England and Wales* (London, 1982), p.110.

b.) Queenborough town boundaries

The boundaries of the new Queenborough were determined at the inauguration of the new royal borough's civic government. The new town was to have a mayor, two bailiffs and four jurats. The mayor was to take oath before the Constable of the castle and a court of record was to be held before the mayor and steward every three weeks on a Monday but they had no power to try cases. The boundaries of Queenborough were outlined in a Corporate Charter by Edward III in 1368 and reinstated by Charles I in a new charter in 1625, which stated the following:¹²⁴

From the east side of the borough, a gate called Barres gate, and by the marsh called Russenden marsh [part of the holdings of Canterbury Christ Church Priory], and on the south side there, and from hence to the common creek unto the Swale on the west side, and from the aforesaid Swale unto the marsh called Digge's Marsh on the north side, and from the said marsh unto the gate called Barres gate on the east side.....and by water from the passage or place called King's Ferry unto the place commonly called Swale's Spitt.

Since Queenborough town was constructed on land lying within the parish of Minster, the church which was built in 1366, through a donation from Edward III to the new Corporation, was considered a chapelry to the mother Minster Abbey.¹²⁵ Queenborough chapel was dedicated to the Holy Trinity and consisted of one aisle, one chancel, and a square tower and steeple at the west end.¹²⁶ Queenborough did not

¹²³ Hasted, p.234.

¹²⁴CKS Qb/I/1 and CKS Qb/I/9/4, transcript of charter of Edward III to Queenborough, 10 May 1368. C.E.Woodruff, 'Notes on the Municipal Records of Queenborough' in *Arch Cant*, xxii, (1897), pp.169-185, p.172-173.

¹²⁵ D.T.Hughes, 'Queenborough Church' in *Bygone Kent*, vol.12, no.9 (1991), pp.551-556, p.551.

¹²⁶ Originally the chapel was dedicated to St. James, but it was deemed confusing since there was already a church on Sheppey dedicated to this same saint. See D.T.Hughes, 'Queenborough Church' in *Bygone Kent*, p.551.

become its own parish until 1607, when the town mayor and jurats wrote to the King stating the town's right to become a parish.¹²⁷

c.) Queenborough town development

The history of Queenborough as a declining town was established by 1377 with the death of Edward III, only ten years after Queenborough's establishment as a royal borough. Edward believed in the prospects of Queenborough as a new, independent and prosperous town which was to become an important wool staple, but after his death, the town slumped back into being a major oyster fishing community with the ritual election of constables to the castle.¹²⁸ Surprisingly, the townsmen were thorough in their record keeping and wrote a variety of activities within their town records - everything that would continue to validate the civic freedoms shared amongst its townsmen. Town rules and regulations, and the meticulous recording of debts, lists of freemen, of burgesses, mayors, and the numerous recording of ordinances of the town regarding everything from fines for leaving ships in the harbour to keeping pigs, pasture, and boars, have been included within the town's records¹²⁹

Queenborough's continuity as a town within the late medieval period from c.1450 was established in its observances of so-called ancient rules and customs such as the election of the mayor, naming of burgesses and also the naming of freemen between 1452 and 1556.¹³⁰ It has been suggested that due to Sheppey's 'isolation' from the mainland, it could have been easier for Queenborough to establish its own customs relatively free from interference by the royal and county officers.¹³¹ The reception of foreigners to the island with pleas of sanctuary did not cease after 1536, which was customary for the rest of the country, but they continued well into the 1560's. For example in 1565, a man

¹²⁷ D.T.Hughes, *Ibid*.

¹²⁸ F.Hull, 'Memoranda From the Queenborough Statute Book, 1452-1556' in *A Kentish Miscellany* (London, 1979), pp.79-101, p.80.

¹²⁹ See CKS Qb/AZ, Calendar Memorandums of various dates.

¹³⁰ CKS Qb/AZ 1, Statute book. Although the Statute Book of Queenborough was first used in 1325, it was disused until 1450, when it was renewed for both practical and ceremonial purposes, such as in the recording of fines and customs within the town.

¹³¹ F.Hull, 'Memoranda From the Queenborough Statute Book, 1452-1556' in *A Kentish Miscellany* (London, 1979), pp.79-101, p.82.

fleeing by boat from Dover was a servant to a mariner who came to Queenborough town because he was 'running away with the boat of his master' and refused to leave Queenborough harbour.¹³² The sanctuary cases within the town records are mysterious; however, the town appeared to be legitimising its customs in accordance with what it referred to as 'liberties and privledges' of the town as they were set originally by Edward III, whilst also encouraging population growth and employment, particularly within the fishing industry.

VII. Population

Medieval Kent was never a thinly populated county; however, at the time of the Conquest it has been suggested that East Anglian and East Midland counties were more densely populated than Kent.¹³³ In addition, the medieval population in Kent was locally diverse due to geographical differences and agricultural productivity.¹³⁴ The large proportion of marshland within the Islands of Sheppey contributed to thinner population figures within all three islands.¹³⁵ The population of the Islands of Sheppey reflects the 'wealthy but not healthy' aspect of marshland society and within the predominantly rural-based economy of the islands.¹³⁶ Fourteenth century lay subsidies surviving from the Island of Sheppey have provided critical, although speculative, information about population growth and decline within the Islands of Sheppey.¹³⁷ Within a forty-three year period between 1329 and 1372, the population of Sheppey grew and then declined between 1346/47 and in 1352 managed to recover growth by the year 1372, which never fully recovered the same figures as before 1346/47. This will be discussed in detail, further below. It is not the intention of this thesis to assess rural prosperity and/or urban

¹³² Qb/JMs 3

¹³³ Everitt, *Continuity and Colonisation* (Leicester, 1986), p.24 and 43.

¹³⁴ C.S.Chalkin, *Seventeenth Century Kent* (London, 1965), p.29; H.Garrad, *A Survey of the Agriculture of Kent* (London, 1954), pp.1-2.

¹³⁵ C.W. Chalkin, *Seventeenth Century Kent* (London, 1965), p.29.

¹³⁶ Phrase here used by Everitt, *Continuity and Colonisation* (Leicester, 1986), p.44.

¹³⁷ Lay subsidies do not survive from the Islands of Harty or Elmley so population for these two islands could not be estimated. In addition, only 44 wills survive from the Island of Harty with only one will surviving from the Island of Elmley for the period c.1400 and c.1559. Although will evidence is not an indication of population, the lower surviving number of wills for these two islands is consistent with other documentation, such as the lay subsidies, where taxation does not survive for the fourteenth century.

growth, as other social historians have been inclined to do, generating criticism over their speculative population theories, however, some knowledge regarding the distribution of households within a local area add dimension to social history enquiries, particularly if local families are to be discussed as they will be through this thesis.¹³⁸ In addition, there are no other lay subsidies surviving from the Islands of Sheppey, including Harty and Elmley, which survive in such chronological and detailed individual assessment as the lay subsidies for the Island of Sheppey between 1329 and 1372.

Over a forty-three year period between 1329 and 1372, there was an average of 195 taxable households recorded amongst lay subsidies with an average population growth estimated at 9 per cent within this same period.¹³⁹ This is in addition to a six-year decline in population growth between 1346/47 and 1352. The following table highlights the household numbers recorded for each of these years discussed, and the increase or decrease in household numbers including percentages, as reflected in the lay subsidies:

TABLE 3.1: Growth and decline in taxed households, c.1329 to 1372.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total households</i>	<i>Household increase/decline</i>	<i>growth/decline percentage</i>
1329	157	-	-
1334	183	26 +	16.5%
1346/47	221	38 +	20.7%
1352	197	24 -	-10.8%
1372	217	20 +	10.10%

There was a drastic decrease in population during the Black Death period of 1348-49, and as revealed in the above table the epidemic did affect the local population on the Island of Sheppey; however, the population appeared to be slowly regaining its original population after 1352. As stated this population increase was slow with just under half the growth compared with the 20.7 per cent increase over a twelve-year period from 1334 to 1346.

¹³⁸ See S.H.Rigby, 'Late Medieval Urban Prosperity: The evidence of the Lay Subsidies' in *Econ Hist Rev*, 39 (1986), pp.411-416; also see A.R.Bridbury, 'Dr Rigby's Comment: A Reply' in *Econ Hist Rev*, 39, (1986), pp.417-422.

¹³⁹ The lay subsidies are as follows in chronological order: 1329: E179/123/10; 1334: printed in H.A.Hanley & C.W.Chalkin (eds.), 'The Kent Lay Subsidy of 1334/5' in F.R.H.DuBoulay (ed.), *Documents Illustrative of Medieval Kentish Society* (Ashford, 1964), pp.58-172; p.163-165 for Sheppey; 1346/7: E179/123/20; 1352: E179/123/24; 1372: E179/123/29.

Additional lay subsidy figures from the Islands of Sheppey, particularly the Island of Harty, have suggested, similar to Shrewsbury's research, that any decrease in household numbers or population may not solely be the result of the Bubonic plague epidemic. Shrewsbury, in his highly controversial examination of the plague, has suggested that the plague was not as severe in rural areas, and in addition to this the majority of infectious diseases occurred in smaller, local epidemics, suggesting that the Black Death was not necessarily the cause of high mortality.¹⁴⁰ The individual lay subsidies from the Island of Harty suggest that the Islands of Sheppey may have been prone to smaller and frequent epidemics of infectious disease probably most likely connected to marsh fever or malaria. The lay subsidies from Harty dating 1544-45, record a total of thirty tax paying households including several orphans within the custody of named individuals.¹⁴¹ 40 per cent or 12 out of a total of 30 people recorded in the tax assessment were described as 'orphans' with the name of their guardians also given. Five individuals were responsible for the custody of one to three orphans, including one widow, Marion Clinton, who was responsible for two orphans; John Clynton and Agnes Clynton, who were all most likely related to each other.

The use of the last will and testament in attempting to determine mortality rates is highly speculative; however, further evidence from the Island of Harty may suggest that brief periods of epidemic disease had a greater impact upon local population growth and decline than larger epidemics of the same nature as the Black Death. It was not unusual for two generations of the same family to write a will at the same time, particularly if they were husband and wife, however, three generations of the same male family members to leave a will within the same month is something which might be considered in greater detail. The Banny family of Harty had three generations of men within the same year of 1460 produce wills on different chronological dates within the same month. Thomas Banny, junior of Harty and bachelor, made his will on the 9th of August 1467.¹⁴² Within his will he bequeathed the residue of his goods to his father, John Banny, including property which was stated to be worth four acres of land and pasture located in Harty. All

¹⁴⁰ J.F.D.Shrewsbury, *The History of Bubonic Plague in England* (Cambridge, 1970), p.19; J.Hatcher, *Plague, Population and the English Economy 1348-1530* (Basingstoke, 1977), pp.18-19.

¹⁴¹ NA E179/125/277.

¹⁴² CKS PRC 17/1/78.

land was to be sold and the money distributed in the parish church for masses for his soul and to work of the church. It is unlikely that Thomas Banny would have left his land and property to his father if he were known to have been suffering from serious illness. John Banny, father of Thomas Banny junior, left a will, more or less, within the same week as his son on the 13th of August.¹⁴³ John Banny bequeathed his estate including fourteen acres of land and a tenement to his wife which was to pass on to Thomas Banny, John's father after her death. Thomas Banny, senior, father of John Banny, and grandfather of Thomas Banny, junior, produced his will on the 20th of August, within 7 days of his son's will.¹⁴⁴ Thomas Banny, senior's will did not include any bequests of land or estates to any children or grandchildren, only his wife was to inherit his property and there was no mention of the previous bequests from his son. Unfortunately, there is no date recorded for probate approval for any of the three wills mentioned.

The possibility that these three men were the victims of an epidemic is not certain but the timing of will production, all three wills written within one week apart of each other, and including bequests from son to father in the case of Thomas junior and John Banny, suggest that epidemic was a strong possibility for their deaths. Alternatively, the death of the younger Banny man, Thomas Banny, junior, may have been the result of epidemic whilst the will production of the other two elder Banny men may have been a result of precautions taken by them to insure the inheritance of their property if they feared they may become ill. Furthermore, Thomas Banny, senior, may have coincidentally died of old age. These speculations are difficult to conclude since there is no record of probate approval, making the possible cause of death and the possible date of death impossible to know.

As stated previously, the assessment of will evidence in determining epidemic or population is very speculative; however, R.S.Gottfried used testamentary sources in attempting to analyse epidemic crisis in East Anglia between 1430 and 1480, using 20,000 wills.¹⁴⁵ In addition, other historians have adapted Gottfried's model to determine

¹⁴³ CKS PRC 17/1/70.

¹⁴⁴ CKS PRC 17/1/71.

¹⁴⁵ R.S.Gottfried, *Epidemic Disease in Fifteenth-Century England: The Medical Response and the Demographic Consequences* (Leicester, 1978).

the 'nature and impact of disease within certain critical years.'¹⁴⁶ Within the will evidence from the Islands of Sheppey there is a small pattern of chronologically significant shifts in will production indicative of possible epidemic or periods of high mortality; however, further comparison with other will evidence from larger parishes on the mainland could provide more fruitful information. The table below shows the total number of wills that survive from the Islands of Sheppey and Harty, from Archdeaconry and Consistory registers, for the period 1450-1559.¹⁴⁷

TABLE 3.2: Total surviving wills from the Islands of Sheppey and Harty, c.1450-1559.

<i>Years</i>	<i>Total Surviving Wills</i>
	For the Isles of Sheppy and Harty
1450-1459	1
1460-1469	6
1470-1479	15
1480-1489	15
1490-1499	24
1500-1509	51
1510-1519	29
1520-1529	49
1530-1539	40
1540-1549	26
1550-1559	37

The two periods of substantial increase in will production within the Islands of Sheppey were between 1500-1509 and 1520-1529. There was a 27 per cent increase in will production from previous years between 1500 and 1509 and a 20 per cent increase between 1520 and 1529 mentioned. When these figures are compared with will survival rates from the largest and closest parishes on the mainland, Milton and Faversham, the will production increase rate is similar, particularly between 1520 and 1529. The will survival rates for Milton and Faversham are below next to the previous figures from the Islands of Sheppey and Harty which are repeated here for comparative purposes:

¹⁴⁶ P.J.P.Goldberg used Gottfried's testamentary evidence model for assessing epidemic in the diocese of York. See P.J.P.Goldberg, 'Mortality and Economic Change in the Diocese of York 1390-1514' in *Northern History*, vol.24 (1988), pp.38-55; quote in text on p.38. Also see S.P.Elkes, 'Lydd 1540-1644: A Demographic Study' (unpublished MA dissertation, University of Kent, 1987), chapter 5, pp.80-103.

¹⁴⁷ This table does not include prerogative court wills usually made by wealthy families and landowners who lived in a various locations.

TABLE 3.3: Total surviving wills from Milton and Faversham parishes, c.1450 to 1559

<i>Years</i>	<i>Total Surviving Wills from Milton</i>	<i>Total Surviving Wills from Faversham</i>	<i>Total Surviving Wills from Sheppey/Harty</i>
1450-1459	1	4	1
1460-1469	10	11	6
1470-1479	19	31	15
1480-1489	16	33	15
1490-1499	15	58	24
1500-1509	18	44	51
1510-1519	14	52	29
1520-1529	29	86	49
1530-1539	17	37	40
1540-1549	21	39	26
1550-1559	30	30	37

Overall there was a 39 per cent average increase in will production, between 1520 to 1529, for Milton, Faversham and the Islands of Sheppey. This was the largest increase in will production for all three areas examined. This is the strongest indication so far from any type of evidence that there was an epidemic crisis possibly taking place in north Kent between 1520 and 1529, whereby parishioners were most likely to have made a will. In addition, more detailed analysis of Faversham and the Islands of Sheppey showed that both areas had the highest will production rate between 1521 and 1522 and also between 1525 and 1526. Furthermore, Sheppey inhabitants had 50 per cent of wills probate approved within 1 to 2 months of making their individual wills, whilst 60 per cent of Faversham wills were approved within 1 to 4 months of will production date. Seasonal positioning for both periods is also strikingly similar. From 1521 to 1522, both Faversham and Sheppey wills shared an Autumn (mostly October and November) and Spring (mostly May) seasonal position, but from 1525 to 1526, Sheppey had a strong winter pattern and Faversham showed a varying winter and spring seasonal positioning.

In addition to comparisons between Faversham and Sheppey wills, written between 1520 and 1529, Milton and Sheppey wills contained several bequests which provide clues as to the possible young ages of the testators or testatrix at the time of will production, suggesting an unexpected suddenness of illness. It may be noted that 31 per cent of Milton testators mentioned children who were under twenty years of age. These

testators included one man, Thomas Thomasse in 1521, who was described within his will as 'sick' and had a pregnant wife and three sons, all less than eighteen years of age.¹⁴⁸ In 1526, Richard Mylar, also described as 'sike' within his will, had a pregnant wife and two sons under twenty-two years old who were to be given five pounds sterling at the age of twenty two.¹⁴⁹ Agnes Coppyn in 1527 was also described as 'sike' within her will where she bequeathed all her goods to be kept in the keeping of a woman named Constance who was to be the guardian of her child.¹⁵⁰

Sheppey wills dating between 1520 and 1529 included similar details and bequests such as those found within Milton wills. In 1522, Thomas Ward of Minster parish, Sheppey, left his goods to his wife to support his three children who were under age.¹⁵¹ Edmund Randolf of Eastchurch parish, Sheppey, had one son under twenty-two years old, an unmarried daughter, and his mother who was still living at the time of his will production in 1524.¹⁵² One widow, Alice Jacob of Minster in 1523 bequeathed her father to bring up her children after her death.¹⁵³ Harry Symon of Sheppey in 1526 did not mention any children within his will aside from his sister's son but his wife was pregnant and his mother was still living at the time of his will production.¹⁵⁴ In addition to these bequests, 24 per cent of Sheppey wills listed bequests of land and other property to wives until sons or daughters became at least eighteen or twenty years old. Although it could be argued that this type of bequest was standard postmortem inheritance practice, it supplements the previous statistics where young children were frequently left behind by testators or testatrix who left a will between 1520 and 1529.

Overall, population on the Islands of Sheppey experienced growth and decline between 1329 and 1372 with possible epidemic outbreaks causing higher mortality especially between 1346/7 and 1352. Speculative examination of wills surviving from the Islands of Sheppey and Harty between 1450 and 1559 have shown some evidence for possible smaller outbreaks of disease which caused a few years of high mortality,

¹⁴⁸ CKS PRC 17/15/201.

¹⁴⁹ CKS PRC 17/17/222.

¹⁵⁰ CKS PRC 17/17/345.

¹⁵¹ CKS PRC 17/15/169.

¹⁵² CKS PRC 17/16/129.

¹⁵³ CKS PRC 17/16/63.

¹⁵⁴ CKS PRC 17/17/99.

especially when these figures were compared with surrounding mainland parishes. However, overall figures for population or household numbers within the Islands of Sheppey may not be accurately assessed using will evidence and remain speculative from the fourteenth century lay subsidies, providing only an indication of population and households, high mortality at the local level, and local will production rates.

VIII. Occupations and industry

The Islands of Sheppey have always been associated with sheep rearing, as the place-name suggests. In addition, early accounts have commented on the superior quality of the wool from the Islands which had the 'fineness of the fleese...which passeth all other in Europe.'¹⁵⁵ The Island of Sheppey was also reputed to have its own breed of sheep.¹⁵⁶ In addition, Sheppey was known for its corn production and orchards.¹⁵⁷ However, the diversity of the natural landscape prompted a variety of occupational practices on the island where most inhabitants, if not wealthy landowners, were involved in both fishing and farming. 90 per cent of those parishioners, who bequeathed weirs, were either yeoman or farmers who also possessed some inventory of livestock such as ewes or lambs. In addition, the fishing trade varied by location where for example fishermen at the western end of Sheppey at Queenborough were more likely to be dredge fishermen, those living in Leysdown to the east of the island, were weir fishermen.

The occupations most widely referred to by individuals between c.1400 and 1559 were found in personal wills from the Islands of Sheppey and Harty and included that of yeoman, farmer, husbandman, or servant. It has been estimated that 60 per cent of the population aged between 15 to 24 were perhaps farm servants, with 72 per cent of yeomen and 47 per cent of husbandman hiring servants within the early modern period.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ *A Perambulation of Kent* by William Lambarde (London, 1576), p.198-199.

¹⁵⁶ A.Daly, *The History of the Isle of Sheppey* (London, 1904), p.22; W.Lambarde, *A Perambulation of Kent* (London, 1576), p.225; Hasted, E., *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, 12 vols. (Canterbury, 1972 [1797-1801]); vol.6, p280.

¹⁵⁷ Hasted, E., *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, 12 vols. (Canterbury, 1972 [1797-1801]); vol. 6, p.280.

¹⁵⁸ M.Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England: The Transformation of Agrarian Economy 1500-1850* (Cambridge, 1996), p.41.

Since most people were involved with some aspect of farming, the occupational identification of yeoman or husbandman was a description of status within the farming and land-owning population of the community.¹⁵⁹ The yeoman was a man who held land approximately to the value of two pounds a year which gave him some political rights in the local community where he would most likely serve as churchwarden, overseer, or executor of a will.¹⁶⁰ Ultimately, the yeoman was a self-sufficient farmer who was unlike the gentlemen since he participated in physical work, whilst the husbandman did not have the same status as a yeoman farmer. However, in Leysdown in Sheppey, Edward Seger, a prominent member of the farming community in 1554, described himself as a husbandman within his will.¹⁶¹ Seger listed a vast inventory of farming equipment as bequests including a plough and cart, livestock, ten different working horses, land, and wheat and he employed four servants.¹⁶²

On the Island of Sheppey, specifically, there were four men, all of Eastchurch who made special reference to the type of farming they were personally involved in within their parish of dwelling. Two men described themselves as farmers, Henry Wreke was 'a farmer' in 1471 and John Collens was a 'farmer to Sir Thomas Cheney' in 1536, whilst two additional men, Robert Tettysford in 1556 was described as a farming 'labourer', and John Elliot in 1545 was a 'shepherd'.¹⁶³ John Collens, the farmer to Sir Thomas Cheney bequeathed two horses, 2 cows, 2 bullocks, a chest, a brass pot, and a kettle to his wife, Constance, and his son Thomas.¹⁶⁴ There was no mention of freehold land or property within his will. Richard Reade, also of Eastchurch, left a will in 1472 and although he did not specify his occupation he was employed by the Cheney family with indications that he lived at Shurland Manor.¹⁶⁵ Eastchurch parishioners gave the most detailed inventory of livestock, land holdings, and farming equipment of any parish on the Island of Sheppey. Over 20 testate parishioners gave a total of 30 or more sheep within their

¹⁵⁹ M.Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England* (Cambridge, 1996), p.36.

¹⁶⁰ M.Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England* (Cambridge, 1996), p.40.

¹⁶¹ CKS PRC 17/29/62.

¹⁶² CKS PRC 17/29/62.

¹⁶³ Henry Wreke, farmer of Eastchurch, will date 1471 (CKS PRC 17/2/110); John Collens of Eastchurch, farmer to Sir Thomas Cheney, will date 1536 (CKS PRC 17/21/97); Robert Tettysford, labourer of Eastchurch, will date 1556 (CKS PRC 17/32/260); John Elliot of Eastchurch, shepherd, will date 1545 (CKS PRC 17/25/45).

¹⁶⁴ CKS PRC 17/21/97.

¹⁶⁵ CKS PRC 17/2/125.

wills; often bequeathing over 100 sheep. Inventories of wool were also bequeathed from Sheppey testators, including a spinning wheel.

Fishing was specialised and localised to certain areas of the Island of Sheppey. Queenborough inhabitants held connections with London where fishermen there were most likely to be dredging for oysters.¹⁶⁶ Bequests from Queenborough included dredges, anchors and nets. Leysdown inhabitants on the eastern side of the Island of Sheppey held weirs and boats which they often bequeathed in wills to surviving heirs. In contrast with Leysdown, inhabitants of Harty did not appear to participate in weir fishing. Boats bequeathed in wills by Harty inhabitants did not include additional bequests for fishing apparel like Sheppey wills which suggests that Harty boats may have served other functions besides fishing due to its proximity to the mainland coast.

IX. Transportation

The main route of travel on and off of the Island of Sheppey was the King's Ferry, located at the southwest of the Island of Sheppey in Minster parish. The King's Ferry was operated and regulated by the ferry warden and his two men who were appointed within the Kingsborough court 'law day' usually held in late spring or summer.¹⁶⁷ The King's Ferry was controlled by public authorities rather than privately owned and operated, which was more common.¹⁶⁸ The King's Ferry was paid for through taxation of both Minster and Milton parishioners and also through postmortem gifts. It was not only the ferry itself that the warden was responsible for but also the maintaining of the roads leading from Minster parish and through Iwade and Milton parish on the mainland coast.¹⁶⁹ In 1575, a legal act was drawn stating that those dwelling within eight miles of Milton town and four miles of the ferry, both on the mainland and on the Island of Sheppey, would be required to pay one penny for each acre of fresh marsh and ten acres

¹⁶⁶ Thomas Robinson of Queenborough in 1544 requested burial within the churchyard of Allhallows, Barking in London. Allhallows is located directly on the Thames, next to the Tower. Will reference CKS PRC 17/23/270/1544.

¹⁶⁷ CCAL U47/2/M5.

¹⁶⁸ E.Melling, *Kentish Sources. I. Some Roads and Bridges* (Maidstone, 1959), p.54.

¹⁶⁹ CCAL U47/2/M5; E.Melling, *Kentish Sources. I. Some Roads and Bridges* (Maidstone, 1959), p.55.

of salt marsh owned.¹⁷⁰ If one did not pay their tax fines were steep at 3s 4d in 1596. The expensive upkeep and maintenance of the King's Ferry service was vital to both islanders and mainland inhabitants.¹⁷¹

Since the ferry warden and assistants oversaw maintenance of the ferry and its housing, they also made sure that local taxes were paid by island and mainland parishioners. For his service, the ferry warden was granted lucrative bonuses, such as dredge fishing privileges within the compass of the ferry loop. The ferry house, and surrounding land was also provided for his own usage.¹⁷² There were other ferries in addition to the King's Ferry in Minster, Read Ferry in south Eastchurch was funded by the Lord of Shurland Manor, Thomas Cheney, and another minor ferry on Harty was a cattle and foot-passenger ferry, like the King's Ferry but serving the far eastern end of the Island of Harty and crossing to Oare parish, next to Faversham. The Read ferry was a market ferry assisting those coming into Eastchurch and Minster and travelling to the mainland to major markets such as at Faversham.

Sir Thomas Cheney of Shurland House, Eastchurch, in his will of 1558, described the Read Ferry as a passenger ferry for the 'market foulke and other comers and goers'.¹⁷³ Travel between Sheppey parishes was made possible by the major route way around the Island of Sheppey combined with a dense selection of minor roads within the north of Minster and Eastchurch parish where there was the greatest density of settlement. Also, the variety of these minor roads connecting borough settlement from the main streets linking Minster and Eastchurch parish is in direct contrast to mainland coastal parishes which did not appear to have the same amount of roads which the Island of Sheppey had within densely settled mainland areas.

¹⁷⁰ Hasted, Kent, vol.6, pp.210-211; E. Melling, *Ibid*, p.55.

¹⁷¹ CCAL U47/2/M5.

¹⁷² *VCH*, Kent, vol.3, p.432; CKS U47/2/M5.

¹⁷³ NA PROB 11/22.

X. Natural land boundaries and its impact on social relations between the island and mainland inhabitants

Archaeological evidence from pre-historic island societies has provided indications of the nature of social relations between islands and that of the mainland by constructing a 'picture of the range of contacts available to a particular community' whilst also providing an 'indication of the extent to which these were of real importance to it.'¹⁷⁴ In addition, Evans has concluded that a study of groups of islands lying close to each other provide 'an opportunity to study the related development of small discrete communities, to observe the mutual effect of their contacts.'¹⁷⁵

A reconstruction of social networks and contacts between the Islands of Sheppey and Harty and the coastal mainland parishes has been possible using testamentary evidence. Reconstruction has been possible through a process of examining object inheritance patterns within island and mainland coastal parish evidence in addition to examining kin networks. Individual testaments are examined for evidence of relationships with various groups, mostly kin groups, involving both economic and social interests of the testator or testatrix.¹⁷⁶

Objects inherited and their identification with individuals, both in terms of establishing a relationship between giver and recipient or expressing a current established relationship, emphasize the social connections between people in addition to the importance of the gifts in exchange. The 'symbolic capital' of an item may be fully

¹⁷⁴ J.Evans in 'Islands as Laboratories of Culture Change' in C.Renfrew, ed., *The Explanation of Culture Change: Models in Prehistory* (London, 1973), pp.517-520, p.518.

¹⁷⁵ J.Evans, 'Islands as Laboratories of Culture Change' in C.Renfrew, ed., *The Explanation of Culture Change: Models in Prehistory* (London, 1973), pp.517-520, p.519.

¹⁷⁶ M.Overton remarks on the work of K. Wrightson's research into kin groups and the household and how the study of early modern relationships are difficult to assess but vital to continued developments into how the lives of individuals had a direct impact on any agrarian economy, p.43 in M.Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England* and K.Wrightson, 'Household and Kinship in Sixteenth-Century England' in *History Workshop Journal*, 12, pp.151-158. This concept of kinship and its relation to wider cultural contexts such as economic and demographic forces has been also been noted by Kertzer, D.I., 'Future Directions in Historical Household Studies' in *Journal of Family History*, (1985), pp.98-106.

understood in how it has maintained or developed strong or weak kinship relations.¹⁷⁷

Testamentary evidence revealed three different types of connections between inhabitants on the islands of Sheppey and Harty and the mainland; however, both groups of inhabitants do not share similar connections. Moreover, Sheppey and Harty had distinctly different bequests, particularly pious provisions to separate monastic houses, with Sheppey towards the Minster on its island, and Harty to Faversham or Davington monastic houses. Sheppey testators were far more likely to be associated with the mainland through pious interests whilst mainland coastal parishioners were most likely to have links with the island through land or livestock holdings. In addition, the mainland coastal parishes showed consistently stronger mainland to mainland associations rather than to either the Island of Sheppey or the Island of Harty. Closer natural boundaries between places, such as the Island of Harty and Sheppey, do not necessarily dictate closer inter-island social relations since either island was more likely to have established relationships with mainland families and religious establishments most likely due to landed interests.

The Island of Sheppey held the strongest associations with those parishes located directly south of Sheppey, particularly Iwade, Milton, and Murston, on the coastal mainland. The Island of Harty had the strongest social, family, or religious contacts with Luddenham and Oare, just south of the Island of Harty.¹⁷⁸ Murston parish was the only mainland coastal parish with a connection to the Island of Elmley and this parish was located directly south of that island however only one will from the island has survived making it difficult to assess equivalent relationships.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ The concept of 'symbolic capital' is discussed by B.Vernier, 'Putting Kin and Kinship to Good Use: The Circulation of goods, Labour, and Names on Karpathos, Greece', pp.28-76 in H.Medick and D.W.Sabean, (ed.) *Interest & Emotion: Essays on the Study of Family and Kinship* (Cambridge, 1984). Vernier states 'building mills and chapels, acquiring gold pieces, household utensils, and names, monopolizing the priestly and presidential positions, and following certain marriage practices were all strategies used to maintain and increase their economic and symbolic capital', p.28. Symbolic capital being the associations connected with an item or object inherited or given, whether it be in relation to reputation, expectation, status or family importance within a community, is to be discovered by the microhistorian. Also see A.Appadurai, (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1986). L.Bowdon, 'People of Property': Social Relations in Wingham c.1450-1600', 2 volumes, (unpublished MA dissertation, University of Kent at Canterbury, 1998).

¹⁷⁸ The 'King's Ferry' crossing to the Island of Sheppey was located at Iwade. The Harty ferry crossed to Oare parish on the mainland.

¹⁷⁹ John Hyld's will dated 1516: CKS PRC 17/12/564.

The types of connections which were found in wills may be classified by the following: Land and livestock bequests including personal gifts to named individuals,¹⁸⁰ pious intentions or religious bequests and migration factors which involved the direct specification within a will of living previously within another parish. Fishing, including its links with transportation, was one of the most direct associations the Islands of Sheppey and Harty had with the mainland coastal communities. The two parishes with the strongest links to Harty, Oare and Luddenham were the only two parishes with wills containing fishing bequests. John Arnolde from Luddenham gave his youngest son his dredging boat with all apparel in 1543; however, his son did live within the parish of Luddenham¹⁸¹ Gilbert Berry of Oare in 1516, bequeathed his boat to be sold with half of the money coming from it to be used for burial and burial anniversaries.¹⁸² However, Berry named Stephen Grene of Sheppey as one of his executors suggesting that both men may have been associated through the fishing trade or through kin networks which are not clear within Berry's will.

Marsh land and pasture were the most prevalent type of land holding within the northeast areas of Kent, including Sheppey, Harty and Elmley; however, bequests of marshland and pasture appeared far more often amongst mainland parishes directly opposite Harty. Sheep leases were mentioned amongst bequests from Harty, Oare, and Graveney, whilst no bequests for sheep leases appeared within Sheppey wills.

Overall, Harty had more connections to the mainland through land and livestock bequests representing 46 per cent of testate parishioners with land connections and 7 per cent of Harty parishioners having a livestock connection to the mainland within their wills. Although 21 per cent of Sheppey wills had a livestock connection to the mainland the category with the greatest number of connections to the mainland was pious intentions; however, Harty also had the highest number of bequests to the mainland when compared with religious bequests from Sheppey inhabitants.

¹⁸⁰ For this study, a monetary grant in most cases was a gift of specified amount to a named recipient who could have been a friend or relative but their relationship is not specified within the will, only the recipient's parish of dwelling is written after their name.

¹⁸¹ CKS PRC 17/23/125.

¹⁸² CKS PRC 17/12/549.

The most popular type of pious bequest between parishes on the islands and mainland involved the giving of money or livestock to the funding of parish churches or in tithe payments. 57 per cent of Sheppey testate parishioners made pious bequests to the mainland with only 1 per cent of mainland parishioners making the same type of bequest to Sheppey. 85 per cent of Harty testate parishioners made pious bequests with 12 per cent of these bequests possible tithe payments. There were three bequests from Harty parishioners to Leysdown church on Sheppey which were unrelated to evident land holdings.¹⁸³ William Church of Harty, in 1517, bequeathed various amounts of money to Stone, Norton, Oare, Luddenham, Davington, Faversham and Leysdown in Sheppey. It is unclear why he made such a variety of bequests to these parish churches; however, tithe payment was the most likely reason.¹⁸⁴ Church also bequeathed a further 4*li* to the making of 'hoo lane' lying between Davington and Oare possibly for easier access to his land holdings and to maximise farming production traffic. Three wills from Sheppey testators dwelling in Leysdown, Eastchurch, and Queenborough made religious bequests to Harty church. One man from Leysdown and another from Eastchurch did not specify land holdings within Harty but they may have had some sort of land connection with the Island since they both gave to the high altar, suggesting tithe payments.¹⁸⁵ Unusually, Johanne Moyse of Leysdown in 1511, requested a priest to sing for him in Harty church and not his own parish church.¹⁸⁶ In 1505, Rose Redfyn of Queenborough, bequeathed a hart of wax to the church of St. Thomas of Harty, in addition to her other bequests which included a pilgrimage to the 'Rood of Grace' and to Master John Shorne of Halstowe who was the patron saint of ague sufferers.¹⁸⁷ Ague being a type of malarial fever which was associated with the Islands of Sheppey marshlands. In 1508, a parishioner of Harty, William Songar, bequeathed his executor to 'bere a penne' to Master John Schorn at Halstow.¹⁸⁸ There was interest by mainland inhabitants in supporting the patron saints of Island churches where other family members were living, such as in this case of John

¹⁸³ William Church, will dated 1571: CKS PRC 17/12/583; John Gregory, will dated 1523: CKS PRC 17/15/272; Richard Brayles, will dated 1524: CKS PRC 17/20/72.

¹⁸⁴ CKS PRC 17/12/583/1517.

¹⁸⁵ CKS PRC 17/12/92; CKS PRC 17/10/4;

¹⁸⁶ CKS PRC 17/12/92.

¹⁸⁷ CKS PRC 17/10/4.

¹⁸⁸ CKS PRC 17/9/327/1508.

Hogday whose mother lived in Sheppey. In 1512 John Hogday of Iwade made a bequest to the light of St Sexburga in Minster, Sheppey.¹⁸⁹

Sheppey's pious giving was largely unrelated to land holdings or tithe payment unlike Harty. Sheppey testators were also more likely to make bequests to any of the orders of friars in Kent or London. Between 1512 and 1518 there was a high concentration of giving to the various orders of Friars. William Borowe, a priest and clerk of Minster in Sheppey, stated within his will dated 1518 that he was a brother within the chapter of Augustine Friars and he also left a bequest to the Observant Friars to pray for his soul.¹⁹⁰ It may well have been through the power of suggestion that William Borowe persuaded testate parishioners to have the friars pray for their soul through a postmortem donation to one of the orders affiliated with their local priest.

Prerogative Court wills from very wealthy land holders in Kent included bequests to Minster priory with no bequests found from mainland wills which were filed within the Archdeaconry and Consistory courts. In 1465, William Marys, of Preston next to Faversham, requested that the prioress and convent of Sheppey to receive 5 marks every year for eight years to pray for the souls of prince King Henry V and the Bishop of Winchester and the remaining money was to be spent for the abbey church and the steeple.¹⁹¹ This yearly obit was to be paid by Marys' late wife's son, Thomas Brinston and if he did not carry out this yearly bequest, then the prioress was granted the right to take over the estate in Newland Marsh lying within the parish of Teynham in order to pay for the yearly prayers. Due to the high status families who requested burial and prayers at the Minster in Sheppey whilst residing elsewhere on the mainland, it may be suggested that a certain degree of prestige was associated with the Minster abbey of SS Sexburga and Mary. Testators living on the Island of Harty did not leave any bequests to Minster priory on Sheppey, and only 9 per cent of wills by testate parishioners included a bequest to the nunnery at Davington.¹⁹² This pious giving to Davington priory by Harty parishioners may be associated with the nunnery's extensive marsh land holdings on the

¹⁸⁹ CKS PRC 17/12/106/1512.

¹⁹⁰ CKS PRC 17/14/183/1519.

¹⁹¹ NA PROB 11/4/1459.

¹⁹² Richard Reade's will dated 1472: CKS PRC 17/2/125.

Island of Harty, as suggested previously in the connection between tithe and religious giving bequests.

Migrants between the islands and the mainland often remained partial to their previous place of residence. One man of Sheppey in 1505, Thomas Fowell, stated in his will that he was 'late of Harty, now being of Eastchurch.'¹⁹³ Within his listing of pious bequests he left 12d to the high altar of Harty, possibly for overdue tithes, and 3s 4d to the reparations of the high altar there. In addition, Fowell also gave 12d to the high cross, St. Thomas's light, and the torch light within Harty church.

There is some evidence that those who lived on Sheppey before moving to the mainland wanted to continue to be identified with their parish of origin after death. Such as the case with Robert Tettysford of Eastchurch, who was dwelling in Faversham at the time of his will production in 1556.¹⁹⁴ Tettysford states that he was late of Eastchurch parish and does not mention his new parish of residence until he leaves a bequest of the bed 'that I lye in' to Julian Tappett, widow of Faversham, stating that Faversham was where 'I nowe am kept.'¹⁹⁵

XI. Conclusion

The physical geography of the late medieval Islands of Sheppey presented a framework for social development. Concentrated areas of social settlement were found to exist within the north of the Island of Sheppey with pre-dominantly marshland areas to the south of the islands. It is within this landscape that the evolution of social systems began to emerge, in particular a major religious institution known as the Minster on Sheppey. Much of the early Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical settlements, including the establishment of the Minster and parish boundaries, continued to shape the social landscape throughout the medieval period and beyond the Reformation. In addition, dispersed secular and ecclesiastical farmsteads developed overlooking the southern marshland areas of the Islands of Sheppey. The visual and psychological impact of the presence of the monastic community at Minster, Sheppey, on the highest elevated

¹⁹³ CKS PRC 17/10/161.

¹⁹⁴ CKS PRC 17/32/260.

¹⁹⁵ CKS PRC 17/32/260.

position on the Island, had an influence on emerging notions of locality in relation to space.

It has been important to provide a comprehensive settlement history of the Islands of Sheppey, including evidence from mainland coastal parishes, in order to proceed with further chapters which delve deeper into social system complexities within the Islands of Sheppey. Natural island boundaries shaped connections and relationships with the mainland which differed between the Islands of Sheppey and Harty. In addition, Island inhabitants were more likely to have some type of tithe or kin connection with parishes or people living on the mainland than mainland parishioners had with Island inhabitants. Relationships between the Island inhabitants and the mainland were strongest between their nearest mainland coastal parishes than between each Island.

The use of lay subsidies and will evidence to determine population trends has revealed periods of strong growth and decline in the Island population, such as in 1346/47 and 1352, with a slow recovery by 1372. The local population was affected by the Black Death over the period 1348-1349, whilst will evidence showed a more frequent will survival rate between 1521 and 1522. Marshland fever appeared to affect families quickly and could also kill multiple generations of the same family within one month, such as the case of three generations of men in the Banny family of Harty in 1460, who wrote their wills one week apart in August.

By examining the transportation systems between the Islands and mainland it was found that Harty testators were more likely to have links between the northern mainland Kentish coast than with the neighbouring Island of Sheppey. Sheppey also had stronger social networks with Milton parishioners than it did with Island of Harty inhabitants. After examining the overall social networks between islanders and the mainland Kentish coast it has been revealed that notions of isolationism are not necessarily determined by physical boundaries. Territorial locality could be occupationally defined, particularly through farming and fishing trades; however, Islander bequests to religious institutions on the mainland also instilled a sense of belonging with wider Kentish communities.

Chapter Four

Places and Religious Practices:

The Minster and its Influence on Family and Community within the Island of Sheppey

1. Introduction

This chapter will examine how places of religious authority and devotion, such as the Anglo-Saxon Minster on the Island of Sheppey, shaped and influenced religious practices in the later Middle Ages between c.1400 and c.1560. The chapter will begin with discussion about the physical positioning of the Minster on Sheppey which naturally led to a socio-spatial relationship between place and space, contained within its natural island boundaries. In addition, this chapter will also examine how the early Kentish ecclesiastical structure continued to influence medieval to early modern administrative divisions on the Island of Sheppey. This discussion will specifically highlight the structure of Minsters in relation to their daughter churches and chapelries, which were still visibly and socially apparent for over a thousand years after their initial establishment.¹

The Minster held important power and authority through traditional practices associated with the Minster's historical past, particularly burial and the naming of daughters after Sexburga, its seventh-century foundress. This chapter will examine the important link between the Minster and the late medieval devotional practices as revealed within individual post-mortem bequests found in wills. This chapter will also discuss new discoveries revealed in research for this thesis including how local religious devotion differed considerably within local areas on Sheppey. In addition, this chapter will also explore how post-mortem pious giving patterns were determined by distinctive localities within this already small Island landscape.

Research for this chapter involved the close examination of all seven parishes within the Islands of Sheppey, between c.1400 and c.1559, including the parishes and

¹ A.Everitt, *Continuity and Colonisation* (Leicester, 1986), p.181, 185.

Islands of Harty and Elmley.² Research involved a close reading of pious bequests left within wills at a time when heightened awareness of death and provisions for the soul were at their greatest. Therefore the first section of the last will and testament was concerned with the well-being of the soul in the afterlife. Provisions were carefully detailed by testators so that certain goods, livestock or money could be used as payment for dirges, devotional lights dedicated to specific saints and their brotherhoods and in support of the fabric of the parish church. All of these religious bequests were made to secure a future place in heaven. The last will and testament was a form of biographical writing in which provisions were made for an idealist future identity which was first personal (for the sake of the soul) and familial (for the financial security of family members left behind). This chapter focuses on the personal and religious bequests; however, for Sheppey and some Kentish mainland testators death also brought ancestors together, through burial at the Minster.

The last will and testament has also been considered the only available documentation for researchers which makes it possible to access individual expression(s) which is not readily apparent in other historical documentation.³ In addition, will evidence used in previous research into the relationship between locality and religious practices have shown how material culture and religious belief systems are distinctive, particularly within marshland society.⁴ Salter, in her research into individual representation found within will evidence, has commented on how the last will and testament allowed 'ordinary individuals creativity' where 'texts and objects available to them' were used to 'make statements' which were personal and imaginative.⁵

This chapter contributes to previous research into Kentish communities and their pious bequests and practices using the last will and testament as the main source in

² The 300 wills surviving include the breakdown of the following figures from each parish: On Sheppey: Minster (147 wills); Eastchurch (50 wills); Queenborough (33 wills); Leysdown (17 wills); Warden (8 wills). On the Isle of Harty (44 wills) and on the Isle of Elmley (1 will).

³ P.Lee in his Ph.D. thesis stated that 'it is possible to be too circumspect...at best they [wills] give an impression of the truth which would otherwise be virtually hidden from view', p.5-6 in 'Monastic and Secular Religion and Devotional Reading in Late Medieval Dartford and West Kent' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Kent at Canterbury, 1998).

⁴ See R.Lutton, 'Heterodox and Orthodox Piety in Tenterden, c.1425 - c.1550', Ph.D. thesis, 1997 (University of Kent at Canterbury).

⁵ E.Salter, *Cultural Creativity in the Early English Renaissance: Popular Culture in Town and Country* (Basingstoke, 2006), p.2 and 63.

researching individually desired provisions at the time of death and after death. However, the emphasis and findings within this chapter are unique in that they explicitly focus on place as devotional space which is re-imagined and re-written within the last will and testament of Sheppey inhabitants, or those with ancestors from the island. It is the intention of this chapter to introduce wills as a type of social and religious mapping that records pious mental spaces in close association with re-imagined narratives of the Minster and its foundress.⁶ By carefully assigning, and therefore mapping, pious provisions in the first part of their wills, testators were recollecting traditions already practiced on the Islands of Sheppey whilst also defining locality, which was both real and imagined.⁷

II. The site of the Minster Church

The Minster on Sheppey, a Benedictine house, was founded as an 'ordinary Minster' or Mother-church in c.664 by Sexburga, who was of East Anglian heritage, daughter of King Anna, and Queen of Kent to husband King Erconbert.⁸ After the death of St. Sexburga's husband King Erconbert she asked her son for land to build a nunnery where she was the first prioress with seventy-seven nuns, however, four years later, at the death of her sister, Ethelfrida in Ely, she took the place of prioress there whilst her daughter Erminelda succeeded her at Minster, Sheppey.⁹ The first mention of the Minster at Sheppey was within King Wihtrud's grant of privileges to eight Minsters in Kent

⁶ Fundamental to the theory presented in this introduction is Zerubavel's previous work on mental landscapes which has shown that 'social maplike structures in which history is typically organised in our minds' is referred to as 'sociomental topography of the past', p.1. This sociological perspective is described as 'how the past is registered and organised in our minds', p.2 See E. Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (London, 2003).

⁷ See A.D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford, 1999) where Smith has emphasised the central role of myths and myth-making in claiming territory and creating local loyalty, see pps. 3-27.

⁸ Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. With introduction by J. McClure and R. Collins (Oxford, 1994), p.80; A. Dunbar, *A Dictionary of Saintly Women II* (London, 1905), p.170; J. Cave-Brown, 'Minster in Sheppey', *Arch Cant*, xxii (1897), p.145; A. Everitt describes the four early church foundations in Kent as 'head Minsters' or 'cathedrals'; 'ordinary minsters' or original mother churches of a district; lesser parochial churches with churchyards; and 'field churches' built for new communities with no rights to burial fees. See A. Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization* (Leicester, 1986), p.185.

⁹ J. Cave-Brown, 'Minster in Sheppey', *Arch Cant*, xxii (1897), p.145-46.

including Reculver, Dover, Folkestone, Lyminge, Minster-in-Sheppey, Minster-in-Thamet, Hoo St. Werburgh and another unspecified location called Upminster in c.697.¹⁰

Sheppey's Minster dominates a strategic visual position which overlooks the whole of the Islands of Sheppey, including both the Thames Estuary and Essex to the north, and the southern marshlands of the islands including the Swale to the south, (please see Map 4.1, Site of SS Mary and Sexburga, Minster). Everitt's research into Kentish churches has noted that 'it is probably true to say that the church has had a greater impact on the landscape and economy of Kent than any other human agency.'¹¹ Although the ecclesiastical impact of settlement evolution, including place-name studies in Kent has been examined by Everitt, the influence and evolution of authoritative and ecclesiastical centres, such as the Minster on Sheppey, have not been researched thoroughly. Corcos's research into Minsters and their relationship to other churches in the Somerset landscape, has revealed 'the significance of topography in shaping the psychological response of the viewer' provides a context for research where the landscape itself is evidence.¹² Recent work has also been conducted on the psychological significance of places within a local landscape, particularly religious sites of power and authority which visually reinforce their control. Altenberg's research into medieval Dartmoor and Bodmin Moor has suggested that 'the religious elements in the landscape were dependant on, and appealed to, the visual sense. A direct visual impact was needed in the landscape if Christianity was to be perceived as superior to nature and therefore convincing and comforting.'¹³ In addition, other archaeologists and prehistorians, such as Tilly, Bender, Cole, Gelling, Darvill and Barker have all emphasised the application of spatial and cognitive theoretical frameworks for a better insight into how medieval landscapes were perceived within localised communities.¹⁴

¹⁰ See BL Stowe.Ch.2, council of Bapchild, c.697. Within this document, the Minster on Sheppey is written as 'scepei'.

¹¹ A.Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization: The Evolution of Kentish Settlement* (Leicester, 1986), p.181.

¹² N.Corcos, *The Affinities and Antecedents of Medieval Settlement: Topographical Perspectives From Three of the Somerset Hundreds*, BAR British Series 337, 2002; p.2.

¹³ K.Altenberg, 'Space and Community on Medieval Dartmoor and Bodmin Moor: Interim Report', in *Medieval Settlement Research Group Annual Report, 14* (1999), p. 28.

¹⁴ See C.Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape* (Oxford, 1994); B.Bender, ed., *Landscape, Politics and Perspectives* (Oxford, 1993); A.Cole and M.Gelling in *The Landscape of Place Names* (Stamford, 2000), pp.xxii-xxv; T. Darvill, 'Landscapes and the Archaeologist', in K Barker and T Darvill, eds., *Making English Landscapes: Changing Perspectives* (Oxford, 1997); N.Corcos, 'Churches as Pre-Historic Ritual Monuments: A Review and Phenomenological Perspective from Somerset' in *Assemblege*, issue 6 (2001).

The position of the Minster within the Sheppey landscape prompts an immediate psychological response. Hasted, in the seventeenth century noticed how the Minster was at the centre of the parish and village of Minster 'situated on high ground'.¹⁵ Cave-Brown, another antiquarian historian, in 1897, wrote that the Minster site 'selected had peculiar advantages and attractions. Its elevated position, insulated, delta-like, by the two branches of the River Medway, called the East and West Swale, with the expanded Thames flowing in front, made it a conspicuous object...it also commanded the surrounding flat of the Island itself...the opposite coast of Essex in front, and the North Downs of Kent in the rear.'¹⁶



PHOTO 10: View from the top of the Minster gatehouse looking north across the Thames Estuary towards Essex.

¹⁵ Hasted, E., *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, vol.6, (Canterbury, 1972 [1797-1801]), p.217.

¹⁶ J.Cave-Brown, 'Minster in Sheppey', *Arch Cant*, xxii (1897), p.146.



PHOTO 11: View from the top of the Minster gatehouse looking south across the Sheppey marshes, the Swale, and onto the Kentish mainland.



PHOTO 12: View from the Minster churchyard looking southwest towards the King's Ferry Bridge and the Kentish mainland.

Early Minsters were often founded within a distinctive range of natural topographical features including elevated locations and near major watercourses, such as that posed by the proximity of the Thames Estuary, in the case of Sheppey.¹⁷ In addition to the baptismal and communal pastoral care of the 'monasterium' complex, the Minsters, along the Thames Estuary in particular, were designed to serve defensive positions.¹⁸ Furthermore, the natural boundaries of the Island of Sheppey served to enclose and prescribe the Minster community, where the whole island territory consisted of daughter churches loyal to the Minster mother church.¹⁹ Also indicative of marshland society, where all parish churches were located on upland sites, the Minster at Sheppey was located on the highest upland area approximately 200 feet above sea level.²⁰ In addition, these upland sites of church settlement within marshland regions also suggest early centres of settlement.²¹ Therefore, as Blair has suggested, the foundation of the Minster site was not 'accidental'.²²

¹⁷ J.Blair, 'The Minsters of the Thames' in B.Golding and J.Blair, eds., *From the Cloister and the World* (Oxford, 1996), pp.5-28, p.8; R.Gem, 'Anglo-Saxon Minsters of the Thames Estuary' in *RCHME Conference proceedings* (1995), pp.1-7, p.1-2; A.Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization* (Leicester, 1986), p. 193.

¹⁸ J.Blair, 'The Minsters of the Thames' in B.Golding and J.Blair, eds., *From the Cloister and the World* (Oxford, 1996), pp.5-28, p.10.

¹⁹ A.Everitt in *Continuity and Colonization* (Leicester, 1986) has suggested that 'when the boundary of the original minsterland is reconstructed, it is often found to describe a continuous line around the whole territory, and to delimit a more or less coherent group of parishes focused on the mother-church', pp.193-194.

²⁰ A.Everitt in *Continuity and Colonization* has stated that marshland parish churches were sited on upland in Kent, p.58.

²¹ A.Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization*, pp.57-58.

²² J.Blair, 'The Minsters of the Thames' in B.Golding and J.Blair, eds., *From the Cloister and the World* (Oxford, 1996), pp.5-28, p.8



PHOTO 13: SS Mary and Sexburga Abbey and Parish Church, western approach.

III. SS Mary and Sexburga Abbey and Parish Church



PHOTO 14: SS Mary and Sexburga Abbey and Parish Church, eastern approach. Evidence of Anglo-Saxon monastic church on the far right exterior wall with early arches still intact.

Shropshire: An account of the Parishes of the County of Shropshire, with a description of the principal churches, and a list of the rectors, vicars, and curates, who were led by Mr. Cardiner. Also the names of the benefactors, and the names of the rectors, vicars, and curates, who were benefactors. London: Printed by J. Baskin, 1795.



PHOTO 15: Close-up view of exterior wall of Anglo-Saxon monastic church.

III. SS Mary and Sexburga Abbey and Parish Church

The Minster in Sheppey is the only one of the Kentish Minster churches of mid Anglo-Saxon date to remain relatively intact despite a series of additional building work since its foundation. It is unclear as to the extent of the outer building complex during the initial phase of the Minster's production in the seventh century. The first convent was most likely made of wood and recent excavations have revealed the remains of a timber building adjacent to the existing church complex which dates eighth or ninth century.²³ The post-holes of the timber framed building found showed that uprights had been

²³ Previous excavations at the Minster abbey site have revealed Ipswich pottery and Anglo-Saxon brooches but the full extent of the complex at the first convent site are unknown. See Anon 1880, 'Minster Abbey Explorations' in *Sheerness Times & General Advertiser*, 6 Nov. 1880; S. Pratt, 'Minster in Sheppey', in *Canterbury's Archaeology 1993-1994* (Canterbury, 1995); B.Philip & M.Chenery, *Prehistoric and Monastic Sites at Minster Abbey, Sheppey, Kent* (West Wickham, 1998); B.Slade, *Minster Abbey, Isle of Sheppey: An Account of the Excavations* (Sheerness, 1993); The most recent excavations were in 1999 which were led by M.Gardiner. See M.Gardiner, 'Excavations at Minster in Sheppey, Kent', unpublished report, Queens University Belfast, 1999).

formed by rough planks which were split from tree-trunks rather than sawn, which resulted in a wedge-shaped cross-section.²⁴

This early convent was subjected to frequent winter invasions by the Vikings, the first documented in 835 and the second in 855, which subsequently led to the burning and pillage of the nunnery on both occasions.²⁵ The first complex of the nunnery finally fell into ruin sometime after the Vikings and the Conquest, most likely in 1052 during Earl Godwin's rebellion against Edward the Confessor.²⁶ By 1130, the convent at Minster had slowly re-established itself, with a few nuns living there, after relocation from Newington Abbey in Kent, up until the time that Archbishop William de Corbeuil announced rebuilding and restoration of the nunnery at Minster.²⁷ It was at this time that major changes took place at the Minster including its rededication to St. Mary and St. Sexburga and the founding of the parish church attached to the nunnery church to the south of the existing complex.²⁸

The SS Mary and Sexburga abbey and parish church were located within the same complex of buildings yet separated by Norman arches at the south wall of the abbey or nun's church and chapel, and at the north wall of the parish church. Please refer to Map 4.2 for a reconstructed plan of the interior of the Minster abbey and parish church, as it exists today.

²⁴ M.Gardiner, 'Excavations at Minster in Sheppey, Kent' , unpublished report, Queens University Belfast, 1999).

²⁵ G.N.Garmonsway, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 3rd ed. (London, 1972), pp.62-3 and 66-7.

²⁶ G.N.Garmonsway, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 3rd ed. (London, 1972), pp.177-180.

²⁷ A.H.Davis, ed., *William Thorne's Chronicle of St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury* (Oxford, 1934), p.273.

²⁸ .H.Davis, ed., *William Thorne's Chronicle of St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury* (Oxford, 1934), p.273-4.



PHOTO 16: Evidence of earlier Norman windows in middle wall which may have divided the two monastic and parish churches of what is now the parish church of Minster.

Norman windows have been found in clerestory of the middle wall where the Norman arches still stand today in the church of Minster. The abbey church occupied the northern half of the church of Minster and there is evidence to suggest that a cloister existed which would have been attached to the exterior of the north wall where Roman brick can be seen today. The abbey church was 94 ft. in length (with the tower included) and the width was 27 feet. The walls of this church are Saxon in origin, especially at the north Chancel, which is believed to be part of the original Anglo-Saxon church.²⁹ In addition, Roman brick is evident in the building as well, where it has been suggested that the north wall was part of a cloister area, adjacent to the nun's choir.³⁰

²⁹ R.Gem, *Anglo-Saxon Minsters of the Thames Estuary* (Kent, 1995), p.4. R.Gem states that Minster in Sheppey is of 'prime importance' amongst Minster sites since it is the only Mid Anglo-Saxon church still 'substantially intact (and one of the few such buildings in England or, indeed, in northern Europe)', p.4.

³⁰ A.Everitt in *Continuity and Colonization*, pp.193-195 has suggested that in many buildings of early Minsters in Kent, Roman building material was found within the church structure, particularly at Reculver on the northeastern Kentish coast. In addition, most of these early sites post-dated earlier Roman settlement such as in the case of Reculver and Sheppey.



PHOTO 17: The north wall of the monastic church.

The tower is fifteenth century and the north chancel is fourteenth century, showing transitional Norman work. The south church would have been the parish church. It is 75 feet in length, not as long as the abbey church, but slightly wider at 31 feet. This church also has a porch 16 feet long and 15 feet wide.

The visual presence of both the SS Mary and Sexburga monastery church and the parish church provided a complex relationship of power dynamics within such a small rural and local community. Will evidence has also revealed how this was extended to all the inhabitants of the Island of Sheppey. Postmortem bequests show that parishioners of all parishes on the Island of Sheppey made clear distinctions when giving to the lights and images within Minster parish church or the monastery church.³¹

³¹ Please refer to Appendix 4.1 for a detailed list of pious bequests left by all parishioners of the Islands of Sheppey, including Harty and Elmley Islands.

III.i. Internal chapels

Two separate chapels, known as St. Katherine's chapel or aisle and Our Lady Chapel, within both the monastic and parish church at Minster were identified with two wealthy land owning families and patrons on the Island of Sheppey. The Shurlands of Shurland Manor, Eastchurch, later to be married into the Cheyney family, and the Norwoods of Norwood Manor, Eastchurch used their family chapels in the churches as a means for expressing their own social status and secular power within the Island of Sheppey. The Shurlands, Cheneys and the Norwoods were the wealthiest patrons of the Minster and used the site of the monastic house to display and convey their position of authority over the island.³² The presence of these internal chapels physically recorded social and collective memory through the presence of ancestral burials and by doing so shaped the micro landscape of not only religious space but authoritative space and power on the Island of Sheppey.³³ The family burials within the chapels provided a physical record of the past, and the future, which was consistently enforced in the same collective space; instilling a sense of personal nostalgia whilst also making collective island history for other parishioners.³⁴ As a result, Minster parishioners in the late fifteenth century began funding their own chapel, in addition to St. Katherine and Our Lady chapels, in

³² I.F.Silber, has commented that monastic houses were vehicles for people to express their 'collective pride' of family and social status, in his book, *Virtuosity, Charisma and Social Order: A Comparative Sociological Study of Monasticism in Theravada Buddhism and medieval Catholicism* (Cambridge, 1995), p.148

³³ E.Zerubavel in his book *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (London, 2003) introduced the concept of shaping social and collective memories into a 'microsocial' landscape, p.9.

³⁴ See E.Zerubavel *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (London, 2003), p.41. Zerubavel has suggested that places can 'provide us with some sense of permanence'. This theory can be applied to the case of the burials in the Minster, at the highest point on the Island of Sheppey. The permanence of these burials within distinct chapels also contributes to nostalgia. See also M.Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York, 1980) and M.J.Milligan, 'Interactional Past and Potential: The Social Construction of Place Attachment' in *Symbolic Interaction*, 21 (1998), pp.8-15 for more discussion of focal points of both personal and the collective which contribute to reassuring ideas of permanence within a changing landscape.

order to contribute to, and re-imagine, local collective identity where they could also be remembered at the highest point on the Island.³⁵

St. Katherine's aisle, or better known as St. Katherine's chapel, was associated with the Shurland and Cheney family of Shurland Manor in Eastchurch and considered their ancestral burial chapel. Sir Robert de Shurland, the son of Sir Jeffrey de Shurland was first to be buried in what is now Minster parish church. Sir Robert's only heir was his daughter Margaret who married William, the son of Sir Alexander Cheney of Patricbourne, Kent. The precise location of St. Katherine's chapel is unknown, however, Sir Thomas Cheney's tomb can now be found at the division between the monastery and the parish church. This is an interestingly symbolic burial location for a wealthy man, who divided the Island's wealth and power between the secular - at Shurland Manor, and the monastic - at the Minster. This particular chapel fell out of use as a family burial chapel when Lord Henry Cheney sold Shurland Manor to the Crown between 1572 and 1580 and relocated to Toddington. At the dissolution St. Katherine's was referred to as an aisle rather than a chapel even though it still contained an altar to St. Katherine.³⁶



PHOTO 18: Tomb of Sir Thomas Cheney and the interior of the North Chancel beyond (site of the early monastic Minster church).

³⁵ Work on an altar and chapel dedicated to St. Lawrence was first recorded in 1486 when William Swalman of Minster, bequeathed a timber beam to the project (see CKS, PRC 17/4/106). In 1506, Thomas Jacob of Minster bequeathed two ewes to the 'worke of saynte laurence chapel' (see CKS, PRC 17/10/249). The work of St. Lawrence's chapel does not appear in any other will after 1506 nor is it mentioned in the inventory of the church and priory of Minster in 1536 (See M.E.C. Walcott, 'Inventory of SS Mary and Sexburga' in *Arch Cant*, vol. vii, pp.290-306, p.301.

³⁶ M.E.C. Walcott, 'Inventories of St. Mary's Hosiptal, or Maison Dieu, Dover; The Benedictine Priory of St. Martin, Dover for Monks; The Benediction Priory of SS Mary and Sexburga in the Island of Sheppey for nuns', *Arch Cant*, vii (1868), pp.272-306, p.292.

Our Lady Chapel was part of the north church or abbey church, connected with the Norwood family of Norwood Manor, which was also located in Eastchurch, like the Cheney's Shurland Manor. Most of the monuments within Minster parish church were not surprisingly from the Norwood family as the longest established family on the Island of Sheppey. Jordan de Sheppey's son was Stephen who the first to assume the name of Northwood. Stephen Northwood's son was Roger de Northwood, who accompanied Richard I to the third crusade. He returned to Minster, died at his manor and was later buried in the Minster Abbey church. On the pavement, in the centre of the choir, facing the altar are two full-length memorial brasses which are believed to represent Sir Roger and his wife, the Lady Jane de Badlesmere.³⁷ In 1379, Sir John Northwode requested burial in the monastery church of St. Sexburga of Minster in Sheppey.³⁸ He appeared to be the last of his family to request burial within the abbey church.³⁹ Although the family seat moved to the mainland the Norwood family still had a presence within the Minster abbey church.

John Norwood, the elder, of Milton, did not request burial at the Minster in 1488 with the rest of his ancestors but requested to be buried within the chancel of Milton 'before the Holy Trinity under a stone of marble where the blessed body of Our Lord maybe set upon in the time of Easter in the wall there.'⁴⁰ In this same will several bequests were made to local churches including his parish church of Milton where he funded three lights dedicated to Our Lady, St. John the Baptist and the Holy Trinity, and he also requested prayers only from the vicars of Iwade, Bobbing, Upchurch, Hartlip and Halstow.⁴¹ In the second half of John Norwood's will he requested that all land and tenements in parishes of Milton, in the Isle of Sheppey, Elmley and Newington, to be inherited by his son John. John Norwood, the son of John Norwood the elder, made his will in 1493.⁴² Like his father, John Norwood, the younger, requested burial in the chancel of the parish church of the Holy Trinity in Milton 'beside the old vicarage and

³⁷ A.Daly, *The History of the Isle of Sheppey* (London, 1904), pp.75-77.

³⁸ A.Daly, *The History of the Isle of Sheppey* (London, 1904), p.78.

³⁹ M.E.C.Walcott, 'Inventory of SS Mary and Sexburga', *Arch Cant.*, vol.vii, pp.272-306, pp.290-292.

⁴⁰ NA PROB 11/8.

⁴¹ NA PROB 11/8.

⁴² NA PROB 11/11, probate approved in 1496, although his will was written in 1493.

over me a plain stone to be laid for my wife and me.'⁴³ In his will he bequeathed Norwood manor on Sheppey to his wife and from this point onward the manor was no longer kept within the family and eventually sold to William Warner.⁴⁴ It would appear that the Norwood family, since moving their family estate to the mainland also moved their ancestral patronage in which they could begin to build a new social memory of both the past and the future.

For the parishioners of Sheppey, Our Lady chapel had a more active role in daily religious life and contained 'tymber well payntyd' and 'a payntyd table of our Ladye'.⁴⁵ Our Lady chapel was better maintained than St. Katherine's and contained both Norwood family tapestries with coats of arms and six vestments for priests and deacons⁴⁶ Expensive maintenance of Our Lady chapel produced an inventory at the dissolution of three carpets of tapestry including one of a coverlet with twenty two Fleur de Lis and eleven flowers embroidered of "luks" gold on canvas, in addition to gold fabric and silver of Cyprus which was often brought for a royal wardrobe at a cost of 40s per pound of fabric.⁴⁷

Beginning life as familial burial spaces at the highest point on the Island of Sheppey and within the mother church of the Minster, the two chapels became places of devotional continuity for regular parishioners on Sheppey. Although these physical spaces remained chapels associated with early Sheppey families, they became the focal point for collective piety.

III.ii. The external chapel

The third chapel associated with the parish and monastic churches at Minster was dedicated to St. John the Baptist and located within the churchyard; however, the precise location is still unknown.⁴⁸ It was not unusual to find burial requests in wills for this

⁴³ NA PROB 11/11.

⁴⁴ unknown author, *A Brief History of Norwood Manor* (supplied by current owners of the manor in 2002).

⁴⁵ Walcott, p. 292.

⁴⁶ M.E.C.Walcott, 'Inventory of SS Mary and Sexburga' in *Arch Cant*, vol.vii, pp.290-306, p.291.

⁴⁷ M.E.C.Walcott, 'Inventory of SS Mary and Sexburga' in *Arch Cant*, vol.vii, pp.290-306, p.293.

⁴⁸ M.E.C.Walcott, 'Inventories of (I.) St. Mary's Hospital, or Maison Dieu, Dover; (II.) The Benedictine Priory of St. Martin New-Work, Dover, for Monks; (III.) The Benedictine Priory of SS Mary and Sexburga, in the Island of Sheppey, for Nuns', *Arch. Cant.*, vol. vii, pp. 272-306.

location, particularly from priests of Minster and Eastchurch parish churches during the sixteenth century. This alludes to the space as an enclosed and dedicated burial location for priests or religious men only. John Spencer, of Minster parish, requested burial 'in the chapel of St. John in the churchyard of Mynster' in 1520.⁴⁹ In addition, John Spencer also gave 6s 8d for a burial stone to be erected and he bequeathed another 20s to be paid for 'church worke of Mynster'.⁵⁰ Sir John Male, a priest of Eastchurch, requested burial within the chapel of St. John the Baptist 'in the churchyard of Minster' within his will dated 1524.⁵¹ Priestly apparel belonging to this chapel was kept in a chest in Our Lady's chapel; however in 1536, two coloured hangings of the life of St. John the Baptist, three altar cloths, a vestment for a priest of blue and green and another of coarse fabric were located within the chapel.⁵² In addition to this, a third vestment, a reliquary, and some old books were also recorded within the inventory.⁵³ This was clearly a distinctively literate space for reflection, for burial service and to remember the priests of Sheppey's churches.

IV. Relationships between Sheppey parishioners and the monastic and parishes churches of SS Mary and Sexburga

The social and economic relationships between Sheppey parishioners and the monastic community were complex and sometimes strained; however, the large number of pious requests from Sheppey testators suggests a multi-faceted relationship with the Minster site. Even though wages were unequal and services were inadequate the monastic house, the prioress and the nuns were frequently left money by testators within their wills.

Relationships between the nuns within the monastic community and employees from Sheppey were sometimes strained or difficult as in 1511. Despite the number of individuals employed by the nunnery, the nuns complained that there was no convent

⁴⁹ CKS, PRC 17/14/182.

⁵⁰ CKS, PRC 17/14/182.

⁵¹ CKS, PRC 17/16/108.

⁵² M.E.C.Walcott, 'Inventory of SS Mary and Sexburga' in *Arch Cant*, vol.vii, pp.290-306, p.302.

⁵³ M.E.C.Walcott, 'Inventory of SS Mary and Sexburga' in *Arch Cant*, vol.vii, p.290-306, p.292.

servant which required each nun to pay for their own washing.⁵⁴ In addition, the nuns also complained that there was no infirmary for the sick.⁵⁵ Wages paid to Minster abbey employees did not appear to be equal, with three shepherds paid different amounts. In 1535, John Giles was paid by year 14s and a pair of hose and shoes.⁵⁶ John Gayton was paid yearly 53s 4d and John Canning was paid 20s yearly.⁵⁷ The abbey also did not pay their employees straight away for work finished, such as the case of Dorothy Sowthe, described as the Bailiff's wife, who was owed 40s.⁵⁸

The monastery or nunnery at Minster employed a substantial amount of people to tend to the lands, cattle, and other general duties such as cooking and cleaning for fewer than ten members of the religious community. In 1536, thirty-eight people were employed by the Benedictine priory at Minster with only eight nuns in residence there including the prioress.⁵⁹ This small community of religious women appeared to share relative freedom within their community. Nuns had their own chamber and personal belongings which they brought into the monastic house with them, in addition to other items for more comfortable domestic living, such as tongs and fire pans in their personal inventories in addition to sheets and painted cloths.⁶⁰ Sister Elizabeth Stradling had a window in her chamber whilst Sister Margaret (surname illegible in manuscript) had a 'chamber hangyng of payntyd papers' which suggests an early form of decorative wallpaper.⁶¹ Despite their domestic comforts and luxuries, the nuns did make a serious complaint in 1511 that services at the monastery were not adequate, including the lack of an infirmary for the sick.⁶²

Personal postmortem bequests from Minster parishioners alone to the prioress and the nuns at the monastery included the most frequent type of religious bequest found within any will. From a total of 196 religious bequests to either parish or monastic

⁵⁴ K.L.Wood-Legh, *Kentish Visitations of Archbishop William Warham and his Deputies, 1511-1512* (Maidstone, 1984), p.44.

⁵⁵ K.L.Wood-Legh, *Kentish Visitations of Archbishop William Warham*, p.44.

⁵⁶ M.E.C.Walcott, 'Inventory of SS Mary and Sexburga' in *Arch Cant*, vol.vii, pp.290-306, p.303.

⁵⁷ M.E.C.Walcott, p.303.

⁵⁸ M.E.C.Walcott, p.291.

⁵⁹ M.E.C.Walcott, 302-306. At the time of writing this inventory at the Dissolution, the value of the nunnery was 127*li*, 7s, and 10d a year.

⁶⁰ M.E.C.Walcott, p.300.

⁶¹ M.E.C.Walcott, p.300.

⁶² M.E.C.Walcott, p.298-300.

church, the prioress and her sisters received together a total of 53 postmortem gifts or 27 per cent of the total religious bequests between 1409 and 1540.⁶³ In addition, all Sheppey parishes included at least one religious bequest to the prioress or her sisters at Minster with Eastchurch testate parishioners making the most postmortem gifts. There were 67 religious bequests made from Eastchurch parishioners, from a total of 50 wills, which included 20 bequests made to the prioress and her nuns representing 29 per cent of the total religious bequests. There is a strong contrast in the type of pious bequests made by Sheppey and Harty testators with no Harty testators leaving money for the prioress or nuns at Minster. However, Harty testators did leave 3 bequests out of a total of 99 religious bequests for the nunnery at Davington, near Faversham, on the Kentish mainland coast. In addition, Harty testators also left 1 bequest for Davington's prioress and 2 bequests for the nuns at Davington.⁶⁴ Furthermore, there was only one bequest for the abbot of Faversham and one for the Observant Friars at Canterbury, from a very wealthy Harty testator.⁶⁵

There is little documentation surviving from the Davington accounts but the connection between Harty islanders and the priory are evident within the surviving last wills and testaments. Four per cent of Harty testators left a bequest for the nuns at Davington, whilst only one Sheppey testator left a bequest for Davington priory.⁶⁶ The religious bequests of Sheppey and Harty parishioners not only reveal their devotional sympathies but also the social connections, or rather disconnections, between island communities. There appeared to be minimal contact between Minster and Eastchurch parishioners and frequent association by Harty parishioners with a variety of Kentish mainland, coastal parishes and religious houses. Although the Islands of Sheppey were relatively close in physical proximity, the Island of Harty inhabitants appeared free from the expectations of the Minster, mother church. Harty church even had its own

⁶³ Please refer to Appendix 4.1 for an itemised list of pious bequests made by Minster testators between 1409 and 1559.

⁶⁴ John Gregory of Harty made a will dated 1523 in which he bequeathed a lamb to every one of the five nuns of Davington (CKS, PRC 17/15/272).

⁶⁵ Will of Thomas Fowell of Harty, dated 1505. Fowell left 20 marks for the Abbot of Faversham and his convent for reparations of the abbey, requesting 5 marks be divided amongst the convent for prayers for his soul. In addition, Fowell also left 5*li* for five houses of Observant Friars; 20s for each house to say a trental of masses for his soul and all Christian souls (CKS, PRC 17/10/161).

⁶⁶ Only one man of Eastchurch parish, Sheppey, Richard Reade, left a bequest of 20s to the prioress of Davington to 'pray for my soul' in 1472 [CKS, PRC 17/2/125].



churchyard which may have contributed to more independent liaisons with mainland religious centres. Spatial boundaries are not necessarily physical but also socio-religious as surviving testamentary material has identified so far.

V. Burial practices on the Island of Sheppey

At the time of the *Domesday Book*, the Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical organisation was regarded as being in decay. Many ex-Minsters became substantially large parish churches. Many former daughter churches to the Minster became locally-based parish churches that exercised full rights of baptism, marriage, and burial which were no longer exclusive to Minsters.⁶⁷ However, in certain areas, former Minster churches retained exclusive rights of baptism and burial or continued to demand dues from their daughter churches even though they had attained parochial status.⁶⁸ The former chapelries of Wayford, Seaborough, and Misterton in Somerset, for example, continued until the nineteenth century to pay their dues and to bury their dead in the churchyards of the mother church at Crewkerne.⁶⁹ On the feastday of St. Bartholomew (24 August), the parishioners of Wayford would present the key to their church at the high altar at Crewkerne, thereby acknowledging their subsidiary status.⁷⁰

By the Norman Conquest the influence of the 'old minsters' had been superseded by that of the subsidiary churches they had created, and the parish was emerging as the fundamental unit of ecclesiastical administration. It was usually common for monasteriums to adapt a more relaxed role after the founding of individual rights to parish churches; however, burials on the Island of Sheppey were still conducted at the Minster on Sheppey well after the dissolution of the monasteries. Minster in Sheppey appeared to be retaining traditions more worthy of its Anglo-Saxon heritage yet the nunnery was rebuilt in 1125. The power of the abbess at Minster over the ecclesiastical

⁶⁷ F.Barlow, *The English Church 1000-1066* (London, 1979), p.184; J.Blair, *Minsters and Parish Churches: The Local Church in Transition 950-1200* (Oxford, 1988), p.2,7, and 111.

⁶⁸ J.Blair, ed., *Minsters and Parish Churches: The Local Church in Transition 950-1200* (Oxford, 1988), p.11-13.

⁶⁹ Friar, S., *A Companion to the English Parish Church* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1998), p.16.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p.16.

affairs of the Island of Sheppey cannot be underestimated. Uniquely out-of-date burial practices were found to exist on the Island of Sheppey from surviving testamentary material. Even families who had re-located elsewhere but were originally from Sheppey requested burial at the Minster church in Sheppey.

Although full rights were granted to the Isle of Sheppey's parish churches to exercise all administrative and spiritual responsibilities, previously exclusive to the Minster, this did not appear to take effect on the Island of Sheppey. When parish churches on Sheppey implemented their rights, the abbess of the Minster condemned these acts of independence. In 1355, a complaint by the abbess of SS Mary and Sexburga was made against the vicar of Leysdown church for burying certain bodies in his churchyard and for receiving fees for this.⁷¹ The abbess claimed that these fees were due to the 'Mother Church' of Minster Abbey where the bodies were to be carried. The abbess formalized a complaint against the vicar of Leysdown, William de Riphull, for what she deemed to be illegal burial practices at Leysdown chapel (as the church was known at this time). This prompted the Archbishop to admonish and fine the vicar for burying certain bodies in his churchyard at Leysdown and receiving fees for doing so. The archbishop sided with the abbess stating that the fees were due to the mother church of Minster where the bodies were to be carried. The 'certain bodies' that were buried included: John Saunders at 3 ½ d, Joan Gamone at 7 ½ d, Juliana, daughter of John Aleyn at 3d, Elias Spaylard at 3d, John Feyre at 4d, Joan, daughter of John Hauchyn at 2 ¼ d. None of these individuals have surviving wills.

Within fifteen years of this incident at Leysdown the chapel was called the parish church of St. Clement and John Mere of Rainham was the first vicar of the new church in 1370. Even if burial was 'illegal' within parishes besides Minster, and if Minster was the only parish supposed to receive bodies for burial, the funds generated for the abbess were crucial to the abbey's income. With new churchyards at Eastchurch, Leysdown and Warden, Minster abbey would have suffered financially, at least to some degree, if they depended on revenue from burials of inhabitants living anywhere on the Island of Sheppey.

⁷¹ Rev. Cannon Scott Robertson, 'Church of All Saints, Eastchurch, Sheppey', *Arch Cant*, vol.14, pp.374-388, p.380.

It had been fifteen years since the church of Leysdown was named a parish church. Minsters did retain significant rights in their parish and these were often controlled by the monastic houses since tithes were regularly paid by parishioners to these houses and burial rights of the Minsters were usually far more strictly monitored than baptisms. This activity has been noted as primarily financial in motivation with jurisdictional power seen as secondary.⁷² Furthermore, it was found that as late as 1511, the churchyards of Leysdown and Eastchurch were being neglected by their parishioners and churchwardens.⁷³ In addition when it came to fulfilling the responsibilities set out to the abbey by church officials assigned by the Archbishop, the abbess was quick to deny the liability of her house towards any intended repairs or damages.⁷⁴ Through the increase in secular manors on the Isle of Sheppey, primarily southwest of Minster abbey on the Queenborough road and directly east of the Minster, the abbey retained significant control over its early parochial spiritual rights. This was not uncommon during the Middle Ages, but the extent to which these rights crossed over the Reformation and where not retained elsewhere in Kent, such as at Minster on the Isle of Thanet, provides a distinctive contrast between practices on the Island of Sheppey and its hinterland.⁷⁵

In 1431, royal license was granted to All Saints in Eastchurch to perform all duties of a parish church, yet wealthy testate parishioners of Eastchurch did not request burial within Eastchurch church or churchyard.⁷⁶ In addition, the Cheney family, who were responsible for granting part of their land to the Abbot of Boxley for the building of the new parish church at Eastchurch, requested burial at the Minster. All testate parishioners of Eastchurch requested burial at Minster.

⁷² J.Blair, ed., *Minsters and Parish Churches: The Local Church in Transition 950-1200* (Oxford, 1988), p.11-13.

⁷³ K.L.Wood-Legh, *Kentish Visitations of Archbishop William Warham and his Deputies, 1511-1512* (Maidstone, 1984), pp.252 and 263.

⁷⁴ This is clear in the 1511-1512 visitations of Archbishop William Warham which have been transcribed by K.L.Wood-Legh. The Chapel of Queenborough lay in the hands of the prioress where it was noted that she was very happy to receive the tithes from Queenborough but she 'wille not repara the chapelle'. The prioress even went so far as to employ a lawyer and deny liability to repair the chancel of Queenborough chapel. The churchwardens did not appear in court so the case was dismissed, p.255.

Also, information on medieval burial requests from Thanet testators has been provided by Gill Wyatt from her Ph.D. in progress on Family history of the Isle of Thanet, c.1450-1600.

⁷⁶ See Rev. Cannon Scott Robertson, 'Church of All Saints, Eastchurch, Sheppey', *Arch Cant*, vol.14, pp.374-388, p.382.

There appeared to be two explanations for burial requests at the Minster by Sheppey inhabitants. The first reason for Minster burial involved the existence of a tradition of burial practices unique to Sheppey because of the physical presence of the Minster on the island. Secondly, burial practices became part of a family tradition where ancestral manors or other domestic places were connected with more than one generation of family members. In addition, families which moved from the Island of Sheppey also retained an interest in burial at the Minster. This practice was linked to tradition and ancestral status. Moreover, Sheppey inhabitants remembered not only their ancestors but also the island's Anglo-Saxon heritage through landmark mapping and rebuilding.⁷⁷ The physical structure of the Minster was re-imagined into family and personal experiences.

Burial choices did appear within the testamentary material regardless of any possible disputes which may have incurred if bequests were honoured after will probate. The bequest itself was a self-proclamation of power and authority at the moment it was produced. Local Island wills were testaments of imagined perceptions of space which revealed community tensions within the small island landscape of Sheppey.⁷⁸ Burials did take place in Leysdown by the 1470s; however, there is no evidence of disputes. The testamentary evidence suggests that burial requests in any other parish churchyard besides the Minster was unusual and uncommon. However, the choice to be buried in one's local parish could also have been a political statement suggesting loyalty and devotion to territory as much as to preparations for the body and soul after death. 'Space is, after all, the other dimension necessary for a framework to self-identification, and assumes special importance where claims to territory are being pressed.'⁷⁹

Two testate parishioners of Leysdown may have caused controversy in their burial requests and when compared with the other 252 wills left between 1400 and 1559 from parishes within the Island of Sheppey. In 1476, William Feyre of Leysdown and in 1472,

⁷⁷ B.Bender, ed. *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives* (Oxford, 1993), p.9 and Kuchler's discussion of tombs and the active reconstruction of the past in S.Kuchler, 'Landscape as Memory: The Mapping of Process and its Representation in a Melanesian Society' in B.Bender, ed. *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives* (Oxford, 1993), pp.85-106, p.10.

⁷⁸ Salter has stated that descriptions in wills show 'tensions between continuity and change, not necessarily for resolution but consideration', p.63 in E.Salter, *Cultural Creativity in the Early English Renaissance: Popular Culture in Town and Country* (Basingstoke, 2006). Also on p.73, Salter also states how wills provide 'insight into the processes by which individuals could self-consciously manipulate' customs and practices.

⁷⁹ A.D.Smith, *Myths and memories of the Nation* (Oxford, 1999), p.63.

Robert Style, also of Leysdown, actively denied burial at the Minster churchyard. Robert Style's will is more allusive and ambiguous; however, his burial request is still unusual. Style, whose will was written on Easter Sunday in 1472, requested burial in the churchyard 'of what paryshe I dysseace inne'.⁸⁰ Style's will was written by the parish priest of Faversham which suggests that he may have been away from home at the time of making his will; however, probate was granted on the 10th of April 1472. Style's other religious bequests were exclusively for the church of Leysdown and he also bequeaths 'all my land and tenement in Leysdown or elsewhere' to his son Robert. William Feyre requested burial within the churchyard of Leysdown in 1476.⁸¹ In addition, Feyre was the only testator to leave the most detailed religious bequests to the church of Leysdown. Feyre gave 2 ewes each to the lights of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Clement, St. John the Baptists, St. Nicholas, St. Thomas, St. Mary Magdalene, St. Katherine, and St. Margaret. He also gave 4 marks towards the construction of a certain chair before the cross. William Feyre was the only person who requested mass to be sung in Leysdown after his death. Most parishioners of other parishes, after requesting burial within the churchyard of Minster, either had mass sung for them in Minster, Queenborough or Eastchurch depending on where they lived. William Feyre requested mass to be celebrated at the altar of St. Mary in Leysdown for one year, giving 5 marks to the costs. It was clear that Feyre fully intended for his body to be buried at Leysdown where all other masses and prayers were also to take place. When compared with John Grene of Leysdown who makes reference to the churchyard at Leysdown, Feyre's will is distinctively different. Grene made a bequest for 20s towards the shingling of the church and 20s towards the paving of the churchyard of Leysdown; however, John Grene did request burial in the churchyard of the Minster.⁸²

Although it could be argued that wills follow a set formula in writing style, some of the wills from Sheppey inhabitants directly state that burial was intended to be 'at the Minster' - this statement within the will echoes the knowledge of Minster on Sheppey as the mother church of the district. In 1466, William Mores of Warden requested burial

⁸⁰ CKS, PRC 17/2/120.

⁸¹ CKS, PRC 17/3/110.

⁸² CKS, PRC 17/19/282.

within the churchyard of St. Sexburga of the Minster.⁸³ In 1472, Richard Reade of Eastchurch, requested burial in the churchyard of St. Sexburga 'at the Minster' by the cross 'that standeth by the wey besyde seynt John the Baptist chapel'.⁸⁴ In 1536, John Collens a farmer to Sir Thomas Cheyney, who lived in Eastchurch parish, requested burial in the churchyard of St. Sexburga 'called the Minster'.⁸⁵ Sir Thomas Cheyney in 1559, stated in his will, '...I will my bodye to be buryed at the Minster in the Isle of Shepey...'⁸⁶ Cohen has suggested that a consistent 'use of language' implies a 'shared knowledge of ecology and therefore a 'sense of belonging'; therefore, the consistent use of 'at the Minster,' in burial requests, distinctively locates both heritage and shared purpose for Sheppey islanders.⁸⁷ It is not uncommon for 'structures of social association' to be 'described in terms of their 'historical character' such as in the specific reference to burial 'at the Minster.'⁸⁸ The Minster on Sheppey connected religious ritual to kin and local custom.

Burial requests at the Minster on Sheppey did not appear to cease at all after the Reformation and continued well beyond it; as the example of Sir Thomas Cheney's will, dated 1559, has shown. There is no other comparable research so far which has found this archaic practice of burial at the mother church, as was common on Sheppey. Burial practices at the Minster on Sheppey were not affected by important religious changes in English history, such as the Reformation. Therefore, burial practices were not necessarily spiritually driven but indigenously motivated and distinctive within the locality of the Island of Sheppey.⁸⁹

⁸³ CKS PRC 17/1/68.

⁸⁴ CKS PRC 17/2/125.

⁸⁵ CKS PRC 17/21/97.

⁸⁶ NA PROB 11/42B.

⁸⁷ A.P. Cohen, ed., *Belonging: Identity and Social Organization in British Rural Cultures* (Manchester, 1982), p.6.

⁸⁸ A.P. Cohen, 'A Sense of Time, a Sense of Place: The meaning of close social association in Whalsay, Shetland' in A.P. Cohen, ed., *Belonging: Identity and Social Organisation in British Rural Cultures* (Manchester, 1982), pp.21-49, p.23.

⁸⁹ A.P. Cohen, ed., *Belonging: Identity and Social Organization in British Rural Cultures* (Manchester, 1982), p. 1. Cohen has suggested, in his research into rural cultures, that a sense of belonging was intrinsically linked to an 'indigenous perception of the locality.' In addition, Cohen also noted how 'social organisation was a means through which people order, value and express their knowledge of their worlds of experience,' p.1-2.

Wills made by Sheppey families who relocated also requested burial at the Minster in accordance with local island custom. This suggests a desire to link with a territorial heritage, distinctively local and distinctively Sheppey. Burial bequests at Minster did not conflict with further religious giving to a family's new local church, suggesting the localness of this Sheppey burial practice - one which was consciously driven by an interest in local custom participation rather than religious practice.

Thomas Fowell, of Eastchurch, who was late of Harty, requested burial in 1505 within the churchyard of Minster.⁹⁰ He left religious bequests for an altar cloth to the high altar of Harty and money for other cloths needed. This was in addition to 12d to the light of the high cross and to the light of St. Thomas within a chapel at Harty and also including the maintaining of the torch light. He also gave 5 marks to the Abbot of Faversham, who owned marshland on Harty, for the reparations of the abbey. The stability of a dated form of bequeathing one's body to be buried at the mother Minster church was an isolated practice in Kent for this late period of c.1400-1559. However, the burial requests not only reveal the desire to belong to distinct cultural and local practices but also show how those individuals with multiple landholdings had wider connections with other parishes. This would have promoted a further need for community cohesion. The continuation of religious burial practices at the Minster also created a heritage associated with sacred space on the Island of Sheppey. This heritage was later translated into family practice and custom as the following case study of the Wreke family has revealed.

V.i. The Wreke family and burial on Sheppey: the significance of ancestral heritage on local custom.

The Wreke Family was first recorded as an Island family in 1346, when John le Wreuek paid 2s in tax.⁹¹ Six generations of this farming family left wills between 1471 and 1545. All family members had substantial landholdings within Minster and Eastchurch parishes with some relocating to mainland parishes, such as the marshlands of

⁹⁰ CKS PRC 17/10/161.

⁹¹ PRO E179/123/20.

Murston and Teynham parishes, opposite the Island of Elmley. However, the Wreke family lived on Sheppey for at least fifty years.

In 1484, John Wreke, living in Murston parish, opposite from the Island of Elmley across the Swale, requested burial within the churchyard of St. Sexburga at Minster on Sheppey.⁹² William Wreke, dwelling in Teynham parish in 1532, made pious provisions to several mainland parish churches in north Kent but his bequests to Sheppey churches were most revealing. William Wreke left religious bequests for the Sheppey churches of Minster, Eastchurch, and Leysdown.⁹³ He requested that an obit be maintained each year of 20s at the Minster on Sheppey 'to pray for my soul and for the souls of my mother and father, and my kynesfolke'.⁹⁴ William consciously requested a 'commemorative holiday' be put into practice which ritualized his ancestral past in conjunction with the sacred space of the Minster location.⁹⁵ Therefore, the religious burial site and the location of family commemorative space were mutually mapped within William's will.

William Wreke's need to associate burial practices with his 'kynesfolke', and therefore local custom, showed how both historical place and historical practice were distinctive and the same for those associated with Sheppey. William Wreke requested burial next to his wife in Teynham churchyard, which was an expected traditional bequest but usually the obit was to be said near the buried body. William Wreke wanted prayers conducted in the place that was home to his ancestors, suggesting a maintenance of familial identity with the Minster and the Island of Sheppey, where he was from, and to which he did not want to lose association with his ancestral rights to local custom.

VI. St. Sexburga, Anglo-Saxon women and daughters of Sheppey

Inhabitants of Sheppey also had a unique tradition of naming their daughters after Sexburga and other Anglo-Saxon women. Although evidence is restricted to five wills, nevertheless, in comparison with over 1,452 wills examined, from all surrounding mainland parishes, there was no evidence of the same type of consistent naming practice

⁹² CKS, PRC 17/6/128.

⁹³ CKS, PRC 17/19/373.

⁹⁴ CKS, PRC 17/19/373.

⁹⁵ E. Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (London, 2003) p.4.

amongst mainland parishioners between 1400 and 1559.⁹⁶ In addition, the naming of daughters after Sexburga and other Anglo-Saxon women was not necessarily a family tradition, according to the surviving will evidence.

Sexburga's local popularity within Minster is ambiguous. Most Sheppey testators named St. Sexburga as the 'patroness' of the abbey and church at Minster with limited mention of St. Mary, who was also the patroness by the year 1125. However, Thomas Platt of Minster bequeathed his soul to St. Sexburga in 1521, which was an unusual bequest. Traditionally one would bequest their soul to God and the company of saints, which was formulaic.⁹⁷ Between 1501 and 1514, two men of Minster parish had daughters named Sexburga. Thomas Cardon of Minster left Sexburga, his daughter, in 1501 one portion of his goods and the other portion to his wife.⁹⁸ Nicholas Rayman of Minster had a daughter named 'Sexburge' and also left a postmortem gift of 4d to the 'making of the tabernacle for St. Sexburga' which was also the only bequest of its kind found within testamentary evidence.⁹⁹ However, a priest in 1505, William Fisher, gave a crucifix and silver to the shrine of St. Sexburga.¹⁰⁰ The only other place in Britain which claimed to have a shrine dedicated to Sexburga was Ely Cathedral, where Sexburga was abbess for most of her life. The Ely Cathedral shrines of St. Sexburga, Withburga, and Ermengild, all early Anglo-Saxon women, were a popular pilgrimage place in the Middle Ages.¹⁰¹

Despite the elaborate shrine and relic of St. Sexburga in Minster, the light, image, and shrine dedicated to her within Minster were not popular options for postmortem religious gifts, receiving only 3 per cent of the total number of bequests from Minster parishioners.¹⁰² In addition, there were no bequests from any other Sheppey inhabitants

⁹⁶ The Kentish mainland coastal parishes studied include the following parishes and their total number of wills surviving between c.1400 to c.1560 from the Archdeaconry, Consistory and Prerogative Courts of Canterbury: Sheppey and Harty wills (300), Milton (201), Iwade (29), Murston (25), Luddenham (32), Tonge (23), Teynham (82), Oare (43), Graveney (69), Sittingbourne (174), Davington (7), Preston-next-Faversham (11), Stone-next-Faversham (4), and Faversham Town (452) which is not considered a coastal parish, however it was the closest and largest urban area to the Islands of Sheppey.

⁹⁷ CKS, PRC 14/328.

⁹⁸ CKS, PRC 17/16/344.

⁹⁹ CKS, PRC 17/12/332.

¹⁰⁰ CKS, PRC 17/10/2.

¹⁰¹ David Farmer, *Dictionary of Saints*, 3rd edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 433-434.

¹⁰² This figure is based on 196 religious bequests counted from Minster testators with only 6 bequests to either a light, image, shrine or tabernacle dedicated to St. Sexburga.

besides those dwelling in Minster parish. Therefore, the discrepancy between religious giving and naming presents similarities between the burial practices at the Minster. The most obvious is that motives were not necessarily of a religious nature but more culturally and locally driven. Sexburga, although the founding abbess of the Minster on Sheppey, also became the name given to local girls living on the Island. The identification of local girls with this important religious and historical woman became a shared 'commonality,' like Sheppey's burial practices, in which locality was made meaningful within the community.¹⁰³

Frideswide was a more popular Anglo-Saxon name for a girl living within Eastchurch parish. Two parishioners of Eastchurch had either a daughter or a relative named Frideswide. William Borden of Eastchurch had a godchild named Frideswide Wynsner in 1520, and in 1539, John Abell of Eastchurch had a daughter named 'Frydyswyth'.¹⁰⁴ In addition to Frideswide, two other girls were christened with Anglo-Saxon female names of German origin. Henry Wreke, a farmer of Eastchurch, had a wife named Matilda in 1471 and William Robinson of Queenborough town in 1549 had a daughter named Ursula.¹⁰⁵ Frideswide, Matilda and Ursula were not unusual names for the late Middle Ages; however, the association with Sheppey's Anglo-Saxon heritage cannot be underestimated when examining local practices. The distinction of the Minster as a central place of community burial and the naming of daughters after important women of the time, presents further unity and community. Boys on the Island of Sheppey do not appear from surviving will evidence to have been given Anglo-Saxon names compared with Sheppey girls.

VII. Religious brotherhoods on the Islands of Sheppey

The multi-functional aspect of parish church fraternities, brotherhoods or cults has been described as an individual and collective enterprise, both devotional and social in

¹⁰³ Cohen has suggested that communities share meaning and 'commonality' in their social organisation which provides a sense of 'belonging,' p.9. See A.P Cohen, ed., *Belonging: Identity and Social Organization in British Rural Cultures* (Manchester, 1982), p.9.

¹⁰⁴ William Borden's will: CKS 17/14/284; John Abell's will: CKS 17/22/31.

¹⁰⁵ Henry Wreke's will: CKS PRC 17/2/110; William Robinson's will: CKS PRC17/26/274.

nature, within local lay communities.¹⁰⁶ Duffy has identified three basic functions of the parish brotherhood or cult, the first being maintenance of lights dedicated to the saints, the second including the procurement of prayers and alms for the souls of deceased brothers or sisters, and the third function was the promotion of communal charity.¹⁰⁷ However, some religious brotherhoods on the Island of Sheppey were identified with, and distinctively part of, the landscape.

The brotherhood of the light of St Peter, as it was referred to within wills from Sheppey testators, was also associated with the borough of Ossenden in Minster. Between 1474 and 1524, there were six bequests to the light of St Peter in Minster Church with no mention of the association with Ossenden; however, in 1504, John Elliot, of Minster, bequeathed an ewe to the light of St Peter 'of the brotherhood of Ossenden.'¹⁰⁸ In addition, John also owned land in the 'borough of Ossenden.' In 1520, John Sole, of Minster, also left a bequest of two female sheep to the light of the 'brodrehed of St Peter of Ossenden'; however, from Sole's will it is not apparent whether or not he owned land in this borough. Half of the testators who bequeathed postmortem gifts to the light of St. Peter did not mention the brotherhood associated with it and furthermore, testate parishioners with land in Ossenden did not necessarily leave a bequest for St Peter's light. For example, John Frende, of Minster, bequeathed land in the 'borough of Ossenden' to his wife Alice in 1501; however, he did not leave a bequest to the light of St Peter.¹⁰⁹ Thomas Carden, of Minster, left his will in 1503 and bequeathed his land in 'borough of Ossenden' to Alexandre Pyttard and Edward Cardon.¹¹⁰

What is most revealing about St Peter's brotherhood is its association with the only hamlet in Minster parish and the affiliation with St. Peter. St Peter, who was the leader of

¹⁰⁶ For discussion on the range of purposes and functions of parish church brotherhoods and cults see B.Hanawalt, 'Keepers of the Lights: Late Medieval English Parish Gilds', *JMRS*, vol.14 (1994), pp.21-37; B.Hanawalt and B.McRee, 'The Gilds of *homo prudens* in Late Medieval England', in *Continuity and Change*, 7:2, (1992), pp.163-179; J.J.Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford, 1984), pp.19-44; M.Kowaleski and J.Bennett, 'Crafts, Gilds, and Women in the Middle Ages', *Signs*, vol.14, no.2 (1989), pp.474-488; K.French (ed.), *The Parish in English Life 1400-1600* (Manchester, 1997); M.Caiazza, 'The Parish Church of St. Dunstan's, Canterbury, and its Fraternities, c.1485-1540' (unpublished MA dissertation, 1999).

¹⁰⁷ E.Duffy, 'Chapter 4: Corporate Christians - Gild and Parish' in *The Stripping of the Altars* (London, 1992), pp.141-154.

¹⁰⁸ CKS PRC 17/9/82.

¹⁰⁹ CKS 17/8/188.

¹¹⁰ CKS 17/9/201.

the apostles and a fisherman, may have been viewed as a patron of those within the fishing industry of Ossenden in Minster. However, it is unclear as to where Ossenden was actually located within the densely populated parish of Minster. The light of St Peter, as the patron of Ossenden within the parish church of Minster, suggests that perhaps a miracle or vision took place within Ossenden thereby providing a devotional reason for its community. Ossenden, in Minster, Sheppey, is an example of a contextualised landscape, one with a saintly presence and a social community.¹¹¹

Everitt has suggested that the fishing communities of the marshes, particularly in and around Romney Marsh, developed their own forms of superstitious beliefs which he associated with their small and insular communities, often exposed to higher rates of mortality by living on the unhealthy marshland.¹¹² Similar to St Peter, St Clement of Leysdown parish on Sheppey was associated with the sea and was the patron saint not of fishing but of ships and lighthouses. Not surprisingly Leysdown had the highest number of weir fishermen with frequent bequests of weirs to both male and female children by testators of Leysdown. In addition, fishermen of the Isle of Whalsay in Shetland were also found to have communities formed on the basis of particular and unique ideologies and connections associated with kin, place and crew.¹¹³ St James parish church in Warden parish, located in the northeast corner of the Island of Sheppey, also had a brotherhood as evident within testamentary material. St James, the patron saint of travellers, presents another relationship between landscape, religious devotion and social cohesion. The parish church was a watch point which overlooked the sea to the north of the island. However, St James has also been associated with fishermen and mariners in Kent, with other coastal dedications to St James around the Kentish coast at Cooling, Dover, the Island of Elmley, Grain, Sandwich and Reculver.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Bender has stated that people 'experience' landscapes where they 'understand and engage with their worlds', p.2 and 9 in B.Bender, ed., *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives* (Oxford, 1993).

¹¹² A.Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization*, p.232.

¹¹³ A.P Cohen, ed., *Belonging: Identity and Social Organization in British Rural Cultures* (Manchester, 1982), p.23.

¹¹⁴ A.Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization*, p.232.

VIII. Conclusion

The physical presence of the Minster on the Island of Sheppey contributed to the shaping of popular religious practices on the island in the late medieval period and early modern period. In addition, local inhabitants of other Sheppey parishes also established their own contextualised landscapes, especially the fishing communities with patron saints named after particular places, such as St. Peter of Ossenden in Minster parish. Religious practices, such as burials, girl's naming and saintly hamlets represented cultural systems in process within Sheppey communities. Unique to Sheppey was the mapping of place to devotional, familial and local practice and custom. The symbolic position of the Minster, at the highest point on the Island of Sheppey, laid the foundation for making sacred associations within the collective imagination of Sheppey inhabitants. The last will and testament was fundamental, as a communication system, for individuals and families to re-create and envision local and family heritage which was both personal and collective.

Burial practices at the Minster site were inclusive to all of the testate Sheppey population with only wealthy families and priests requesting burial in the Minster churches and/or their chapels. Exceptionally, burial practices at the Minster were also requested by Sheppey families who had relocated to the mainland. The burial requests of several generations of the Wreke family provide an insight into the complex ancestral and historical narratives of remembrance which were adopted by local Islanders even after migration. Wreke family members consciously commemorated and mapped their ancestral past to the central place of the Minster consistently within wills written from 1471 to 1545. The Minster became a family tomb; a space for remembrance which was imagined and ritualized - uniting families to sacred island space. The Minster was the visualised location, ancestrally mapped by and to the Wreke family so they could actively remember and perpetuate their social past. Burial practices at the Minster, on Sheppey, created a common and shared historical memory linked to family and to local place on the Island.

The naming of daughters after Sexburga and other Anglo-Saxon women also alludes to the transmission of meaning associated with religious space to that of family

heritage linked to place. There is no evidence which suggests that Sexburga, Frideswide, Matilda and Ursula were passed down from mothers to daughters within families; however, the commonality of these names, especially Sexburga, is rooted in the Minster's presence on the Island of Sheppey. The reinterpretation of Sexburga from Minster foundress of the sixth century to a girl's name for later generations of women presents a complex cultural system of visualized heritage and locality by island inhabitants.

Furthermore, the mapping of places to saints, such as St Peter of Ossenden in Minster, presents an additional complexity about the importance of community validity to local people. Ossenden, although located within Minster parish, had an associated brotherhood which exerted its own ownership of space by exploiting religious ideologies in the form of St Peter, a saint representing fishermen.

Sheppey's landscape was actively reproduced, taking root in its religious origins and translating this space to a socially conceptualized microcosm of family heritage and practice or occupational networking and status.

Chapter Five

Maps of the Islands of Sheppey

I. Introduction

The maps surviving of the Islands of Sheppey from between c.1525 to c.1666 show how the physical landscape of the islands, often including both land and sea, were historically subject to frequent regional and national factors. These factors included interpretations which emphasised the evolution of cultural and social changes within the island boundaries but not necessarily exclusive to life for the inhabitants. These maps, including some from a later period which falls outside of the time scale of the research for this thesis, provide a visual ‘context for engagement’ with the Islands of Sheppey.¹ This engagement with the island landscape was mostly for and produced by non-inhabitants. This chapter will explore notions of visualising and ‘idealising’ the topography and history of the Islands of Sheppey, as part of the county of Kent, specifically how they were cartographically and chorographically represented and described.² In addition, the representation of ‘locality’ will also be explored, including how and what was narrated about the Islands of Sheppey.³

The maps and descriptions of the Islands of Sheppey present distinctive perceptions of the Islands by mapmakers and chorographers who were mostly employed by the Crown and/or did not live on the Islands. Furthermore, the military importance of the Islands in terms of their geographic and strategic significance to London and the Medway, dominated the reasons for map production between c.1525 and c.1666. An additional perception of the Islands of Sheppey is found within maps which showed how the position and influence of large estates, in particular Shurland Manor in Eastchurch, Sheppey, contributed to the defining of individual tenant property on the Island.

¹ Cosgrove has stated that maps are ‘contexts for engagement’ with a landscape in D.Cosgrove, ed., *Mappings* (London, 1999), p.1.

² A.McRae’s study of agrarian interpretations of England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have revealed an inter-play between surveying and idealizing the nation’s history in accordance with the monarchy and the land. See A.McRae, *God Speed the Plough: The Representation of Agrarian England, 1500-1660* (Cambridge, 1996), pp.232-233.

³ D.Buisseret has suggested that early-modern maps should be called ‘locational images’ since it is the quality of ‘locality’ represented which makes them unique and worth of study. See D.Buisseret, *Mapmaker’s Quest: Depicting New Worlds in Renaissance Europe* (Oxford, 2003), p.xi.

The diversity of information pictured and communicated within maps and also within chorographical descriptions of the Islands interprets, constructs and reconstructs space from a physical position. Overall, both maps and descriptive topographies offer a visual context for the cultural, social and ultimately exploitative perception of island life.⁴ Therefore this chapter examines how the objectivity of maps has a cultural context which is critical to understanding how the Islands were represented and fundamentally experienced by outsiders.⁵ This is in contrast to the inhabitants of the Islands who mapped their own cultural experiences of everyday island life, using textual descriptions found within their wills. This will be further examined in Chapter 6.

II. Maps as evidence

From around c.1500 onwards there was an increased desire by large landowners, both ecclesiastical and secular, to create an accurate record of their lands and often the field system of a particular area.⁶ This new survey or estate map was a transitional document, created and used by landowners, to provide a precise survey of their land wealth. This new trend in surveying, assisted by the spread of printing, brought about a surge in map production where every detail of a specific landscape included a range of visual features to represent types of land including arable, pasture, meadow, woodland and parkland. For Kent, early modern maps have identified how enclosed farms covered most of the county with some indication of fields subdivided into unenclosed parcels of land.⁷ In addition to the Tudor survey map of the Islands of Sheppey was the early-

⁴ H.Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. D.Nicolson-Smith (Oxford, 1991 [French original 1974]), pp.38-39; Also see B.Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2001), p.7 for discussion on maps as 'commodities' which offered 'privileged access to physical space.'

⁵ H.Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. D.Nicolson-Smith (Oxford, 1991 [French original 1974]), p.39; B.Klein, in *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2001), has also drawn on Lefebvre's theory of space to distinguish the diversity of early modern 'surveying stages', particularly with regard to representing and imaging social spaces including the diversity between 'inhabitant' and 'user' spaces, p.49.

⁶ P.D.A.Harvey, 'The Documents of Landscape History: Snares and Delusions' in *Lands Hist*, 13 (1990), pp.47-52; P.D.A.Harvey, 'Estate Surveyors and the Spread of the scale map in England 1550-80' in *Lands Hist*, 15 (1993), pp.37-49; P.D.A.Harvey, *Maps in Tudor England* (London, 1993); J.B.Harley, 'Meaning and Ambiguity in Tudor Cartography' in S.Tyacke, ed., *English Map-Making 1500-1650* (London, 1983), pp.22-45; A.R.H.Baker and R.A.Butlin, *Studies of Field Systems in the British Isles* (Cambridge, 1973), p.2,10.

⁷ A.R.H.Baker and R.A.Butlin, *Studies of Field Systems in the British Isles* (Cambridge, 1973), p.385.

modern military map, valuable to the defensives of the Crown, particularly in protecting London from foreign invasion.

The depiction of the physical landscape, as visualised within early modern estate maps, provides valuable and perhaps unintentional information by the map producer. This information may include aspects of everyday life on the Islands in times of impending war (such as the threat of the Spanish Armada in the 1580s) and also including the social organisation of densely settled areas. Some illustrations show road systems and Island family named land holdings, such as that shown in the Cheney survey of the 1570s, confirming the emergence of recorded social spaces, 'defin[ing] the relationship between soil and subject, between tenant and lord.'⁸

Maps of the Islands of Sheppey provide a picture of the complex and interwoven cultural influences shaping the landscape whilst also revealing the conflict of interest between those who lived on the Islands and those who did not but took a strategic interest in Sheppey's location.⁹ Differences in map structure and chorographical content provide evidence for the existence of complex cognitive responses attached to, and within, places.¹⁰ In addition, these mappings collectively, of the Islands of Sheppey, functioned 'by serving interests' including 'presences and absences' which were revealed in the visual and final reproduction of the islands.¹¹ Overall this presents discrepancies especially when compared with the textual mapping details found in the testamentary material of island inhabitants.

⁸ B.Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2001), p.44.

⁹ See B.Bender, ed., *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives* (Oxford, 1993).

¹⁰ E.Edson wrote in *Mapping Time and Space* (London, 1999) that 'differences in map structure and content are clues which lead us to imagine how medieval makers and readers of maps saw their world', p.viii. In addition she also emphasises how physical places such as Jerusalem and Constantinople were mapped or visually represented according to their religious or historical pasts rather than their geographical position, p.viii.

¹¹ In D.Wood's introduction to *The Power of Maps* (London, 1992), p.1, he states that 'maps work by serving interests' and that these 'interests are embodied in the map as presences and absences' to 'enable' maps 'to work'.

III. Visualising the Islands of Sheppey from the River Swale

The significance of the Swale to the physical depiction of the landscape of the Islands of Sheppey cannot be overestimated as mapmakers working for the Crown strategically designed their maps of the Islands from initial approaches at sea. As previously mentioned in Chapter 3, the Swale was the most common route for passage to London due to its sheltered position to the south of the Islands of Sheppey as opposed to the entrance to the Thames Estuary to the north of the Islands, which was often rough causing shipwrecks, due to rough weather conditions.¹²

The earliest surviving map of the Islands of Sheppey is a map of the Swale estimated to have been designed around 1525. This map is the largest single image of the Swale and is approximately 25 feet long by 1 ½ feet wide with over three-fourths of the map containing the Swale despite a small three-inch margin on the bottom and top of the map roll showing the shoreline (please refer to Map Appendix 5.1 for a section of this map displaying a sea barrier to the far eastern entrance to the Swale).¹³ The intended purpose of this map was to visually capture the extent of the sea route along the southern half of the Islands of Sheppey and along the north Kent mainland coast from Seasalter and Whitstable to Milton parish. This map is shown from a boat's perspective of the journey along the river in which the specific landmark features on the coastline of the Swale, in the map's margins, include only coastal houses, mills, churches and other unspecified buildings. These everyday landmarks are depicted as reference points to guide the journey and to locate a boat's position along the Swale.

Why this map was specifically made and for whom is unclear. However, it has been suggested that it was constructed in order to precisely show the coast's 'character' from the point of view of a mariner, or of an enemy fleet.¹⁴ There is some indication that the map was to serve as a guide to the Swale, perhaps for Henry VIII himself. However, it was most likely used by Crown officials for military or economic purposes suggested

¹² In 1380, a ship from Flanders was caught in a storm on route to London. The ship was damaged and driven ashore on the northern coast of the Island of Sheppey where upon the Cheney family of Shurland Manor and the Prioress of Minster instructed men of the island to steal goods from the shipwreck. See *Misc Inquisitions*, vol.iv, c.1377-1388, Richard II, p.71.

¹³ BL Cotton Roll.XIII.12

¹⁴ P.D.A.Harvey, *Maps in Tudor England* (London, 1993), pp.45-47.

by the only written key on the map. The presence of specific landmarks serves as a guide to identifying the position of a ship on the Swale for navigational purposes. The map also describes the Swale as 'A goode rode for a C sayle of goode shepys' meaning a good route and anchorage for at least 100 ships. This map fits within the time period that Thomas Wolsey started a major national survey of military resources and capacity in England from 1522; however, this campaign was short-lived.¹⁵

The only text on the map is written in a highly stylized hand and the bright colours used in the map's production suggest that it is to be used by someone of considerable status or importance. All of the other words written on the map, specifically along the coastline (top and bottom) under parish locations, were written so the reader or readers of the map could view the Swale and its coastline from both sides of a table if laid flat. The buildings that have been chosen and drawn onto the map are each distinct in character with no two buildings exactly alike. This exact illustration presents the buildings, churches and mills only as positional references to be used in the interest of sea navigation and ship position. This mapmaker is not concerned with the position of places or their accuracy in relation to the Swale. For example the parish of Leysdown is further north but identified, by text, in the map as existing along the Swale coastline. However, Leysdown church is pictured in a visually recognised and consistent format compared with other northern Kentish coastline churches such as Seasalter and Whitstable. Overall, the precise location of parishes and churches on the Islands of Sheppey, such as Leysdown and that of Harty, are not accurately described compared to the precision and detail drawn in the buildings, churches and mills of the mainland Kentish coastline. The importance of landmarks in this map is to be found in the precise detail of the buildings rather than the natural physical features of the landscape. In later regional maps of the Islands of Sheppey, specifically Speed's and Camden's maps, communicating the contrasts in the natural landscape, with geographical symbols for creeks and hills, was very much a part of identifying the local area.¹⁶ However, due to the lack of population

¹⁵ J.Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford, 1988), repr.1990, pp.96-97; G.R.Elton, *Reform and Reformation* (Bungay, 1977), repr.1984, pp.86-87.

¹⁶ Klein has stated that Speed used more toponyms than natural geographical features in his maps. See B.Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2001), p.108.

in the southern marshland areas of Elmley Island, a limited range of structures would have been available for the identification of landmarks as guides when at sea compared with the northern Kentish coast.

In addition to the central position of the Swale, a water barrier dominates part of the map between the mainland Kentish Coast and the Island of Harty. To what purpose this barrier served is not known; however, due to the close vicinity of the moated manor of Sayles Court on the Island of Harty, and since the Swale was a popular route for foreign and domestic traffic in and out of London, the presence of defensive precautions cannot be ruled out. This alludes to the possible reason for map production - as a record of the coast from the position of an enemy approaching by sea. In addition, it is unclear as to whether or not this barrier did exist in the Swale since there is no record of its construction or purpose.

Not until 1780 was a similar style map made of the Islands of Sheppey – from the perspective of a boatman making a journey along the Swale. This map is scientific in objective since it attempted to record the sea depths of the Swale in great detail. Over 200 years after the first surviving map of the Swale, a Lieutenant M.Mackenzie authored his map of 1780; a mapping of the tides and velocity of the Swale from a specific easterly approach west up the Swale's water course.¹⁷ Mackenzie writes his descriptions on the map for a reader who is going up the Swale west from an eastern approach to the south of the Island of Harty. All of Mackenzie's descriptions are written facing east, similar to the 1525 map with its assumed easterly sea approach along the Swale.

The Mackenzie map, clearly of a later date than this thesis intends to examine, does provide a contrast to the earlier representation of the Swale, whilst also emphasizing the importance of the navigated sea to those who had contact with the Islands of Sheppey. The use of the sea around the Islands of Sheppey presented spatial perceptions of the Islands of Sheppey's and other landmarks surrounding the Swale. In 1525, the Swale was drawn over three-fourths of the page with only a few inches remaining for the mainland and Isles on either side of top and bottom. The c.1780 Mackenzie map positioned the Islands of Sheppey as the largest feature on the map with the Swale of relatively small proportions in relation to the land. The islands are outlined in black and left blank on the

¹⁷ BL Map M.T.11.h 2 (8).

map in comparison with the numerous figures signposted throughout the Swale. This map measures 3 feet 9 inches long and 3 foot wide. The Swale itself measures 3 inches in width with over 75 per cent of the top half of the map showing the perceived outline of the Islands of Sheppey in relation to the Swale. Mackenzie is primarily concerned with the times of tides in the Swale, areas of sand and mud banks and the access of vessels to other creeks, such as that of Faversham Creek, where he writes, 'vessels that draw less than 9 feet water may get up to Faversham with spring tides.'¹⁸ Mackenzie does depict the small passageway of the Swale in relation to the large land mass of the Islands of Sheppey.¹⁹

The main objective for the production of these maps was not to show the physical space of the Islands of Sheppey but the river Swale. In both maps, the Swale was approached from the east, the most popular route towards the Thames estuary or River Medway for seafaring traffic from the medieval and early modern period and throughout the eighteenth century. The Swale map of c.1525 and the Mackenzie map provide a prescription for map reading using words and images strategically placed within the context of the physical landscape features of the map. These maps are not about the land but the physical relationship between the land and the sea. The river Swale was to be navigated so the maps read as a visual chronology of places within and along the Swale. The map reader is presented with a visual understanding of the place of the Islands of Sheppey in relation to that of the successful navigation of the Swale.

IV. Placing the Islands of Sheppey within Kentish and national history writing and mapping

Sixteenth and seventeenth-century cartographers and chorographers recognised the contributions of 'Sheepe' Island, unlike the Island of Harty or Elmley, through either the 'fineness of the fleese', the Minster church, Queenborough Castle, Shurland Manor or the parish boundary names.²⁰ The recording of the history of the Island of Sheppey

¹⁸ BL Map M.T.11.h 2 (8).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ W.Lambarde, *A Perambulation of Kent* (London: 1576), p.198. Lambarde and Camden only write about the Island of Sheppey whilst maps made by Saxton, Speed and Camden recognise Elmley and Harty Islands as either a marsh or toponym equivalent to a parish boundary.

was centered around the geographical dimensions important to the island such as the quality of its wool from the vast flocks on the marshes and the status of the Minster on the higher foothills.²¹ The genealogy of Sexburga and the 120 li yearly value of the monastery begin Lambarde's tour of Sheppey.²²

Sheppey features towards the end of Lambarde's chorographical descriptions of Kent, after he narrates his travels from Milton and Sittingbourne, to Tong Castle and Teynham parishes, on the north Kent coast and then across to Sheppey, unlike Camden who decided to change this with a sea approach, from the Medway to the western Swale.²³ Camden's more pastoral description invites the reader to notice the fertile landmarks, including the sea and its role in contributing to agricultural production:

'Now Medway growne more full and carring a greater bredth,
with his curling waves right goodly and pleasant to behold, runneth
a long by the fruitfull fields, until that being divided by meeting
with the Iland Shepey maketh his issue into the Estuarie of Frith
of Tamis at two mouths. Western is called West Swale, the easterne
that seemeth to have severed Sheppeie from the firme land is called
East Swale.'²⁴

Camden's personification of a bountiful Medway and corresponding 'fruitfull fields' immediately materialises the richness of the landscape associating 'topographical and economic conditions' to national interests between land, productivity and the landed gentry.²⁵ Descriptions of rivers, such as that of the Thames, as 'delightfull and golden streame' by the poet John Taylor, presented a 'vital focal point for the construction of a

²¹ W.Lambarde, *A Perambulation of Kent* (London: 1576), p.198; W.Camden, *Britannia*, trans. Philemon Holland (London, 1610), p.333.

²² W.Lambarde, *A Perambulation of Kent* (London: 1576), p.198

²³ W.Lambarde, *A Perambulation of Kent* (London: 1576), p.190-191 (Milton/Sittingbourne parishes; pp.195-196 (Tong Castle); p.197 (Teynham); pp.198-199 (Sheppey); W.Camden, *Britannia*, trans. Philemon Holland (London, 1610), p.333.

²⁴ W.Camden, *Britannia*, trans. Philemon Holland (London, 1610), p.333.

²⁵ A.McRae in *God Speed the Plough: The Representation of Agrarian England, 1500-1660* (Cambridge, 1996), pp.237-238, has suggested that Camden's *Britannia* shows the nation as 'framed by nature' with a natural order between 'topographic and economic conditions' which celebrate not only the fertility of the land but the pleasure of working it and managing it by the landed gentry. McRae also comments on John Norden's chorographical work and his use of adjectives such as 'fertile' and 'fruitful' in celebrating the link between productivity, the pleasure of rural life and the gentry, p.241. Also see J.Norden, *Speculi Britania Pars: The discription of Hartfordshire* (London, 1598).

national mythology', argued McRae.²⁶ It was Camden who wrote about Shurland Manor, the largest single estate owned by a gentry family on Sheppey.²⁷ This included a record of its previous owners, such as the Cheneys and its current owner, Sir Philip Herbert, at the time Camden was writing, at the beginning of the seventeenth century.²⁸ Although Camden asserts that he used Lambarde's previous work as his 'foundation', the decision to include Shurland Manor in his topographical description of Sheppey showed Camden's commitment to creating an idyllic 'rural order' on Sheppey, and therefore recognising its importance in the overall economic productivity of Kent.²⁹ This was established at the beginning, with the approach to the Island and ended with a brief 'discourse of the propertied' on Sheppey.³⁰

Sheppey's introduction in Lambarde's *A Perambulation of Kent* symbolically begins with a decorative 'S' monogram; however, the 'S' is for 'Sexburga' and not Sheppey.³¹ The Minster church was at the heart of Sheppey, both historically and geographically, as it was clearly visible from land and sea in all directions. The Minster also carried the ancient credentials of having a distinguished historical tradition validated through royal pedigree and religious ritual. This ethno-symbolic rediscovery through chorographical transmission would have appealed to Lambarde in his written collectiveness of heritage – the meeting, through writing, of both ancient landscape and historical authentication.³²

Camden, and especially Speed, created detailed images of the rivers which cut through the marshlands of southern Sheppey (see Maps 5.2 and 5.3).³³ The economic

²⁶ A.McRae in *God Speed the Plough: The Representation of Agrarian England, 1500-1660* (Cambridge, 1996), p.250.

²⁷ W.Camden, *Britannia*, trans. Philemon Holland (London, 1610), p.334

²⁸ W.Camden, *Britannia*, trans. Philemon Holland (London, 1610), p.334.

²⁹ A.McRae in *God Speed the Plough: The Representation of Agrarian England, 1500-1660* (Cambridge, 1996), p.250.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p.234.

³¹ W.Lambarde, *A Perambulation of Kent* (London, 1576), p.198.

³² A.D.Smith in his book *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford, 1999) has suggested that the building of a nation is based on the link between 'historical territory' and 'common ancestry' which can be 'shared' through 'historical memories and traditions', pp.12-13. L.Cormack has also written on the origins of 'imperialistic' attitudes in Britain and has suggested that they may be found in Elizabethan 'geographical texts', p.46 in 'Britannia rules the waves?: images of empire in Elizabethan England' in A.Gordon and B.Klein, eds., *Literature, Mapping, and the Politics of Space in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2001), pp.45-68.

³³ BL Maps C.7.c.20 - J.Speed map of Kent, c.1611; BL Maps C.7.b.1 - W.Camden map of Cantium, c.1607.

significance of these detailed watery divisions, which boldly stand out within both Speed's and Camden's maps, created a distinguished visual importance of the marshes near Elmley and Harty. Although Elmley and Harty were separate parishes and Islands, it is the names of 'Sturt Marsh', Ryde', 'Creg diepe' and 'Choten Marsh' in Speed's map which allude to their known economic importance and dominance on the map and on the Island of Sheppey (see Map 5.2). The marshlands of Sheppey, Elmley and Harty were owned by large landowners who exploited the rich pastures for economic gain. Shurland Manor is shown in both maps; however, it is within Saxton's map of Sheppey that the estate divisions are clearly shown, with pronounced separation of Elmley and Harty, as separate islands.³⁴ Harty is also referred to as 'Hertie In' on the map (please refer to Map 5.4).

Saxton was commissioned to survey England and Wales and to publish the maps in an atlas. His maps, in addition to Camden's and Speed's, were designed to record territories regardless of how 'faithfully they may have gathered and repeated the 'facts' of England's history and geography, [they] had an inescapable part in creating the cultural entity they pretended only to represent.'³⁵ Saxton's maps have been criticised for their lack of character in representing 'local individuality'.³⁶ Saxton uses a similar style when representing towns and villages, usually with a formulaic arrangement of red parish church structures and parish administrative naming.³⁷ Saxton's depictions of places on the Island of Sheppey divert slightly from the rest of north Kent, and in the style of his mapmaking contemporaries. This diversion reflected the military objective of the Crown in securing the Island of Sheppey as a military-style stronghold, in preparation for a Spanish invasion of the capital.

Shurland Manor is carefully enclosed with its park of trees clearly visible and a building shown as different but equivalent in style to the parish churches on the map. Shurland Manor is not labeled on Saxton's map but is visibly the largest enclosed area in north Kent. Saxton's interest in recording places of military significance is shown in his

³⁴ BI Maps C.7.c.3., f.11.

³⁵ R.Helgerson, 'The Lands Speaks: Cartography, Chorography and Subversion in Renaissance England' in *Representations*, vol. 16 (1986), pp.51-85, p.51.

³⁶ J.B.Harley, *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography*, ed. by P.Laxton (London, 2001), p.98.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p.98.

representation of Sheppey.³⁸ 'Quinboro Castle' with its large illustrative castle, complete with four turrets and flags is geographically accurate at the entrance to the western Swale; however, it is the fortified appearance of Shurland Manor which reveals the changing nature of this estate from wealthy private land to government stronghold for the largest armoury of weapons on the island.³⁹ Saxton's maps 'are expressions of territorial pride' and they were known as an 'aid to national administration and defense' providing a 'strong sense of provincial identity.'⁴⁰ This is clearly the case in Saxton's view of Sheppey which is only as important as the success of its castle and manor in contributing to national security.

Approximately ten years after Saxton completed his survey and map of Kent, Lord Burghley's nephew, Edward Hoby, visited Sheppey to record and report to the Crown the 'severall sortes of weapons' the 'new mustered Sheppey souldiours' had in their possession from the recorded arsenal held at Shurland Manor.⁴¹ Perhaps Shurland Manor's transformation into a military stronghold was active in the 1570s. In 1576, the Crown was considering the purchase of Shurland Manor on Sheppey which finally completed on the 6th of May 1579.⁴² It was at this point that Shurland Manor ceased to be the architecturally beautiful manor it once was - complete with park, lodge, chapel, gatehouse, stables and hall with a cupola and was turned into a variety of small tenements (please refer back to Map 3.7 of Shurland Manor, c.1570).⁴³ Shurland became a fortified stronghold, complete with 'Sheppey souldiours' who were ordinary inhabitants of the Island whose sole purpose was to protect London from invasion by the expected Spanish fleet. Overall, it is Saxton's map, completed within a time of political anxiety, which reflected the national interest of recording territory over natural geography. Nearly forty

³⁸ L.Cormack suggests that Saxton's atlas maps were mainly about the 'recording of musters, lords, lieutenant and places of fortification' in 'Britannia rules the waves?: images of empire in Elizabethan England' in A.Gordon and B.Klein, eds., *Literature, Mapping, and the Politics of Space in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2001), pp.45-68; p.55.

³⁹ BL Lansdowne MS 42, xliii, f.10.

⁴⁰ J.H.Andrews, 'Introduction: Meaning, Knowledge, and Power in the Map Philosophy of J.B.Harley' in J.B.Harley, *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography*, ed. by P.Laxton (London, 2001), pp. 1-32; p.15 and Chapter 3, 'Silences and Secrecy: The Hidden Agenda of Cartography in Early Modern Europe', pp.84-107; p.90.

⁴¹ BL Lansdowne MS. 42, f.11.

⁴² NA C66/1148; Land sold to the Crown by Lord Cheney of Shurland Manor can be found in NA C66/1177.

⁴³ NA C66/1148; 1177; 1188; 1209; 1216; 1220; 1221.

years after the Spanish Armada threat to Britain, the flow of rivers, the location of foothills, and the complex framework of natural and ever-changing marshland boundaries became more of an objective for Camden and Speed in visualising the Islands of Sheppey.

V. For the protection of the realm

The majority of maps dealing with the visualisation of the Islands of Sheppey concern the military and strategic significance of the Islands and the Swale in protecting the route to the Thames Estuary and London. Also the Islands and the Swale were vital to military communications across the Estuary, to the north, in response to any possible approaches by enemy fleets. The military maps of the Islands of Sheppey visually depict defenses in place or proposed fortifications around the Swale and Islands. Top secret plans for fortifications and interpretations of invasions on the Islands are revealed within maps made between c.1525 to c.1666. It is the subject of military and defense interests which produced the largest number of maps of the Islands of Sheppey. Therefore, the most consistent perception of the islands are by those not living within the islands themselves but interested in how the islands' physical position could be used strategically by the Crown in order to protect London. The physical proximity of the Islands of Sheppey, at the entrance to both the Thames Estuary and the River Medway, led to a greater exploitation of the Islands with regards to boosting defensive measures as deemed necessary by the government.

In 1585, Kentish antiquarian William Lambarde mapped the military communications of Kent, in particular the Kentish beacons and their locations (please refer to Maps 5.5 and 5.6).⁴⁴ The purpose of Lambarde's map of the beacons coincided with the threat of the arrival of the Spanish Armada in July 1588. The Armada, containing 166 ships, was expected to appear in the southeast, although there is no evidence that any beacons were lit during times of intense military activity.⁴⁵ Due to heightened fears concerning a Spanish invasion and impending approach to the capital by

⁴⁴ BL Add. MS 62935.

⁴⁵ H.T.White, 'The Beacon System in Kent' in *Arch Cant*, vol.xlvi, 1934', p.89.

the enemy, the Island of Sheppey had the most densely populated beacon sites in the whole of Kent with at least five beacons total within a nine mile range west to east. The Island of Sheppey also had more beacons than the Isle of Thanet located further east of Kent and being the clearest lookout south over the English Channel. The Islands of Sheppey may have had beacons on the Islands before 1585 since as early as 1377 the erection of beacons on each side of the Thames was granted in order to 'give warning of the approach of hostile ships in the river.'⁴⁶ Similarly, Lambarde supports his own objective for mapping the beacons in Kent 'so there is no secret hereby disclosed, whereof the enimie may take advantage.'⁴⁷

In addition to the Armada threat, the guarding of the River Medway in 1596, where another Spain invasion was viewed as imminent, meant that if any vessels were at sea to the north of Sheppey, the Queenborough beacon was to be lit to inform the eastern side of the Island towards the entrance of the West Swale and the River Medway.⁴⁸ In addition, the Queenborough beacon was to alert Gravesend on the Thames Estuary, also located en route to London. The Island of Sheppey was the first in order to alert Gravesend and further west to London in the event of a foreign fleet trying to get to the capital.

The defensive beacons on Sheppey were located from west to east at Barowhill, Fursynhill at Minster and Furse Hill, all located between Queenborough and Minster. The other beacons were Beaconhill, Holte (in Warden parish in the far north), Eastchurch (at Warden), Leysdown and Landesende (the furthest beacon east). Lambarde's beacon map of Kent contained drawn lines of communication between beacons in addition to the beacons themselves. The main routes of beacon communication followed a path where most of the mainland coast could be seen from Sheppey and vice versa. For example, communication was to travel from Faversham to Fursynhill, Sheppey and then Chatham on the River Medway, or from Barowhill to Sheppey and then Chatham. Also communication was to travel between Faversham and Beaconhill, Sheppey or Warden or Eastchurch on Sheppey. Beaconhill, Sheppey, was to communicate east to Holte, and Eastchurch communicated to Warden and as far as Whitstable on the north Kent coast.

⁴⁶ See H.T.White, 'The Beacon System in Kent' in *Arch Cant*, vol.xlvi, 1934', pp.77-95, p.80; also see *Parliament Rolls and Close Rolls*, I Richard II.

⁴⁷ W.Lambarde, *A Perambulation of Kent* (London, 1596), p.69.

Borowhill, Sheppey could communicate as far west as the Isle of Grain across from Queenborough and to the entrance at the River Medway, whilst also communicating as far southeast as Stone-next-Faversham. Since the Spanish Armada never appeared in this intended way, the beacon map records the anxieties of anticipation felt by London in which the Islands of Sheppey literally stood out as a purpose-built military stronghold. The beacons and their communication lines are all you see of the Islands of Sheppey in Lambarde's map.

A detailed map of the north coast invasion by the Dutch in 1667 during the second Anglo Dutch War (c.1664-1667) shows the Islands of Sheppey at the centre of the famous Medway attack. Although this map is of a later period, like the Mackenzie map, it provides perspective on conceived experiences of the islands due to their physical position in the north Kentish coast. Two separate maps, presented as one map, provide a large scale and close up view of the invasion route down the Thames Estuary and into the River Medway just north of the Island of Sheppey with the ships approaching from the east (see Map 5.7).⁴⁹ The map is black and white of a woodcut or wire production and not drawn by hand. The map, consisting of two maps side by side, measures as one map at approximately 17 inches in length by 12 wide, with a smaller border about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch wide on the right and left side of the images and then $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inches on the top and bottom. At the top left corner, in the first map, there is a little box of approximately 2 inches by 3 inches which states in Latin: 'L'Abbrucciamento fatto dagli, Vascelli Olandesi di quelli de gli Inglesi nella Re'ue'era di Cattam. Anno 1666, 24 di Agosto.'⁵⁰

Map 1, on the left hand side is approximately 8 inches long by 12 inches wide and shows a one-dimensional, flat, large scale view of the Kent coast to London along the Thames and as far north as the Essex coast and into the Sussex coastal areas (please see Map 5.8). There are no natural geographical images on this map which appears flat. The only documentation of detail is present in the depiction of the sands at sea showing shallow areas, suggesting the mapmaker was of maritime distinction, documenting the

⁴⁸ H.T.White, 'The Beacon System in Kent' in *Arch Cant*, vol.xlvi, 1934, pp.90-91.

⁴⁹ BL Map 1240. (7).

⁵⁰ The date of this map appears to be misleading since the Dutch invasion of the Medway took place between the 12th and the 14th of June 1667, a year after the map was produced. The detailed depiction of the Dutch attack on Sheppey and in the Medway suggests that the battle already took place before the map was produced suggesting that the date of the map is most likely to be the 14th of August 1667, two months after the Dutch invasion.

geography that would interest him and the ships that were used to taking this watercourse. However, landmark images are present on the map outside the immediate Thames and Medway areas, where coastal churches might have indicated location from a navigational and sea view, such as around the Kentish coast approaching the north from the eastern tip of the Isle of Thanet. These landmarks include St Peter's, Thanet, Sandwich and the Essex coast. As the map maker moves along the coast from Thanet, he moves towards the Islands of Sheppey with 'Queenborch' centrally located at the precise location of Eastchurch and Leysdown, whilst Warden and 'Shyrenasse' are written at the west end above the word 'Scapeia'. The Minster, Sheppey, is recognised only by the symbol of a church in exactly the correct position. The only other geographically correct area is the 'Swalve' (the Swale).

The mapmaker may be forgiven for his inadequate representation of Queenborough's precise location since the two main events involving the Islands of Sheppey in the Dutch invasion of the Medway in June 1667 took place at Sheerness. Here the fort was captured at the start of the invasion, and to the north of the Island of Sheppey, where the Dutch held provisions for securing the south east under their control. The frequent identification of place names on map 1 coincides with the east to west reading of the map as parishes become closer to the River Medway, only on the south side of the watercourse below the Thames Estuary. Parishes named include Milton, 'Scharpanes Pamon', 'Pinarven', Upton (with church symbol), Chattam (with church) and Rochester (with church,). Along the Thames coast from Rochester, identified on the map as Milton (Milton-next-Gravesend), 'Gravesant' (Gravesend), Norfleet, Broadeness, 'Darfora' (Dartford), Erith and Greatenbrech. On the northern side of the Thames, the exact location of particular areas is written in as 'Ranam', 'Barkingreck', 'Galhous', Hookenes, Blackwal and then London, which is written in all capitals within a small image of a walled city. Along the Essex coast, the coastal parishes are written in densely as they line the north of the Thames Estuary. Beginning with 'Fobbing', south Essex, the parishes are written as they are read in a northern direction on the map as 'Skillhaven', Holhaven, Bawfloth, Lechaven, Wakaring (with a church symbol) and Pagalsam (with a church). Place locations are then scattered north including 'Tolsberi', Colehster, Ines (with church), S.Osyes (with church), Harwits (with church), Baldze oste Pasel (with church)

and Castell Oeford (with church on the coast). Written at the bottom of this map is the name of the map maker, 'ger.Bouttate fe'.

Map 2, is slightly smaller than the first map, measuring 6 ¼ inches by 12 inches (please refer to map 5.9). This map shows the invasion of the Dutch on the Medway which took place between the 12th and the 14th of June in 1667. Map 2 shows natural features of the coastal landscape, such as grass areas to show marshland, hills and movement of the sea, as an attempt to more closely detail historical events within their physical context. Map 1 was a general map to place the reader physically into the events as defined in Map 2. The two maps, viewed together, present a story of events through visual rather than textual framework.

Enemy ships are seen as approaching the Island of Sheppey from the northern coast, attacking the Island and then moving down the River Medway while ignoring the Thames Estuary. The ships continue down the Medway, past Upton, Chatham, and Rochester where they appear to begin further sea attacks. There is one unit of men at Upton and one approaching Chatham, where there is a large castle drawn with surrounding buildings. There is also smoke on land and on two ships. There is a large fleet of ships, with smoke from cannon fire, on the water between Rochester and Chatham.

The largest image of the Dutch attack is shown on Sheppey's northern coastline where there were two battles. The first battle was during the Dutch approach to the Medway where they captured Sheerness Fort and the other battle took place on the way back when the Dutch held provisions on the northern half of Sheppey to secure its base in the southeast. Map 2 appears to show both events as simultaneous with a huge fire at the position of Sheerness and also in the regrouping of men in military position on the Island. In contrast with the northern occupation of the Dutch on Sheppey, the southern half of the Islands at the Island of Harty show a more pastoral view of island life with the rounding up of sheep in the attempt to preserve what remained of economic stability during a time of invasion. Four men at Harty are shown amongst the livestock in addition to the mill, suggesting everyday inhabitation of the Islands by local people. In addition, the Island of Harty, is the only location where the working and grazing of the land is illustrated by the mapmaker.

Around Kent and along the Thames Estuary, fear of the Dutch was prevalent, just as it was in 1588 concerning the Spanish Armada. In Sheerness, on Sheppey, people fled the town and ships were seen along the Thames carrying various people away with their goods.⁵¹ The taking of Sheerness Fort by the Dutch was perhaps relatively simple since there were no great number of individuals to defend it and military support was not adequately provided for by the Crown in addition to the ruinous castle as Queenborough destroyed during the Commonwealth.

In the popular imagination of these mapmakers, from Saxton to Bouttate, Sheppey's story was one of a narrative military history. The perception of the Islands of Sheppey is that they were bounded spaces of fortification to protect the wider realm. Therefore, the depiction of a raging battle in 1666 was dramatic and communicated the fear of the mapmaker's popular imagination of an island ablaze – starting with Sheppey and perhaps continuing onto London and the rest of England.

Over a hundred years earlier, representatives of the Crown, such as Edward Hoby noticed that the Islands of Sheppey appeared to be held in tension with two separate interests reigning over the inhabitants, these being military expectations and also the daily toll of everyday life amongst local inhabitants to sustain their livelihoods. Upon visitation of the Isle of Sheppey by Edward Hoby of the Privy Council and nephew to Lord Burghley, treasure of England, in 1583, he noted with pleasure his visit to Sheppey after local people had been militarily trained impending the threat of a Spanish invasion:

‘where we have therein made offer of our selves, to see our new mustered Sheppey souldiours...well taught and trayned up to the use and handling of their severall sortes of weapons, at suche times as we shalbe therunto by then...’⁵²

Edward Hoby, as a Crown representative, praised the military strategies which were put in place on the Island of Sheppey; however, the second half of Hoby's report carried a different tone, revealing his concern for the inhabitants of the Island and the

⁵¹ Samuel Pepys in his diary account for the 10th of June 1667 recorded that in particular Sheerness and Gravesend witnessed the exodus of local people as they fled in fear of the Dutch. See R.Latham and W.Matthews, eds., *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: 1667* (London, 1995), p.172.

⁵² BL Lansdowne MS. 42, f.11.

impact the defensive programmes might be having on the well-being of everyday life on the Isles:

‘...And wheras lately divers the poore inhabitantes of this Isle have been greatly oppressed with the loss of their lambes, capons, hennes, chikins, and suche ordinary provisions of householde, by her Majesties takers, the breading of theis being the greatest parte of some of their livinges because I have alwaies found them willing to abide, whatsoever chardge was layed upon them for the furtheranuce of her Majesties service, and that if they sustayne by few more the like losses, they shall not be able to maintaine that furniture with now they do; this are in their behalfe most humbly to beseeche your honour, to take some speedy order for the redresse therof, and that no inhabitante within this Isle, may be herafter pressed for any the said provisions, unless he occupy 300 acres of fresh land within the same at the least.’⁵³

The Islands of Sheppey were exploited by the government in more ways than one – the depiction of their Islands was politically motivated and their small ‘provisions of household’ were used by ‘her Majesties takers’ upon their visits to the Island. Hoby relates how it was the poor inhabitants of the islands which suffered the most and made a plea for those with larger landholdings of at least 300 acres to oblige with Crown interests instead of the poor. The only problem with this proposal is that most of the inhabitants of the Islands of Sheppey did not own that much acreage in freehold land or property, as found within surviving will evidence. The inhabitants of the Islands of Sheppey were exploited and vulnerable due to their physical position to London which consequently impacted their daily lives. This was visually detailed and narrated within the Dutch invasion maps of 1666. Islanders were expected by the Crown to protect the realm as righteous citizens; however, they were ill trained for the role. In addition, the suggestion

⁵³ BL Lansdowne MS 42, f.11.

by Hoby to limit the requirements of military responsibility to those who occupied more than 300 acres of fresh land prompted another survey of Island provisions.⁵⁴ Forty-one individuals, excluding ecclesiastical landlords, living mostly in Kent, Essex or London were recorded as owning approximately 12,539 acres of the Islands of Sheppey, more than half of the 22,000 total acres of the Islands of Sheppey, Elmley and Harty inclusively. From the survey list of names, only one of the individuals possessing 300 acres or more on Sheppey actually lived on the Islands; most landowners left their tenants in charge of running their estates.⁵⁵

Although Hoby's survey was designed to assist local people by having the wealthier land owners pay taxes necessary for Sheppey's defensive provisions, local islanders were still the victims of foreign invasion on their own soil and there is no evidence that provisions were made as intended. In addition, individuals that possessed the majority of island land did so purely for economic reasons leaving the local economy and the people of the Islands to gain little for themselves, similar to the unwelcome intrusions of expected military duties. The little land and property that testators referred to within their wills was explicitly described and named to ensure that the little they had went precisely, without dispute, to the intended recipients listed within their wills. Therefore, wills record the anxiety of testate parishioners, living on the Islands of Sheppey, in their final desperation to secure the futures of the family they are about to leave behind after their death.

Amongst the wealthy Island inhabitants, such as the Cheneys at Shurland Manor, the personal and domestic security in place to protect these areas often exceeded the overall count of arms or weapons that ordinary Islanders held in their possession.⁵⁶ Shurland House had an armoury of 25 muskets, 50 pikes, and 40 harberdiers, with 40 able men whilst the entire parish of Eastchurch held 24 calivers and 35 bills with a total of 49 able men.⁵⁷ Minster, the largest parish on Sheppey, only counted 100 able men, 74 calivers and 74 bills.⁵⁸ Shurland House was the only area with a complete inventory of able men and the largest range of weapons.

⁵⁴ BL Lansdowne MS 42, no.12-13.

⁵⁵ This man was John Seger of Eastchurch. See BL Lansdowne MS 42, no.12-13, p.28.

⁵⁶ BL Lansdowne MS 42, xlii, f.10.

⁵⁷ BL Lansdowne MS 42, xlii, f.10.

⁵⁸ BL Lansdowne MS 42, xlii, f.10.

The serious implications of the Crown's military agenda on the Island of Sheppey inhabitants is further shown when the proposed Queenborough and Minster fortifications are examined in detail. Queenborough was already unique and advanced in its fortification construction by the fourteenth century, when it was built. The castle contained outer, circular walls surrounded by a moat with main gate and an inner bailey which was also thought to have been moated again from the inner courtyard area.⁵⁹ However, the blueprint of fortifications around specific areas of interest, including additional fortifications around Queenborough castle, highlight the scale of planning the Crown engaged in to secure London's safety, at the expense of Sheppey's islanders.

These fortification maps were flat, one-dimensional images, in black and white. Around c.1580, at the time of the Spanish threat of invasion to England, Minster village was to be protected by invasion as a stronghold for local able men to position themselves in case of attack on the Island. A map of flat perspective shows a fortified Minster village within a star-shaped fortification surrounded by a circular, flower-shaped water moat with a draw bridge (please refer to Map 5.10).⁶⁰ Another fortification map, similar in scope to the Minster fortification map is the proposed fortification of Queenborough castle (please refer to Map 5.11).⁶¹ The castle is drawn to a small scale surrounded by a very large star-shaped moat with two drawbridges at 2 o'clock and 6 o'clock. The fortifications proposed within these maps never became a reality. However, their planning suggests the serious measures taken within the Crown's military agenda.

VI. Map surveys and the socialisation of the island landscape

The new trend in early modern surveying of large estates produced a new type of map from c.1500. As discussed in Chapter 2, details of both the physical and socialised landscape of a locality were selectively drawn and constructed in a visual form in such a way which had never before been experienced in map making. In addition, the concept of the survey map design was not only fashionable but also beginning to be seen as an objective documentation of an individual's landholding inventory. This type of survey

⁵⁹ R.A.Brown, *English Medieval Castles* (London, 1954), p.93-94.

⁶⁰ NA MPF 9. Suggested dates for this map are approximately c.1580 - 1582.

⁶¹ NA MPF 7. Suggested dates for this map are approximately c.1580 - 1582.

combined both cartographic and written details and evolved from Fitzherbert's ideals that any honorable landowner 'maynteyned' a full knowledge of all aspects of economic profit.⁶² Regardless of the momentum of social change taking place in Tudor England, transformations specific to cartographic representations and economics are identifiable within the complex spatial accounting of the Islands of Sheppey.⁶³ Two surveys of estate and tenant housing on Sheppey were produced between c.1570 and 1579 which not only show the land and buildings of larger estates for which the maps were commissioned but also the correlation between these estates and other housing and natural features of the landscape.⁶⁴ Tenant housing, larger estates and the surrounding physical landscape are named and identified in text throughout both survey maps in addition to the images of buildings, additional symbols and keys which will be discussed further in this section. Different types of land including pasture, woodland and parkland are also distinctively defined in the second map to be discussed, the Cheney land survey, where visual boundaries are constructed in relation to other estates and smaller land holdings presenting a virtual snapshot of the local Island landscape around c.1570-1580.

The first map to be produced showing the whole of the Islands of Sheppey as one group of islands was produced in approximately 1574, by an unknown mapmaker, and appears to be a draft copy in a black and white drawing (please refer to Map 5.12).⁶⁵ The map measures approximately 8 ½ inches by 12 inches and is closely related to the second map to be discussed within this section, the fine and detailed copy of the Cheney land survey map. The similarity in dates between the two maps, catalogued as being two years apart, contain the same information about tenant housing on the Islands with other similar details included such as the names of specific creeks and landmarks, such as the parish churches. In addition, this black and white drawn map also displays tenant or freehold family names in the precise position of their dwelling places which are written from top

⁶² J. Fitzherbert, *The Boke of Surveying and Improvements* (London, 1523), f.55.

⁶³ A. McRae has suggested that by 1567, when the final publication of Fitzherbert's *The Boke of Surveying* was published, swift changes economically and in surveying prompted an awareness of greater land management by individual landlords. See A. McRae, *God Speed the Plough* (Cambridge, 1996), p.173.

⁶⁴ The dates provided are approximate since the first map to be discussed within this section appears to be related to the other copy of the Cheney land survey due to the similar information and views between each map. The first map has a cataloged date of c.1574 in the British Library whilst the second map has an approximate catalog date of c.1572 however land sold by Lord Cheney of Shurland Manor, Sheppey to the Crown was not officially recorded until the 6th of May 1579 [NA C66/1177]. Land on Sheppey was being considered for purchase by the Crown in 1576 [NA C66/1148].

to bottom, east to west, just as the names are positioned in the Cheney land survey map. It would appear that the draft black and white drawing, produced before the colour map of Cheney's landholdings to record the names and locations of tenant families, was nevertheless a visual inventory of land and property for sale to the Crown in c.1576. This map may have been commissioned by Lord Henry Cheney for his official use. Although Cheney worked for the Crown, it was Shurland Manor, with its park, lodge, chapel and various other building complexes and land, which was the symbol of family heritage and status. Gentry families who frequented London on official duties often maintained bonds and the 'strongest loyalty to their own counties.'⁶⁶ The quality aesthetics of both colour and detail are synonymous with a personal placial pride, reflecting Cheney's power and influence in shaping not only a view of his landholdings but the communities that were attached to, and part of, the Islands as a whole, including Shurland Manor.⁶⁷ It is precisely this 'painted paper' which may have distanced the farmer from the landowner; however, the careful mapping of families to places presents interesting aspects of inclusion otherwise uncommon on a survey map.⁶⁸

Family names dominate the Cheney survey map of the Islands, particularly Sheppey and Harty, and are densely written, appearing to overlap each other particularly within the densely-settled northern half of the Island of Sheppey. There are no boundaries marking the extent of field or park land, nor are there any routes or roads. However, beacons, parish churches including the Minster, Queenborough Castle, Shurland Manor and park, and two mills on Sheppey, suggest that their identification on the map was to serve as landmarks to the position of family dwellings.

The naming of physical landscape features in addition to the landmarks mentioned above assists the reading and interpretation of place in association with family housing on the Islands of Sheppey. Natural features which are named are predominantly sea based to

⁶⁵ BL Cotton MS Augustus I.i.51, c.1574.

⁶⁶ J.B.Harley, *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the history of Cartography* ed. by P.Laxton (London, 2001), p.128. Also see J.V.Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England, 1160-1914* (Oxford, 1986), chapters 3 and 10 in which Beckett claims that bonds between the gentry and their counties were based on marriage and property.

⁶⁷ G.King in *Mapping Reality: An Exploration of Cultural Cartographies* (Basingstoke, 1996), p.21 has suggested that 'maps have the power to shape our view of the world as well as to reflect it.'

⁶⁸ One of John Norden's farmers in his *Surveyor's Dialogue* refers to land surveys as a 'map for the Lord to look vpon, better then a painted paper' and 'what is he the better to see if laid out in colours? He can adde nothing to his land, nor diminish ours.' (London, 1607), p.15.

initially assist the position of place from the sea or Swale route approach to any of the Islands. On approaching the mainland or Islands by sea, these routes are clearly identified and named creeks which have been precisely drawn in the map including mainland creeks such as Faversham and Milton Creek, 'Wades Dyche', 'Chyde Breake', 'Burnhouse Krek', 'Chedney Kreak' and then the entrance to the River Medway just below Queenborough. The various creeks clearly visible around the Islands' shore include separate and distinctive sea approaches to each of the Islands such as 'straw creek' and 'stork creek' around the Island of Elmley and unnamed water courses towards the Island of Sheppey's Eastchurch marshland and around the fresh marshes of the Island of Harty. However, the Island of Sheppey contained the King's Ferry to the mainland coast and the Rede ferry which are both drawn just south of Eastchurch parish on the edge of the Islands of Elmley and Harty. Apart from these water routes into the southern portion of the Islands of Sheppey and south of the Swale onto the mainland there are no additional physical landscape features presented within this map.

The names of families on the map function as pictorial images, where they symbolise places associated with a specific meaning. The specific placement of family names in certain locations within the Island landscape shows how these families occupied a precise portion of the landscape with their dwelling. The naming of certain locations with specific families transformed the understanding and interpretation of the physical Island landscape to one that was more cultural and socially experienced and accessible.

In c.1576, the Crown bought various lands and tenements on the Island of Sheppey, including all the land and buildings of Shurland Manor and within the Island of Harty which had been owned by the Cheney family since 1323.⁶⁹ From c.1579, the Crown proceeded to convert the property into a series of tenements with the intention of leasing the land and property to various island families who were willing to defend the island in case of foreign invasion.⁷⁰ This major land transfer prompted the making of a map survey by the Crown which is one of the finest examples of a sixteenth-century detailed visual estate survey of land (please refer to Map 5.13).⁷¹ In addition to the

⁶⁹ See Hasted, Kent, vol.6, p.248 for history of the Cheney marriage into the de Shurland family of the Island of Sheppey.

⁷⁰ NA C66/1148; 1177; 1188; 1209; 1216; 1220; 1221

⁷¹ The map reference is NA MPF 240. Also see P.D.A.Harvey, *Maps in Tudor England* (London, 1993), Chapter five, 'Maps and Landed Estates', pp.78-93, for more information on estate survey maps.

visual land survey of acquired Cheney land and property to be leased, other documentation dating between c.1576 and c.1579 pertaining to the sale of Cheney's land contains information relevant to the estate map.⁷² The estate map provided a visual inventory of people and families on the Islands of Sheppey landscape, particularly in association with other individual landholdings on the Islands and their precise location.

The Cheney property survey map measures 2 foot by 2 foot and is therefore the largest map and estate survey produced of the Islands of Sheppey within the early modern period.⁷³ The mapmaker presents a prescription for reading the survey as is described by a box with a key to the map's symbols located to the bottom left side of the map. The key states that 'L:CH:' is the symbol used for 'places where they be signified the Lord Cheyneys houses and lands'. This is how the map is organised by the map producer, who does not identify himself except through the monogram 'IM' at the bottom right corner of the map. 'L:CH:' is written below or above an individual building on the map which resembles a small house and after the L:CH is the name of the tenant family usually at the opposite side, above or below 'L:CH' such as in the example below:



Not all houses and dwellings have this key above or below their picture. Some houses are in clusters with the names of the property owners written above the houses with no key providing early modern settlement information of the northern Sheppey coastal areas which may not have been intentional by the mapmaker. The houses pictured with their family affiliation or ownership, in addition to the inventory of properties belonging to the Cheney family, were small and densely drawn in the map between Minster and Warden parishes. Testamentary material has confirmed the location

⁷² *Calendar of Patent Rolls (NA C66)* include estimated dates between c.1576 and c.1579. See NA C66/1148, c.1576; m.37: 'lands considered on Sheppey, bargained and sold to the Crown by HL Cheney, 'at his request'.

⁷³ No maps of Sheppey survive from before c.1570. The later Mackenzie map, discussed in the previous section on maps of the Swale, dated c.1780 and measured 3 foot, 1 inch across by 3 foot, 9 ½ inches long.

land transfer between the Cheney's and the Crown. The water routes are also named and identified as 'water myll creek' along the divide between the Islands of Elmley and Sheppey. In addition, the organisation of trees follow a prescriptive pattern close to individual family dwellings and within formations to suggest boundaries such as that shown in the picture above and around larger houses next to the Minster such as 'Longe', 'M Askew', 'Pe:Busy' and 'Th:Kyngsdon'.

In addition, the landscape had been mapped in such a way that views of the main road system linking the Island parishes and smaller hamlets had been drawn into the collection of housing settlement. This information provides knowledge about Island transportation and the general route of traffic across the Island of Sheppey, particularly west to east in the north over many hamlets, and also including the route from these areas to the south of the Island to the mainland via the King's Ferry. The road through Minster crossed directly by the main entrance to the Minster monastery complex and through the north of the village towards Eastchurch after passing through Minster hamlets or 'borows'. Upon approaching Eastchurch, travel could resume past the church and continue to Shurland Manor where the route mapped ceased to exist, or continue east towards Leysdown or north of Eastchurch to Warden.

Natural landscape features, such as trees and hills, are represented as socialised spaces through their naming on the map. This takes the purpose of a landmark feature comparable with that of parish churches and mills which also functioned as a navigational symbols, to locate specific places on the Islands of Sheppey. These were all relevant to precisely locating Cheney's land holdings and the land and dwelling of other freehold property owners in relation to Cheney's. However, similar to the landmarked buildings along the river Swale in c.1525, the named spaces on the Cheney survey map record a peopled landscape.

The survey map demonstrates the correlation between family identity and place identity. Families became representational of the houses themselves, defining the existence of the house and also of the family. This is similar to Bestard-Camps study of household and family in Formentera where she found that there was no difference between house as building and house as family unit. Families on the Cheney map were called houses or buildings and identified by the image of a house or dwelling in

association with the family name.⁷⁵ The house as a 'social representation is a balance between the ownership of patrimonial possessions and the prestige that the family has to maintain within the community.'⁷⁶ Sheppey families are represented as names of houses such as Carden, Clynton, Jacob, Osborn, Seger and Ruffin, to name just a few out of the sixty named houses and locations on the Cheney survey map. Island of Harty family and house names included Cardon, Craley, Ambrose, Blackburn, Gregot, Larkyn, Bellyng, Napleton, Elyat, Parmour, Neve and Ambros. Larger houses and more prominently written family names on the map such as 'Nutts', 'Elliot's', 'Larkin', 'Norwood' and 'Segar' all names of ancient families on the Island who could be traced to the earliest lay subsidies from the fourteen century.

The Island of Elmley is shown as having a house called 'Stork house' with 'Cromers' written right at the water's edge, mid Isle, which defines the ownership of the house and the whole of the Island's marshland. The Cromer family did not live on Elmley but on the mainland coast in Teynham parish; however, this identification of the family with Elmley became part of the system of identifying specific places on the Island which is synonymous with the family. Specific places or houses associated with named families blurred the seigniorial and administrative parish and smaller settlement boundaries. Small individual landholdings pictured strategically on the Cheney survey map extend over borough and parish boundaries without mention of their jurisdictional boundaries. In addition, the overall map's utilization of houses to signal family suggests a unique history associating family with landscape history. Individual family histories are mapped to the land through a coding system that not only allowed Cheney to locate his tenants but also revealed their place in the world, and ultimately their relationship to places and to the map.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ J.Bestard-Camps, *What's In a Relative: Household and Family in Formentera*, translated by R.Pitt (Oxford, 1991), p.5.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p.138.

⁷⁷ D.Wood, *The Power of Maps* (London, 1992),p.2 and 132. D.Wood has stated that 'maps are about relationships' which is revealed through signs and codes within the mapping process, p.135.

VII. Conclusion

A survey of chorography and maps of the Islands of Sheppey show various experiences of the landscape which were not always indigenous. Those narrating a topographical account or mapping the Islands of Sheppey, and the surrounding sea routes, were mostly interested in affirming national identity through historical genealogies or they were employed by the Crown to validate the Islands' military significance. Fear of foreign invasion left the Islanders at the mercy of Crown objectives whilst the physical and prominent position of the Islands at the entrance to the Thames estuary made them vulnerable to attack and occupation. The Islands were small enough to take over yet large enough to easily hold a small army for regrouping.

The impact of the Islands' natural geography prompted a military and strategic response to the place of the Islands by the Crown which continually tried to map both the real and imagined on the Islands. The maps of defenses and those of battles, made between 1580 and 1666, presented a gauge for both the state of readiness of the Islands and the fear of the government of a foreign attack, which would take over not only the Islands of Sheppey but eventually the British Isles.

The visual survey maps of large estates became surveys of people and their homes within the Islands, especially the Island of Sheppey. Furthermore, the estate map of Cheney landholdings in particular became a cognitive reconstruction of the settlement systems in place within the islands, particularly land and sea routes and the density of hamlet populations. Without the identification of who peopled the landscape of the Islands there would be no true indication of the overall diversity and quantity of land or structural property on the Islands of Sheppey, particular to the north of Sheppey.

Fundamentally, this Chapter provides an overview of an Island landscape exploited and in tension by the demands of others on local communities. The maps of the Islands of Sheppey reveal how greater political and economic agendas were visualised, and in their production exploited notions of place which were deemed real by the chorographers and map makers. This conflicted with Island inhabitants and their needs, as recorded in Hoby's survey in 1583, and is further revealed within testamentary material left by Island inhabitants.

Chapter Six

Descriptions of local places on the Islands of Sheppey

I. Introduction

This chapter will examine the detailed textual descriptions of places found in individual last wills and testaments from parishioners living within the Islands of Sheppey from between c.1400 to c.1560.¹ These descriptions of place provide valuable information about how places were defined, named and mapped within a local landscape by those who lived and worked within it. This chapter will show how the Islands of Sheppey and its various settlements were named 'in response to the decisions of ordinary people, acting on their own initiative rather than in response to orders from above.'² Furthermore, the naming of places by inhabitants of the islands also revealed their own unique relationship with the landscape, both individually and collectively.

Will evidence has frequently been contested by social and landscape historians who have overlooked how the individual will, when examined closely, provides valuable information about the nature of small, freehold landholdings.³ Previous chapters in this thesis have already revealed the religious relationship people had with important sacred sites. Furthermore, will evidence also maps land in textual terms, which describes and locates landholdings and their size and names smaller areas of land, such as crofts and fields, which otherwise would not have been identified in other historical records. The

¹ Wills have been examined from the Probate Registers of the Archdeaconry, Consistory, and Prerogative Courts of Canterbury. Archdeaconry and Consistory Probate records are held at the Canterbury Cathedral Archives and the Prerogative Court wills are held at the National Archives (NA) at Kew. In addition, the will of William Cheney, dated 1441, has been published in the *Registers of Archbishop Chichele*, vol.2, p.584. More details, such as will numbers, will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

² C.Dyer stated in his book *Everyday Life in Medieval England* (London, 1994), p.xiv, that landscapes and settlements 'were formed in response to the decisions of ordinary people, acting on their own initiative rather than in response to orders from above'

³ For the debate on the reliability of the will in describing important information for settlement history analysis see: C.Burgess, 'By Wic and by Dead': Wills and Pious Provision in late Medieval Bristol'; C.Marsh, 'In the Name of God? Will-Making and Faith in Early Modern England' in G.Martin and P.Spufford, eds., *The Records of the Nation* (Woodbridge, 1990); Hey, D, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History* (Oxford, 1996), p.495. A variety of successful research into religious and social history using the will as the primary source of evidence for research may be found within the following studies: R.Lutton, 'Heterodox and Orthodox Piety in Tenterden' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Kent at Canterbury, 1997); S.Sweetinburge, 'The Role of the Hospital in Medieval Kent, c.1080-1560', (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, UKC, 1998); L.Bowdon, 'People of Property' (Unpublished MA dissertation, UKC, 1998).

reliability of the last will and testament as a valuable source of information about individuals and communities has been questioned; however, Salter's recent work has highlighted its personal nature and its plentiful survival as a historical record, yet sadly it is not researched enough.⁴ It is the intention of this Chapter, and the next two Chapters, to reveal just how valuable testamentary sources are within historical research. In addition to this, wills provide evidence which would be otherwise unobtainable about the nature of inheritance patterns within a local area and its possible impact on other social systems including kin relationships within a locality. Wills surviving from the Island of Sheppey, specifically, contain detailed descriptions and references to named land, boundaries, streets, hamlets, fields and other physical places. When compared with other Kentish coastal, and predominantly marshland, parishes, including Milton, Iwade, Murston, Luddenham, Tonge, Teynham and Oare, the evidence from Sheppey suggests that distinctive place naming systems were used to organise and locate places, whilst also assisting with navigational reading of a specific position of land or structural property.

II. The will-making population on the Islands of Sheppey

A close reading of over 1,452 wills from the Islands of Sheppey and the mainland coastal parishes have been examined for research within this chapter and specifically for the case studies in Chapter 8.⁵ This figure includes 300 wills which have been examined from all Sheppey parishes inclusively for the period c.1400 to c.1560 including one will from an Island of Elmley testator in c.1512 and including the Island of Harty which only had 44 surviving wills from this same period.

It is extremely difficult to ascertain the portion of society which is represented by the surviving will evidence from the Islands of Sheppey or any other location which does not have clearly documented population figures. However, the will-making population

⁴ E.Salter, *Cultural Creativity in the Early English Renaissance: Popular Culture in Town and Country* (Basingstoke, 2006), p.13 and 15.

⁵ The Kentish mainland coastal parishes studied include the following parishes and their total number of wills surviving between c.1400 to c.1560 from the Archdeaconry, Consistory and Prerogative Courts of Canterbury: Milton (201), Iwade (29), Murston (25), Luddenham (32), Tonge (23), Teynham (82), Oare (43), Graveney (69), Sittingbourne (174), Davington (7), Preston-next-Faversham (11), Stone-next-Faversham (4), and Faversham Town (452) which is not considered a coastal parish however it was the closest and largest urban area to the Islands of Sheppey.

was not only reserved for the elite or landowners but a broad range of society usually having distinctively local differences in the types of individuals who may have left a will.⁶ Testators or testatrix from the Islands of Sheppey were mostly from the rural parishes of Minster and Eastchurch with those holding small amounts of freehold property most likely to have left a will than the poorer and sometimes wealthier populace of the islands.⁷ In the sixteenth century, in some regions of the country, it was found that small landholders, or those with no land, were most likely to leave a will with nearly two-thirds or 64 per cent of those with under two acres of arable land or landless leaving a will compared with 21 per cent of those with half-yardland or over leaving a will.⁸ It would appear that a testator or testatrix intended their will to provide clear instructions for the insurance of future family profits from the small amount of land they did own.

III. Patterns of described land and structural property: The islands and the mainland

The naming and/or description of land and property recorded within wills is indicative of pre-mortem social processes already at work within the community. What is meant by structural property descriptions includes the explicit reference in a will of tenements, barns, farms, messuages, houses, spaces referred to as 'places', unspecified buildings which were only identified by a name, or unspecified types of land also identified by testators or testatrix by name or location of the land or property. The naming or describing of land and/or structural property within a will, at the critical and crucial moment at the end of the lifecycle, serves as a recalling and reclaiming of land or structural property for purposes of reiteration and reconfirmation of personal possession to ensure their successful inheritance. It is through the detailed directional phrases within wills that the use of land, with relation to its position and in connection with named individual owners, be witnessed as in process and in continuity.

⁶ R.T.Vann, 'Wills and the Family in an English Town: Banbury, 1550-1800' in *JFH*, vol.4 (1979), pp.346-367, p.348.

⁷ Individuals in possession of less than 2 acres of land or with 'parcels' of land represented 75 per cent of island will makers. Prominent Queenborough townsmen and women often did not leave a will compared to those living in Minster or Eastchurch parishes.

⁸ This evidence comes from Cambridgeshire. See M.Spufford, 'Peasant Inheritance Customs and Land Distribution in Cambridgeshire from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries' in J.Goody, J.Thirsk, E.P.Thompson (eds.), *Family and Inheritance* (Cambridge, 1976), pp.156-176, p.170.

Sheppey's testamentary evidence has been compared with surviving wills from Milton parishioners. Milton was the largest and most geologically similar parish, closest to the Island of Sheppey, and also the only parish with the highest number of wills surviving from any group of mainland or coastal Kentish parishes.⁹ Milton's social organisation included both rural and town settlement similar to the Island of Sheppey, including both high and low ground and extensive fresh and salt marshes. All direct references to land or structural property represents that which was intended to be inherited through postmortem inheritance. Whether or not the land or property was transferred to the intended recipient is not considered within this thesis, only the intentions of the individual making the will are relevant for this study. Also, the transference of land or property exchanged through pre-mortem systems of inheritance, such as that granted through the form of a deed or charter, is not examined within this thesis. This Chapter examines how the naming and describing of land or structural property textually mapped and socialised the landscape of the Islands of Sheppey through inheritance and also in a form not otherwise conceived by visual maps.

Will evidence shows that the transference of land through the use of a last will and testament, in post-mortem giving, was popular for at least 65 per cent of will makers on the Islands of Sheppey. 58 per cent of island wills contain descriptions of land or property within bequests. Furthermore, the nature of described land or property bequests did not reflect the importance of the land or structural property in terms of the size of the holding which usually ranged from one acre to forty acres. The specific naming or locating of landed property in a descriptive textual form within the wills was a greater reflection of the importance of this land or property to the testator or testatrix in securing the economic future and stability of family. The importance of identifying or naming small freehold land or property is reflected within the 307 different and specific descriptions of land and structural property found within wills, with less than 2 per cent

⁹ Wills surviving from mainland coastal parishes between c.1400 and c.1560 include the following: Iwade parish - 29 wills; Murston parish - 25 wills; Luddenham -32 wills; Tonge - 23 wills; Teynham - 82 wills; Oare - 43 wills; Graveney - 69 wills; Sittingbourne - 174 wills; Davington - 7 wills; Preston-next-Faversham - 11, Stone-next-Faversham - 4 wills. Due to the low number of wills surviving from each parish, they have been excluded from the study in this chapter.

of these specific descriptions being repeated by more than one individual will maker or spanning over ten common description categories found within the wills. Therefore, naming and giving was intrinsically complex and varied by each generation.

In comparison with the Sheppey figures, a similar set of figures from Milton reflects the high number of will makers who used their last will and testament to include freehold land or structural property bequests. However, the degree of specifically described land or property within that parish was not the same as that found within the Island of Sheppey parishes. Overall, Island of Sheppey inhabitants were more likely to leave a detailed or specific description of their land or property within their wills than Kentish mainland inhabitants. Bequests of land or structural property were found in over 60 per cent of Sheppey and Milton wills whilst only 30 to 34 per cent of Sheppey and Milton testators did not include any land or structural property bequests. A total of exactly 38 per cent of Sheppey and Milton wills include described land or property amongst the list of bequests found within individual wills.

A major difference within the figures for both areas is in the total number of described land or property found amongst the bequests. Sheppey testators used over 350 different descriptions for their land or property within bequests whilst only 115 different descriptions were found within Milton wills, with one less descriptonal category type than Sheppey. In addition, different descriptions of land or property bequests for Sheppey fell under several categories where for example, one house could have been described in ways which were multi-dimensional representing various categories within one description. For example, a house of Thomas Randall, the elder of Minster, in 1532, was bequeathed in addition to an unspecified quantity of land. The location of house and land were described as 'belonging to the west part of the highway lying between the land of Oliver Greg of the south and the land of Simon Brodstrete of the north.'¹⁰ This one description of a house counts as one description of landed property but contains two categories of description types found within wills including a directional phrase and the name and location of a street. Another example of one description of landed property which included multiply categories of identification is that which concerned nineteen

¹⁰ CKS PRC 17/9/243.

acres of land of Richard Lambe of Eastchurch in 1540.¹¹ Lambe's land was called 'Bewokes' and it was 'lying in [the] borowe of Holte in Eastchurch'.¹² This particular description of land has been counted within two categories including the naming of a specific place and the mention of land or places within a borough.

The following Tables 6.1 to 6.2 show the different types of descriptions found within both Sheppey and Milton wills. Overall this figures show how the landscape was constantly evolving and in transition.

TABLE 6.1: Categories of described land or structural property including the total number of descriptions found within bequests from the Island of Sheppey testators and testatrices.

<u>Description type</u>	<u>Total number</u>
Directional	73
Specific places (manors/farms/houses)	70
Family names	67
Crofts/fields	36
Landscape	38
Specific places (hedges/pits/hills)	18
Boroughs	23
Streets	17
Specific places (crosses/mills)	11
Marshes	6
TOTAL	377

TABLE 6.2: Categories of described land or structural property including the total number of descriptions found within bequests from Milton testators and testatrices.

<u>Description type</u>	<u>Total number</u>
Directional	31
Specific places (manors/farms/houses)	24
Family names	2
Crofts	25
Landscape	8
Specific places (hedges/pitts)	0
Boroughs	12
Streets	9
Specific places (crosses/mills)	4
Marshes	0
TOTAL	115

¹¹ Will number CKS PRC 17/23/52.

¹² CKS PRC 17/23/52.

Considering both Sheppey's high number of descriptive references of land or structural property and the frequency of multiple identification types, it is not surprising to find that the Island of Sheppey also had the greatest complexity of settlement. 'Borows' or boroughs were identified by small freehold property owners as Tables 6.3 and 6.4 explain, representing figures for both Sheppey and Milton.

TABLE 6.3: Sheppey boroughs listed within wills and the number of will references found.

<u>Borough</u>	<u>Parish Location</u>	<u>Total number of references within wills</u>
Rithe/Rythe	Eastchurch	1
Holt	Eastchurch	7
Sedon	Eastchurch	3
Wardown	Eastchurch	2
Wardon	Leysdown	1
Ossenden	Minster	9

TABLE 6.4: Milton boroughs listed within wills and the number of will references found.

<u>Borough</u>	<u>Total number of references within wills</u>
Chalkwell	9
Holt	3

Borough references compared here from both Sheppey and Milton indicate settlement variation between the two areas. Sheppey's boroughs were predominantly located within the rural parish of Eastchurch which was densely settled to the north of the Isle of Sheppey. In addition, Eastchurch and the one Minster borough of Ossenden were all bound together from west to east on both the north and south side of the major road leading from Minster Abbey to Eastchurch parish church. The references to boroughs by small freehold property holders within their bequests are consistent with court roll descriptions of rents paid by tenants, which were also strategically organised by borough on the island rather than parish. Overall, the level of detailed references found within Sheppey wills suggests a small but densely populated area, therefore differentiation between settlement communities was vital in establishing locality and spatial meaning.

Court rolls and manorial records have traditionally been used for the research of social and economic continuities and changes over time and within regional or county

comparisons. They have rarely been compared with other source material especially individual wills and testaments for organisational comparisons within the context of how they organise people to places. Manorial research has concentrated on the property rights and lord and peasant relationships within a specific, local geography.¹³ However, the Kingsborough and Middleton Court records organise people to specific boroughs and places in a similar form as testators and testatrixes categorise their own land or property.¹⁴ In addition, scribes writing on behalf of those living within the Islands of Sheppey never appeared to refer to individuals being from the Islands but from specific boroughs within the Islands' parishes, particularly the larger parishes. The following court records demonstrate how place functioned, particularly the boroughs, as a social organising tool for collecting and recording rent for large landowners. In addition, this social organisation was later exploited by will makers in order to identify their own freehold property to ensure its inheritance.

The jurisdictional use of the borough boundaries appears to be highly complex on the Isle of Sheppey particularly within the Kingsborough Court Records and that of the Middleton Manor Court Rolls for Milton Hundred. These records exclude Leysdown parish since it was part of the inventory of land belonging to Christ Church Priory Canterbury, however Middleton and Kingsborough does include the Isle of Elmley within its jurisdictional organisation. The identification of people within a borough, found within documents, appeared to assist officials with more accurate identification of places on the Island of Sheppey and, in addition, a strategy of categorising rents paid on the Island of Sheppey. However, the Cheyney survey which visually mapped the Islands of Sheppey did not locate individual dwellings by boroughs therefore the categorising of individuals by borough was not always necessary. The identification of rents paid by

¹³ See C.Dyer, *Everyday Life in Medieval England* (London, 1994) for discussion on the beneficial use of manorial court rolls in researching aspects of daily life.

¹⁴ For more information on evidence found within manorial records, see J.Thirsk, *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* (Cambridge, 1967); M.M.Postan, *Medieval Economy and Society* (Aylesbury, 1972); S.H.Rigby, *English Society in the Later Middle Ages* (Basingstoke, 1995); C.Dyer, *Everyday Life in Medieval England* (London, 1994); C.Dyer, *Lords and Peasants in a Changing Society: The Estates of the Bishopric of Worcester, 680 - 1540* (Cambridge, 1980).

tenants within a specific 'borough' of a densely settled area of the Island of Sheppey as that between Minster and Eastchurch parish, suggests the need to organise people by places more accurately than that provided by the parochial organisation traditionally established by the end of the Middle Ages. In addition, the ancient boundary identification of people dwelling within a 'burg' structure also identifies how ancient nucleated settlements on the Island of Sheppey were not lost at the end of the Middle Ages.

Kingsborough Court was unusual since Kingsborough was a manor and also held a court for the election of the ferry warden to the King's Ferry and for the election of the ferry men to assist the warden. In addition, Kingsborough manor contained marshland which paid for the upkeep of the King's Ferry. The recording of various repairs to the ferry itself and the ferry house was also recorded within the court rolls. Kingsborough manor and court was within Eastchurch, however the boroughs which appeared to fall under its jurisdiction were within Minster parish as well as Eastchurch within a densely settled area. The high number of farmsteads and hamlets, also known as 'burgs', surrounding the Kingsborough manor, could indicate an ancient woodland area cleared by the Middle Ages.¹⁵ In addition, Kingsborough manor could have been a major legal and administrative centre since before the rise of the fourteenth century town, 'boroughs' were created to provide security and to house garrisons, which were then established as centres of trade and economic interest.¹⁶ By the sixteenth century, the primary function of the Kingsborough court was to attend to the requirements of the King's Ferry on behalf of the whole of the Island of Sheppey yet the recording of rents was still organised in an old traditional style of identifying people by boroughs or hamlets within the parishes of Eastchurch and Minster.

In the Kingsborough Court record of 1546, the boroughs of Sheppey were written in the left hand margin. To the right of these borough subheadings was the relevant information pertaining to fines, rents, and elections. The boroughs listed within this court roll were written as follows, from top to bottom: 'the borough of Ossenden,'¹⁷ 'the

¹⁵ C.Lewis, P.Mitchell-Fox, and C.Dyer, *Village, Hamlet and Field* (Manchester, 1997), p.130.

¹⁶ M.M.Postan, *Medieval Economy and Society* (Aylesbury, 1972), pp.236-237.

¹⁷ Ossenden is in Minster parish, whilst the rest of the boroughs listed were in Eastchurch parish.

borough of Sedon', 'the borough of Ride', 'the borough of Holt' and 'Warden borough'.¹⁸ To the right hand side of each borough is the name of men who were not present at court with the names of the men who were sitting in for them and the names and fines of individuals within each borough subheading. Following this information was the name of the ferry warden and ferry men. Also in the left hand margins, it is written: 'The Ferry Warden' and 'The Ferry Men' with corresponding information written to the right of the subheading. After the names of the new warden and men is the outgoing warden's list of rents.

The purpose of the Kingsborough Court roll was to record rents and fines owed to the ferry, estimate repairs and costs to the maintenance of the ferry, and to elect the new ferry warden. The unintentional organisation of the document, similar to that of the personal will, provides within its textual structure and description of place a map of the boroughs within the parishes of Minster and Eastchurch. There is no significance given to parish location or the location of a borough identified within a specific parish. The borough was the significant identification point to map the organisation and function of the court at Kingsborough.

The rents listed are also interesting since they include names of those who have paid rent on land which is also identified in addition to the amount paid. This further reveals the need by scribes to specifically locate person to area within a densely populated landscape. The land descriptions also present a textual mapping of the land belonging to the King's Ferry which extended south of Eastchurch and Minster parishes and to the Isle of Elmley. The following list of rents are found within the Kingsborough Court where they map lands within the central to southern half of the Isle of Sheppey into the Isle of Elmley, and individuals from other manors or boroughs who are renting land belonging to the King's Ferry:

¹⁸ CKS U47/2/M4, Kingsborough Court, c.1546.

TABLE 6.5: Kingsborough rents paid in 1546

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rent Paid</u>
Sir Thomas Cheyney	14s od
Master Rodstone for land in Elmley	3s 4d
Thomas Davye for land called Blanketts	2d
William Swalman for land called Stonard	8d
Henry Osborne for land called Puffes	4d
William Abeylle for land at the Harps	4d
Master Thomas Mascoll for land called Hammonce	6d
Thomas Davy for land [of] a Croft	1d ob

Since Kingsborough court involved the whole of the Isle of Sheppey, in terms of its trade and economic stability with a link to the mainland, choosing a ferry warden and men from the inhabitants was important for all islanders, with the whole of the Island of Sheppey involved with the proceedings and affairs of the King's Ferry. Therefore, individuals living within several different places on the Island of Sheppey called for the borough boundaries to distinguish places in connection to individuals. Overall, the Kingsborough court records map the whole of the Isle of Sheppey in terms of the inhabitants' obligation to the maintenance of the King's Ferry while also providing a map of one of the only insights available to the complex and very localised social organisations of places, and the people living within them, on the Island of Sheppey. Furthermore, the Kingsborough court records also account for, and map, the funding via rents paid, of the King's Ferry financial support. Therefore, this document not only maps people to boroughs but also the individuals funding the upkeep of the King's Ferry, whilst also positioning various people to their rented land holdings, crossing over parish and borough boundaries, on both the Islands of Sheppey and Elmley.

Individuals also referred to boroughs within their personal last wills and testaments to precisely locate land or structural property. There did not appear to be an exclusive use of the borough boundary jurisdiction by either landlords or tenants. The description of areas where people lived within the parishes on the Island of Sheppey, in particular, appeared to textually map land or property to borough. This was used more often in will evidence than in any other legal documents. Moreover, the borough

categorising within documents probably assisted officials in identifying where people were dwelling on the Island of Sheppey. However, the borough was also a way to categorise rents paid on Sheppey. The importance of the mapping of boroughs in terms of boundary and the identification of people within distinctive places cannot be underestimated, boroughs were distinctive for local people within their wills.

The categorising of individuals, rents and fines by boroughs is also found within the organisation of the Middleton Manor court rolls which date between 1329 and 1381. In contrast with Sheppey, mainland parishes within the Middleton Hundred only describe the location of people and their rents and fines by the name of the parish.¹⁹ Document number 6, dated c.1329 within the court rolls of Middleton include the rents and fines of individuals which start with the first location written in the left margin as 'Sydingbourn [Sittingbourne, on mainland Kent next to Milton parish]' with the names of individuals written to the right hand side. Some of the mainland parish and subheadings include: 'Bymme', 'Bakechild', 'Mildestede' and 'Tonge'. However, like Kingsborough Court rolls, the subheadings for the Island of Sheppey are not organised by parish, boroughs or hamlets of settlement within the Sheppey parishes. In addition, the layout of the document in terms of the order by which the boroughs are written presents a precise textual map of the exact geographical location of the boroughs on an east to west axis starting from Leysdown to Eastchurch, and then to Minster parishes, ending with the boundary of land owned by the prioress of Minster.

The first borough subheading to be written on the document is 'Wardone' which was within Leysdown parish, next to Warden parish. Listed to the right of this subheading includes eighteen individual names with no sum total of rents paid. The next subheading is 'Rythe' which was located within Eastchurch parish. Under Rythe, are the names and rents listed for three individuals. After Rythe, is the subheading 'Elgie' which was the Island of Elmley, just south of Eastchurch parish. The following subheading, moving east to west, is the borough of 'Holte' which was also within Eastchurch parish. Holt had twelve names written with corresponding rents paid under its subheading. The next borough listed is the borough of 'Ossenden' which was located within Minster parish which listed sixteen names and rents under its subheading. Also within Minster

¹⁹ Middleton Manor Court Rolls: CCAL U15/24/1-6, no.6 described here and dated as c.1329.

parish was the subheading which followed Ossenden, written as 'Libt. Priorisse' with the names of fifteen individuals and their rents paid. After all Sheppey borough subheadings were listed including the names and rents paid, the next line within the document stated the total sum for 'Scapia' (the ancient Anglo-Saxon name for the Island of Sheppey) as 26s 8d.²⁰ The following table shows the total number of names recorded for each borough listed within the rent roll:

TABLE 6.6: Total rents paid organised by borough, c.1329

Borough Name	Total number of names recorded as paying rent
Wardone	18
Rythe	3
Elgie	1
Holte	12
Ossenden	16
Libt. Prioressse	15

When these boroughs listed above are placed within their parishes, the number of names recorded within the rent roll becomes consistent with population figures and similar to the figures which represent the will making population of each parish on the Island of Sheppey.

TABLE 6.7: Total rents paid organised by borough and parish, c.1329

Borough Name	Parish Located	Total names by parish
Wardone	Leysdown	18
Rythe	Eastchurch	-
Holte	Eastchurch	15
Elgie	Isle of Elmley	1
Ossenden	Minster	-
Libt. Prioressse	Minster	31

Despite the early date of the Middleton rent roll at c.1329, the population distribution by parish may also be compared with the survival rate of wills which also reflect that Minster and Eastchurch were the most populated areas on the Isle of Sheppey, and also the most densely populated and most likely to contain defined hamlet settlement. Minster had the largest will making population between 1409 to 1559 (a total of 138 Minster wills

²⁰ CCAL U15/24/6.

survive for this period, excluding 34 wills from Queenborough) while Eastchurch had the second largest will making population (a total of 56 wills survive for the same period as the Minster wills). However, figures for Leysdown are not consistent between the tenant numbers recorded within the rent rolls and the will making population. In 1329, there were approximately 18 tenants paying rent according to the Middleton court rolls, and between 1409 to 1559, there were only 21 total wills surviving suggesting that perhaps there were far more poorer tenants within this parish who did not hold title to their own land or property so the making of a will was not deemed necessary. In addition to Middleton manor having land within Leysdown, Canterbury Christ Church Priory also held land within this parish.

The uniqueness of the Middleton court rolls in terms of their mapping of the social organisation of the parish boroughs within the Island of Sheppey, is best seen within the comparison of other court rolls of Canterbury Christ Church priory concerning their land within Leysdown and the Isle of Harty. Bartoner's rent and court rolls concern lands and a brewery named Bartoner's Court which was located within the Isle of Harty and partially within the Isle of Sheppey at Leysdown. The rent rolls which have survived organise people by their farming yield paid or the rent paid according to the acreage of land within their keeping. There is no mention of boroughs within the Isle of Harty or other settled or named pieces of land or structural property within the rolls, all which date between 1377 and 1550.²¹ In comparison to the mapping of people to specific Sheppey boroughs within the Kingsborough and Middleton court records, Bartoner's court rolls, map people to their rents paid.

Street references found within Sheppey wills also reflect the densely populated northern half of the Island from Minster to Eastchurch, similar to the borough references. An indication of densely settled areas and the higher volume of roads connecting these locations may be found on the Cheyney estate map which contains evidence of the Island road system crossing over parish and borough boundaries.²² Tables 6.8 and 6.9 below

²¹ This includes the rent and court rolls as follows: Isle of Harty, Bartoner's Court rolls, d.1377-1523, CCA U15/17/1-6; Isle of Harty, Bartoner's Rent Rolls, d.1539, CCA U15/17/7; d.1500-1550, CCA U15/122/1-11. Leysdown, Barton Court roll, d.1378-1398, CCA U15/20/3, d.1465-1475 and 1478-79, CCA U15/20/4.

²² Cheyney Map, PRO MPF 240.

show the numbers of street references found within wills for both Sheppey and Milton parishes:

TABLE 6.8: Sheppey streets listed within wills and the number of will references found:

<u>Street</u>	<u>Parish</u>	<u>Total number of references within wills</u>
2 highways in Rithe (1 near the church, 1 near the cross)	Eastchurch	1
King's highway	Minster	2
Minster Street	Minster	6
Minster Street	Eastchurch	1
Windmill Street	Minster	1
Tawinpons Street?	Minster	1
Litis Street	Minster	1
Holmy Street	Eastchurch	1
High Street	Eastchurch	1
Warden Street	Eastchurch	1
Unspecified name (description of street through the naming of land owners on north and south)	Minster	1

TABLE 6.9: Milton streets listed within wills and the number of will references found:

<u>Street</u>	<u>Total number of references within wills</u>
Northstreet	9

Given the above evidence, an area of approximately three miles west from Minster parish approaching eastward to Eastchurch parish, there were nine separate streets linking various settlements within the two parishes. Within the small parish of Milton, there was only one major road which was the only street reference found within wills. In connection with the lack of boroughs found within Milton compared with the Sheppey evidence, and with regard to Milton's predominantly urban communities, the social organisation of the land was not as complex as Sheppey's settlement. In addition, it could be noted that Sheppey had more small freehold land owners on the Island compared with Milton inhabitants.

IV. Wills and the textual mapping of specific places

The following table shows the range of category descriptions found within wills from Sheppey testators and testatrix:

TABLE 6.10: land and property locations and descriptions found within wills

M = located in Minster parish
E = located in Eastchurch parish
L = located in Leysdown parish
W = located in Warden parish

<u>Hedges</u> Holland's Hedge (M)	<u>Pits</u> Stone pit (L) Lome pit (E) Mede pit (M)	<u>Mills</u> Windmill (M) Werymill (M)	<u>Crosses</u> of Boxley Abbey (E) Waysslies Cross (E) Hede Cross (M) Jacob's Cross (M)
<u>Crofts</u> Spere (W) Chollis (E) Rithing woodis (M) Ferry (M) Belors (M) Colyn's (M) Home (E) New (E) Great (M) Bookes by Cliff (W) Brookes (E) West (E) South (M) East (M) North (M) Long (E) Long (M) Hamund (M) Berevuly (W) Digge (M) Stone (M) Bustons (L) Simon's (M) Cocrell's (M) Swale (Q/B)	<u>Fields</u> Hy (W) Small (M) Goors (E) West (E)	<u>Marshes</u> Digge (M) Horne (E) Russhenden (M)	<u>Hills</u> Digges (M) Borstal Style (M) Hunger (M) Chetynden (M) Voutbrosse (M) Cothill (M) Castelake (M) Castlocke (E) Garrades (E) Borow (E) Penagefold (W) Goodales (W) Smith's (L)

Most of the names listed above reveal how places were named after physical landscape or in terms of their directional location such as east, west, south and north. By identifying place-names of crofts such as 'Spere' (enclosure in a wood) in Warden, 'Chollis' (gorge, neck of land) in Eastchurch, 'Brooke' in Warden and Eastchurch, 'Belors' (old river name) in Minster and 'Rithing woodis' (a wood clearing) in Minster, past land usage and woodland clearings become evident. Fields also identify areas of open ground next to woodland and in addition hill names, such as 'borow', usually suggest a grove or small woodland area. All of these types of place-names have been identified in the north of Minster, Eastchurch and Warden parishes; areas particularly identified within Sheppey map evidence and north of the major park land and lodge of Shurland Manor (See Map NA MPF 240 [5.14] in map portfolio).

This landscape was perhaps a major part of Sheppey's ancient significance as a contained and resourceful land, rich in woodland and also pasture land, where the benefits of settlement, in terms of social organisation, could lead to profitable advantages for Ecclesiastical institutions and other large landowners. The place-names as mentioned above have fulfilled a more social function within will and map evidence, where the choice to refer to particular areas by name, once again, suggest land greatly divided and bound with several land owners concerned about securing the future of their family's profits. The land here became a social process where names served as instrumental for the reinstating of claim over small and specific portions of the landscape. Not only do landowners use general place-names as mentioned above but they also make sure of traditional boundary markers such as crosses in order to provide exact location of their property and/or land. No Kentish crosses survive today; however, they either functioned as boundary markers or roadside shrines.²³ The use of crosses to establish ecclesiastical land ownership was common in the early Middle Ages. By the late medieval period crosses were part of local communities and their landscape; used and referred to by individuals for their own private benefit in locating their families land possessions.²⁴ This is particularly relevant to the detailed descriptions found within wills left by

²³ A.Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization*, p.186.

²⁴ Muir, R., *The New Reading the Landscape: Fieldwork in Landscape History* (Exeter, 2000), p.71, 75 and 76.

Sheppey inhabitants of Minster and Eastchurch parish, the largest parishes of the Island. The next section of this chapter presents detailed will case studies to illustrate the strategic nature of textually mapping land and property.

V. Mapping ownership to the land

William Curle of Eastchurch, in 1471, left only one messuage and one parcel of land to his wife Thomasina after his death, but the descriptive location of his personal land and property becomes just as important as the inheritance process of the property.²⁵ William Curle's messuage and land was described as being:

‘in Eastchurch [parish] and the borgh of Rithe near the two highways. One highway near the church at the entrance of Rithe lying east and the road towards the rectoria of Eastchurch next to and near the cross of the Abbot and Convent of Boxley which is called le Wothcrofte’.²⁶

The detailed descriptions within Curle's will of the location of his one messuage with land, also unconsciously mapped the location of his land and property within the context of various landmarks within his area of residence. Curle first identified his land and property within the administrative and jurisdictional bounds of parish and borough and then in connection with the highway. The highways are precisely described in order not to mistake the wrong road since this more populous region of the Isle of Sheppey contained several different routes to and from Minster and within surrounding boroughs.

Another will which locates and maps personal land in association with other land owners of Minster parish is Richard Dobbe's will, written in 1474.²⁷ Dobbe, a parishioner of Minster, bequeathed four acres of land to his son William which he identified by name and by location in connection with land bordering his own which was identified by owner. Dobbe described his four acres of land as follows: ‘four acres of

²⁵ William Curle's will: CKS PRC 17/1/399.

²⁶ William Curle's will: CKS PRC 17/1/399.

²⁷ Richard Dobbe's will, CKS PRC 17/2/291.

land called jooce in Minster parish next to Thomas Ware in the east and to the prioresses of Sheppey to the west and Thomas Pore in the north and Regia Strata in [the] south'. Similar to Curle's will, Dobbe's immediately categorises his land within the parish administrative boundary but also identifies his land by name first while then mapping 'jooce' within a larger framework. Those individuals neighbouring his land are identified by name and therefore mapped within the context of Dobbe's own personal understanding of the place of his land in relation to the land of others which is not named like jooce but rather by owner name. This identification is one method used by Sheppey testators to identify and map their individual land and/or property in accordance with the owners' names of the land which borders their own. The personal significance of ownership in the identification and textual mapping of land or property mirrors that which has been found within the visual estate survey map evidence discussed in Chapter 5.

Island of Sheppey testators did not always identify their property by name of family, nor did they always map the precise location of their property through its boundaries or in connection with the land of others which was identified by the owner's name. It was also common for some testators to use different references to their property within their will, where some property was identified by name, such as that belonging to Richard Dobbe in 1474. Often land was not named but its location was described in great detail and in relation to other people's land. Dobbe's four acres of land called 'Jooce' in Minster parish has been described above; however, it is important to consider how different types of land ownership may have called for different forms of land identification, or land identity may have been dependent on the size of the holding and the type. It is evident that small landholdings were more likely to be named or described in terms of their location next to other small landholdings. Larger areas of land, such as crofts, had several very small sections divided for the benefit of providing additional farming opportunities with greater possibilities for higher yields to supplement the larger and more private section of individual land. This example may be seen within the will of William Gorman of Minster parish, who left his will in 1496, which demonstrates the variety of techniques used by testators in naming and mapping personal land and property, according to type of landholding.

William Gorman held a total of two 'places' and seven and one-half acres and further land of 'three rows'.²⁸ Gorman names his two places as one called 'Litis Strete' which also contained 1 ½ acres of land, and the other place was named as 'Chetynden Hill' which also contained two acres of land. It could be argued that the places mentioned here within Gorman's will actually referred to the place where he held land, due to the names he provided within his will. However, the naming of property in terms of a physical building or dwelling is the same here as it is within other wills, in terms of applying a name to a specific place, with further description in terms of the amount of land which occupied the surrounding building or area. In addition, Gorman does not name his 'three rows of land' which also included one additional acre of land, only the description of the location of the land is given within his will as 'lying on the north side of the highway before the said 'litis strete'. This implies that either 'litis strete' is the name of a building or the name of a street which contains his other acres of land and also a 'place' such as a dwelling or other structural property.

Land which was held within a common croft was not identified in terms of its 'place' or any other name of personal association or otherwise but only as 'the great croft' where at that point Gorman states that his two acres within the 'great croft' were located 'as the marke and bowondes thereof more playnly showth'.²⁹ Gorman could be suggesting that larger areas of shared land holdings may have been marked by physical boundary markers, making the naming of such land redundant. Furthermore, the specific acreage which a tenant held may have changed every two or three years. Therefore, the precise location of personal land within a large and common croft may have been frequently adjusted, so the personal identification or naming of this type of land was always in transition, like the space itself.

²⁸ William Gorman's will, CKS PRC 17/9/158.

²⁹ CKS PRC 17/9/158.

VI. Conclusion

The relevance of testamentary material in better understanding the complex nature of a socialised medieval and early modern landscape cannot be overlooked by historians. Testamentary material survives in large quantities and is the only evidence which could be classified as personal in conception. Research of testamentary material is also important when reconstructing the local island landscape of Sheppey, since places were densely populated and therefore named more frequently in order to prevent inheritance disputes. Over 1,452 wills were consulted from surviving testate parishioners of the Islands of Sheppey and the mainland coastal parishes with similar geographical topography to the Islands. Descriptions and the naming of land and structural property within these wills was categorised and compared in order to better understand the affiliation between named places and their personal possession. Places were always in transition which is seen in the many textually mapped spaces described in wills. This is highly contentious when you consider that wills were made at the end of a person's lifecycle, at the point in which past, present and future converge into one document.

Testate inhabitants of the Islands of Sheppey were more likely to have named or textually mapped the location of owned places, such as their freehold property or that of others, in the identification of bounded spaces. In addition, over twice the amount of description was applied to spaces within Sheppey's landscape, as found within will evidence. Densely populated parishes on Sheppey contributed to the range of boroughs and street names found within Island wills. This detailed naming demonstrates how complex landscapes were in the late medieval and early modern period. To add further perspective on locating named places within the Islands of Sheppey, court rolls were also researched for this Chapter. Traditionally these documents have been used as sources for the examination of social and economic continuities and changes. However, in comparison with the last will and testament, court rolls show how places were organized and how these places were synonymous with particular families.

The land became a socially experienced place for individuals, families and neighbours. Land and structural property identification was instrumental for the reinstating of claim over small and specific portions of the landscape, where it was no

longer physical but conceptual and synonymous with family identity and belonging. Places became imagined and realised through the naming and identification of them. This was highly strategic and objective for those who named, identified, owned and bequeathed a portion of the Island's landscape and therefore its sense of family identity and communal identity.

Chapter Seven

The inheritance of land and structural property on the Islands of Sheppey

I. Introduction

This chapter will closely examine inheritance patterns and the bequeathing of freehold land and structural property on the Islands of Sheppey, as found within testamentary material between c.1400-1559. Furthermore, this chapter will also examine the relationship between inheritance strategies, specific naming of land or structural property on the islands and the role of the family in the continuity of these cultural processes. This Chapter, along with Chapter 8, attempts to examine in more detail the individual's participation within inheritance processes and its role in shaping the social landscape of the Islands of Sheppey. This requires the examination of ordinary and traditional practices, such as bequests found within wills, in order to ascertain where differences might exist on Sheppey, in particular.¹ Studies of individuals and small groups, for this period, have traditionally focused on commercial and occupational history in the light of the debated changes in feudalism from the fifteenth century.² Moreover, changes in agrarian management allowed for greater opportunity for individuality in economic and social enterprise.³ Significant economic and social changes within the peasantry, or small land-owning population, from the fifteenth century onward, as evident within the inheritance of land and property on Sheppey, prompted higher levels of social inclusion and consumption throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁴

¹ M.Merry, 'Reconstructing Lives: Self, Person, and Community in Late Medieval Bury St. Edmunds', paper given for the Culture and Society Seminar for the Canterbury Centre for Medieval and Tudor Studies, 9 November 2000.

² See T.S.Brown, 'Introduction in M.Bloch, *Feudal Society* (London, 1990), pp.xi-xxi; J.Kermode's comments on this subject are found in J.Kermode, ed., *Enterprise and Individual in Fifteenth-Century England* (Stroud, 1991), pp.ix-xiii; also see C.H.Clough, eds., *Profession, Vocation and Culture in Later Medieval England* (Liverpool, 1982) for connections between cultural processes and occupational status.

³ M.Rubin, 'Small Groups: Identity and Solidarity in the Late Middle Ages' in J.Kermode, ed., *Enterprise and Individuals in Fifteenth-Century England* (Stroud, 1991), pp.132-150.

⁴ R.H.Hilton, *The English Peasantry in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1975); C.Dyer, 'Were There any Capitalists in Fifteenth-Century England?', pp.1-24; R.M.Smith, 'Coping with Uncertainty: Women Tenure of Customary Land in England c.1370-1430', pp.43-67, both of these essays in J.Kermode, ed., *Enterprise and Individuals in Fifteenth-Century England* (Stroud, 1991).

This is in addition to the increase in small land-owning populations across the country.⁵ A close examination of testamentary material from Sheppey inhabitants has revealed a complex mapping system of land and structural property to family inheritance patterns. It is also the aim of this Chapter to contribute to wider research into small-scale studies of wealth distribution and inheritance in order to provide the best critical conclusions on the nature of complex social localities.⁶

Partible and impartible inheritance strategies of the testate population of the Island of Sheppey, provide an insight into locality, the nature of freehold land ownership and the local mapping strategies used within wills to locate place with family. The particular parishes which this Chapter focuses on include all four parishes of Sheppey: Minster, Eastchurch, Leysdown, Warden and the town of Queenborough. Comparative examples of inheritance strategies from the closest and largest parishes on the mainland, notably Milton parish and the town of Faversham, will also be considered where relevant, to provide a point of contrast with Sheppey practices. Furthermore, this chapter will present a comprehensive overview of detailed bequests revealing the complex nature of how inhabitants categorised spaces and how these spaces were interpreted as family possessions; putting individuals in a creative role of shaping local landscapes and essentially local history.⁷

⁵ C.Dyer, 'Were There any Capitalists in Fifteenth-Century England?' in J.Kermode, ed., *Enterprise and Individuals in Fifteenth-Century England* (Stroud, 1991), pp.1-24.

⁶ These studies include R.T.Vann, 'Wills and the Family in an English Town: Banbury, 1500-1800' in *JFH*, vol.4 (1979), pp.346-367; M.Spufford, 'Peasant Inheritance Customs and Land Distribution in Cambridgeshire from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries' in J.Goody, J.Thirsk, E.P.Thompson, eds., *Family and Inheritance* (Cambridge, 1976), pp.156-176; C.Howell, 'Peasant Inheritance Customs in the Midlands, 1280-1700' in J.Goody, J.Thirsk, E.P.Thompson, eds., *Family and Inheritance* (Cambridge, 1976), pp.112-155.

⁷ E.Salter in her book, *Cultural Creativity in the Early English Renaissance: Popular Culture in Town and Country* (Basingstoke, 2006) has acknowledged the importance of 'regional and local' history which reveals the 'dynamics of particular places' important 'for assessing culture, society and politics,' p.7. In addition she has also used the term 'cultural creativity' in relation to how individuals and families 'creatively' used texts such as the last will and testament to record their personal experiences, p. 2 and 15.

II. Types of inheritance on the Islands of Sheppey

There were two types of family inheritance strategies found within wills at the end of the medieval and into the early modern period, from c.1400 to c.1559.⁸ Before this is described it is important to consider the social status of testators for a better perspective on the will-making population and their post-mortem inheritance processes. The social position of testators was not necessary confined to the richer urban inhabitants but has been found in previous research to be more diverse than may be expected.⁹ Spufford, in her research of sixteenth to eighteenth century inheritance patterns of Willingham, Cambridgeshire, found that it was the landless and small land holders who were most likely to have left wills rather than the land owners of over half a yardland or more.¹⁰ Howell also found there to be generational differences amongst families, but the main decision to leave a will was not based on economic factors but rather the family responsibilities of the testator.¹¹

Eastchurch and Minster parishioners of the rural communities on Sheppey were most likely to have left a will whilst the small parishes of Leysdown and Warden had fewer will makers. Furthermore, the inhabitants of Queenborough appeared to have the most choice of goods to bequeath rather than land or structural property. The dynamics of rural and urban landscapes shaped the lifestyles and bequests of Sheppey inhabitants. Queenborough townsmen, with their connections to London trading and possibly wider abroad, would be amongst those Sheppey men with the most earning potential, whilst

⁸ This study does not examine changes or continuities within inheritance strategies after 1559 due to lack of testamentary evidence for the Islands of Sheppey for over one hundred years. For additional background studies into land and structural property inheritance and the influence of the family on strategies of inheritance see S.A.Campbell, 'Some Aspects of the Social and Economic History of the Manor of Adisham c.1200 to the Dissolution' (unpublished Master's of Philosophy, University of Kent at Canterbury, 1981); L.Bowdon, 'People of Property: Social Relations in Wingham c.1450-1600' in two volumes (unpublished Master's dissertation, University of Kent at Canterbury, 1998).

⁹ See R.T.Vann, 'Wills and the Family in an English Town: Banbury, 1500-1800' in *JFH*, vol.4 (1979), pp.346-367. Also, M.Spufford, 'Peasant Inheritance Customs and Land Distribution in Cambridgeshire from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries' in J.Goody, J.Thirsk, E.P.Thompson, eds., *Family and Inheritance* (Cambridge, 1976), pp.156-176; C.Howell, 'Peasant Inheritance Customs in the Midlands, 1280-1700' in J.Goody, J.Thirsk, E.P.Thompson, eds., *Family and Inheritance* (Cambridge, 1976), pp.112-155.

¹⁰ M.Spufford, 'Peasant Inheritance Customs and Land Distribution in Cambridgeshire from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries' in J.Goody, J.Thirsk, E.P.Thompson, eds., *Family and Inheritance* (Cambridge, 1976), pp.156-176, pp.169-171.

smaller landholders in rural Eastchurch were most likely tenant farmers with a standard supply of livestock and land sustained for the livelihood of their families. These rural inhabitants and their families were dependent on the land they worked on and lived on; therefore taking a vital interest in securing what small holdings they held which were synonymous with their livelihood and future family wellbeing.

The first type of inheritance found within wills of Sheppey inhabitants was impartibility, which was in favor of one heir, either a son or daughter. The second option was partible inheritance, or gavelkind, particular to Kent. Partibility involved the inheritance of land and/or property divided equally amongst all children, both male and female, or between all daughters or all sons. Whilst it was not necessarily unorthodox to name members of the wider kin network as beneficiaries to freehold land or property, this was not the most common or popular option for testate islanders of Sheppey. The complexities of reciprocity within family and kin networks cannot therefore be underestimated.¹² Bequests of land or structural property to sons, either through impartibility or partibility remained the most widely chosen form of inheritance by testators on the Island of Sheppey.

European studies of family inheritance patterns have shown the strong impact of local variations within land or structural property inheritance where impartibility was favoured in northern and western areas of Europe, whilst western Germany favoured partible inheritance strategies.¹³ Studies conducted by Howell, noted that the diversity of individuals that might inherit cannot always be assumed or categorised into large standardised groups. For example, 193 wills from Kibworth showed that 33 men died leaving children who were all minors: 42 per cent of these men left their property to their wives while 39 per cent jointly endowed the wife and a son, and 18 per cent bequeathed all their property to a son even though the wife was still alive.¹⁴ Kentish studies, such as

¹¹ C.Howell, 'Peasant Inheritance Customs in the Midlands, 1280-1700' in J.Goody, J.Thirsk, E.P.Thompson, eds., *Family and Inheritance* (Cambridge, 1976), pp.112-155, pp.140-141.

¹² R.T.Vann, 'Wills and the Family in an English Town: Banbury, 1550-1800' in *Journal of Family History*, (1979), vol.4, pp.346-367; R.M.Smith, 'Kin and Neighbours in a Thirteenth-Century Suffolk Community' in *Journal of Family History*, vol.4, no.3 (1979), pp.219-256.

¹³ M.Anderson, *Approaches to the History of the Western Family* (Basingstoke, 1980), p.67.

¹⁴ See C.Howell, 'Peasant Inheritance Customs in the Midlands, 1280-1700' in *Family and Inheritance*, ed. by J.Goody, J.Thirsk, and E.P.Thompson (Cambridge, 1976), pp.112-155; and for further reference to these findings see B.Hanawalt, *The Ties that Bound* (Oxford, 1986), p.76-77.

recent studies into the rural area of Wingham in Kent, where partible inheritance was the favoured strategy, reveal the diversity of recipients for bequeathed land and property.¹⁵ This local research into the individuality of bequests found within wills shows that personal choice was a strong factor in deciding who would inherit land and property. It appears that testate family members had a degree of freedom as to how they intended their land or property to be inherited and whom they deemed suitable for inheritance, whether as a sole heir or as joint heirs, of land or structural property.

II.i. Impartible inheritance

Sons, wives and daughters were most likely to have been sole heirs to land or structural property on Sheppey or in Milton. However, where Sheppey and Milton testators differ is in the figures of impartibility towards mothers, scoffees, brothers, servants, and the monastery on the Island of Sheppey. For the benefit of local research in revealing complexities of inheritance practices, the three groups of sole heirs including sons, daughters, and wives will be considered in greater detail below. That only 34 per cent of Sheppey testators favoured impartible inheritance and only 5 wills with described landed property employed impartibility within their wills, whilst 29 per cent of wills with described land or property made use of partible inheritance, highlights interesting issues about the role of the family in inheritance strategies choices.

a.) Sons

Impartibility to sons may be categorised into two different patterns of inheritance on the Island of Sheppey. The first most common pattern of impartibility towards sons was that of one son living at the time of will production and where an entire estate was bequeathed only to this son. This pattern included 38 wills out of the 47 wills with impartibility to a son (81 per cent). The other pattern of impartible inheritance to sons was that of one son, usually the oldest son but not always, was sole heir to all land and

¹⁵ L.Bowdon in her MA dissertation, 'People of Property: Social Relations in Wingham c.1450-1600' in two volumes (unpublished Master's dissertation, University of Kent at Canterbury, 1998) found that 132 wills survived from Wingham between 1450 and 1559 including 77 wills which contained land and/or structural property bequests (58 per cent). Partibility was the most popular inheritance strategy.

structural property, whilst the other living sons or daughters were to receive money from the sale of certain land or property. Six testators on Sheppey (12 per cent of impartible inheritance to sons) bequeathed all land or property to one son when the others were to receive money. An additional three testators had one son living and more than one daughter living but chose to bequeath all land and property to the one living son (representing 7 per cent of impartibility to sons). There was some variation within Sheppey women's wills since some women were more likely to sell their land. However, one widow left her estate to her mother in 1552 - possibly because she did not have any living children at the time of will production.¹⁶

With regard to Sheppey testators who bequeathed to only one son the entirety of their estates whilst other sons and/or daughters were to receive money, in most cases it appeared that the other children were too young to inherit at the time of will production and so a sole heir was the practical inheritance choice. For example, Robert Fellow of Minster parish, Sheppey, left a will in 1558. Robert had two sons, James and William, and two daughters, Agnes and Alice. James was to receive all houses and lands 'lying in Sheppey' and James was to pay his brother William, forty shillings within two years of their father's death.¹⁷ Roger Clerke of Minster leaves the same type of bequest within his will of 1507, where William Swalman 'my eldest son' was to inherit land and tenements and 'he to pay his second brother ten shillings.'¹⁸

In 1505, William P Asheley had more heirs than the two previous testators yet decided to keep the inheritance of his land and property down to a sole heir, his son named Thomas under the condition that 'he shall pay to his five brothern John, William, Richard, Robert, and Clement, fifty shillings and three pence.'¹⁹ Instead of leaving the condition simply with that, William P Asheley proceeded to break down how he intended his other sons to inherit their money. Within the first year of his death, John was to receive ten shillings, William was to receive the same in the second year, Richard to receive the same in the third year, Robert to receive the same in the fourth year, and Clement to receive the last of the ten shillings in the fifth year. It could be concluded that

¹⁶ Avice Brodestrete of Minster parish bequeathed her 'houses and lands in Sheppey and all right to live and interests in the same' to her mother Elizabeth Hurtonne. (CKS PRC 17/29/303).

¹⁷ CKS PRC 17/35/25.

¹⁸ CKS PRC 17/9/276.

that the order listed within the will, by which the sons were to receive their money, follows a distinctive and conscious pattern. Each son is named according to his age starting with the eldest first. Thomas who was to receive the land and tenement since he was the eldest and the youngest Clement, as the fifth son, was to receive money in the fifth year of William's death. P Asheley's will 'makes a statement' about a personalised and projected future, as he imagines it as head of household.²⁰ P Asheley also applied a hierarchical framework by age to his sons in which the eldest son was deemed as the most suitable replacement to him, as father, after his death. Therefore, not only is land and structural property inherited by Thomas, the eldest, but also the unconscious aspect of head of household instilled in him by his father. Land and property inheritance was identical to the inheritance of family practice.

b.) Wives

It would appear that testators without living children chose to bequeath all land and property to their wives over any other type of relative, including male kin such as a living brother or cousin. 13 out of 14 Sheppey wills which applied impartible inheritance strategies did not mention any living children within their wills. This represents 93 per cent of wills with impartibility to wives from Sheppey inhabitants. In addition, impartibility to wives was more likely if only daughters were living at the time of will production as in the case of a Sheppey testator who chose to assign his wife as sole heir despite having four daughters but no living sons.²¹ In 1547, Thomas Eastland of Minster, Sheppey, bequeathed livestock of one cow each and five sheep to his four daughters equally with two daughters, Alice and Agnes, receiving an additional bullock when they became sixteen years old.²² Thomas Eastland's wife, who was unnamed within his will, was to receive all of her husband's land and to make 'no stripe nor waste' on the grounds except for the use of firewood and the 'building of her house'.

¹⁹ CKS PRC 17/10/8.

²⁰ E. Salter has suggested that ordinary people used the 'texts and objects' around them 'in order to present and make statements about their own identity', p.2 in *Cultural Creativity in the Early English Renaissance: Popular Culture in Town and Country* (Basingstoke, 2006)

²¹ Thomas Eastland of Minster. [CKS PRC 17/25/123, c.1547].

²² CKS PRC 17/25/123.

It is interesting to note that testators, who bequeathed their wives as sole heir, either had no living sons, or only daughters living; some of whom were young at the time of their father's will production. Others were simply excluded, for reasons unknown. However, if some daughters were married, it was most likely that the testator only provided for his widow. William Curle of Eastchurch who made his will in 1471 bequeathed his wife, as sole heir, his one messuage and one parcel of land in the 'borgh of Rithe' in Eastchurch.²³ William's wife, Thomasine was also to be his executor and she was to use six shillings and eight pence, possibly from harvest profits, for prayers for his soul and his parent's souls. William's parents may have recently died but it is impossible to tell since his father does not have a surviving will and one can only speculate at the age of William and his wife.

Walter Elice of Leysdown parish left a will in 1481 where he also did not mention any children and named his wife to be sole heir to his land and property.²⁴ Walter's wife, Agnes, was to receive land called 'Sumptyngge' and to have Walter's 'manor of Stonepytt with all land including one parcel of land called holdowne to dispose in benedictium in the church of Leysdown'. Also included in his estate were two acres of land 'next to land of the prior of Canterbury' which was to be sold and disposed for reparations of the chapel of St. Mary in Leysdown church. In addition, Agnes was to receive a 'tenement called Notte' and land called 'Le brooke'. Thirty shillings was to come from land called 'Smythishill' for burial anniversaries in Leysdown and for the priests and the poor of the parish.

A Queenborough man, John Allen left his will in 1527, where at the time of will production he had a married daughter and a grandchild.²⁵ Agnes, John's wife, was to be sole heir to his property and land where she was to receive a 'house of St. John's hold within the town of Queenborough' which was to retain also the 'counter in the hall and a great brass pot [which] shall stay in the house'. Agnes was also to receive land called 'Skotte' containing sixteen acres. After the death of Agnes, all of the above land and property was to be inherited by Agnes Aland, the daughter of John's daughter. Agnes Aland, a widow by 1538, left her own will where bequests were made to her cousin, John

²³ CKS PRC 17/1/399.

²⁴ CKS PRC 17/3/405.

²⁵ CKS PRC 17/17/344.

Saunders, the younger and John's wife who is unnamed.²⁶ Agnes does not appear to have any children and bequeaths her house to William Salmon, a known townsman with Sheppey roots. It is unclear as to where this house was located; however, it could have been the house originally bequeathed to her by John Allen, eleven years earlier.

Whilst testators were more likely to bequeath their estates to their wives, if there were no sons or daughters to be sole heir, it was also more likely that descriptions of land and property were found in those wills where impartibility went to the wife. In addition, to the examples shown above where land or houses were specifically textually mapped, there is an additional will which clearly reveals the importance of spatially locating and naming land or property in order to prevent future disputes after the testator's death, particularly if there are no immediate males in the family. Thomas Berry in 1516 named his wife as sole heir of specific land and property.²⁷ Berry described himself as a yeoman of Milton and bequeathed his wife Joan to have all of his lands and tenements which were described by him as 'the messuage which I dwell in, a barn and stable, a mede (meadow) called the Tayntercroft and another messuage, a barn, a stable, an orchard, and a garden called the saffron garden, and all land lying in acremanfeld and two acres of land in Sayerfeld.'²⁸ Thomas Berry had a daughter and his wife was pregnant at the time of making his will. Thomas's daughter Alice was to receive five marks at her marriage and so was the unborn child if it was a girl. The precise descriptions of where his land was located and how his land and property should be identified, highlight the crucial importance of personal mapping by testators in order to prevent disputes and to ensure that the sole female heir was to receive all they were entitled to. Unlike the descriptions of land and property amongst partible inheritance by sons, the descriptions of land and property within wills where impartibility went to the wife was to ensure that each widow received exactly what they were entitled too without the interference of other men. The warnings of interference by others, including family members to a named heir's property, was something which did appear in some wills and will be discussed later in this chapter.

²⁶ CKS PRC 17/21/300.

²⁷ CKS PRC 17/12/563.

²⁸ CKS PRC 17/12/563.

c.) Daughters

The third most common sole heir involved in postmortem impartible inheritance of land and structural property was daughters. From the 34 per cent of testators who preferred impartible inheritance, 11 per cent chose their daughters to inherit their land or structural property on Sheppey, whilst 13 per cent of Milton testators chose their daughters as sole heir from 31 per cent of Milton testators who chose impartible inheritance strategies. In all cases for Sheppey and Milton wills, impartible inheritance by daughters only appeared to take place when there were no living sons to inherit and only one daughter appeared to be living. Most daughters inherited with other daughters or with other kin if there was more than one daughter living. This fact is particularly relevant if partible inheritance strategies were adopted by the testator. This was a similar pattern found within Milton wills, where one daughter living usually became sole heir, while more than one daughter or other close kin would share the inheritance.

Most bequests of land to daughters from fathers also contained specific directions or instructions for the bequest of land or property to be valid. These types of conditions found within bequests to daughters were not found within the bequests to sons from fathers. Peter Fellow of Minster, Sheppey, bequeathed, in 1518, all lands to his wife until his daughter Lore was old enough to inherit, but with the condition that 'if Lore to marry, her husband cannot sell land' and if Lore dies with no heirs then William Fellow and Thomas, Peter's brothers were to have the land for 3 pound sterling, 6 shillings, 8 pence and 'if they don't buy it then William Swalman and James Swalman, my feoffees to sell it to most value'.²⁹ Another unusual condition for a daughter inheriting land or property was from Robert Bockmer, of Eastchurch, Sheppey, who in 1536, bequeathed his daughter Marion a tenement and land along with her sons, Robert and Thomas Sampson, who were to inherit between them. This was to take place only 'under the condition that if Robert Sampson, her husband coming agayne to her then the sons excluded and put out both Marion and her husband and if he coming not she to it [tenement and land] for all the days of her life.'³⁰

²⁹ CKS PRC 17/13/311.

³⁰ CKS PRC 17/21/96.

Sheppey testatrixes left land or property to their daughters without precautions, such as those described above; however, like testators, women will makers were more likely to leave their land or property to one daughter, if the daughter was the only child living at the time of will production. It is interesting to note that only three women from amongst Sheppey's testate (34 women made wills), bequeathed land or property to their daughters. Furthermore, only 18 women (52 per cent of women testators) mentioned property or land within their wills. Only one Sheppey woman bequeathed all her houses and lands (unspecified) and 'all right to live and interests in the same' to her mother, along with 5 ewes, her best girdle and best hat.³¹ Most Sheppey testatrix were inclined to leave bequests of livestock, clothing, or other personal possessions to a range of female kin (mostly clothing, jewelry, or stuff of household) and sometimes male kin who mostly received livestock. From 22 women testatrix on Milton, 7 women (31 per cent) left land or property bequests within their wills and from these only one woman left property or land to her daughter.³² From the Sheppey testatrix, one woman, Margaret Jacobe, a widow of Minster, Sheppey left a will in 1508, where her estate was to be inherited by her daughter Johanne.³³

No Milton wills match the conditional bequests to daughters, from fathers, living in Sheppey. One Milton father, William Crouche, bequeathed his messuage and four acres of land 'next to Sewerfeld in le townemed' and two acres in 'le Weln' and one garden and one acre at 'le forthe' to his wife and then his daughter who was described as the wife of William Hogen who was to inherit his barn 'with all houses next to it' including a dovecote.³⁴ It appears as if Crouche's daughter received her bequest in part due to her husband. It may have been that Crouche and Hogen were associates of some kind, probably both farmers since Crouche is happy to bequeath his barn to him.

Another man of Milton, Ralph Chiche, in 1501 had three daughters, Katherine, Margaret, and Elizabeth.³⁵ Each daughter was to receive the same selection each of featherbeds, sheets, blankets, clothing, salt cellars, livestock of 100 ewes and 4 cows and

³¹ Avice Brodestrete, of Minster, Sheppey, date of will 1552; CKS PRC 17/29/303.

³² Joan Awcye, of Milton, date of will 1540; CKS PRC 17/22/299.

³³ CKS PRC 17/11/47.

³⁴ CKS PRC 17/2/146.

³⁵ CKS PRC 17/13/378.

harnesses, but only Katherine was to receive estates, where she was to pay the other two daughters ten marks yearly. Katherine inherited land and tenement called 'Little Court' and marshes called 'Usbarns', 'Berdynhill', 'Lokfeld' and 'Herspardowne', all beside 'fawnes forthwith' and other lands in Iwade and Milton. Katherine was also to receive rents from land in Ivychurch and Brokeland within Romney Marsh and from this to pay yearly her two sisters ten marks each. In addition to this, Katherine was to inherit the Manor of Colsall and lands in the manor of Thorneton otherwise known as 'Bartlotte' with all woods and rents belonging to it in the Isle of Thanet. Similar to other detailed land and property descriptions, Katherine's inheritance was as detailed as some of the bequests to wives, where such large amounts of land and property were to be inherited by one woman only.

Although inheritance by daughters was one of the most common forms of impartible inheritance, it clearly was not the most popular. Inheritance by daughters appeared to have conditions that the other two categories did not appear to have. Although wives could have conditional bequests usually these were found within the partible inheritance patterns to sons and the wife, where conditions were weighted on her remarriage to protect the interference of second husbands into the family's estates. However, conditions made by testators on their daughters also appear to reflect concerns about the intrusion of husbands into their daughter's inheritance, but having said that, the successful marriage of a daughter to a man deemed as secure and trustworthy, perhaps within the same occupation or working with his father-in-law, could have secured a substantial inheritance, as in the case of William Crouche's daughter of Milton.³⁶

II.ii. Partible Inheritance

Although gavelkind was an ancient Kentish custom by which freehold property was divided equally amongst all children, a diversity of partible inheritance choices were made by a testator or testatrix. In addition, sons remained the most likely to inherit an estate but were often likely to share the division with other relatives, or in the absence of sons, other individuals were likely to inherit a divided estate. Why testators or testatrix

³⁶ CKS PRC 17/2/146.

divided their land or structural property amongst other relatives or named individuals requires consideration since partible inheritance patterns are markedly different within local communities; far more than historians have accounted for in their surveys of partible inheritance customs.³⁷

Sheppey and Milton wills show a complex choice of partible inheritance patterns between testators living within their local parishes and between the isle and mainland communities themselves. In addition, patterns of high mortality of children in the predominantly marshland areas could have resulted in testate parishioners resorting to alternative patterns of partible inheritance where one member of the family received one portion of land or property while another person, not necessarily kin, was to receive the other portion. Wealthier families who had at least four to eight sons and/or daughters living usually divided their estates equally amongst their offspring, excluding other members of the family or close friends. These families will be considered within the categories where discussion is relevant.

Although partible inheritance has traditionally been considered to be the most popular form of inheritance strategy used by testate parishioners; it was not the most popular choice for Sheppey and Milton inhabitants. Only 29 per cent of Sheppey will makers showed favorability towards partible inheritance, compared with 34 per cent of Sheppey will makers adopting impartible inheritance. In addition, 27 per cent of Milton will makers adopted partible inheritance as the preferred choice of inheritance strategy, whilst 31 per cent of Milton wills adopted impartible inheritance strategies.

As with impartible inheritance strategies, there were three main categories of partibility found within wills including inheritance by sons, daughters, and wives as the most popular choices for divided inheritance of an estate. However, within these categories inheritance to sons, daughters, and wives often included another recipient of at least half of an estate. This was either a named relative or other person, male or female. In addition, equal division of an estate amongst all sons, all daughters, sons and daughters together, or wife and sons, were the most popular choices for partible inheritance. The following categories will be examined separately below.

³⁷ See Chapter 9 in R.A.Houlbrooke, *The English Family 1450-1700* (London, 1984), pp.228-252, for a concise introduction into inheritance and issues of gavelkind.

a.) Sons

For both Sheppey and Milton partibility was the favoured inheritance option. If sons were chosen to inherit land or property, all sons inherited an estate equally between them. In 1474, John Cooke of Milton, bequeathed his workshops to his two sons Sampson and Thomas but Sampson was to receive three stalls for the marketplace, while Thomas was to receive two stalls.³⁸ In addition, Sampson and Thomas were to share their father's estate, however, Sampson received one messuage in the villa of Milton 'next to the land of Adam Flecher' and Thomas was to receive only a piece of fresh marshland. Land and structural property was strategically divided, possibly in figuratively equal portion, depending on the son's age and his acquired land and/or property.

John Lambe of Eastchurch parish in Sheppey in 1503, had three sons and each son received equally divided movables from their father; however, all three of them had slightly different portions of their father's estate.³⁹ In addition, his will also includes specific location descriptions which map his property within the Isle as to its precise location, and also map his family's inheritance plan. Richard, the first son listed within John's will, was to receive one tenement called 'Pelland' with all pertaining to it in the borough of Holt in Eastchurch, including one cow and the responsibility to keep his father's burial anniversaries for twenty-two years in Eastchurch parish church at the cost of 6s 8d yearly. Edmundo and Franasto, the next two sons, listed together within John's will, were to receive land and tenements in Minster parish on the Isle of Sheppey. Likewise, in the will of Thomas Grene of Leysdown in Sheppey, his two sons were to receive essentially the same types of items from their father's estate; however, the quantities were different and explicitly specified within Thomas' will. In 1474, he bequeathed his son John and William one workshop each and an unspecified type of fish

³⁸ CKS PRC 17/2/328. Market stalls here were entered as 'shamellis' in John Cook's will where a shamble was for meat or butchery in the market square of a town. The word 'shamel' and its various spellings, appear frequently within Milton wills pre-1500.

³⁹ CKS PRC 17/9/176.

trap; however, John was to receive six acres of land pertaining to it and William was to receive fourteen acres of land.⁴⁰

In addition to the very detailed descriptions and specifications of places within wills which had impartible inheritance to wives, the greatest amount of detail regarding an individual's estate was found in those wills which had partibility to sons. This demonstrates the desire to prevent dispute and to appropriate the landscape with particular family identity. From the total of 41 Sheppey wills with partibility towards sons, 18 of these wills included descriptions of land and/or structural property (43 per cent), making this specific category of inheritance the most likely to provide details as to the precise location of an individual estate, including any names of tenements or of land. From Milton's wills with partibility to sons (55 per cent of wills), only 9 wills included descriptions of land and/or structural property; this was 31 per cent of these wills.

Whilst individual family patterns of inheritance found within wills, and in relation to land and structural property mapping, are to be discussed in the next section, the diversity of portions of an estate which were divided amongst sons, deserves careful consideration. Wills show that partibility towards a son was strategically thought out and individually considered according to family wealth and maximum benefit of future profit. Although it is difficult to determine, the eldest son was usually listed first within the will, but was not necessarily bequeathed the largest portion of an estate. Therefore, patterns of partibility cannot be generalised in this way, or in any other form, as has previously been suggested by Houlbrooke.⁴¹ In addition, the detailed descriptions of land and/or property in terms of their individual names and precise location were not necessarily found within those wills of wealthier testators or testatrix but those testators who chose to divide the estate were perhaps more concerned about disputes taking place after their death. Moreover, detailed descriptions of land and/or structural property were most likely to be found in wills where partibility was used in the division of an estate to at least two or three sons, and often to as many as six sons.⁴² However, many wills with partibility to

⁴⁰ CKS PRC 17/2/315.

⁴¹ R.A.Houlbrooke, *The English Family 1450-1700* (London, 1984), p.229.

⁴² James Swalman of Minster parish in 1535, left portions of his estate for his six sons, William, William, Richard, Thomas, William, and James. James Swalman also had two daughters. [will reference CKS PRC 17/21/18.

sons did not include descriptions of land and/or property. In 1498, William Cardon of Minster, had two sons who were to inherit his messuage and land equally divided between them.⁴³ This is not to say that these testate individuals were not wealthy, but it would be a generalisation to assume that descriptions of land or property signify extensive estates which called for a lengthy will, in which all land or property was listed, with no strategic agenda other than to show and display this wealth within their will. Furthermore, the number of sons and daughters was not a prerequisite to the use of partible inheritance. Particular Sheppey wills highlight some of the complexities presented above.

Robert Manne of Eastchurch parish in 1473, provided a detailed list of how he wished his sons to inherit his estates and the equipment belonging to his profession.⁴⁴ Robert had two sons, Richard and William who equally inherited their father's estate and the cart and plough belonging to his land. Robert specified exactly what his two sons were to inherit in that Richard was to receive 'my home place with nine acres of land' and William was to inherit, 'the place a south side the high weye with ye land fro[m] the east end of the garden westward.'⁴⁵ Robert clearly divides his estate so that there was no dispute into which son was to inherit which portion of Robert's land and property.

In 1535, James Swalman, of Minster parish, provides a textual map of his property within his will which strategically visualizes within its precise location description of what all of his six sons were to inherit.⁴⁶ William, the first son to be listed amongst the sons inheriting a portion of their father's estate, was also the eldest son. William was to receive his father's house called 'home place' with all land which was 'bourdeth by the King's highway, south upon 'dygge', Frennd's land, and St. Peter's land to the east, Clerk's land and the said highway west, and upon the street north. Thomas and the youngest son William were to receive together, a barn with all land called 'dygge' with a marsh called 'dygge's marsh'. William, the second son, not the youngest William,

⁴³ CKS PRC 17/7/80.

⁴⁴ CKS PRC 17/2/256.

⁴⁵ CKS PRC 17/2/256.

⁴⁶ CKS PRC 17/21/18.

and two other sons, James, and Richard were to inherit equally the following specified portions of their father's estate:

- 1.) a piece of land called 'mede pytt and dygges hill'.
- 2.) two acres of land bought of a man called Petarde.
- 3.) Five acres of land lying upon 'dygge hill' and all land which was sometime owned by a man named 'Plott'.
- 4.) Six acres of land lying 'in Borston'.
- 5.) A croft called 'Stone Crofte' lying next to a piece of ground called 'Dane Withall'.

In addition to all of the land above to be inherited by James' sons, his wife, Katherine was to receive one acre of land called 'dygge crofte' and two acres of wheat and two acres of barley and one and one-half acres of wheat 'now growing in a crofte of her own called 'Long crofte'.

James Swalman's will is a personal survey map which was visualised by him and illustrated through a textual inventory of his land ownership within the parish of Minster. Not only that but his landscape was measured cartographically in terms of its size, its borders, and in relation to how his land fitted within the social context of his neighbour's land. The land descriptions are representational of the land's ownership, how it was occupied, or by its geographical constitution such as a hill. It is unclear as to whether or not James Swalman named his various properties himself or acquired it with its name, but nevertheless his use of land descriptions serve as a strategic device in clearly showing which portions of his estate were to be inherited by the appropriate son.

In a different example and in contrast to the individual property details listed in James Swalman's will, John Kingesdown of Eastchurch, in 1501, located his estates by borough or parish for the partible inheritance of his three sons.⁴⁷ John Kingesdown's will specified that he had land in Minster, Eastchurch, Warden, and Leysdown parishes, and also within the mainland parish of Sittingbourne. John's feoffees were to present an estate to John, his son, of land within the 'borgh of Holte and Sedon in Minster and Eastchurch parish'. William, John's second son was to receive five acres of land in Sittingbourne and two acres in Eastchurch and Warden parish. Thomas, the third son,

⁴⁷ CKS PRC 17/8/124.

was to receive only a chamber in his father's house, with his brother John paying him yearly twenty shillings during Thomas's life.

Richard Bukmer, of Milton, left his will in 1545, which is one of the most detailed wills about the nature of partibility to sons within this parish.⁴⁸ However, the level of detailed descriptions and naming of land or property did not match any of the Sheppey wills where precision with regard to location was crucial and meticulously presented within testamentary material. Bukmer had five sons and each was to inherit a specific amount of land as outlined within his will except for the fifth son listed within his will who was most likely the youngest son, who was to receive money from a leased farm. Nicholas, the first son listed within Richard's will was to inherit 'all my lands bought of John Dean' when Nicholas became 21 years old and Nicholas was to support his mother with 13s 4d to be given to her each year. Harry, the second son listed, was to inherit houses at 'Chalkwell' which were 'bought of John Andyan and John Catlot and all lands belonging to the houses. Harry was also to pay his mother yearly 13s 4d. Harry, the third son, was to inherit four acres of land 'bought of Laky's widow' and two acres lying 'in bafys dane' and another two acres in the 'crofte west of the lane that cometh to Chalkwell'. George, the fourth son, was to inherit the property called 'bryghte' with all its land and an additional three acres of land 'lying by Master John Fynche's [land]' and also the messuage bought of 'Beere of Bobbing with the land belongeth'. Thomas, the fifth son listed within Richard's will, was to inherit twenty quarters of barley at twenty years old and five pounds sterling. Thomas, Richard's brother was to have the lease of Richard's farm in Borden called 'Cryals' and he was instructed to pay Thomas, Richard's son, fifteen pounds sterling when Thomas became twenty years old.

The experience of taking on sons from a spouse's previous marriage was also evident within wills where stepsons did inherit their stepfather's land and or property. Thomas Cardon of Minster parish in 1503, left his estate to be divided between his son Edward and his wife's son Alexander Pyttard.⁴⁹ Although this is the only will where a step-son appears to have equal rights as a biological son in terms of partible inheritance strategies, clearly the significance of second marriages had an impact on the child and

⁴⁸ CKS PRC 17/25/108.

⁴⁹ CKS PRC 17/9/201.

parent relationship where kin networks were restructured in order to incorporate children from a previous marriage. The fact that Thomas Cardon equally divides his estate between his biological and step-son, suggests that Thomas saw his wife's children as part of his responsibility and part of his immediate family, and he did not appear to differentiate between the two since there were no specifications given in terms of what each son should inherit and there is no inequality between their bequests.

Five Sheppey wills out of forty one wills with partibility towards sons were left by widows. Like testators, widows also used detailed descriptions of their estate in order to outline precisely which son was to inherit the property or land that they intended to leave them after death. Custans Eston of Eastchurch in 1505, had two sons, Alexander and Raulph, and also two daughters who were given clothing and money.⁵⁰ Alexander was to receive an entire tenement called 'Bwehedes' with eighteen acres of land, while Raulph was to have four acres of land called 'West croft'. Only two wills out of twenty nine with partibility towards sons were left by women testators living in Milton and in each case it appeared that women mentioned one living son.

b.) Sons and daughters

The second largest partible inheritance group was that of sons and daughters being granted equally the estates of their father or mother. Partibility towards both sons and daughters represented 1.5 per cent of wills with land or property within Sheppey wills and 3 per cent of Milton wills. Within Sheppey wills, partibility towards sons and daughters was slightly behind statistics showing two other preferred methods of inheritance, the first being wives and sons to share an estate (1.9 per cent), and the second group which was partibility towards feoffees to sell land and/or structural property (also 1.9 per cent). However, Milton partibility towards sons and daughters was evident within seven (3 per cent) of those wills with land and/or structural property making this strategy the second most common practice of partibility after partibility only towards sons.

Two Sheppey men who preferred that all their children, male and female inherit their estates outlined exactly what each child was to receive after their father's death.

⁵⁰ CKS PRC 17/10/13.

Richard Dobbe of Minster in 1474, had two daughters and two sons at the time of his will production.⁵¹ Each child was to inherit a portion of its father's estate which was described within his will. Margery, the first daughter listed within his will, was to inherit one acre of land called 'Dowes' which was described as located 'next to John Hokes and John Plott'. Isabel, his other daughter was to also receive a piece of land unspecified. William, the first son listed, after the two daughters, was to receive four acres of land called "Jooces" in Minster parish 'next to Thomas Ware in the East and to the prioress of Sheppey to the west and Thomas Pore in the north and Regia Strata in the south'. John, the second son listed within Richard's will, was to receive fourteen acres of land called 'fovellys' which was located 'next to John Hook and John Reynold's'. John Abraham of Eastchurch left a will in 1482, where his one son and two daughters were to inherit his estate in portions specified and described within his will.⁵² Juliana, the first child mentioned within his will was to receive her father's messuage and one acre called "homecrofte" with all that pertain to the land there. Agnes, the second daughter and second child mentioned within John's will, was bequeathed ten acres of land which was Robert Abraham's other son who had perhaps died without an heir. John, the son of John Abraham, was to receive one croft called 'Goorsfeld' and one croft called "Newcroft".⁵³

It was unusual to find a will where a daughter and son were actually intended to share the same estate equally but John Bull of Milton stated within his will of 1488, that his daughter Agnes and his son Thomas were to share four acres 'next to Putwode' and 'they to have the guardians of Sedyngborn [Sittingbourne] buy an antiphoner [for the parish church there]' to be worth 16 shillings and 8 pence.⁵⁴ John Bull's other two daughters, Joan and Alice, were to receive three acres in Borden parish at their marriage, however, Agnes was to receive 'Harte Barne' with garden and nine acres of land called 'Lez forde' which was 'next to Sayerfeld'. Stephen, the second son of John Bull, was to receive everything that belonged to his mother after her death including a house and garden.

⁵¹ CKS PRC 17/2/291.

⁵² CKS PRC 17/3/444.

⁵³ CKS PRC 17/3/444.

⁵⁴ CKS PRC 17/5/26.

c.) Wives

According to the figures for Sheppey and Milton, wives were also the second most common group to share an inheritance with other recipients and also the most likely to share with a range of other recipients who were not their children. Testators appeared more likely to provide an estate to their wives as sole heir and when wives were to share an estate it was most likely that they were to share with their sons or named males, not necessarily kin, rather than their daughters. The wealthier testators were most likely to provide a separate estate to their wives, rather than placing the wife simply as guardian until the sons reach an intended age of inheritance, usually specified within the will. William Wreke of Eastchurch, Sheppey left a will in 1484, which listed separate inheritance of land and property for his three sons and his wife.⁵⁵ Lore, the wife of William Wreke, was to inherit William's place 'at Hoke' with all things in the 'chamber and kechyn and in the little barn'. Lore was also to have eight acres of land that lay next to William's place and 'so northward unto the pound with all the innestore of household'. Roger, the first of William's son to inherit land and property of his father's was to receive two places called 'Lokynge and Burdon' and a field called 'molefeld' with a barn located 'without the south gate'. William, the second son was to receive ten acres 'lying on the north side of the pound with the grete barn and five acres of land lying at the south cliff called Scvdilgre'. Robert, the third son, was to receive his father's place at Minster 'with eleven acres at Sumptynge'. William's two daughters, Joan and Isabel, were to receive twenty ewes and a cow each but not land or structural property of their father's.⁵⁶

Another Sheppey man, Alexander Cardon, of Minster, left a will in 1553 in which he left a separate inheritance for his wife and his five sons with textual mappings made as to the property, land location and name.⁵⁷ Agnes, the wife of Alexander, was to receive a parcel of land called 'Raggefilde' and all land 'within the lease for seven years and to pay for the farme within the lease'. Agnes was also given a condition by her husband that she was not to 'trouble any of the son's land or she will forfeit her legacies'. If Agnes were to die before the seven year term ended, his son Robert was to receive one half of the

⁵⁵ CKS PRC 32/3/48.

⁵⁶ CKS PRC 32/3/48.

⁵⁷ CKS PRC 17/30/38.

property and the other half was to be inherited by two of his sons, Richard and Humfrey. In addition, to Agnes's land grant, she was also to receive a tenement called 'New House' which was late purchased of John Cheseman of Hithe, a parcel of land late purchased of John Elliot, three more parcels of land late purchased of Alice Bockiner of Iwade, and another parcel lying next to 'Holland Hedge'. Richard, the first son listed in Alexander's will to inherit land or property, was to receive a house with two gardens in Minster Street. Humfrey, his second son, was to receive his father's house and tenement called 'Gormunds' with all land pertaining to it and his father's part of a parcel of land called 'Simon's croft' with two other parcels of land called 'Cocrell's croft'. Robert, the third son, was to receive a house and tenement called 'Denes' with all land belonging to it estimated at 35 acres. William, the fourth son, was to inherit a house and tenement called 'Southe Cliff' and all land which came by Alexander's father to him. In addition, William was also to inherit a tenement called 'Perces' with its land that was 'in exchange between my Lord Warden and me', one parcel of land called 'Nocke' and another parcel of land 'lying in Clefe belonging to Harnes'. Thomas, the fifth son, was to inherit the house that his father was currently dwelling in at the time of producing his will which was described as 'late purchased of John Morishe' with ten acres and all lands purchased of Master Digges of Newington. Thomas was also to inherit another parcel of land 'late purchased of Thomas Urton, another parcel of land 'late purchased of Robert Colwell' and with the instruction that Thomas pay his brother Robert forty-six pounds sterling from the profits from his lands.

Milton testators who chose partibility to both wife and sons had similar wills to Sheppey testators where a small portion of an estate was granted to the wife separately from the son's inheritance. William Cotyng of Milton left his will in 1498, where his wife Isabel was to inherit a house at North Street, 'with all land' while his two sons John and Thomas, inherited their own estate.⁵⁸ John was to inherit a house at Shamble with land belonging to it and two acres of land 'lying in Westland'. Thomas was to inherit two messuages at 'Pynywikill' with land and also a shamble in the market place of Milton town and a 'little plot of land called Paradyse' and an acre of woodland 'lying at Deerwey' in Newington parish. Similarly, William Huggyn, another Milton man, left a

⁵⁸ CCA PRC 17/7/52.

will in 1513, where his wife and only son John were to inherit their own separate estates.⁵⁹ Margaret, William's wife was to inherit all of her husband's messuages, gardens, and land at 'Qwnyte Strete' in Milton and Bobbing for her life except for two acres of land 'at Hulthill'. John, William's son, was to inherit all of his father's land and tenements in Chalkwell in Milton including a garden 'bought of Noke next to the mill pond' equaling two acres. In addition, John was to inherit two more acres 'in Sawersfeld, lying to the town mede parte of the south side of the chamber within the hall and the south side of the kitchen.'

d.) Daughters

Similar to partible inheritance to sons, daughters were also equally bequeathed the estates of their fathers where each daughter's inheritance was inventoried within the will so that daughters with different ages could inherit appropriately. Usually partible inheritance to daughters was favoured if there were no living sons.

Following the pattern with Sheppey wills, detailed land descriptions were provided within wills with partibility towards daughters in similar pattern to wills with partibility towards sons. John Child, a Minster inhabitant in 1482, had two daughters at the time of leaving his last will where each daughter named Johanne and Agnes had specific amounts of their father's estate left to them after his death.⁶⁰ Johanne, the first daughter mentioned within John's will, was to receive her father's house which included seven acres of land called 'Burdone land' and 'Goresmannes land'. Johanne's mother, also named Johanne was to dwell within the house for her lifetime. Agnes, who at the time of her father's will, was under 22 years old, was to have nine acres of land called 'Reymannie land'. John Child also had at least one grandson named Laurence who was the son of John's deceased daughter Cesile. Laurence was to receive money from the profits of his two daughter's inheritance which was to equal 33 shillings and 4 pence from Johanne's inheritance and 20 shillings from Agnes's land. In addition, Agnes was to look after her father's bequest of a dirige and two masses to be sung in Minster church.

⁵⁹ CKS PRC 17/12/157.

⁶⁰ CKS PRC 17/3/443.

One of the masses was to be 'Our Lady' and the other was to be the *requiem* mass. Each year these two masses were to be sung for the health of her father's soul and for all her father's friends' souls.

Richard Ruffen, a husbandman from Eastchurch left a will in 1550, where at the time of leaving his will he had no living sons but four living daughters, Alice, Margaret, Elizabeth, and Johanne.⁶¹ In addition to Elizabeth, Margaret and Alice inheriting one cow each with five ewes, all of the four daughters were to receive an equal portion of their father's estate. Alice, the first daughter mentioned within Richard's will, was to receive her father's house with all land and pastures that belong to it and 'all out howsing containing twenty acres estimated set lying and being from the house to thatchers wall and so alonge by that hedge by the broke to my Lord's land called Home Marshe'. In addition, Alice was to receive two more parcels of land equaling fifteen acres - one called 'Pollynes' and the other called 'Abrahams'. Alice was to inherit all this after her mother, also named Alice, died. Margaret, the second daughter mentioned within Richard's will, was to receive eighteen acres of land that her father purchased from Thomas Borden called 'Barkers'. If Margaret were to die, then all was to be inherited by Alice, her sister. Elizabeth, the third daughter of Richard, was to receive fourteen acres of land 'lying unto my wife's land called Upper Thatchers and Gosseneste' and one additional little croft. Together, Margaret and Elizabeth were to inherit six acres of land called 'Upper Abrahams'. Johanne, the fourth daughter, was to inherit a house and land called 'castlocke hill' that Richard purchased of Clemente Pasheley including four acres of land lying in 'Goorfield'.

Aside from partible favour towards sons and daughters or between all daughters, female heirs were also likely to inherit their father's estate with either another female relative, their husbands, or another male. Most possibly, the named female or males intended to share estates with daughters were within the kin network. In 1501, John Frende of Minster, divided his land and property between his daughter Agnes and another female named Alice, who was described as the daughter of Johanne Salmon who was the wife of James Salmon.⁶² James Salmon was a witness to John's will and also a scoffee.

⁶¹ CKS PRC 17/29/212.

⁶² CKS PRC 17/8/188.

William Feyre of Leysdown left his will in 1476, when at that time he had four daughters, Isabel, Beatrice, Marion, and Margaret.⁶³ Each daughter received a piece of land from their father either as a croft or in acreage, except for a weir to the north of a messuage called Elliot's which was also part of William's estate. This northern most weir was to be inherited by William Borden and Andrew Blanket. In addition to being named as scoffee, William Borden was also listed within William Feyre's will as an intended recipient of 20 ewes, in addition to the other named persons of which one was a daughter and others were simply grandchildren, who were to inherit ewes as well.

Although the will evidence shows that sons were favoured for inheritance, both impartible and partible inheritance of land and structural property, even if daughters were living at the time of a testator or testatrix's will making. Women were far less likely to bequeath any land or property within their wills, and rarer still was a will which contained bequests of such to daughters. Sons and other male kin were more likely to inherit a widow's estate than a daughter. From a total of 18 women's wills which contained bequests of land or structural property, only 3 wills included estate bequests to daughters, whilst sons were favoured in 8 wills and 4 wills listed male kin as preferable recipients of a widow's estate. Overall 66 per cent of women's wills with estate bequests favoured sons or male kin (12 wills out of 18 wills) to inherit their land and/or structural property. Perhaps this alludes to gender differences within local communities. Women knew how difficult it was for them to maintain or keep land or property within their possession; maybe even after a second marriage. With this in mind, women knew that future disputes could be avoided if they utilised and exploited the legality of the last will and testament to ensure the wellbeing of their family's estate through giving it to the male child.

III. Conclusion

The inheritance of land or structural property relating to houses or other buildings on freehold land, found two distinctive postmortem giving strategies used by testate parishioners: impartibly or the bequeathing of all land or structural property to one sole heir, or partible inheritance where all land and structural property was divided equally

⁶³ CKS PRC 17/3/110.

amongst family members. The strategies used varied within local areas and Sheppey testators did not favour the traditional Kentish partible inheritance known as gavelkind. Sheppey testators preferred to keep their land or structural property within the hands of a sole heir, usually under tight control of their son. This revealed not only inheritance of land or structural property but an inheritance of ideology since family responsibility was transferred from the testator to the eldest son, as his replacement. In addition, the densely described and mapped details of spaces on Sheppey, often in relation to personalised spaces named after families on the island, signaled how precious land was on Sheppey. This was specifically found in the northern areas of Minster and Eastchurch parish which has been revealed in land details written in wills. With the range of pulling forces on Sheppey's resources it was no surprise that freehold land was not scattered across the island. The inheritance strategies suggest locating important spaces, naming them or inheriting their name, and bequeathing these areas in a will which textually mapped the existence of the freehold property.

Testamentary material surviving from the Island of Sheppey and also Milton (supplied as a comparative study to the islands) found a range of local diversity in choosing inheritance strategies. Overall, sons, daughters, and wives were most likely to inherit land or property after the death of a testator. In addition, the descriptive details or naming of specific locations were most often found within those wills using the partible inheritance system. Descriptions or names for landed property did not appear necessary if a single heir were to inherit an entire estate, further suggesting the relationship between naming as an investment and as a security for the will maker. Testators and testatrix were actively making a legal statement that would prevent anyone from wrongfully claiming ownership of their land. In addition, if an estate was inclusive of both land or house, meaning that the boundaries of both house and land were together within one location, it did not appear necessary to use descriptive phrases to locate the precise place of land or house. Wills from testators living in rural settlements on the Island of Sheppey were also more likely to have freehold land and structural property within a densely settled area; therefore, differentiating ownership was vital. The density of individual small landholdings on the Island, particularly between the parishes of Minster and Eastchurch, reflect the complexity of the social organisation of the Island. The identifiable and

named land or structural property on Sheppey suggests tension between local and family boundaries and also larger administrative boundaries. If issues of national identity were founded within the landscapes owned by the landed gentry then freehold land and property was a microcosm for asserting local identity.⁶⁴

Testators were not only concerned with who their land or property should be given to but also in providing an exact textual mapping of where their property was located. Through this re-creation of the landscape textually, impartible and partible inheritance framed the imagined future landscapes testators wished to maintain after their death. It was therefore essential to provide detailed examples of impartible and partible inheritance within this chapter as a prerequisite to Chapter 8 which examines how family names made and represented landscapes.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ The concept of national identity through landscape representation is discussed in D.Mitchell, *Cultural Geography* (Oxford, 2000), p.119.

⁶⁵ Landscapes 'are made (by hands and minds) and represented (by particular people)' in presenting authorship and therefore 'a kind of text', p.121 in D.Mitchell, *Cultural Geography* (Oxford, 2000), p.121.

Chapter Eight

Places and Family Influence

I. Introduction

This chapter will examine the significance of family upon how places were named and described within wills. As the previous chapter discussed, there was a connection found between the types of inheritance strategy employed, either partible or impartible, and the frequency of individual or family naming of freehold land or property. Sheppey's testate parishioners were again unusual in Kent for not adopting partibility as frequently as the rest of Kent. Furthermore, the occurrence of textual mapping by Sheppey families of their land or structural property was also higher when compared with other testate parishioners in surrounding Kentish mainland parishes. Textual mappings, as found within the details of places described in wills, became individual family surveys and used as such to instill authority over a small and very populated area of the Sheppey landscape.

Fundamentally, this Chapter will explore how a piece of land or structural property, such as a tenement, barn or messuage, also became a social unit as well as a specific place. The transmission or reference of a named place or other place description provided a framework whereby the space named or described became socialised and the name was adopted by other members of a family and within a community.¹ Land, dwellings or other buildings which were labelled or named referred as much to the family who owned, occupied and worked upon and within it, as the name of the space itself.² Furthermore, family names became part of the heritage of the Islands of Sheppey where ancient family names became landscape place-names. Dwellings or buildings were named after particular Island families and their names were retained by other land holders who bequeathed the land or structural property along with the family name it was originally given. The naming of land or property was part of a cultural process which was

¹ J.Bestard-Camps, *What's In a Relative: Household and Family in Formentera*, translated by Robert Pitt (Oxford, 1991), p.51 describes how houses became social units in themselves representing the family and recognised by the wider community.

² J.Bestard-Camps, *What's In a Relative: Household and Family in Formentera*, translated by Robert Pitt (Oxford, 1991), p.51.

visualised and given validity through an oral history involving naming, cataloging and mapping people on the Islands of Sheppey to places within the Islands.

Testamentary evidence used within detailed case studies of textual mapping, as found within wills, is also supplemented by taxation material from the fourteenth to sixteenth century, when relevant. These documents will add perspective to the mapping of family and places on the Island of Sheppey. It is the intention of this Chapter to explore the origins of land naming in connection with family identification on Sheppey, as well as providing perspectives on the changes and continuities of family-named landscapes.

II. Family strategies of inheritance and naming systems

This section examines six families as individual case studies showing how each family adopted their own system of inheritance practice. This is in accordance with the total number of family members to inherit and the quantity of land or structural property intended to be bequeathed by the testator. All of the case study families presented here contained at least three generations of family members who left wills, so a perspective can be gained about stability of practice. In addition, the case studies also reveal how larger families with more children were more likely to have named their land or property using directional phrases within their wills in order to identify or map the exact location of their land within the islands.

II.i. The Sigors: Mapping 'Gorton', 'Hoothys' and 'Warden Court'

The Sigors were the oldest and largest farming family recorded on the Isle of Sheppey, with generations spanning between c.1466 to c.1558. There were no Sigor women who left wills (this does not include any married females within the Sigor family who may not have been traceable). The Sigors consistently described their property precisely within their wills which is consistent within all generations. The Sigors employed both partible and impartible inheritance depending on the number of sons

surviving whilst also including servants amongst family members who were to receive structural property or land.

In 1466, William Sigor of Eastchurch parish had two sons John and Robert who equally inherited land and other goods from their father.³ John was to inherit one messuage near 'Gorton' and 'two acres of land that is ploughland in the south'. Robert was to inherit a house 'near Gorton' and three acres of ploughland. John and Robert were to share the inheritance of two messuages called 'Gorton' with four acres of land near the message when they became of 'proper age' which was unspecified. William's wife was to inherit a messuage called 'Hoothys' with two acres belonging to it.

Thirty four years later, in 1500, John Sigor, the son of William, left a will in which he described himself as living within Warden parish, on the Isle of Sheppey.⁴ John had a son named Thomas and a daughter named Agnes, plus a goddaughter and godson. John Sigor had, since his father's death, acquired a farm which he called 'Wardon Court' that he bequeathed impartibly to his only son, Thomas, complete with a plough, two oxen, two horses, and 'all harnes and apparell to the said plough, containing a cowe, a bullock, and twenty ewes'. John's daughter Agnes was not intended to receive any of his land or structural property but was bequeathed forty ewes and a cow. If Thomas was to die without heirs, all land and property was to be sold and ten pounds sterling was to be given to Agnes. John's will did not mention the inheritance of Gortons or Hoothys.

Over thirty years passed before another Sigor left a will - Thomas Sigor produced a will in 1532. Thomas was the son of John Sigor of Warden, and describes himself as a yeoman of Warden.⁵ Thomas had three sons; all named after either Thomas's father, John or Thomas's uncle named Robert. Thomas's sons were John, Robert and Edward, and his daughter was named Johanne. Thomas used partible inheritance, dividing all property amongst his three sons but the divisions were unequal with John to receive the most livestock, land, and structural property, possibly due to this age if he was the elder son and perhaps already establishing himself firmly within the occupation of his father, as a yeoman, although his father John, did not describe himself as such.

³ CKS PRC 17/1/241.

⁴ CKS PRC 17/7/205.

⁵ CKS PRC 17/19/306.

John, the first son mentioned in Thomas Sigor's will, was bequeathed 100 ewes, 50 wethers, 100 chotes and half wethers, and half ewes by his father, in addition to one mare, and a bed which was all to be received by the time John was nineteen years old. In addition, John was also to receive twenty fleeces of wool and two cows yearly until he was nineteen years old. John was to also receive the land and tenement of his grandfather called 'Gorton'. Thomas' other sons Robert and Edward to receive the croft called 'Bexce Evyuly', while all sons were to receive a weir each with John to receive one for his sole use and the other weir to be shared by Robert and Edward.

Two sons of Thomas, John and Edward left wills between twenty-one and twenty-six years later than their father. John appeared to move back to Eastchurch, where his great-grandfather resided back in 1466, where he made his will at that time. In 1558, ninety-two years later, John Sigor was described as living within Eastchurch at the time of his will production.⁶ John's will was rather short and did not mention 'Gorton' or a weir which was amongst the bequests to him by this father. Instead, John bequeathed his wife to have all his tenements and land, unspecified or described, which were to help her to pay for the needs for their children described as two sons who were to be paid 13 shillings and 4 pence yearly from all land profits. John's wife was to sell his 'spring and take the wood to her own use and the grove well and honestly closed againe that the springes may prosper againe burnyng reasonable and levinge certaine tres standing'.⁷

In 1553, Edward, one the sons of Thomas Sigor, and the brother to John above, left a will which expands on family networks, providing several bequests for various kin, while new property had been acquired by Edward during the course of his life, although the property and land of his father and grandfather do not appear within his list of bequests. Edward Sigor, describes himself as a husbandman of Leysdown, where his father Thomas, twenty one years earlier, had described himself as a yeoman.⁸ Edward Sigor used partible inheritance just like the previous generations of his family where there was more than one son who could legitimately inherit land and structural property.

⁶ CKS PRC 17/35/31.

⁷ CKS PRC 17/35/31.

⁸ Edward Sigor's will CKS PRC 17/29/62, date 1553; Thomas Sigor's will PRC 17/19/306, date 1532.

Edward had also moved from Warden, where his father had lived and resided during the time of will production, to the neighbouring parish of Leysdown and in the process had acquired land and property which may have contributed to his moving in the first place. Edward had two sons, a wife, and his two brothers John and Robert were still living. Edward is the only Sigor to include inheritance of land, property, or other items to brothers, wider kin through marriage, and servants within his will and who also acquired a large farmstead not within previous family occupation.

Before discussing Edward's land and structural property bequests directly, it is important to consider his family and kin networks and how they relate to the total range of bequests within his will where most items connected to his land and property were divided amongst his two sons but other important items for the productivity of his farm and the surplus profits from harvest were given to his brothers, other kin, and his four named servants.

Edward first bequeathed his two brothers John and Robert to provide six seams of wheat to the poor people of the Isle of Sheppey immediately after his death. In addition, he bequeathed to his brother's children two lambs each 'to be delivered at the wenyng time except the ram lambs'.⁹ One of John's children is named as Edward Sigor who was to receive 1 cow bullock. Every one of Robert's children was to receive two lambs while Robert himself was to receive four pounds sterling. Two other men referred to as 'brothers' within Edward's wills were the brothers of his wife, now included within his kin circle. 'My brother Taylor's children' were to receive one theve each (a theve was a young ewe) and 'my brother John Stonarde' was to receive a mare stag and two other horses and a ram lamb. Edward also mentioned two cousins within his will such as his 'cosyn of London' who was to receive his best black gelding. Another cousin named William Skepton was to receive four pounds sterling. Five servants were named within Edward's will where they each received livestock bequests. Robert Haywarde, the shepherd of 'Notte' farm which was in Edward's possession, was to receive one mare stag, Mildred Wright, a servant was to receive one cow bullock, Valentine Drayton, servant, was to receive ten theve lambs, Richard Danyell, servant, was to also receive ten

⁹ CKS PRC 17/29/62.

ewes from the hands of Agnes, Edward's wife. Richard Newman, another named servant, was to receive one theve lamb.

Edward's wife was to receive most of the household items of his house and farms as described within his will, 'all my stock of belongeth to my farm at home and out of the farm of Notte including four kene and six working steres and two working mares and a working gelding, three cotts and three ram lambs out of the farm of Notte'. In addition to this Agnes was to 'to harvest my wheat that is on the ground' with one half each going to herself and the other half to the children.

In addition to assisting his brothers John and Robert, who may not have been as well off as Edward, with the bequests described earlier such as pounds sterlings and livestock including a mare and also bushels of wheat, Edward also bequeaths that the residue of his stock at Notte, which he had given to his children, was now to be bought by Robert, his brother, and the money coming from the stock, after it was sold, to be divided amongst his brothers, Robert and John.

Edward's sons George and Adam were expected to inherit all land and structural property with further farming equipment which was precisely named and mapped accordingly by Edward within his will. George was to receive his father's house 'that I now dwell in and all lands about it by estimation of 28 acres'. If George died then his brother Adam was to act as heir to his brother. Adam was to inherit a fresh marsh and a piece of land called 'Bustons croft' in Minster parish with George acting as Adam's heir in case of death. If both sons died, then all was to go to Edward's daughter who was not named within his will. Agnes, Edward's wife was to inherit all other unspecified land if she remained a widow for 21 years, but if she married then all land was to 'be let out to the use of my sons by the hands of my two brothers'. And in addition to his, Agnes was to also leave out of her stock of Edward's goods, 60 ewes and 'a cart and plough' which was to be given to George Sigor, Edward's son.

Within the Sigor family, the mapping of land and structural property appeared more useful when partible inheritance was used by a testator within their will. The naming of individual property and land helped to clearly identify the location of property so that all sons inheriting and the feoffees knew precisely where land or property was

located. The naming of property was also significant in family inheritance where named property was continued to be referred to over the generations such as in the inheritance of the place called 'Gortons' which skipped a generation in terms of appearance within a will bequest but was held from father to father over three generations regardless of the families move between Sheppey parishes from Eastchurch to Leysdown. Inheritance systems adapted by the family also reproduced the landscape itself in which places were represented with the Sigor family and their name. These areas of land and structural property became indicative with Sigor family history.

II.ii. The Cardons: mapping inheritance and land

The Cardons were a large farming family of Minster parish with links to Queenborough town. Compared with the Sigors, there are limited descriptions of land or structural property within their family wills and it did not appear to be the practice of the widows within the family to bequeath land or structural property; however, the descriptions of land or structural property which were used within the last will surviving of a Cardon family member in 1553, mapped land and property in terms of how the land and/or property was inherited and who possessed it throughout previous generations. Therefore, the descriptions within Alexander Cardon's will in 1553 map family inheritance patterns rather than land or property location.

The first three wills of the Cardon family were from three brothers Peter in 1475, William in 1498 and Thomas in 1501. All three brothers have wives and children while William alludes to his parents still being alive in 1498, and Thomas in 1501, suggested that his mother was still alive.¹⁰

The first will of the Cardon family was produced in 1475 by Peter Cardon of Minster parish.¹¹ Peter states within his will that he had two sons named John and Thomas and two daughters Alice and Denise who all received ewes and cows from their father. Peter's land was to be occupied by his wife where she was to receive all their

¹⁰ William's will: CKS PRC 17/7/80 and Thomas' will: CKS PRC 17/16/344.

¹¹ CKS PRC 17/2/457.

profits to provide for the children, except for four acres of which three were to be sold and the money was to pay for his debts. In 1498, William Cardon, the brother of Peter above, is not specifically stated within either of their wills, although Peter named William to be one of his executors. William also had a son named John and another son named Edward. William does state that his parents are to be his executors while Peter did not mention his parents at any point within his will. Like Peter, William bequeathed all his land and property to his wife, possibly because his children were young like Peter's children, although William does state that his two sons are to be his executors. Nevertheless, Peter and William both intend their wives to inherit all their land and property. William's wife Isabel was to inherit his messuage and land under the condition that she did not take another husband and if she did, then his sons were to have all land and property divided evenly amongst them both. Thomas Cardon left his will in 1501 where he bequeathed his son Thomas one lamb, suggesting that his son was very young at the time. Furthermore, he bequeathed all his residue of goods to his daughter Sexburga who was to provide one half of these goods to Thomas's mother. Thomas does not mention any land or structural property within his will and only provides bequests of livestock to his son, a 'special friend' William Clerke, a Thomas Cokerall and George, his servant, where all received between one lamb and four lambs each with George receiving the most lambs of four in total, and a gown and twenty pence, probably his wage.

Thomas Cardon, the first heir from one of the three brothers, Peter, William, and Thomas above, was the son of Peter Cardon, and he left a will in 1503.¹² It was twenty eight years between father and son will production. Thomas does not state specifically whether or not he has any sons or daughters but he has a wife, named Johanne, who leaves a will in 1531. Thomas Cardon is the first of the family to provide details as to the location of his land and property. He required that his feoffees provide an estate for Alexander Pittard and Edward Cardon (who may have been his son) from all his land and tenements in Minster in the 'borough of Ossenden'. Other land included three acres and a tenement which were to be used to fund a yearly obit in Minster parish church for his soul

¹² Thomas Cardon's will date 1503: CKS PRC 17/9/201.

and his mother's and father's souls. Nine acres were to be sold by executors Alexander Pittard and Edward Cardon, and the money was to be given to his wife Johanne plus an additional ten shillings to pay his debts and keep his children.

Johanne, the widow of Thomas Cardon above left a will twenty eight years after her husband's death in 1531.¹³ Johanne's will does not mention any land bequests which was not uncommon for widows. Johanne's will does provide additional information about the Cardon family in connection with wider kin bequests and perhaps obligations to family which were not present within her husband's will nor his uncle's or father's wills. In addition, Thomas Cardon, her husband referred to his children but did not mention their names, ages, or gender and did not include any bequests for them. Johanne left bequests for her daughter, named Elenour, who she bequeathed a cow, a 'flokkebed', two pair of sheets, and kitchen goods such as a brass pot, and three different kettles and her sons' children. Johanne's sons, William and Alexander Cardon, were named as her executors. The son of William Cardon, also named William, was to receive a lamb from Johanne, and Johanne, the daughter of William, was to receive a calf which was with Alexander Cardon. Thomas and William are described as the sons of Alexander Cardon and each boy was to receive a cow. Alexander Cardon is another child of Johanne's who is not specifically named within Thomas Cardon's will (Johanne's husband), possibly because his children were so young and none was to inherit their father's estates at the time of his death. Johanne also left bequests for her grandchildren on her daughter's side of the family, leaving Thomas Andrew, her grandson also known as 'Rich', a ewe, just as she left William Cardon, her other grandson, a lamb. Thomas Andrew, another son and described as the eldest son of Thomas Andrew senior, was to receive a lamb and an ewe, and Thomas Andrew, senior, Johanne's son-in-law was to receive two ewes.

The women who were to receive bequests in Johanne's will, included the great aunts of her late husband, the sisters of her husband's father, Isabel and Denise Cardon where Denise was to receive a russet coloured gown and Isabel was to receive twenty shillings.

¹³ CKS PRC 17/19/193.

William Cardon, the son of Johanne and Thomas Cardon left his will in 1531, four months apart from his mother. William Cardon is the only family member who described himself as living within the town of Queenborough in the parish of Minster.¹⁴ Alexander Cardon, William's brother was one of the executors of his will. William used partible inheritance to divide his estate since he had two sons. He stated that he had a house and lands but did not specify their precise location but they were to be inherited by his two sons, Thomas and William, and if both of them died without heirs then their sister Johanne was to inherit their portions, and if Johanne died with no heirs then all of the land and the house were to be inherited by his brother Alexander Cardon. Alexander was to have custody of his three children and their land for six years.

Alexander Cardon, in 1553, had five sons and two daughters and chose partible inheritance between his sons. Full descriptions of his property and land were provided within his will, and in addition, the history of his purchases were also identified with the properties, providing a personally mapped inventory of his acquired and purchased properties rather than inherited property.¹⁵ In addition to his five sons receiving a portion of Alexander's estate, his wife Agnes also received her own small portion. The five sons of Alexander are listed below alongside their intended portion of Alexander's estate which was to be received after his death:

- 1.) Richard: a house described as being 'in Minsterstrete' which had two gardens.
- 2.) Humfrey: 'my house and tenement called 'Gormunds' with all lands pertaining, including a parcel of land called 'Simons Crofte' with two other parcels of land called 'Cocrells Croft'.
- 3.) Robert: a house and tenement called 'Denes' with all land estimated at 35 acres.

¹⁴ CKS PRC 17/19/88.

¹⁵ CKS PRC 17/30/38.

4.) William: a house and tenement called 'southe clefe' and all land which 'came by my father to me.' (his father did not bequeath any estates to his sons, only to his wife, in his will dated 1503. Alexander's mother, William's grandmother, did not list any bequests of land or property within her will dated 1531. Inheritance of 'south clefe' was probably done through deed since it did not go through the post mortem process of inheritance).

a tenement called 'Perces' will all land 'that is in exchange between my Lord Warden and me (the Lord Warden being Sir Thomas Cheyney of Shurland Manor, Eastchurch, Sheppey.).

a parcel of land called 'Nocke'

another parcel of land 'lying in Clefe belonging to Harnes' (It is unclear as to what Harnes refers to but it was most likely the name of a family or individual).

Conditions - William to pay his brother's Richard and Humfrey 20 pounds sterling out of his lands (10 pounds sterling yearly), and to deliver an estate to Robert, his brother, which is to include three acres of land called 'Burstens'.

5.) Thomas: the house 'that I now dwell in, late purchased of John Morishe' with 10 acres belonging to the house.

all lands 'purchased of Master Digges of Newington'.

another parcel of land, 'late purchased of Thomas Urton.

another parcel of land 'late purchased of Robert Collwell'

conditions - Thomas to pay Robert, his brother, 46 pounds sterling out of the land that was late purchased of Robert Collwell.

In addition to the specific land bequests for his sons, Alexander also provides a warning for his wife that if she 'troubles any of the son's land she will forfeit her legacies'. Agnes, Alexander's wife, was bequeathed a tenement called 'New House,' which was

described as 'late purchased of John Cheseman of Hilhe.' Other properties for Agnes to inherit included a parcel of land, 'late purchased of John Elliot' and three parcels of land 'late purchased of Alice Bockiner of Iwade' and another parcel of land 'lying next to Holland's hedge.'

Alexander Cardon's mapping of most of his property and land, in terms of who he purchased it from, presents another form of inheritance. Aside from descriptions of exact location in relation to the property of others, the property name, the street location name or hamlet location, but in terms of the property's past existence as someone else's possession. Alexander presents the reader with a past oral inventory of land and property ownership otherwise never recorded except where deeds may survive from the property transfers. Alexander does not name his property or rename his property or refer to most of his property in terms of such descriptions but through their past ownership which was unusual but nevertheless, provided an exact mapping of where the property may be found within the local community. Alexander used this form of mapping since he felt that it would establish the precise location of property and/or land, and prevent dispute of his ownership, perhaps if they were newly acquired, over any portion of land or property by providing the previous owner's names of particular parcels of land.

II.iii. The Kingsdown family: accumulation of land and detailed mapping

The Kingsdown family left four generations of wills between 1462 and 1545. All members of the family lived within Eastchurch parish. There were no female members of this family who left wills. Partible inheritance of all sons was popular with the Kingsdown family who also left detailed descriptions of their land and/or property so that precise inheritance of the correct land or property could be insured after death of a testator. The descriptions of land or property became more detailed depending on how many sons were to inherit, and with each generation who appeared to acquire more and more lands and properties than the previous generation.

Thomas Kingsdown was the first member of the family to leave a surviving will in 1462.¹⁶ Thomas had a son named John and another son named William. John and William were bequeathed the same amount of land of one acre and one half, but John was to receive an additional two acres of land which were to be sold by John with twenty shillings to be paid to Joan, Thomas's daughter, at her marriage. Katherine, Thomas's other daughter, was to receive twenty shillings at her marriage (the source of her gift is not specified but may be expected to come from his son's inherited land holdings). All of Thomas's land was not described in any way. Alice, Thomas's wife, was to receive his 'place' with one acre of land where she was to keep it 'wind and water tight' with all necessary reparations. Alice was also bequeathed two kene and three hogs. Alice was also named as executor of his will with John, their son, named as an assistant to his mother in disposing of goods for charitable purposes for his soul.

John Kingsdown, the son of Thomas, left a will thirty nine years later in 1501, where at that time John did not appear to have a wife but had three sons who were old enough to have their own wives and families since these women made part of John's bequests within his will.¹⁷ John stated that he had lands in Minster, Eastchurch, Warden and Leysdown, and on the mainland in Sittingbourne. An estate was to be made for his son John within the 'borgh of Holte and Sedon in Minster and Eastchurch'. In addition, John was to receive both of his father's weirs called 'the eastwere' and the 'westwere'. John was to pay to his brother Thomas twenty shillings a year during Thomas's lifetime and Thomas himself was to dwell in his father's 'new house'. John's wife, Elenour, if she were to live 'long after John' was to have John senior's dwelling place in Eastchurch and 'the land about it which was described as worth twenty-six shillings and eight pence a year, 'as long as she is a widow'. If Elenour was to marry she would then only receive thirteen shillings and four pence yearly.

William, John's other son, together with William's wife Margaret, were to have an estate of five acres in Sittingbourne and two acres in Eastchurch and Warden. Margaret specifically was to receive thirteen shillings and four pence 'which she gave to

¹⁶ CKS PRC 17/1/108.

¹⁷ CKS PRC 17/8/124.

John Kingsdown for dowry' to marry his son. In addition, William was to receive twenty pence. John's third son, Thomas, was to look after his fruit trees which were upon his dwelling property where it was instructed that Thomas 'at such time as please God, to sende any frute to growe or come of the appultrees, peerys, or Wardon trees upon my dwelling' then Thomas to have 'of every ten bushels, three'. John had three acres of land in Leysdown which was to be sold and the money used for a priest to sing in Eastchurch for his soul and his friend's souls, and another priest to sing in Minster church for the same.

John Kingsdown, the younger, left a will in 1504, just three years after his father, where the death of his parents was still fresh in his mind. One of his first bequests was that his executors provide a trental of masses for his soul, and for the souls for his father John and mother Alice.¹⁸ John had four sons and a wife to provide for after his death and his bequests are the most detailed of any of the Kingsdown family members while also the only to have four sons, although one of his sons named Laurence had three sons and five daughters in 1545 but his daughters were not intended to receive any of their father's estate.¹⁹ John's four sons were to inherit the following land and/or property:

- 1.) William: a house with messuage called 'Sandres'
two crofts called 'Whietfold' and 'long croft'
- 2.) Lawrence: a tenement at Minster with all land 'in the
borough of Seydon'
- 3.) Ralph: a tenement called 'Broke' with all lands
'purchased of John Sole' a yard of land
lying at 'Holkyn Mannys unto the tenement
at Broke'.

¹⁸ CKS PRC 17/9/130.

¹⁹ CKS PRC 17/26/152.

- 4.) John: my dwelling place called 'Kingsdown' with all land pertaining 'at a croft called Hamunde'.
two crofts 'lying at the hede crosse'
one yard of land 'lying in John Eastland's field'
one half acre of land 'lying at Cothill'
one acre 'lying within the land of Thomas Randolf called 'Vowlis' acre.

All of John's detailed and specific bequests came with a condition for each son to adhere to, except Ralph. If any of his three sons tried to inherit what Ralph was entitled to, than their portion of land would automatically become Ralph's land and/or property.

Overall, John's will provides the most descriptive partible inheritance bequests where land was mapped in terms of its past ownership and its position in relation to natural geography such as hills. Furthermore, it is also mapped in relation to other's property, and general human-made landmarks such as crosses. The nature of property location in terms of its position within a particular borough of a named parish also became important in terms of precisely identifying where the land and/or property would be found.

Lawrence, one of the sons of John Kingsdown, left a will forty-one years later in 1545.²⁰ Lawrence had three sons and five daughters, all named individually alongside their bequests within his will. The five daughters received a range of money and livestock whilst the three sons had their father's estate which was equally divided between them. Lawrence's will states that his three sons were his 'lawful heirs' and that he gave them 'all lands, tenements, pastures, and gardens' divided between them. The only property which is described in any form is within the bequests to his wife Iden who was to receive 'one of the houses in Minster Street for her to dwell in her widowhood' while William his son was to see to the reparations of the house. Although, Lawrence does not describe his property in details, as his father had done within his will, he does describe the inheritance process which was best for his children's needs.

William, Thomas, and Alexander, his sons were to inherit all land, etc. evenly, as described above, where William was to inherit immediately while Thomas and Alexander

²⁰ CKS PRC 17/26/152.

were to inherit their portions each at sixteen years old. If any of the three sons died, then each son was to be the heir of the other. The strategy of partible inheritance and how it was to operate between Lawrence's sons was more importantly described within his will, rather than the naming, identifying, describing and mapping of 'all lands, tenements, pastures, and gardens.'

II.iv. The Wreke family: early maps of family property

The Wreke family was one of the earliest recorded families on the Island of Sheppey with tax payments consistently received for Wreke family members in the fourteenth century taxation material.²¹ The earliest wills surviving for the Wrekes were written in 1471 when two brothers left wills within four months apart.²² Both brothers had very different wills in terms of their list of bequests and how they described them with Henry, the brother with more than one child presenting detailed partible inheritance bequests between his son and his brother John, whilst John, Henry's brother had only one son and did not include the detailed land names as his brother.

In 1471, John Wreke, of Minster, left his son John some domestic bequests such as bedding and sheets and also bequeathed his croft of two acres 'lying on the south side of the Kings Highway' to be used for dirige of two shillings for twenty years and then to John. Joan, John senior's wife, was to inherit specifically for herself, a messuage that he dwelled in with all the land and garden joined to it with all the trees.²³ Henry Wreke described himself as a farmer of Eastchurch in 1471.²⁴ Henry began his list of land bequests first with his son John's entitlement which included: land of two barns and one acre 'next to the house', plus seven acres of land called 'Nona Crofta' and including all land called 'Chollis Croft'. John, Henry's brother, was to be the heir of John, Henry's son. Matilda, the wife of Henry and John his son were to receive all land and 'custody of the residue of my property in Eastchurch'.

²¹ NA E179/230/182.

²² John Wreke's will was produced on the 24 June 1471, whilst Henry Wreke's will was dated 6 February 1471.

²³ CKS PRC 17/2/31.

²⁴ CKS PRC 17/2/110.

In 1484, William Wreke of Eastchurch, could have been a brother to both Henry and John, yet this remains unclear. Nevertheless, William Wreke provided the most detailed will of the family, with land and property clearly identified and for reasons which suggest that there was, once again, a connection to partible inheritance between sons and the level of land description and individual mapping of where and what these land holdings were in case of dispute after the testator's death.²⁵ William had three sons who inherited his land and property as it was described in detail within his will. In addition, Lore, the wife of William also received property and land which was describe in full detail. The listing of bequests for all three sons, as they appear within William's will, are written below along with the detailed descriptions:

- 1.) Roger: land called 'Lokyngce' and 'Burdon'
a field called 'Molefeld' with the barn
'without southgate'.
- 2.) William: 10 acres 'lying the north side of the pound'.
the 'great barn' plus five acres of land
'lying at the south cliff'.
- 3.) Robert: a place at Minster with 11 acres at
'Sumptynge'. (Also, within William's will
it states that if Robert 'be forward and
contrary to this will, he to have no part of my
goods.' It is not certain whether or not 'goods'
also meant his father's land and property).
- 4.) Lore, William's wife: to have 'my place' called 'Hoke'
with all the 'chambers and kitchen.'

the little barn with 8 acres of land
'lying about the place and so northward
unto the pound with all the Innestore
of household goods.'
- 5.) Thomas, son: all the described property above which
was first to be inherited by his mother
Lore but after her death then all goes
to Thomas.

²⁵ CKS PRC 32/3/48.

Robert, the only son of William Wreke, was given a caution within his father's will but left his own will in 1504, twenty years after his father.²⁶ Robert surprisingly does not leave any land or structural property bequests within his will and does not appear to have any children for the making of post mortem provisions; however, he does describe how the residue of his goods and chattels and debts were to be given to his wife Johanne.²⁷ Henry Wreke, of Minster parish, left a will in 1540, and was the last of the Wreke family to have a surviving will.²⁸ Like Robert's will in 1504, Henry's will does not outline any land or structural property bequests but there are more bequests overall in Henry's will.

II.v. The Mann family: representing family as place

The Mann family of Eastchurch parish, had only one member from three generations leave a will between 1473 and 1544. Through the examination of each generation, the evolution of property naming may be traced where in 1544, the Mann family had their own tenement called 'Manns.'²⁹

Robert Mann in 1473, had two sons, Richard and William, who equally inherited their father's estates with descriptions provided as to the exact location of the land and property as all previous testators did who used partible inheritance strategies amongst sons within their post mortem bequests.³⁰ Richard was to receive his father's house with nine acres of land while William was to inherit a place on the 'south side of the high way with the land from the east end of the garden westward.'

William Mann, one of the son's of Robert Mann, left his will in 1503, thirty years after his father left a will.³¹ William had three sons named James, Robert, John where two of his sons were to receive their father's estate equally divided yet perfectly described

²⁶ CKS PRC 17/9/193.

²⁷ CKS PRC 17/9/193.

²⁸ CKS PRC 17/23/270.

²⁹ From will of Robert Man, CKS PRC 17/23/268, date 1544.

³⁰ Robert Mann's will, date 1473, CKS PRC 17/2/256.

³¹ William Mann's will, date 1503, CKS PRC 17/9/27.

in order to prevent a dispute after the testator's death. James, was to receive a house and land while Robert was to receive seven acres 'lying at Holmy street.' John, the other son was to remain the heir of his two brothers if they were to die yet John did not receive his own individual land or property bequest within his father's will. John may have been the youngest family member who may not have been old enough to inherit, while the other two sons could have been older. One of William's sons, Robert, went on to leave his own will in 1544, forty-three years after his father.

Robert Mann of Eastchurch, in 1544, left the most detailed will of his family, although his will did not have detailed explanations of where property and land was located which could have been due to the fact that he had three sons with only one inheriting.³² Robert's feoffees were to insure that an estate was granted to Thomas, the son of Robert, which included a tenement and ten acres. The tenement was called 'Mannes' and it was 'lying in Warden Street' and the ten acres of land were by the tenement, all within 'the borough of Waredowne in Eastchurch'. If Robert died then Michael Mann or Richard Mann, the other two sons were to be their brother's heir.

III. Families represented as landscape on Sheppey

Sheppey family names came to be identified with specific places on the island which served as place-names to fields, marshland, and other distinctive places within the landscape. Island landscape place-names can be matched to families found in taxation records surviving from the Island of Sheppey from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries.³³ The transmission from family to place-name, presents issues of identity where cultural processes of family land ownership and inheritance have come to be transferred into the landscape and become part of social memory and land identification regardless of family ownership. Bestard-Camp has researched how families were known as houses in her study of local cultural practices in Formentera. She examined how houses, like families were corporate groups with names and rights in addition to units of kinship. Family processes and practices were established through ancestry and the promise of

³² CKS PRC 17/23/268.

³³ NA E179/123/29, date 1372.

successors.³⁴ Buildings in particular represented more than physical structures.³⁵ Ancestors of Sheppey families came to represent land or structural property of both past, present, and often an imagined future by testate parishioners. Many people were linked to families through the names that were bestowed on land or structural property well before their own generation of ownership.

Landscape place names contained the social imagination of the Island of Sheppey. Families were mapped into the landscape and came to represent places. Land or a dwelling which was named, such as a tenement, barn or messuage, became a social unit which framed meaning for the family which owned it.³⁶ The transmission or reference of the name or other details of a specific and located space became part of that social unit's meaning to both the family it was named after and family that owned and bequeathed it.³⁷ The naming of property or land or its reference in relation to others suggests that the land or property became a symbol for the personalisation of the landscape representing opportunities for social experience.³⁸

There was a strong link between place-names and ancient families on Sheppey from c.1347 onward. There were 67 family-name descriptions of land or property within Sheppey wills, compared with only two descriptions concerning families within mainland wills examined. Similar to Sheppey's ancient religious roots within Anglo-Saxon religious history, family names that could be traced back over 200 years from c.1550, were names most likely to be used within place-names on the island. Not only was land or property inherited but also family names were inherited regardless of which families were exchanging land. There was a symbolic interaction between land and family. There were also social implications for the real or symbolic naming interaction within the continuous association of a piece of land with an ancient Sheppey family.

³⁴ J.Bestard-Camps, *What's In a Relative: Household and Family in Formentera*, translated by R.Pitt (Oxford, 1991), p.5.

³⁵ J.Carsten and S.Hugh-Jones, eds., *About the House: Levi-Strauss and Beyond* (Cambridge, 1995), p.8.

³⁶ J.Bestard-Camps, *What's In a Relative: Household and Family in Formentera*, translated by R.Pitt (Oxford, 1991), p.51.

³⁷ See J.Carsten and S.Hugh-Jones, eds., *About the House: Levi-Strauss and Beyond* (Cambridge, 1995) for more discussion on the different ways of interpreting houses as social units.

³⁸ J.Bestard-Camps, *What's In a Relative: Household and Family in Formentera*, translated by R.Pitt (Oxford, 1991), p.xv.

Sheppey families exchanged social and spatial knowledge within postmortem land transmission, whilst also preserving and recording ancient family connections with the landscape. Table 8.1 presents a list of some families which represented land or housing on Sheppey.

TABLE 8.1: Land named after Sheppey families.

<u>Family name</u>	<u>Number of generations exchanging the name with the land</u>	<u>Parish</u>
Gordon	2	Eastchurch
Clenches	2	Eastchurch
Larkin or Lorkyns	2	Minster
Elliot	2	Leysdown
Baker	2	Warden
Nutts or Noote	2	Leysdown
Reymans	1	not specified
Eastland	1	Minster
Kingsdown	1	Minster
Symondes	1	Minster
Reynolds	1	Eastchurch
Mannes	1	Eastchurch
Wattes	1	Eastchurch
Abrahams	1	Eastchurch
Yonges	1	Minster

From the list of families above, eight names, including Symondes, Reynolds, Nutt, Eastland, Yonge, Clench, Elliot and Abraham, appeared within individual tax assessment records written between *c.*1347 and *c.*1372.³⁹ In addition, the families listed here could also be identified with land holdings on the Cheney map survey, discussed in a previous chapter, and made sometime between *c.*1576-*c.*1579.⁴⁰

Although ancient family names were identified with various houses on the Island of Sheppey, these ancient families did not necessarily live within these dwellings named after the family. Interestingly, no ancient Sheppey family could be linked with a property of the same name as their family. For example, the Elliot family was a long standing Sheppey family where at least two different families exchanged property named after this

³⁹ NA E179.123.20, *c.*1347; E179.123.24, *c.*1352; E179.123.29, *c.*1372

⁴⁰ Cheney map survey reference: NA MPF 240.

family, yet the Elliots did not appear to own it themselves. In c.1476, William Feyre of Leysdown, bequeathed a messuage called 'Elliots' to his daughter Isabel together with two acres of weirs under the condition that she is unmarried. If she married, Elliots was to be sold and the money used for charity.⁴¹ William Feyre also bequeathed a messuage called 'Bakers' in Warden parish to his wife.⁴² Both properties in the hands of William Feyre, at the time of his death, were named after families who were living on the Island of Sheppey, yet these families did not hold possession of these dwellings named after them. A property named Elliots was later found within another will and exchanged between members of the Grene family. In 1532, Thomas Green of Leysdown bequeathed land called Elliots to his brother-in-law- Richard Hayward for twenty years and then to George Grene, Thomas's son.⁴³ The Elliot family, in 1504, lived within the Minster borough of Ossenden and had a property called 'Coppondon', twenty-eight years later in 1532 the same property was sold but land in Ossenden was inherited over three generations of sons.⁴⁴

This evidence presents an exploration of ways that landscapes were represented. The places and land holdings named after families functioned as identification but also contained within their metaphorical naming was the recognition of socialised space. Spaces were given family labels and by doing so these areas were categorised and validated and so were the families which were named after specific land or structural property. The retaining of family identification with specific land and buildings is an example of how both taxation and post-mortem inheritance strategies perpetuated the perceptions of families and landscapes. The families and even the other various names for the landscape became standard practice across Sheppey parishes, where the identity of the land became more important than the identification of the land with a certain family.

⁴¹ CCA PRC 17/3/110.

⁴² CCA PRC17/3/110.

⁴³ CCA PRC 17/19/282.

⁴⁴ CCA, PRC17/9/82, 1504; PRC17/19/343; 1532, PRC 17/19/338; 1533.

There were some ancient Sheppey families who remained on Sheppey for over two hundred years yet they did not hold any property named after their family. TABLE 8.2 below lists those Sheppey families with island history dating back over two hundred years with no recorded property linked to their family name.

TABLE 8.2: Ancient Sheppey families with no record of property linked to their family name.

Atte Well
Allen
Cokkel/Cockerell
Ellis
Fayre
Foghal
Frend
Hamon
Jacob
Napulton
Poor
Randolf
Wreuke/Wreke

In addition, there were several Sheppey family names that appeared within taxation and probate registers from the mid-fifteenth century yet their names were not linked with properties that were bequeathed within wills. TABLE 8.3 lists the names of prominent Sheppey families who had more than one generation of family member who made a will yet did not have any landholdings named after their family.

TABLE 8.3: Prominent Sheppey families with no landholdings named after their family.

Abell	Flood
Abraham	Gorman
Banny	Grene
Borden	Gregory
Brayles	Hogyn
Brett	Lambe
Brodestrete	Laybourne
Carden	Morris
Churche	Passheley
Clarke	Prior
Cliff	Robinson
Cleve	Ruffyn
Clynton	Swalman
Collins	
Crosland	
Collsall	
Easton	
Felow	
Fenell	

The Sheppey families who owned land with the family name attached to it only appeared to hold the land with the name for one generation. In 1504, John Kingsdown of Eastchurch was the only family member who bequeathed the largest amount of property within his will and amongst his land inventory was a dwelling which he called 'Kingsdown.'⁴⁵ The 'Kingsdown' dwelling was not mentioned within any other wills after John's death. As mentioned, John Kingsdown had the largest inventory of properties which could have explained the very practical reasons for the family name to be attached to at least one of his properties considering the rest of his land holdings had other names. The prevention of dispute after his death could have been a major factor in the subsequent inheritance of his land by his sons, who did not have the land holdings to match their father's.

The Eastlands in 1490 had land called 'Eastland' which was inherited by other Eastland family members who did not carry the association of the family with the land through subsequent generations. In 1490, Richard Eastland of Minster had 8 acres called 'Eastland' which were purchased by Thomas Eastland. This land was to be inherited by

⁴⁵ CKS PRC 17/9/130.

Thomas Eastland, his son living in Eastchurch.⁴⁶ Thomas Eastland, in 1498, did not bequeath any land named 'Eastland' to his wife or daughter and the land named Eastland did not appear within any other wills thereafter.⁴⁷

It would appear that Sheppey testators retained family-named property when that land name became more relevant as a classification system. The continuous association of a family with a dwelling or piece of land had its basis within Sheppey heritage like other institutions and places on Sheppey where ancient associations were strongly identified with a place such as the Minster and its traditional burial practices. Sheppey's past was identified with various ancient families whose identity was transmitted and retained within the inheritance process of land. Land and social knowledge were simultaneously exchanged.

The use of the family name became a means of identifying a place but not attaching a family with that place. Family names were objective and strategically used within wills to identify where a property was located on the island and within a certain area, particularly with regard to the densely settled northern half of the Island of Sheppey. However, newly acquired property appeared to be given family significance by the individual who used the name of the property within their own will but the family association with the land fell out of use with the next generation. Family names became places, symbolically transmitting family names from subjective to objective; transforming place into family 'relatedness'.⁴⁸ Family roots and their continuity on Sheppey depended on the everyday transmission of space identification.⁴⁹ Landscape and family identification with the land was both conscious and unconscious on Sheppey. The land names were used as a way of laying claim, justifying and legitimating a particular place on the island and within a land bequest found within a will, whilst on the other hand, an unconscious part of the routine of everyday existence.⁵⁰ This everyday experience was

⁴⁶ CKS PRC 17/5/219.

⁴⁷ CKS PRC 17/7/43.

⁴⁸ J.Carsten, ed, *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship* (Cambridge, 2000) introduces the idea of 'relatedness' as linked closely to everyday practices at specific points within the life cycle, pp.14-18.

⁴⁹ B.Bender, ed., *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives* (Oxford, 1993), p.9; Carsten, J. ed, *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship* (Cambridge, 2000), pp.14-18.

⁵⁰ B.Bender, ed., *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives* (Oxford, 1993), p.2.

part of the normal bequeathing process at the end of the lifecycle, when making one's will and reflecting on their inventory of land and possessions and how to best project their worth into the future. Naming property was a form of mapping social knowledge unconsciously since the family names were also associated with land or property. The identification process insured individual rights to that piece of property or land whilst connecting family heritage to territory.

IV. Conclusion

The naming of land and/or structural property after family names and identities mapped social reality and heritage to specific places within the Island of Sheppey landscape. Freehold property owners did not necessarily share the same family name as the property that they bequeathed to others. The transmission of family to place-name identification presented a unique concept of identity where family identity represented a social unit, such as a house, rather than the name of the individuals which lived there. Family identification became part of social memory and synonymous with the landscape.

Place naming and mapping within wills also became part of the everyday reality of post-mortem inheritance processes. As examined within wills the naming and identification of land appeared to be just as important as the inheritance processes of that land and/or property. In addition, the preservation of named property, in terms of its retention over time by members of the same family and in terms of the naming of land or property after the family name, suggests a personalised landscape and one in transition.

Identifying place on the Island of Sheppey was concerned with physical and also cultural geography since the places described in wills were personal possessions rather than naturally formed geographies.⁵¹ Family named land and structural property found within testamentary material was also consistent with families named in taxation records over 200 years earlier. Aspects of heritage were linked to shaping the Island's social and

⁵¹ G.King has stated, 'that worlds we inhabit are largely cultural rather than natural', in *Mapping Reality: An Exploration of Cultural Cartographies* (London, 1996), p.41.

physical landscape, as revealed previously through the presence of religious places such as the Minster, and as examined within this Chapter where identification and value of places were linked to family.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

The main aim of this thesis was to investigate the complex nature of space and place, both physically and socially, within a small island community in northeast Kent. The unique focus of this thesis was to examine the topography of the Islands of Sheppey as an important and relevant case study into the socio-cultural changes and continuities of places. Places on the islands were interpreted, represented and translated in social and religious spaces, within surviving documentation, particularly cartographic and testamentary evidence. The reason for isolating this microhistorical analysis to a group of small islands in the late medieval period to early modern period, was to test the nature and complexity of social locality and its significance to wider landscape settlement debates and mapping discourses, both textually and visually. The Islands of Sheppey were physically isolated from the northern mainland Kentish coast; however, of the 22,000 acres of all three islands 12,539 acres belonged to forty-one London, Kent and Essex landlords.¹ This presented a clear context for research into exploitation or at least the exploitation engineered through 'cartographic representation' commissioned by the Crown.²

This thesis started with the premise that island research has been historically significant in its revelations about cultural and social distinctiveness by showing complex social practices at work. The multifaceted nature of the research in this thesis on settlement, religion, and productions of space and places on the Islands of Sheppey, contributes well to the wider body of information which is anthropological and historical about island communities.³ Furthermore, the Kentish countryside is and was geographically diverse; more so than any other county, further demonstrating

¹ BL Lansdowne MS 42, no.12-13, p.28.

² Theoretical frameworks on the nature of 'cartographic representation' of landscapes and communities have been discussed in the introduction of *Literature, Mapping, and the Politics of Space in Early Modern Britain* ed. By A.Gordon and B.Klein (Cambridge, 2001), p.2.

³ A.Cohen, *Whalsay: Symbol, Segment and Boundary in a Shetland Island Community* (Manchester, 1987); J.Thirsk, 'The Isle of Axholme before Vermuyden' in *AHR*, vol.1 (1953), pp.16-28; J.Evans, 'Islands as Laboratories for the Study of Cultural Process' in A.C.Renfrew, ed., *The Explanation of Culture Change: Models in Prehistory* (London, 1973), pp.517-520.

how the evolving socialisation of the Kentish landscape was 'closely affected by the geological structure of the county.'⁴ Like Everitt's ground-breaking research into Kentish settlement, O'Hara's social research into Kentish courtship and marriage patterns further located 'peculiarities' which she attributed to the 'contrasting features of the Kent landscape'.⁵ This thesis has further contributed to Kentish studies, both its settlement history and cultural practices, by focusing on the relationship between landscape, early social settlement evolution and its impact on later religious and familial landowning and giving patterns.

The contrast between all three of the small islands of Sheppey was diverse in social settlement due to its geographical composition. The most populated Island of Sheppey contained the healthier upland areas in the north of the island whilst the marshland of the Island of Elmley was uninhabitable. This was the starting point for further enquiries into what shaped the religious practices and social frameworks on the islands. This thesis has shown that the natural geography framed the early contextualisation of the religious and social landscape on Sheppey and determined its evolving significances with local inhabitants, and particularly freehold property owners. In addition, the findings have shown the detailed extent to which the will-making population on the Islands of Sheppey described their freehold property or land which was unusually narrative compared with the surrounding mainland, will-making population. Although there were limitations within the consecutive survival of documentary evidence, there were nevertheless unusual and distinct contrasts in the level of written details about specific places found within the Islands of Sheppey. Over 1,451 wills, dated between 1400 and 1560, from the Islands of Sheppey and the mainland coastal parishes were researched, including 254 wills surviving from Sheppey parishes, one will from Elmley Island (dated 1512) and 44 wills from Harty Island. A further 1,152 wills left by inhabitants of mainland coastal parishes, surviving within the same period, were also closely read and examined. The reading of a wide range of wills from the northern Kentish coast, including the Islands of Sheppey has successfully revealed how local island populations continued to create imagined narratives of religious and familial importance by exploiting legal documentation. In addition, the findings also show the urgency to secure familial landholdings in the specific written details, which were found within island wills.

⁴ A.Everitt, *Continuity and Colonisation: The Evolution of Kentish Settlement* (Leicester, 1986), p.44.

⁵ D.O'Hara, *Courtship and Constraint* (Manchester, 2000), p.17.

Island families of the will-making population were extraordinarily specific as to where their land or property was located thus narrating a post-mortem future where disputes over boundaries would hopefully not exist. This is evident through the details left in their wills, where they had the power to define their landscapes. Through this textual mapping they charted their own expectations into a visualised landscape. Although not deemed as cartographical evidence, this testamentary evidence was used to exploit the island landscape, just as the Crown and Shurland Manor were also mapped from an imagined narration of a protected London or for individual financial gain. Moreover, it has been found that this territorial and detailed mapping of spaces within the Island of Sheppey's landscape was distinctly related to its densely populated areas, particularly in the north of Sheppey. Less arable and inhabitable land, dominated by a major religious house and a powerful and wealthy landowner at Shurland Manor, created a landscape in tension.

Throughout this thesis, the thematic procession of chapters allowed an evolving thread of discourse on the complexity of space and place production within a local area, specifically the bounded Islands of Sheppey. The interdisciplinary framework of the thesis, as discussed in Chapter 1 and 2, provided a more relevant and culturally-based enquiry concerning itself with a range of aspects about spatial socialisation and culture. Cultural landscape historians such as Cosgrove and Bender have already conducted extensive research into the sociological and phenomenological experiences of spaces which have been shaped by people's experiences of place(s). The inter-connectiveness of the philosophical relationship between space, place, and landscape was an essential and implicit discussion point throughout the chapters within this thesis. The diversity and changeability of spatial meaning was found to exist within specific localities and for specific communities, without and within the Islands of Sheppey.

The anthropological work on islands, particularly Cohen's work in the Shetlands have also emphasised aspects of difference in how island communities define their world. The correlation between island boundaries and the defining of experience is integral to the landscape, particularly when the Islands of Sheppey are compared with the Kentish mainland. Salter's work on place, property and 'what

constitutes a place' was at the forefront of research for this thesis.⁶ However, the research for this thesis not only defined significant places within the Islands of Sheppey, but also contributed further to studies into how will evidence may be successfully read in order to reveal local social and religious landscapes in tension. Whilst cartographical evidence, in traditional map production, has been used by and for the elite, at the expense of 'depopulating' the settlements it has visualised, this thesis has shown how cartographical representations found within will evidence peopled the landscape, where individuals and families have interacted with places in order to make spaces their own.⁷

Chapter 3 provided a comprehensive settlement history of the Islands of Sheppey, emphasising the important relationship of geology to the complexity of landholding creation on the islands. This detailed history looked at time frames outside the main research objectives of this thesis but the archaic practices, such as burial at the Minster, had to be placed within the context of early settlement in order to understand traditional practices of place and how they evolved and were maintained beyond the Reformation. Chapter 3 began from a suitably traditional perspective drawing on the work of Dyer, Everitt, Muir, Schama, Taylor and Winchester to further develop previous approaches into settlement history, land use and change. However, the range of comprehensive information discussed about the Islands of Sheppey, provided a starting point to explore notions of locality and cultural landscape change which specifically affected the Islands, due to their unique positioning.

Chapter 3 emphasised the special topographical distinctiveness of the vast fertile marshland of most of the island compared with only 27% of habitable acreage. From this geographical position, the ideas of isolation, revealed in transportation, industry and population figures from surviving will evidence, began to emerge and develop in isolated religious practices and social networks across the islands. This chapter provided an interesting insight into communication and co-existence between

⁶ E.Salter, *Cultural Creativity in the Early English Renaissance: Popular Culture in Town and Country* (Basingstoke, 2006), p.7.

⁷ Discussion on the 'functional conception of space' can be found in A.Gordon and B.Klein, eds., *Literature, Mapping, and the Politics of Space in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2001), p.2; E.Salter has commented on the limiting aspects of 'scientific' or 'cartographical' approaches to property descriptions in *Cultural Creativity in the Early English Renaissance: Popular Culture in Town and Country* (Basingstoke, 2006), p.65.

habitants of Islands of Sheppey and their Kentish mainland neighbours. According to will evidence, the people of the Islands were not internally linked to their Island neighbours but on the contrary social networks were established according to where the closest habitable hamlets and boroughs were located. Notions of island isolation were found within Sheppey's communities, in particular within the parishes of Eastchurch, Queenborough and Leysdown where testators were more likely to have extended kin networks within these areas. Those people living on the Island of Harty were more likely to have formed links with Faversham inhabitants. Harty testators were also more likely to give religious bequests to the priory of Davington (near Faversham) rather than to Sheppey's Minster. However, Milton and Iwade parishes, in particular because of the link to Sheppey with the King's Ferry crossing, also shared social networks with the islanders of Sheppey who were living towards the south of the Island. Queenborough residents did show the strongest links to London as Queenborough was one of the major ports en route to London. Overall, the evidence from this thesis points to aspects of isolated localities regardless of island geography. It was from the position of the physical space of the Islands of Sheppey that research began about the social landscape; however, insularity was not found to exist within the physical boundaries but in the isolation of remembrance practices unique to the island communities.

The Anglo-Saxon Minster on Sheppey, at the highest point above sea-level, had profound repercussions on establishing parish boundaries and controlling further social, economic and religious developments on all three of the Islands of Sheppey. The Minster on Sheppey was on the main gateway route onto the rest of the Islands if approached by road. All travellers would have passed the Minster before heading east or west towards the other parishes on the island. Culturally and symbolically, the retention of the Minster's authority was celebrated and remembered by local people living within the Islands and those who had migrated away from the islands who requested burial 'at The Minster.' Chapter 4 examined this profoundly local and important death cult dedicated to the site of the Monastery of Sexburga; distinctively Anglo-Saxon in practise and old-fashioned but nevertheless at the heart of ancestral and sacred place remembrance deemed special to Sheppey islanders.

The prestigious burial at the Minster on Sheppey relocated families at death within an imagined future of island heritage, regardless of the religious changes which took place at the Reformation. Sheppey testators were actively engaged in producing

a personally mapped landscape; one which was a projection of their families past into something timeless – prestigious and metaphorically high-status - not dissimilar to the actual location of the Minster; towering high above the Islands. The will-making families who requested burial at the Minster were actively engaged in monument construction; securing a future of shared commemorative togetherness through a sacred location. In addition, will evidence has also revealed authorial opportunities to myth-make and nation build by Sheppey testators. The practise of naming daughters after Anglo-Saxon women including Sexburga, Frideswide, Matilda and Ursula has shown that the local population organised a collective topography through its fictional narrative history.⁸ This thesis found that the most popular female saint was Sexburga, the local patron and foundress of the Minster in the seventh century. Despite a relic of Sexburga and an elaborate shrine dedicated to her, religious bequeaths to the saint were not popular options amongst the will-making population of the island. This is not to suggest that her devotional light was unpopular in the Minster; however, the listing of donations to her light were limited within the will evidence. However, the female saint was remembered historically and ritualistically through naming, therefore synthesising family heritage with religious heritage in the local community. The transmission of the island as social and religious homeland was also part of the ethnic local heritage.⁹ Overall, Sheppey islanders in their self-conscious act of burial and naming practises, and therefore their collective act of narrative history recollection developed a unique familial and root history not found anywhere else in Kent.

Sheppey was not without further cults that were firmly distinguished by place-name. As Everitt had found in his earlier research, fishing communities of the marshes, particularly on the Romney Marsh developed superstitions linked to their isolated and exposed living on the unhealthy marshes.¹⁰ Research from Sheppey's will evidence include frequent mentions of a hamlet called Ossenden in Minster parish; however, the exact location is ambiguous. Nevertheless, the candle dedicated to St Peter of Ossenden in Minster church was frequently found in bequests. If the

⁸ See E. Zerubavel who first suggested this idea by stating 'social maplike structures in which history is typically organised in our minds' is referred to as a 'sociomental topography of the past', p.1. This sociological perspective is described as 'how the past is registered and organised in our minds', p.2 See E. Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (London, 2003).

A.D.Smith in *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford, 1999) has also emphasised the central role of myths in claiming territory and providing local loyalty, see pps. 3-27.

⁹ Discussion on 'ethno-symbolic' approaches on nation and homeland identifications and practices can be found in A.D.Smith, *Myths and memories of the Nation* (Oxford, 1999), pp.10-13.

¹⁰ A.Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization*, p.232

popular superstitions of marshland societies are to be believed the cult of St. Peter of Ossenden may have stemmed from a local miracle or vision providing collective cohesion and elevating the importance of this place within the already significant Minster parish. St Peter's cult had a distinctive appeal which varied from the Anglo-Saxon women's naming ritual. St Peter's cult was specific to Ossenden therefore the connection between place, trade and spiritual wellbeing through this dedication light is also similar to practices within the Leysdown weir fishermen community. Leysdown weir fishermen left bequests to the light of St Clement in the parish church which overlooked the eastern end of the Island of Sheppey and the north Kent coast at the entrance to the Swale to the south and the gateway to the Thames in the north. St Clement's association with lighthouses and ships suggests an appropriate social dynamic between land, sea use and religious mystery. Therefore, the territorial tensions in the production of Minster parish's identity alone is reflected and revealed in its symbolic religious affiliations to Sexburga and St Peter. However, it was the local inhabitants, and not the religious institutions, which perpetuated religious experiences in the socialising and mapping of Sheppey's past heritage.

Chapter 5 provided an examination of chorography and formal cartographic productions of the Islands of Sheppey from between c.1525 to c.1666. These descriptions and maps of the Islands narrated a story of ancient and royal genealogies affiliated with the Minster's foundation and also a strong military exploitation of the Islands from Crown interests. In addition, one powerful family, the Cheneys, who owned the secular Shurland manor, were also instrumental in engineering surveys and inventories of interest to the Crown. Shurland Manor was not only the largest manor and security force on the Islands of Sheppey but also in northeast Kent. The Islands of Sheppey provided a suitably bounded stronghold for a powerful family to build their own empire – both strategically and economically. Previous research into the nature of maps and the representation of spaces has argued that they are 'void of human traces' or 'visually empty.'¹¹ Lord Henry Cheney's interest in visually accounting for all of his land and tenancies on the Islands of Sheppey, produced a beautifully rich and peopled landscape, albeit a working document, of estates, land and family tenants to be passed onto the Crown in 1576.¹² However, the Cheney

¹¹ Discussion comment taken from A.Gordon and B.Klein, eds., *Literature, Mapping, and the Politics of Space in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2001), p.2.

¹²NA MPF 240

map, as argued in Chapter 5, unconsciously recollects and maps families to specific locations around the islands. This Cheney estate map thereby economically maps Sheppey, to guarantee future Crown wealth once the Cheney estate was sold, but also visualises the complexities of settlement, particularly to the north of Sheppey. The detailed coding system of family names matched to dwellings is comparable to textual coding systems used by will makers in identifying family names to specific property. The houses were social identities or codes which used family names as part of the identification process. To some degree, and when the survey map is compared to testamentary material, this is consistent with the organised descriptions of places by testators on the islands. Inhabitants of the islands with land and property, who left wills, provided navigational instructions so that there would be no dispute as to what belonged to them after they died. In a similar manner, Cheney wanted to ensure a complete understanding of what he owned and where it would be so the Crown could navigate around the Island of Sheppey and knew exactly who owed rent. Essentially this map was a technologically advanced visual list of tenants.

The consequences of wealthy landlords such as the Cheneys and the military and economic interests of the Crown, imposed their own ideologies on the people of the islands. In Chapter 5, it was argued that map productions of the islands, or rather map usage, was designed to be strategic and top secret, due to the location of the Islands of Sheppey. In addition, ideas for maps were secretly conceived, showing planned fortifications for the islands, suggesting political anxiety due to the looming war with Spain. Chapter 5 also showed that the extensive range of military maps about the Islands of Sheppey's proposed defense network was based on cognitions of the sixteenth-century imagination; fear, threat and panic. The Islands of Sheppey were imagined to be the last stronghold on entry by foreigner ships into the Thames Estuary. The physical position of the islands promoted the cartographical transference of war into necessary fortifications, not for Sheppey but for London. These early modern maps of the proposed fortifications at Minster and Queenborough, politicised 1580s Sheppey; they revealed those areas deemed as highly significant to the Crown's interests.¹³ The castle of Queenborough served as a domestic fortress for monarchs in times of plague; an isolated home on an ideally isolated island. The protection of this place for the monarchy is straightforward but

¹³ NA MPF 7 and 9.

Minster's fortifications, including a drawbridge, suggest a stronghold; the last battle to protect a London approach by the Spanish. The fictional story of a stronghold, containing the local 'mustered Sheppey souldiours'¹⁴ both 'socialises' and 'desocialises' the islands, at the expense of the local people, preventing them from protecting their own land and property for the sake of Crown interests.¹⁵ Strategic mapping was the final product of an uneasy imagination; used to try and divert and control outcomes since the Armada was rumoured to appear in the southeast. This never materialised and what was left included spatial narratives of the Islands of Sheppey at war. These maps imposed their fiction on the daily lives of Sheppey inhabitants through their construction and interpretation. This is specifically revealed in 1583 when Edward Hobn, a member of the Privy Council expressed his delight in finding 'new mustered Sheppey souldiours' who were 'well taught and trained.'¹⁶ Although these maps and documents survive later than most of the primary evidence used within this thesis, they nevertheless provide a further tale of landscape exploitation and conception within a time of increasing technology. The Islands of Sheppey were seen as the last frontier before entry into London or the Medway towns and were therefore conceived as a physical and metaphorical fortress by the Crown which included its own home-grown military of local inhabitants. The imagined threat to national security at this time prompted a visual array of other strategies such as the beacon communication system, including the beacon map of 1585. Interestingly, this map was made by an antiquarian, William Lambarde, and now survives as a testament to a historically imagined landscape.¹⁷

Overall, Chapter 5 showed how the representation of places within the landscape of Sheppey, in particular, showed a landscape with a diverse set of complex objectives, visually enhanced with the latest cartographical technology. These state-of-the-art maps created a mythological narrative of possibilities rather than confirming realities until the surprise Dutch invasion ironically turned fiction into reality. The Dutch invasion of the Medway in 1666 prompted the creation of a map which retells the story of the destruction that took place along the north Sheppey

¹⁴ BL Lansdown MS.42, f.11.

¹⁵ J.B.Harley suggested that maps were 'impersonal' in the information that they provided, making them seem empty of people and 'desocialised.' See J.B.Harley, *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography*, ed. P. Laxton (London, 2001), p.81.

¹⁶ BL Lansdown MS.42, f.11.

¹⁷ BL Add. MS 62935.

coast.¹⁸ The 1666 maps of the Islands of Sheppey provide a visual narrative of actual past events, as opposed to the idealistic cartography which showed protected areas in the event of an invaded Sheppey in the 1580s.

Within this background of overbearing political and military involvement of Islanders and their landscape, Sheppey's freehold property owners wrote detailed descriptions of their land and property. Chapter 6 has shown how wills were the only insurance available to most freehold property and land owners for securing the future of families and their well-being. This was achieved by exploiting the legal boundaries of the testamentary documentation. Sheppey testators were more likely to include detailed place names and descriptive detail about where their land was located within their wills, compared with Kentish mainland testators. Sheppey inhabitants had limited choice as to where they could live safely, away from the threat of ague and marsh fever, so detailed descriptions were essential to avoid disputes. The individuality of the will document empowered the local islander to preside over what was rightly theirs whilst also transmitting a personal perception of space which was narrative and biographical. The post-mortem bequests, along with the descriptive details, were indicative of pre-mortem boundaries and tensions within the parishes of Minster and Eastchurch on Sheppey. Chapter 6 examined the detailed and personal landscapes of specific families sometimes inherited over three generations. Overall, chapter 6 not only argued for a more detailed reading of the landscape as written in testamentary material, but also presented a new type of 'paper landscape' which has not been researched in the understanding of place meaning within settlement and landscape history.¹⁹ Chapter 6 showed that small landholdings in Minster and Eastchurch on Sheppey were more likely to be named by testators, including smaller sections of crofts, to prevent any post-mortem discrepancies. Therefore representing a landscape in tension on a lesser scale than Crown and estate maps have revealed.

The focus of Chapter 7 was to examine how places and land were transmitted within the post-mortem exchange process. This thesis found the naming, and therefore mapping, of places and property by the will-making population, as a highly conscious process of imaging family future and stability. This Chapter is similar to groundwork already established in Chapter 6 where the focus was on descriptions and

¹⁸ BL Map 1240.

¹⁹ The term 'paper landscape' was suitably adopted from discussion about the nature of maps and 'spatial re-visions' A.Gordon and B.Klein, eds., *Literature, Mapping, and the Politics of Space in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2001), p.4-5

naming found within will evidence; however, Chapter 7 showed the complexity of inheritance patterns on Sheppey in particular. A suitable comparison was made between Sheppey testators and those living in the largest mainland parish, Milton, in order to provide distinctive contrast in how differentiations between mainland and island groups perceived and described their landholdings.

The proving of partible inheritance, or gavelkind, was a specific preference of the Kentish population; however, amongst Sheppey testators, bequests were made most often to sons. Testatrix were more likely to sell their land with the exceptional case of one woman in 1552 who left her estate to her mother.²⁰ In addition to this, if testators did leave their estates to their wives they were more likely to describe their land and property. The textual mapping of this land and/or property suggests a pre-meditated dispute prevention strategy to ensure that the intended heir receives all they were entitled to after the testator's death. The anxiety presented by predicting these possible disputes, even amongst family members, prompted some testators to include conditional clauses within their will.²¹ Overall, Sheppey testators and testatrix exploited the will document as a personal biographical narrative, linking themselves and their families to land and property, whilst also exercising control over their family's future. Although personal, the will document is an imagined narrative since there is no firm evidence to show that a testator's or testatrix's wishes were adhered to after their death. Nevertheless, the will records personal intentions and mapped plans, just as the Cheney map recorded rentals at the time of purchase by the Crown.

Chapter 8 provided a natural extension to how Sheppey families named their land after their families therefore providing a unique labelling system where families became spaces themselves. Just as the naming of Anglo-Saxon women was translated from religious heritage to ancestral heritage, so too were the familial landscape place-names. This oral history that has been catalogued and mapped within the testamentary material of Sheppey inhabitants discusses six families as individual case studies. Within the case studies, all families adopted their own system of inheritance depending on family size and quantity of landholdings. Each case study presented a chronological mapping of family practice within itself since all had at least three generations of family members who left wills. From this evidence, this thesis has

²⁰ Avice Brodestrete of Minster parish: CCA PRC 17/29/303.

²¹ Alexander Cardon of Minster, left a will in 1553 in which he stated that his wife, Agnes should not 'trouble any of the son's land or she will forfeit her legacies.' See CCA PRC 17/30/38. In addition, Alexander had five sons and each son's land and property was mapped in detail and named.

shown how a pre-mediated concern about future post-mortem disputes was a primary motive for naming landholdings since the more children a family had, the more likely the testator was to name or describe their land or property. Furthermore, the evidence also showed how testators used landmark and directional phrases in the textual mapping of their property as part of their concern for locating their precise property before and after death. Overall, these case studies further highlight the overall preface of this thesis which has successfully used testamentary evidence to uncover a late medieval and early modern island landscape. Therefore a detailed reading of testamentary material can reveal a complex local heritage and practice of mapping property individually which was family-driven and in response to securing what little freeholders had in a densely populated and economically exploited landscape.

The objectification, visualisation and transmission of the Islands of Sheppey's landscape was always in transition and multi-dimensional; from the early establishment of human settlement throughout the early modern period. The exploitation of meanings attributed to places within the Islands was discretionary according to personal or collective interests. There is evidence of dispute or the prevention of dispute, in terms of future landholdings and family inheritance, and there is also evidence of concord amongst local families who re-located but still carried a special and phenomenological relationship with the Islands and its landmarks. Overall the fluidity of the Island landscape's prosopographic nature was made, re-interpreted and exploited by many who lived on, used to live on or visited the Islands. Geographical and sociological insularity was territorial, isolated and distinctive on the Islands of Sheppey.

APPENDIX

Minster (SS Mary and Sexburga monastery and parish church)

Pious bequests found within wills dated c.1409-1559¹

Minster wills surviving:	138 wills
Minster wills with religious bequests:	83 wills
Minster wills with no religious bequests:	64 wills
Minster total number of religious bequests:	196 bequests

<u>Bequests</u>	<u>Total number of bequests</u>
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Reparations to parish church	13
Reparations to the abbey church	1
Repairs to the ceiling of the parish church	1
Painting of the Roodloft in the parish church	1
Repairs to the Cross (unspecified church)	2
New pane in the cloister of the abbey church	1
Repair to wood panelling or glass pane (unspecified church)	1
Repairs to the belfry (unspecified church)	4
Light of Our Lady/ St. Mary	11
Light of St Mary in the chancel and chapel	2
Light of St Mary beside the altar of St. Lawrence	1
Light of Our Lady in the new choir	3
Light of Our Lady of Pity	4
Light of the Holy Cross/High Cross light/ Cross light	11
Light of St Peter of Ossenden	8
Light of St George	2
Light of St Sexburga	1
Light of St Lawrence	2
Light of St John	1
Light of St Christopher	1
All the lights of devotion	1
The Roodlight in the parish church	2
The Roodlight in the abbey church	1
Light of Mary Magdalene behind the choir in the monastery church	1
Image of the Holy Cross	3
Image of Sexburga	2
Image of Our Lady	1
Image of St Katherine	1
Image of St Borge?	1
Image of St Nicholas	1
To the making of an image of St John the Baptist	2
To the making of St Thomas the Martyr	1
To the making of St George	2
To the making of St Peter	1
Shrine of St Sexburga	1
Tabernacle of St Sexburga	2
To the Rood at the north wall	1
To the Rood outside the choir door	1
To the making of a new Rood (unspecified church)	1

¹ Pious bequests include intended post-mortem gifts found within individual wills. Dates begin and end with the date of surviving wills for this particular parish.

(continued) Minster

Pious bequests found within wills dated c.1409-1559²

<u>Bequests</u>	<u>Total number of bequests</u>
Chapel of St John the Baptist	1
Reparations to the chapel of St John the Baptist	1
To the work of St Lawrence's chapel	1
Altar of St Lawrence	1
New altar cloths	3
New processional	1
New chalice	3
New vestments	1
New banners or cross cloths	1
To buy a new pair of silver censors	2
To the Prioress of Minster	30
To the nuns at Minster	23
Reparations to Queenborough Chapel (on Sheppey)	2
To the Rood in Queenborough Chapel	1
Light of the Trinity in Queenborough Chapel	2
Light of Our Lady in Queenborough Chapel	1
Light of St James in Queenborough chapel	1
Reparations to Eastchurch parish church (on Sheppey)	2
Reparations to Warden parish church (on Sheppey)	2
Reparations to Leysdown parish church (on Sheppey)	1
Reparations to Hollingbourne parish church (on the mainland)	1
Reparations to Faversham church (on the mainland)	1
Light of the Cross at Faversham church	1
Light of Our Lady at Faversham church	1
Every light of devotion at Faversham church	1
To every brotherhood at Faversham church	1
Reparations to Selling Church (near Canterbury on mainland)	1
Light of the Cross at Selling church	1
Light of Our Lady at Selling church	1
Light of St John the Baptist at Selling church	1
To the four houses of Lepers	1
To the 'anchorisse of Faversham'	1
To the Abbot of Faversham	1
To the rector of St. Peter's Sandwich	1
To the Observant Friars of Greenwich	1
To the White Ladies of Worcester	1
TO the Augustine Friars	1
To the Observant Friars (unspecified location)	2

² Pious bequests include intended post-mortem gifts found within individual wills.

Warden (church dedicated to St. James)

Pious bequests found within wills dated c.1460-1533³

Warden wills surviving:	8 wills
Warden wills with religious bequests:	6 wills
Warden wills with no religious bequests:	2 wills
Warden total number of religious bequests:	18 bequests

<u>Bequests</u>	<u>Total number of bequests</u>
To church reparations	3
Changing of the bell	1
Light of St Mary	3
Light of the Roodlight	1
Light of St James (brotherhood)	2
Image of St Mary	1
Image of St James	1
Prioress of Minster	1
Nuns of Minster	1
For an altar cloth	1
Reparations of Leysdown church	1
Light of Our Lady in Lesydown church, Sheppey	1
Light of St Clement in Leysdown church	1

³ Pious bequests include intended post-mortem gifts found within individual wills. Dates begin and end with the dates of surviving wills for this particular parish.

Leysdown (church dedicated to St.Clement)

Pious bequests found within wills dated c.1410-1554⁴

Leysdown wills surviving:	21 wills
Leysdown wills with religious bequests:	13 wills
Leysdown wills with no religious bequests:	4 wills
Leysdown total number of religious bequests:	56 bequests

Bequests Total number of bequests

To church reparations	3
Changing of the bell	2
Painting of tabernacle of Our Lady	1
New glass and shingles for the church	2
Paling of churchyard	1
Light of St Mary	7
Light of St Thomas the Martyr	6
Light of St Clement	5
Light of St Clement 'near the high altar'	
Light of the Cross	1
Light of St John the Baptist	3
Light of St Nicholas	1
Light of Mary Magdalene	1
Light of St Katherine	1
Light of St Margaret	1
Trental light	1
All lights of devotion	1
Image of Our Lady	
The cross	1
The Roodloft	1
Reparations to the roodloft	1
Painting of the roodloft	1
To the chapel of Our Lady called 'capel'	1
Reparations to the chapel of St. Mary	1
Altar cloth for Our Lady	1
Construction of a chair before the cross	1
Prioress of Minster, Sheppey	2
Nuns of Minster, Sheppey	1
To Milton parish church (mainland)	1
To Bobbing parish church (mainland)	1
To Warden parish church, Sheppey	2
To Our Lady light in Eastchurch parish church, Sheppey	1
To Island of Harty parish church	1
To Graveney parish church	1
Abbot of Faversham	1

⁴ Pious bequests include intended post-mortem gifts found within individual wills. Dates begin and end with the dates of surviving wills for this particular parish.

Eastchurch (church dedicated to All Saints)

Pious bequests found within wills dated c.1460-1559⁵

Eastchurch wills surviving:	56 wills
Eastchurch wills with religious bequests:	23 wills
Eastchurch wills with no religious bequests:	27 wills
Eastchurch total number of religious bequests:	67 bequests

Bequests Total number of bequests

To church reparations	5
Light of Our Lady	2
Light of St Mary	3
Light of Our Lady of Pity	1
Light of Our Lady in the high choir	1
Light of Our Lady in the south chancel	1
Light of the High Cross/ rood light	2
'bacyn' or beacon light 'around the cross'	1
Image of Our Lady	1
To the Trinity	1
Altar of St Katherine	1
To all the altars (for cloths)	1
New vestments	1
Prioress of Minster, Sheppey	11
Nuns of Minster, Sheppey	9
Minster church (unspecified)	6
Repairs to the High Cross at Minster, Sheppey	1
Cope for Minster church 'for the hygh dayes'	1
Light of St Mary, Minster church (unspecified)	1
Taper in high chancel in Minster church (unspecified)	1
Abbot of Faversham	1
Prioress of Davington	1
Warden parish church	1
Brotherhood of St James of Warden parish church, Sheppey	2
Light of St Mary, Warden parish church	2
Leysdown parish church	2
Light of St Clement, Leysdown parish church	1
Island of Harty parish church	2
Light of the Holy Cross, Harty parish church	1
Light of St Thomas, Harty parish church	1
Torchlight in Harty parish church	1
5 houses of Observant Friars (unspecified locations)	1

⁵ Pious bequests include intended post-mortem gifts found within individual wills. Dates begin and end with the dates of surviving wills for this particular parish.

Queenborough Chapel (dedicated to the Trinity)

Pious bequests found within wills dated c.1470-1559⁶

Queenborough wills surviving:	33 wills
Queenborough wills with religious bequests:	16 wills
Queenborough wills with no religious bequests:	17 wills
Queenborough total number of religious bequests:	29 bequests

<u>Bequests</u>	<u>Total number of bequests</u>
To chapel reparations	6
Bell repairs	1
Light of the Trinity	3
Light of St Mary in the chapel	1
Image of the Trinity	2
Image of Our Lady	1
The Rood	1
The Rood of Fortune	1
Minster church, Sheppey	4
Prioress of Minster, Sheppey	4
Nuns of Minster, Sheppey	4
Observant Friars, Canterbury	1

⁶ Pious bequests include intended post-mortem gifts found within individual wills. Dates begin and end with the dates of surviving wills for this particular parish.

Harty (church dedicated to St. Thomas the Apostle)

Pious bequests found within wills dated c.1450-1553⁷

Harty wills surviving:	44 wills
Harty wills with religious bequests:	30 wills
Harty wills with no religious bequests:	14 wills
Harty total number of religious bequests:	bequests

<u>Bequests</u>	<u>Total number of bequests</u>
To church reparations	4
Roofing of the Church	1
Reparations to the stone wall in the churchyard	1
Light of S. Mary	15
Light of the Holy Cross	8
Light of St Thomas	5
Light of St John the Baptist	1
Light of St Christopher	1
Light of St Margaret	2
Bachelor Taper	1
Parish Light	1
All the lights of devotion	2
Image of Our Lady	3
Image of St Margaret	1
Image of St John the Baptist	1
Image of St Thomas	1
Image of the cross	1
Reparations to Our Lady Chapel	1
Making and extending of St. John's chapel	1
Reparations to the High Altar	3
Reparations to Our Lady Altar	1
Reparations to St John's altar	1
Reparations to the cross beam	3
Painting of the Roodloft	1
An altar stone	1
New Vestments	1
New chalice	3
New altar cloths	3
New Mass book	1
Leysdown parish church, Sheppey	2
Light of Our Lady, Leysdown parish church, Sheppey	1
Vicar of Newington	1
Graveney parish church	1
Light of Allhallows, Graveney church	1
All lights of devotion at Graveney church	1
Oare parish church	2

⁷ Pious bequests include intended post-mortem gifts found within individual wills. Dates begin and end with the dates of surviving wills for this particular parish.

(continued) Harty

Pious Bequests found within wills dated c.1450-1553⁸

<u>Bequests</u>	<u>Total number of bequests</u>
Reparations to Stone-next-Faversham parish church	1
Luddenham parish church	2
Faversham parish church	1
To St Magdelene church, Davington	1
To St Lawrence church, Davington	1
To the nunnery at Davington	3
Davington Prioress	1
To all the nuns at Davington	2
To the abbot of Faversham	1
Observant Friars, Canterbury	1
For a pilgrimage to Master John Shorne at Halstowe	1

⁸ Pious bequests include intended post-mortem gifts found within individual wills. Dates begin and end with the dates of surviving wills for this particular parish.

Isle of Elmley (no church located on the isle)

Pious bequests found within the only surviving will dated 1516⁹
(probate dated 18 March 1517)¹⁰

Bequests

Buried in the churchyard at Minster in Sheppey

To the high altar at Minster

1 cwe

To the funding of the roodloft

1 cwe

⁹ This is the only surviving will within the time period of c.1400 to c.1559.

¹⁰ Will of John Hyld – CKS, PRC 17/12/564.

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