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The geography and peasant rural economy of the eastern Sussex High Weald, 1300–1420

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The medieval eastern Sussex Weald contained many contrasting areas, including river valleys, upland heath and woodland. By the 14th century the area was divided into meadow, farmland, upland grazing, common and park. The main crop grown in the region was oats which was sown on between half and two-thirds of the demesne acreage, and perhaps a smaller proportion of the land of the peasants. The heavy soils of the area were improving by marling. Cattle were grazed on the upland ridges and sheep were kept on the lowland pastures. Woodland near to rivers or the sea was cut and transported to the Continent or London. The region was generally too far from the capital city to fall within its hinterland. Industry and craftwork formed a minor part of the economy, and production methods seem to have remained underdeveloped.

The geographical region known as the High Weald is clearly differentiated from the flat clay lands which flank it to the north and south. The ground rises towards a series of ridges, which are separated by deeply dissected narrow valleys, known locally as ghylls, and by the broader valleys of the rivers Medway, Ouse and Rother. The character of settlement in this area of eastern Sussex had been largely established by the late 13th century: a pattern of isolated farms, hamlets and small villages scattered among the commons, hedged fields and extensive woods.[1]

The best agricultural land in the eastern Sussex High Weald lay in the broad river valleys. It is improbable that the first site of Robertsbridge Abbey, on a spur overlooking the Rother, was a desolate waste when the house was founded in the late 12th century, in spite of the Cistercian enthusiasm for such locations. The monks appreciated the value of the land along the Rother and during the 13th century enlarged their holdings.[2] Land in the river valleys was sought with great avidity by many religious houses. There was a string of ecclesiastical holdings along the Rother valley downstream from Mayfield, at Holmshurst (Burwash), Barehurst (Ticehurst) and Collington (Ticehurst) where the abbeys of Robertsbridge and Battle, and the priory of Combwell had land. At Kitchingham (Etchingham) on the River Limden, a tributary of the Rother, lay further holdings of Combwell Priory and of Bayham Abbey. Further east along the Rother lay the meadow lands of Robertsbridge and Battle Abbeys, which extended as far as Bodiam Bridge, and beyond was the grange of Robertsbridge at Methersham (Beckley).[3]

The land in the valley bottom required drainage to improve the pasture and meadow, and canalization to speed the flow of the rivers. The character of the Rother before improvement is suggested by a charter issued shortly after 1229 which mentions two islands in the river at Wreckery (Ticehurst). The River Teise at Lamberhurst on the Kent border was similar. Among the fields there were two named Small Island (*Parva Insula*) and *Wytegose Ye* (from OE *ēg*, island) and close by was Bayham Island.[4] An early 17th-century map suggests that some such 'islands' may have been land within cut-off meanders. The monks of Bayham undertook drainage or canalization works in the early 13th century on land adjoining the abbey, and when Battle Abbey acquired land in the Brede valley east of Whatlington Bridge later that century, they dug further drainage channels, including a leet to their mill at Sedlescombe.[5]

In the lower part of the river valleys the problems were different. Flooding from sea water driven up into the valleys was an increasing problem in the 1330s and 1340s. In 1341, six parishes bordering on the Brede and Rother rivers included submerged

lands. The Knelle Dam was constructed shortly after 1332 as a sea-defence across the mouth of the Rother valley to prevent flooding.[6] Defences had been built at an earlier date elsewhere. A wall called *Damme* was built across the Brede valley to prevent incursions of the sea, probably in the late 13th century and certainly before 1309, and another called *Morespiche* Wall was erected where the Waller's Haven stream entered Pevensey Marsh.[7] Bodiam Bridge seems to have marked the upper limit of marine flooding on the Rother, and money was collected from tenants downstream to maintain the drainage system and sea defences. Similar payments were made in the Brede valley.[8]

In spite of the problems of draining low-lying land, the cost of maintaining sea defences and the periodic flooding which nevertheless took place, the land in the lower reaches of the river valleys was very profitable while agricultural prices remained high. In the manor of Knelle (Beckley) on the edge of the Rother valley the arable in the upland was worth 4d. an acre, but the arable in the brookland was valued at 15d. or 2s. per acre in 1295. Similar values are given in the 1305 extent for the Battle Abbey estate at Barnhorne (Bexhill) on the edge of the Pevensey Marsh. Some of this low-lying land was under plough, but part was used as meadow or pasture.[9]

As these values suggest, there was a sharp contrast between the land on the valley floor and that on the lower slopes and ridges of the High Weald. The soils in the High Weald were difficult to cultivate and required considerable amounts of marl to obtain a reasonable crop. Inquisitions *post mortem* valued lands in the Weald at the rate of only 3d. or 4d., or occasionally up to 6d. an acre for marled land, and 2d. to 3d. an acre for unmarled land. These values are notably less than those recorded in similar documents for land elsewhere in south-east England. The extents of inquisitions *post mortem* tend, however, to underestimate income and a more accurate assessment of value may be that given in an assignment of dower made on the death of Ralph atte Beech in 1317. His lands in Wartling were said to be worth either 4d. or 6d. an acre.[10]

Some areas of the poorer soils on the higher land were managed as woodland or used for grazing, though others were cultivated. The demesne at Herstmonceux included 80 acres which were sometimes ploughed, but otherwise used as poor pasture, described as heath. The 60 acres of *Brounhothe* in Burwash must have been similar, for it was poor grazing land worth only about $1^1/_2$d. an acre. A 10-acre field of downland in Warbleton was used for cattle grazing when first mentioned, but was later let for arable. In Brightling the tenement of *Denyselond* is described as 'land and heath' and lay adjacent to other holdings called *Gretehorthe* and *Melwardeshothe*, the names of which adequately describe their character. Some areas of heath on the ridges were held in large parcels for grazing. Large heathland holdings of 40 acres in Beckley and 100 acres in Guestling are mentioned in the 15th century. Heath and broom grew on *Nolleslond* in Guestling, which was occasionally cut, but was otherwise let for grazing. On the Wadhurst Clay the soils were not only poor, but also badly drained. There were 102 acres of marshy pasture worth only $1^1/_2$d. an acre at Bivelham (Mayfield), which lies on the clay, and 22 acres of meadow valued at 7d. an acre because they were covered in reeds.[11]

The farmland on the lower slopes and the ridges was held in severalty in small fields, rarely more than a few acres in extent. A lease in the manor of Playden mentions an area of three acres lying in two fields, but these closes were particularly small. More typical was an area of 35 acres in Lamberhurst, which lay in five crofts. The assignment of dower to Joan, widow of William de Fiennes suggests that the demesne fields at Herstmonceux were little larger than those of the tenants. The 60-acre holding of Ralph atte Beech nearby, described in a similar document, was held in 11 fields; the more highly valued land lay in the larger parcels. The fields in the Battle Abbey manor of Marley (Battle), which included both upland and meadow land on the floor of the Brede valley, were a similar size.[12]

Some meadow land was held in common, though this does not seem to have been the practice everywhere. A parcel of meadow at Glasseye (Beckley) called *Menewyssh*, meaning 'common marshy meadow', was common to the adjoining tenants of the virgates of *Haysyerd* and *Avolynsyerd*. Not all meadow in the township was held in common; the land called Broc or Les Brokes was held in separate parcels by named tenants.[13] Common meadow in the upper Brede valley held by the 'men of Whatlington' is mentioned in a grant of *c.* 1220 and shares in the fields close by called *Brodewishe* and *Gorwisse* are referred to in charters of the same period. The land called Salehurst Mead in the Rother valley may also have been held in common, and

close by lay another field called *Menewishe*. A further parcel of meadow in Wartling had a similar name.[14]

There was no forest in the legal sense anywhere in the county, notwithstanding the names of some pieces of common land. Most of the commons were wooded and provided pannage and beech mast for swine, and pasture and browse for cattle.[15] They were an important source for fuel and for building. For example, Ashdown Forest provided timber for construction work at Chichester Cathedral in 1234 and joists were cut on the Broyle (Ringmer) in the Low Weald, and scaffold poles and firewood at Clear Hedge Wood (Waldron) for building at Pevensey Castle in 1289.[16] Yet by the end of the 13th century intensive grazing and the practice of firing the vegetation to improve the 'bite' had turned some areas of the common to heathland. The burning of heath recorded on the Broyle and at Ashdown Forest and the cutting of furze, heath and bracken prevented the growth of new trees. Ashdown Forest was intensively used by the many small tenants who lived on the periphery of the waste and were permitted to have pigs without stint on the common and graze as many cattle as could be overwintered on their own tenements.[17] As the population, and presumably the number of animals grazed, declined in the late 14th century, woodland was able to regenerate. By 1393–4 parcels of birch, characteristic of secondary woodland on poor soils, were being sold from Ashdown Forest.[18]

The commons may be divided into the 'forensec woods' controlled by the lord of the rape and the other commons limited to the tenants of one or more manors. The commons of Hawkhurst, Waldron, Clearhedge Wood and Ashdown Forest in the High Weald in Pevensey Rape lay in the first category. There were extensive rights of common on these lands. In late 13th century there were 208 customary tenants on Ashdown Forest, who were tenants of manors in the vicinity. There were also a considerable number of animals grazed by 'outsiders', tenants of manors more distant from Ashdown Forest. As many as 2000 cattle were grazed by the end of the century and the 'outsiders' alone were grazing a similar number of pigs. Many religious houses had been granted the rights of grazing on these commons by the lord of the rape. Wilmington Priory had pannage for pigs and pasture for animals on the commons in Pevensey Rape and could take wood there. Michelham Priory and Bayham Abbey had similar, but more restricted rights. The tithes of Ashdown Forest, Laughton and Waldron chases were received by the church in Pevensey Castle.[19]

The only forensec wood in Hastings Rape was the Forest of Dallington. It is mentioned in Domesday Book, which records that the count of Eu held half a hide in the forest. The land so called was divided into three parts, the Forest itself, an area of assarts and the pasture land adjoining the Forest. The assarts seem to have lain mainly around Mansbrook (Dallington) and in Brightling. The pasture land was bounded by Coblye Wood (Brightling) and Mansbrook to the south, Darwell Stream on the east and Willingford Stream, 'the stream where three roads meet' on the west. In the early 13th century the count granted Robertsbridge Abbey general rights of pasture and dead wood in that area, but later these were defined more closely. The right to take wood was relinquished by the monks and the number of cattle and horses to be grazed on the common was limited. The count granted similar rights to Hastings Priory: to take dead wood, to have pannage for 20 pigs and have common pasture with the vill of Dallington. The count also gave the priory free ingress and egress through the pale surrounding the Forest proper, which seems to have lain to the west of it.[20]

Usage of the other commons in the High Weald was more restricted. The common of Hawksborough Down, for example, was limited to the manor of Burghurst and the others neighbouring the down. Even the extensive common at Rotherfield, said to be twelve or more leagues (about $17^1/_2$ miles) in extent, was only for the use of the tenants of the manors of Rotherfield and Frant.[21] Some of the commons, such as those at Rotherfield and Crowhurst, also served as parks. They, like Ashdown Forest, were enclosed by a pale and were entered through gates. The regulations governing their use were strict and the commoners' animals were excluded from certain areas during the fence month to ensure there was adequate pasture for the deer.[22] Substantial areas of the manorial wastes were covered with woodland, though they, like the forensec commons, may have been denuded of trees during the 14th century under pressure of grazing. The common of Southwood in Heathfield was described as a waste in 1379, though by 1552 it was again wooded with oak and beech of 100 years' growth. The nearby common of Hawksborough Down produced heath, furze and broom in the mid-14th century, indicating that it too had areas of scrub.[23]

The larger areas of High Wealden common land were situated on the top or the flanks of the ridges and were called *terra montana* in Latin, or *dounelond* in the vernacular. Some were contiguous and formed bands of upland grazing. To the north of Waldron Forest lay the 600-acre common of Beacon Down used in the mid-14th century by the tenants of Possingworth manor for their cattle, sheep and pigs.[24] To the east lay an area of common of Laughton manor, the commons of Heathfield manor of which the largest was East Down, an area of 100 acres, and the common of Hawksborough Down. Crowborough Down some distance to the north was a substantial area situated on the edge of Ashdown Forest. Its eastern flank had been partly enclosed by assarters from the manor of Rotherfield. The remainder was common to the tenants of the borgh or township of Greenhurst in South Malling manor.[25]

Grazing on common land formed an important part of the economy in the Weald. In Crowhurst park in 1398, when the number of swine may have been less than earlier in the century, 18 tenants had 108 swine at pannage. In Rotherfield the tenants had similar rights to the pannage and beech mast in the park and gave 200 pigs a year for the privilege. To sustain the considerable herds of pigs through the winter, the lord of the manor contributed 10 quarters of grain to the tenants' swine. The townships in the northern part of the manor of South Malling were divided into wards, each based around an area of common woodland. The wards are not mentioned in the late 13th-century custumal, though a similar system may be implied by the reference to the right of common:

> All the freemen have common in the same wood *appurtenant to their freeholdings* and the customary tenants by the reason of the hens which they give each year to the lord.

Hens were given for a general right of common in the woodland, a payment called *foresteshenn* or woodhen. The customary tenants gave a money payment for the right of pannage by pigs which was collected by ward.[26] Hens were also given for the right of common in the manor of Laughton on the Dicker in the Low Weald. In other manors, however, hen payments are not apparently associated with the usage of the common. At Chalvington and Bexhill, for example, they were included among the dues paid by each virgate.[27]

There were extensive woodlands, parks and heathland, over which there were no rights of common. The 70-acre wood in the manor of Crowhurst called Fore Wood, and Batts Wood (Mayfield), where there were 60 acres of pasture and *Conyngwode*, both in Bivelham, were demesne. The bishop of Chichester had a woodland of an unspecified area in Ticehurst, with pannage in severalty worth 3s. 4d.[28] One of the largest single woods was in Etchingham manor, where there was a woodland park of 300–400 acres and a further 200 acres outside the park. The areas of woodland were generally smaller nearer the coast and away from the ridges of the High Weald. The demesne wood at Barnhorne was only 12 acres in extent, and in the neighbouring manor of Bexhill the area was about the same but was also used for common grazing.[29] There were coppice woods in Herstmonceux, at Bemsell of eight acres, 20 acres at *Lewstrod* and a further wood called Rock Wood held in severalty. These relatively small woods were evidently insufficient to supply the lord's household, for the services of the neifs included the transport of wood from *Baily*, which lay to the north in Heathfield.[30]

Most woodland held in severalty was managed as coppice with standards. The woods of Battle Abbey at Bathurst and Petley (Battle) produced firewood for domestic use and were therefore coppiced. Coppice was destroyed by straying animals in Combe Wood in Mayfield. The park at Crowhurst, even though subject to common rights, contained closes of coppice woodland, as did many of the customary tenements. Only one area of demesne woodland in Udimore is specifically described as coppice, but as the main produce of the wooded area was faggots, that must have been the case generally.[31]

The area of woodland on tenements is rarely recorded, for only the area of arable is mentioned in charters. A late 13th-century custumal of the manor of South Malling does, however, mention the acreage of coppice held by tenants. The figures given for the borghs or townships of Greenhurst, Mayfield and Wadhurst, which lay in the High Weald, suggest that coppice woodland covered the equivalent of about 10% of the area of the cultivated acreage. The corresponding figure in Framfield, which lay on the periphery of the High Weald, was only 4%, and in Uckfield borgh to the south of Framfield no coppice was noted.[32] Woodland in the Weald was rarely rented or sold separately from the adjoining cultivated land, though a small number of grants

were made of woodland alone.[33] The most informative of these is a lease of a wood at Sandhurst in Mayfield granted for three years. That was evidently a coppice, for the wood was to be cut and then fenced to prevent animals feeding upon and destroying the new growth.[34]

Assarting of the waste for arable led to a very substantial decrease in the area of woodland during the 13th and 14th century. Rights of free chase, such as those held by Richard Waleys from Isfield as far north as Withyham and Ticehurst in the manor of South Malling, and by the counts of Mortain in the south of the Rape of Pevensey were of diminishing value as the area of unimproved land contracted. Parks were established to contain and protect deer and allow them to breed free from disturbance.[35] Sometimes parks were formed simply by embanking and empaling demesne woodland; elsewhere to obtain an adequate area it was necessary to buy out existing tenant holdings. The process of establishing a park at Hawksden in Mayfield is recorded in some detail. Lands had been held in that area by the Waleys family since late 13th century and in 1337 Sir John Waleys and Robert de Sharnden, who held the lordship of a neighbouring tenement, agreed to view the bounds to establish the limits for the park. Sir John had already exchanged lands within Hawksden for others nearby to form a discrete block of land.[36] A similar process must have taken place at Broomham in Catsfield where peasant tenements were extinguished and a tract of woodland and heath emparked to form an area amounting to one quarter of the area of the parish.[37] In the late 14th and early 15th century some existing parks were enlarged. This was achieved at Herstmonceux and Frankham (Mayfield) by reducing the area of the cultivated demesne and at Crowhurst and Burwash by incorporating former peasant tenements.[38]

The park at Rotherfield was older in origin, and indeed was mentioned in *Domesday Book*, but the problem was similar: to distinguish an area for cultivation from that given over to hunting. The boundaries of the park left the customary holding of Lightlands as an island of cultivated land inside the pale. On the south-east side the boundary between the tenants' lands and the park was defined arbitrarily by three long, straight alignments. Pressure to acquire further land for cultivation in the later 13th or early 14th century led to the gradual diminution of the parkland. A strip of land was cut out of the park next to the straight boundary to form a further cultivated area called the Assart of Towngate before 1346. Similar areas of land were taken out on the west side to the south of Boarshead (Rotherfield) where successive encroachments described as 'old' and 'new' assart are recorded. A long strip was removed near Eridge before 1296 to make a new area of demesne and probably separated from the park by the ditch called *Maredyke*.[39]

Parkland was used not only for hunting, but was valued for the timber and wood growing there, and some areas were cultivated. Services of the tenants on the manors of Rotherfield and Herstmonceux included boon works on arable lands in the parks. Hay was grown in Wartling park and there were rabbit warrens at Herstmonceux, Wartling and Crowhurst.[40]

Although the High Weald was fairly extensively wooded, the density of parks in the region was not much greater than in other areas of England.[41] Some parks including those at Rotherfield already discussed, Frankham in Mayfield (330 acres) and Battle (Great Park, 725 acres) were particularly large, but in other areas there were few parks. In Waldron parish there was apparently none, partly because of the extent of the forensec woods of Clearhedge and Hawkhurst, but also because of the prevalence of minor manors with demesnes too small to be given over to parkland. There was a single park at Bivelham and one at Hawksden, but these were the only ones in the manor of Bivelham, the greater part of which was divided between many small sub-manors.[42]

THE PEASANT ECONOMY

No class of medieval records describes the economy of the peasantry in detail and consequently there are few details of their sources of income and expenditure. There is no reason to assume that the tenants' economy was similar to that of their lords, though the physical constraints on the types of crops grown affected both equally. The peasant economy, therefore, has to be reconstructed from incidental references to crops, stock, the use of common land and by-employment, and with cognisance of practices on the better-documented demesnes.[43]

A rare insight into the peasant's appreciation of land and its value is given in an inquiry held in *c.* 1258. Witnesses were called to determine the tithes due to Leeds Priory for land held by Robertsbridge Abbey at Lamberhurst on the Kent–Sussex border. The abbey had there 218 acres of arable of which 55

acres had been marled in the past, 113 acres improved by marling by the monks, 36 acres described as 'almost sterile' and 14 acres of fertile land, which could be improved by marling. The field names indicate that the fertile land lay on the floor of a river valley. The witnesses called to assess the land were local men, one commenting that his family lived and was supported on similar land. They agreed that the land was not in fact sterile and suggested that it could produce a crop of winter oats if ploughed twice the first year, could be sown with oats the second year and left fallow the third. It could be let, they judged, for 6d. an acre or for one fourth or one fifth sheaf.[44]

Oats, the crop recommended by the witnesses for the poor soil at Lamberhurst, were widely grown in the Weald. The soils were heavy and damp and less suitable for wheat and barley. Crops cultivated by tenants are mentioned in actions for trespass by animals heard in manorial courts. In a group of manors across the High Weald, 39 cases were noted in which the crop grown was described. Trespass in fields of oats was the most common plaint, mentioned in 17, or more than a third of these actions. Wheat (nine cases) and beans (six cases) were the other main crops with barley, peas, vetch, rye and flax also recorded.[45]

The dominance of oats seems to have been even more pronounced on the demesne fields. In the years ending 1371–7 on the Lamberhurst demesne, which though in Kent lay close to the boundary with Sussex, 64% of the sown acreage was seeded with oats, 30% with wheat, and barley was cultivated on less than 2%. The only other significant crop was beans, grown on about 4% of the acreage. At Udimore the twelve surviving account rolls for the years ending 1362–82 record that the same proportion of sown land was put down to oats, with the figures for barley and wheat of 14% and 9% respectively. The pattern of arable was similar at Battle, Bexhill and Barnhorne with oats covering between half and two-thirds of the demesne acreage sown.[46] Wheat was grown on the demesnes on the better soils. In some fields, both on the land of the lords and their tenants, peas and beans were sown alongside other crops. A trespass in a single field at Herstmonceux resulted in damage to barley, beans and oats.[47]

It is important not to over-exaggerate the importance of oats in Wealden agriculture. A single account roll for Icklesham Rectory lists the tithes received in 1344 and provides a useful overview of agriculture in the whole parish. A total of 140 quarters of oats and 63 quarters of wheat were given in tithes; the quantity of wheat was slightly reduced that year by flooding in the marshland. The value of the wheat tithe was, however, slightly greater than the figure for the oats, for the former grain could be sold at a higher price. That is a useful reminder that the sown acreage provides only a partial view of the agricultural economy of the area; the value of the crops is also significant.[48]

Cultivation in severalty allowed a flexible cropping regime to be adopted on the lands of the lords and their peasants. A practice, similar to the convertible husbandry advocated in the 16th century and later, has been recorded on the Battle Abbey demesne. Fields were cropped for successive years and then allowed to revert to grass to regain their fertility. The alternation of arable and pasture cultivation allowed the poor Wealden soils to be cultivated for as long as they could produce reasonable crops yields, and the pattern could be adapted to the quality of the soil in particular fields. 'Up-and-down' husbandry might have been practised on the 199 acres of the Herstmonceux demesne which was valued at 4d. an acre when sown, and 3d. an acre as pasture when not sown.[49]

Peasant leases may suggest the use of convertible husbandry on the tenants' fields. Leases were normally granted for arable cultivation with the lessor taking a proportion of the crops grown. The fraction paid in rent in kind was commonly a reciprocal of the length of the lease in years. A lease for five years would therefore pay one fifth sheaf. A longer lease gave a smaller part of the crop yield, implying that declining returns were expected from the land and that a smaller proportion of the produce could therefore be charged. After the term of the lease the land was presumably put down to pasture to recover, which was effectively a convertible regime.

That was not the universal pattern. To prevent the exhaustion of soil, longer leases sometimes specified the number of crops which might be grown during the term. Typically these were for two-thirds of the period of the lease. A lease drawn up in 1316 in Bucksteep (Warbleton) for 15 years specified that only 10 crops might be taken during that period.[50] Under such conditions the lessees' interests might be best served by fallowing the land every third year, rather than by putting it down to a long ley at the

beginning or end of the term. A pattern of fallowing one year in three is also suggested by the Lamberhurst witnesses.

The witnesses at Lamberhurst indicated that marling was of great importance in improving and maintaining the quality of land. That is reflected in the valuations of demesne made in inquisitions *post mortem* in which marled land was carefully distinguished from the less highly valued unmarled acreage. The efficacy of marling has been clearly demonstrated in the yields from demesne land on the manor of Ebony in Kent. Marling was very widely practised on the peasants' land and the sums paid by villeins to obtain marl, charged at the rate of 8d. for an acre in Bucksteep, reflect the value placed upon it.[51]

The purpose of marling was evidently to alter the texture of the soil, though where calcareous Wadhurst Clay was applied, the acidity may also have been reduced. Many leases required that the lessee should marl the land during the period of occupancy. Land in Bucksteep was let on the condition that it received four inches of marl. A lease in Robertsbridge manor required three inches and a grant of marl in Herstmonceux was for a similar depth.[52] Clearly the volumes of marl applied to the soil were substantial. Marl was dug from pits at the edge of fields, in woodland or at the side of the road. The costs of excavating marl, transporting it to the fields and spreading were great. At Lamberhurst $3^{1}/_{4}$ acres were marled in 1323–4 at a cost of 40s. $0^{3}/_{4}$d., about 12s. 4d. an acre. A drain had to be dug to clear water from the marl pit. Carting the marl was six weeks' work for three carts. The costs per acre of marling at Icklesham were similar, but these expenses may reflect the problems of digging and moving marl, for four acres were marled at Herstmonceux by contract for a total cost of only 15s. Denshiring, the burning of pared grass, seems also to have been used to improve the Battle demesne.[53]

Improvement of soil texture was of considerable practical significance since the clays within the Weald produce a very heavy tilth. A team of 10 oxen was necessary to pull the wheeled plough, according to the Hammerden custumal. The sticky soils also made carting difficult. In the autumn, winter and early spring months tenants giving carting services for Battle Abbey had to provide a team of four oxen to pull loads of firewood; in summer only two oxen were necessary.[54] Different types of ploughs were used on the upland and for the marshes and river valleys. The marsh plough was not necessarily lighter than the upland plough for the Udimore account rolls, which detail the making of a new plough in 1365–6, show that it too was wheeled.[55]

The rough upland pasture in the Weald, including the heathlands on the ridges, was particularly suitable for cattle. They were grazed on the heath on Ashdown Forest and on the downland on tenants' holdings.[56] Sheep were mainly kept on manors with pasture land in the river valleys or marshes. The peasants' sheep are mentioned in court rolls in Wartling, Brede, Playden and Crowhurst manors, either because they were given as heriots, or in cases when owners of dogs were charged with sheep worrying. A flock of 200 sheep belonging to tenants is recorded in Herstmonceux. Somewhat surprisingly, the Wealden abbeys of Robertsbridge and Bayham are mentioned among the monasteries supplying wool in a list compiled by Pegolotti, the merchant, but both had lands outside the Weald, where the sheep are more likely to have been kept.[57] Fines for animals grazing on demesne, heriots and cases concerning straying stock show that pigs, cattle, and horses were the animals most commonly owned by tenants, though there is very little evidence for the size of herds kept. Fines for pannage detail the numbers of pigs of each tenant and indicate that while many peasants had up to half a dozen swine, individuals did not have large herds.[58]

Lists of tenants' animals suggest that peasants favoured mixed stock. John Hugeles at his death in 1308 had one bullock, one cow, two sheep and two lambs on a holding of three acres in Playden. There was a similar mixture of stock on the more substantial Udimore holding of John Brokax, who in 1349 had four horses, four bullocks, six affers and a flock of 30 sheep. Nicholas Crull, who was indicted as a felon in 1391, had a holding in Crowhurst with at least four fields. He, by contrast, kept only two pigs. When he had surrendered his tenement in 1385 and received it back to farm for life, he had not given a heriot, because he had no animals. His chattels included a wagon, plough and harrow, a field sown with wheat, eight seams of oats and a parcel of hay, suggesting a mainly arable holding and his few pigs were grazed on the common. We must presume that either he had leased or borrowed draught animals from his neighbours, or had recently sold them. Thomas Dod, who held land of uncertain acreage on Herstmonceux and Wartling

manors, had a team of six oxen, eight milking cows, two young bullocks and a calf, and a mare with foal. Finally, Robert Janekyn, who was a tenant of eight acres in Crowham and a further $3^1/_2$ acres leased jointly with another tenant, had four stots, two mares, two cows and two pigs.[59]

Another perspective on the livestock of the peasantry is provided by the heriots given on the deaths of tenants or on their surrenders of the residue of their holdings. Heriots given on a group of manors across the High Weald in eastern Sussex between 1300 and 1420 were examined; the results are presented in the table. Most of the tenants who died between 1326 and 1375 held an animal of some sort, but these years include a high proportion of plague victims who died prematurely. They are not strictly comparable with the periods before and after, when tenants might expect to die in their old age and when they may have divested themselves of some of their land and animals before their death. The evidence suggests that, except in the first quarter of the 14th century, the great majority of tenants would have had at least one animal. The figures bear comparison with similar statistics derived for the manors of the bishopric of Worcester, but show an even greater pastoral emphasis in the Weald.[60]

The species of heriots are generally correlated with the size of tenements, as one would expect. The holders of the larger tenements gave horses and oxen, the holders of the smaller, pigs, or sometimes just poultry. If the absolute numbers of animals given as heriots are examined, these provide further evidence for the predominance of cattle rearing in the Weald. The heriot was the best beast, and therefore species of lesser value are likely to have been taken less frequently. Nevertheless, sheep are infrequently recorded, supporting the conclusion that they were not widely raised in the Weald. Mares occur quite commonly among the animals given as heriots, providing some earlier evidence for the horse-breeding which Mate identified in 15th-century Sussex.[61]

Grazing on the common lands was unstinted, except for the restriction that the tenants could have no more animals than they could overwinter on their own land. Not all manors had access to the extensive commons on the high ridges; elsewhere animals were grazed on pasture on the tenants' holdings and the arable lands between harvest and ploughing. Some leases specifically reserve grazing on the harvested fields. On the manors of Herstmonceux, Bucksteep, Udimore and Wilting the tenants paid fines to graze the demesne fields after harvest and the demesne woodland throughout the year; at least that seems to be the implication from the repeated presentments of tenants for 'damage' or trespass made in the lord's crops and woods.[62]

Fruit was grown in orchards, not only on the demesnes, but also by tenants. A Herstmonceux widow was given among her dower portion five rows of apple trees in a garden. Most of the references to fruit occur in plaints of theft. Adam Dyne, a Wartling tenant prosecuted John Stunt to whom he had leased the pasture on a piece of his land and garden, but John had also removed the apples there, claiming that they were included in the agreement. Similarly, pears and apples were stolen as they were ripening in late July 1383 at Chilsham (Herstmonceux).[63] Some of the fruit was used for making cider and perry. Presshouses are recorded on the *curiae* of

Table 1. Tenants giving animal heriots 1300–1420.

	1300–25	1326–50	1351–75	1376–1400	1401–20
Animal	77%	86%	75%	79%	81%
No animal	23%	14%	25%	21%	19%
Total number in sample	**66**	**122**	**44**	**89**	**67**

Table 2. Species given as heriots 1300–1420.

	1300–25	1326–50	1351–75	1376–1400	1401–20
Horses	9	36	8	16	6
Oxen	9	32	7	16	19
Other cattle	17	46	14	27	23
Sheep	5	2	0	3	3
Pigs	10	18	4	6	3
Poultry	1	1	0	2	0
Total number in sample	**51**	**135**	**33**	**70**	**54**

Penhurst, Brede and Udimore and on a tenement at Northiam where the building housed an apple-mill.[64]

The evidence discussed has shown that peasant agriculture in the 14th century was mixed and, although there was an emphasis on pastoralism, especially where there was access to unimproved waste, arable agriculture was widespread. The wood-pasture regime of the 16th and 17th centuries was not yet established. That impression is confirmed by the detailed draft returns for Henhurst hundred drawn up for the 1332 subsidy levied on goods. The listed stock and grain were not the entire possessions of the tax-payers, but only the saleable excess. Wheat and oats are the only cereals mentioned and there were greater quantities of the latter. There were considerable numbers of cattle, some horses, but few sheep and some of the tax-payers also had swine. A number of the tenants had casks of cider.[65]

Trade, craft and industry also contributed to the regional economy. The large areas of woodland in the Weald were an important source for firewood, timber and tan. Wood was cut either side of the River Rother in Kent and Sussex for export, particularly to Flanders, and also for shipment to elsewhere in England. There were wharves on the Rother in Kent at Reading Street, Maytham and Newenden, and in Sussex at Bodiam, on the River Brede at *Damme* and *Sloghdam* near Winchelsea and in the Combe Haven valley at Bulverhythe. Land transport was used to reach the ports from woods, such as those in Battle not within reach of the Rother, and the presence of wood-merchants at Cranbrook and elsewhere in the Kent Weald suggest that it was moved similar distances from the north to the quays on the Rother. Men from Goudhurst near Cranbrook paid 15s. for wood from the Lamberhurst demesne in 1376–7. Wood formed one of the major exports from Winchelsea and Rye, the greater part of it as firewood. The export of sawn wood increased during the 14th century, though did not approach the value of firewood.[66]

The costs of cutting and transporting faggots from demesne woods some distance from the Channel ports or the river wharves was prohibitive. Clough found that in the period 1421–6 the average annual income derived from wood-sales on the Pelham manor of Bivelham (Mayfield) was only 3s. and between 1409–22 was 6s. 9d. on the manor of Burwash. Accounts of Rotherfield manor in 1283–4 show that sales from the demesne woods at Henley and Castle Wood were worth considerably more and produced the sum of 27s. 2d., though since the manor was at farm that year these may have been greater than usual: wood was a valuable asset, which could be readily realized. Battle Abbey, which had woodlands much closer to the ports, was able to cut firewood and cart it to Winchelsea to pay creditors, though it was not heavily involved in the wood trade.[67] Large quantities of wood were cut and sold from the Udimore demesne. There was ready access to the town and port of Winchelsea and to the wharf at *Damme* on the River Brede. Even so, the costs of carting firewood the short distance from Udimore to Winchelsea more than doubled the price. During the 1360s the quantity of wood produced on the manor per year varied considerably reaching a peak in 1366–7 when 19,000 faggots, two parcels of woodland and some rods were sold, and throughout the later 14th century wood-sales accounted for a significant portion of the demesne income.[68]

Participation in the trade in wood was more difficult for customary tenants who were forbidden to cut wood, except that necessary for 'husbote' (building) and 'heybote' (hedging). The villeins at Wartling argued that they were able to cut and sell timber and firewood freely, and had their claim been recognized, they would have had exceptional rights. In fact, they were allowed wood only for the purposes mentioned and punitive fines of three times the value of the wood were imposed there and at Herstmonceux for cutting the timber trees of oak, ash and beech.[69] There was particular concern that the guardians of underage tenants should not cut timber, and tenants who rented land were limited in the amount of wood they could take to prevent them committing waste. The cutting of wood for billets and timber on the manor of Crowhurst, which was in convenient reach of the ports at Bulverhythe and Winchelsea, was permitted on the payment of nominal fines. Some of the wood was explicitly cut for sale, and in other cases the licences granted for 1000 or 2000 billets at a time indicate quantities greater than required for domestic use.[70]

The Crowhurst neif Thomas Natelegh was possibly a part-time wood-merchant, since his goods seized in 1400 after a conviction for felony included 48 'schypbords' and 800 roofing shingles. Most of his Crowhurst lands were at farm and he paid chevage to live outside the lordship, but had agricultural interests in the manor of Battle, where he kept a herd of 18 cattle. A number of tenants at Crowhurst and Udimore dealt in firewood and

talewood which they cut by licence, either on their own lands, or on the demesne. Similarly, John Remys, a Lamberhurst tenant who paid 79s. for wood from the demesne in 1369, is likely to have been a merchant. Employment was provided by cutting and working the wood. The poll-tax for the vill of Blackham in Hartfield records three carpenters, a cooper and a woodman among the 15 artisans. Wooden items produced by craftworkers in the Weald included casks, troughs and hurdles, which were owed by the customary tenants at South Malling as part of their work-services.[71]

Firewood was a low-value, bulky product which could not easily be transported overland. By converting the wood to charcoal it was possible to create a lighter, less bulky fuel which could be moved at lower cost. Charcoal burning was practised in woodlands without access to water transport and some charcoal was also shipped abroad. The charcoal maker recorded in the poll-tax records at Worth near Crawley in central Sussex was well situated to send his goods by road northwards to London and also to supply the iron industry in the area.[72]

Industry probably formed only a small part of the Wealden economy during the period studied, although there were abundant raw materials available locally. In addition to wood for fuel, there were also iron ore, clay and sand suitable for the production of iron, pottery, brick, tile and glass, and many fast-flowing streams to provide water-power. Yet in spite of these advantages, the industries remained small and the scale of production did not increase significantly until the 16th century.[73]

The medieval Wealden iron industry does not appear to have been very large and in Sussex was mainly concentrated to the west of the area considered here, in the centre of the county. Iron-working took place around Horsham and Crawley, from whence London was relatively accessible. A smithy at Roffey near Horsham leased in 1344 with its anvil, hammer, tongs and other tools may have been the source of 1000 horseshoes ordered in 1327 and 150 sheaves of arrows in 1347.[74] In eastern Sussex excavated sites at Minepit Wood (Rotherfield) and at Chingley in Kent have shown the size of individual sites and have indicated that substantial investment was required for iron-working. Not surprisingly, the site at Chingley lay on the demesne, as did the well-documented bloomery at Tudeley (near Tonbridge) in Kent. A forge established by Ralph Kenne to found iron on the neif tenement of Adam Creppe in the manor of Wartling may have been working on a smaller scale. Nevertheless, Ralph was a person of some local importance who held land in Brightling, frequently acted as witness to charters and was probably related to Alan and Richard Kenne who held a substantial area of land in the same parish.[75]

Studies of pottery manufacture and distribution have pointed to the contrast in the scale of production in the medieval and early modern periods. Kilns of 13th- and 14th-century date are known in eastern Sussex at Brede, Rye, Hastings, Abbots Wood (Arlington) and suspected at Pevensey, most of them near to towns. The greater number of kilns seem to have produced only for local sale. Very little 'Winchelsea' Black Ware made its way along the coast to Lewes, for example, in contrast to its abundance in medieval deposits at Winchelsea. Rye ware was more widely distributed, and has been found as far west as Michelham (Arlington) and Lewes. Although pottery is well represented on archaeological sites, its economic importance was slight. Pottery was not highly valued and its manufacture provided employment for a small number of people. Two men are identified as potters in the Brede court rolls in 1402–3 and a further one is mentioned in 1425. The level of employment at Ringmer seems to have been similar.[76]

Cloth-making in the eastern Sussex Weald was not as important as in Kent where there was a larger industry based around Cranbrook. Nevertheless, cloth-workers or merchants were found in a number of villages, and there were fulling mills in the narrow valleys in the High Weald. Two fulling mills are recorded in the Uckfield borgh of South Malling manor and single mills at Hammerden, Buxted, Rotherfield, Bucksteep (Warbleton) and perhaps at nearby Rushlake Green. The Bucksteep mill was, however, derelict in 1367. The site of a fulling mill is suggested by field names recorded in 1567 to the east of Robertsbridge, though no mill remained by the mid-16th century. Dyeing was carried out in Burwash.[77]

Local supplies of cattle-hides and of oak-bark and the plentiful streams in the Weald made it a suitable area for tanning. The abbeys of Battle and Robertsbridge both had tanneries and other tanners were working in the hundred of Henhurst and in the tithings of Dill (Warbleton), Mountfield, Wilting (Hollington) and *Inlegh* (Westfield). Once the skins had been tanned, there were also numerous curriers who prepared the leather for use.[78] The leather was

then worked into finished items by others, who might undertake the work full-time, like John Kelssche of Rye who described himself in a charter as a cordwainer (*corvesarius*). In the countryside, many were probably like John Baker, a leather-worker in Ticehurst, who evidently worked part-time, since he also held land. He was identified by his craft to distinguish him from a similarly named tenant who was a baker, but he was adaptable in his trade for in a later gloss he is described as 'leather worker, now cooper'.[79]

Salt-working was carried out on the coastal fringe and perhaps as far inland as Hailsham on the River Cuckmere. Though in the 11th century the greatest concentration of salt-working in England had lain in the Rye area, by the 14th century the industry was in decline. In the 1320s Flemish merchants were still shipping salt from ports in the east of the county, but at by the end of the century salt was being imported from the west coast of France. Salt, however, was still being made as late as 1440 on reclaimed land near Winchelsea.[80]

Most crafts and industries in the Weald did not provide full-time employment, but were supplementary to agricultural work. The potters at Brede also held land and their craft was presumably a by-employment which could be carried on in the slack periods of the agricultural year. The example of John Baker, the part-time leather-worker and later cooper of Ticehurst has already been mentioned. Some of the merchants who traded the goods of the part-time craftworkers seem to have been very successful. Thomas Natelegh, the wood-merchant and Crowhurst neif, was a minor trader, but he managed to purchase land in Battle on which he kept a small herd of cattle. Thomas de Vinehall (*Fynhagh*) was of greater wealth. He was a local merchant, but purchased one of the three parts into which Socknersh manor was divided in 1350. Thomas Kenne, the descendant of the holder of another third of the manor, was a rippier or fish carrier.[81]

The 14th-century High Weald of Sussex might, with modern perceptions, be considered to be underdeveloped. The natural resources of water-power, wood, iron ore, clay and sand were not effectively utilized. Economic growth was hampered by the high costs of transport and the distance from major population centres. The eastern Sussex Weald was largely beyond the limits of the 'London region', that area which supplied materials and food to the capital, although some shipments were made from the ports of Rye and Winchelsea. These ports also served ships trading across the Channel, exporting wood and timber, as already discussed, and importing other goods.[82]

One must conclude that it is possible to sketch only the outlines of the peasant economy. The relative contributions of agriculture, craftwork and industry are difficult to ascertain. Though it is probable that craftsmen, such as potters or leather-workers combined their work with agriculture, it is not possible to identify the relative contribution each made to the income of individuals. It is important to stress that there was evident underemployment in Wealden communities. There were large numbers of cottagers and landless labourers who possessed few animals and were dependant upon the opportunities of wage labour and areas of common for grazing. We know even less about these than about the wealthier tenants.[83]

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NOTES

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2 *Report on the Manuscripts of Lord De L'Isle and Dudley Preserved at Penshurst Place*, Historical Manuscripts Commission report **77**(1) (1925), 47, 62–4; R. H. D'Elboux (ed.), *Survey of the Manor of Robertsbridge, 1567–70*, Sussex Record Society **47** (1944), 124.

3 Holmshurst: *Survey of the Manors of Robertsbridge*, 96–104. Barehurst: Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California (hereafter HEH), BA vol. 29, ff. 126r.–127r. (new foliation). Collington: British Library (hereafter BL), Harl. Ch. 76 A 5. Wreckery: College of Arms (London), Misc. Ch. 117–19. Battenherst and *Chiterlond*: *Survey of the Manors of Robertsbridge*, 82; East Sussex Record Office (hereafter ESRO), SHE 7/3, 7/4; on the location of

Chiterlond, see ESRO, TD/E2, parcels 1356, 1358–60. Turzes: *Victoria County History of Sussex* **9**, ed. L. F. Salzman (1937), 197. Kitchingham: College of Arms (London), Misc. Ch. 112–14. Robertsbridge demesne: *Manuscripts Preserved at Penshurst Place*, 67; M. F. Gardiner, G. Jones & D. Martin, 'The excavation of a medieval aisled hall at Park Farm, Salehurst, East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **129** (1991), 89–91. Meadowlands of Robertsbridge and Battle Abbeys: E. Searle (ed.), *The Chronicle of Battle Abbey* (Oxford, 1980), 86–7, 254–7; C. H. C. Whittick, 'Dallingridge's Bay and Bodiam Castle millpond — elements of a medieval landscape', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **131** (1993), 119–23. Methersham: Centre for Kentish Studies (hereafter CKS), U47/42/M12.

[4] College of Arms, Misc. Ch. 119; HEH, BA vol. 29, f. 126v. (new foliation); *Manuscripts Preserved at Penshurst Place*, 91. Bodleian Library, MS. Sussex Ch. 171; BL, Add. Roll 71302.

[5] Lincoln's Inn Library, Hale MS. 87, ff. 57r.–59r.; A. H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, 2 (English Place-Name Society **26** (1956)), *s.v. mōr*; ESRO, SAS/CO/D 3.

[6] P. F. Brandon, 'Agriculture and the effects of floods and weather at Barnhorne, Sussex, during the Late Middle Ages', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **109** (1971), 80; J. K. Eddison, 'Developments in the Lower Rother valleys up to 1600', *Archaeologia Cantiana* **102** (1985), 95–110; A. R. H. Baker, 'Some evidence of a reduction in the acreage of cultivated lands during the early fourteenth century', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **104** (1966), 4.

[7] HEH, BA 436; M. F. Gardiner, 'Medieval farming and flooding in the Brede Valley', in J. Eddison (ed.), *Romney Marsh: the Debatable Ground* (Oxford, 1995), 127–37. It is possible, however, that the *Damme* was constructed earlier still, for two tenants near Lidham (Guestling) in 1278 had the surname 'de Damme', W. Illingworth (ed.), *Rotuli Hundredorum* 2 (London, 1818), 218. W. M. Homan, 'The marshes between Hythe and Pett', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **79** (1938), 205; R. A. Pelham, 'Studies in the historical geography of medieval Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **72** (1931), 173; N. Saul, *Scenes from Provincial Life* (Oxford, 1986), 118, n. 81; L. F. Salzman, 'The inning of the Pevensey Levels', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **53** (1910), 48–51 and map opposite 32.

[8] For the Rother Valley, see Hastings Museum and Art Gallery (hereafter HMAG), JER collection, unlisted membrane headed 'The wanes 3d upon an acre'. The document can be attributed to 1408 x 49 since it mentions Alice, Lady of Bodiam and Roger de Fiennes (*Victoria County History of Sussex* **9**, 133, 263). For marshland in Ewhurst, *see Calendar of Close Rolls 1389–92*, 76. For the Brede Valley, *see* HMAG, JER collection, unlisted membrane headed 'Roll of the walls of le Damme on the part of the fee of Udimore' and Gardiner, 'Medieval farming and flooding in the Brede Valley'.

[9] Public Record Office (hereafter PRO), C133/71 (5); S. R. Scargill-Bird (ed.), *Custumals of Battle Abbey, in the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II, 1282–1312*, Camden Society n.s. **41** (1887), 17–18; PRO, C135/151 (14); PRO, SC2/205/59, mm. 1r., 6v.; HMAG, JER collection (unlisted Udimore accts); PRO, SC11/660 and 661.

[10] PRO, C132/15 (2); C133/4 (5); C133/68 (7); C134/16 (2); C134/54 (17); C134/98 (2); C135/14 (2); C135/44 (3); E152/4, m. 19v.; SC12/15/66; P. F. Brandon & B. M. Short, *The South-East from AD 1000* (London, 1990), fig. 2.4; BL, Add. Roll 31504, note attached to m. 9r.; PRO, SC11/660, 661. For comments on the doubtful accuracy of inquisitions *post mortem*, R. F. Hunnisett, 'The reliability of inquisitions as historical evidence', in D. A. Bullough & R. L. Storey (eds.), *The Study of Medieval Records: Essays in Honour of Kathleen Major* (Oxford, 1971), 206; E. A. Kosminsky, *Studies in the Agrarian History of England in the Thirteenth Century* (Oxford, 1956), 46–63; N. Saul, *Knights and Esquires: the Gloucestershire Gentry in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1981), 206–7. For a more optimistic assessment of their worth, *see* B. M. S. Campbell, J. A. Galloway & M. Murphy, 'Rural land-use in the metropolitan hinterland, 1270–1339: the evidence of inquisitiones post mortem', *Agricultural History Review* **40** (1992), 3–6.

[11] PRO, C135/151 (14), m. 6; PRO, C145/149 (15); BL, Add. Roll 31310, mm. 2r., 3v.; ESRO, SAS/RF 1/209, 210, 216; HMAG, JER collection, Bundle D (court of Monday before St Valentine 3 Henry VI (13th February 1425)) and unlisted deed no. 27; HEH, BA 436, BA 450; PRO, C135/40 (8). The value of the grazing at Brounhothe in Burwash may have been underestimated in the inquisition *post mortem*, for in the early 15th century it was let for 26s. 8d. a year (BL, Add. Roll 31359).

[12] ESRO, AMS 4884, m. 16v.; Bodleian Library, MS. Sussex Ch. 171; PRO, C135/151 (14), m. 12; BL, Add. Roll 31504, membrane attached to m. 9r.; E. Searle, *Lordship and Community: Battle Abbey and its Banlieu 1066–1538* (Toronto, 1974), 270–71.

[13] The name contains the Old English elements *(ge)mæne* or *(ge)mænnes* and *wisce*. For *Menewyssh*: PRO, E315/56, f. 5r.; for *Broc* or *Les Brokes*: PRO, E315/56, ff. 5r. and 2r.; HEH, BA 950. On the use of Old English brōc for water meadow, *see* A. Mawer & F. M. Stenton, *Place-Names of Sussex* **2** (Cambridge, 1930) (English Place-Name Society 7), 558.

[14] Lincoln's Inn Library, Hale MS. 87, ff. 59r., 60v., 61v.; HEH, BA 35/1142, 40/1125, 40/1174; *Manuscripts Preserved at Penshurst Place*, 59. D. Martin & B. Martin, 'An architectural history of Northbridge and Salehurst villages', *Historic Buildings in Eastern Sussex* **2** (i) (Robertsbridge, 1980), 21, evidently referring to S. P. Vivian (ed.), *The Manor of Etchingham cum Salehurst*, Sussex Record Society **53** (1953), 63–5. For location of Salehurst Mead, *see* ESRO, AMS 5691/3/4. *Survey of the Manor of Robertsbridge, 1567–70*, 135. *Menewish* was called Mine Brook on the tithe apportionment, ESRO, TD/E86, parcel no. 144. BL, Cotton MS. Otho Aii, f. 33v.

[15] O. Rackham, *Trees and Woodland in the British Landscape* (London, 1976), 135–41.

[16] *Calendar of Close Rolls 1231–34*, 461; L. F. Salzman, 'Documents relating to Pevensey Castle', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **49** (1906), 11.

[17] J. K. Irons, 'Aspects of the impact of Man of the historical ecology of Ashdown Forest before 1885' (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Sussex, 1982), 328–9; PRO, SC12/15/46; BL, Add. Roll 31864; Rackham, *Trees and Woodland*, 147. For the practice of burning heath and cutting bracken and complaints of the consequent destruction of woodland in West Sussex in the 17th century, *see* BL, Add. MS. 28529.

[18] PRO, DL29/441/7094; P. F. Brandon, 'The commonlands and wastes of Sussex' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1963), 103; Irons, 'Aspects of the impact of Man', 339. Parcels of birch were also sold in the manor of South Malling in Mayfield and Wadhurst at about the same time: Lambeth Palace Library, ED 1900.

[19] Brandon, 'Commonlands and wastes of Sussex', 32–43; for forensec woods in Kent, *see* F. R. H. Du Boulay, 'Droving, denns and danger', *Archaeologia Cantiana* **76** (1961), 76. For Ashdown Forest: Brandon, *ibid.*, 100–109; PRO, SC12/15/46; ESRO, AMS 3559, 1, being a copy of the Pipe Roll of 26 Edward I; *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous* **1**, 469, 532. The tithes of Ashdown Forest were granted to the church in Pevensey Castle *temp.* Henry I or before, apparently as part of the endowment of the college, West Sussex Record Office (hereafter WSRO), Ep. VI/1/3, f. 175 v.; *see also* M. F. Gardiner & C. H. C. Whittick, 'Some evidence for an intended collegiate church at Pevensey', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **128** (1990), 261–2.

[20] PRO, C135/151 (14), m. 10; DB i, 18b; BL, Add. Roll 31359; ESRO, ASH 198; HMAG, HPL/B9; Darwell Stream was the boundary of the fee of Netherfield, HMAG, HPL/B71; *Manuscripts Preserved at Penshurst Place* **1**, 59–60, 82–3; PRO, C135/40 (8); PRO, SC6/1116/9, m. 10r. ESRO, SAS/RA 61.

[21] ESRO, ASH 206, f. 43r.; PRO, C132/27 (5).

[22] ESRO, SAS/LB 34; PRO, C135/40 (8).

[23] BL, Add. Roll 31265, m. 3r.; WSRO, Ep. VI/2/1, f. 39r.; PRO, C145/149 (15); W. D. Peckham (ed.), *Thirteen Custumals of the Sussex Manors of the Bishop of Chichester*, Sussex Record Society **31** (1925), 97.

[24] D. Martin & B. Martin, 'Old farm buildings in East Sussex 1450–1750', *Historic Buildings in Eastern Sussex* **3** (Robertsbridge, 1982), fig. 3; CKS, U1475/T264/533; ESRO, SAS/J606.

[25] ESRO, QDD/6/E2; WSRO, Ep. VI/2/1, f. 39r.; ESRO, ASH 206, f. 43r. BL, Add. Roll 31306, m. 1r. refers to land called le Doune further east; B. C. Redwood & A. E. Wilson (eds.), *Custumals of the Sussex Manors of the Archbishop of Canterbury*, Sussex Record Society **57** (1958), 84; Brandon, 'Medieval clearances', 148.

[26] ESRO, A2300 (Crowhurst court rolls), m. 6r.; ESRO SAS/LB 34 below. *Custumals of the Sussex Manors of the Archbishop of Canterbury*, 94, 116; ESRO, AMS 5512; ESRO, A1244, no. 22. Many of the names of the wards are found in a 16th- or 17th-century list of woodland in the manors of Mayfield and Wadhurst, BL, Harl. Roll I. 5.

[27] A. E. Wilson (ed.), *Custumals of the Manors of Laughton, Willingdon and Goring*, Sussex Record Society **60** (1961), 18; ESRO, SAS/CH 215; WSRO, Ep. VI/1/3, ff. 163r.–v.

[28] PRO, C145/149 (15); PRO, C135/40 (8); *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1405–8*, 185; BL, Add. MS. 6165, f. 108v.

[29] PRO, C133/68 (7); PRO, C134/100 (15); PRO, C135/14 (1). *Custumals of Battle Abbey*, 19; WSRO, Ep VI/1/5, f. 149r., printed in *Thirteen Custumals of the Sussex Manors of the Bishop of Chichester*, 133; BL Add. MS. 6165, f. 108r.

[30] PRO, C135/151 (14), mm. 6, 10; ESRO, SAS/C 250. *Baily* has been known from the 1780s as Heathfield Park.

[31] E. Searle & B. Ross (eds.), *Accounts of the Cellarers of Battle Abbey 1275–1513*, Sussex Record Society **65** (1967), 111, 158 and *passim*; *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1405–8*, 185; ESRO, A2300 (Crowhurst court rolls), mm. 5r., 19r., 22v.; HMAG, JER collection (unlisted Udimore accounts).

[32] *Custumals of the Sussex Manors of the Archbishop of Canterbury*, 30–83.

[33] BL, Add. Ch. 30853; ESRO, ASH B20; ESRO, RYE 137/5; PRO, C146/5773.

[34] ESRO, GLY 1219.

[35] R. F. Dell (ed.), *The Glynde Place Archives* (Lewes, 1964), x; ESRO, GLY 954, m. 2; Lambeth Palace Library MS. 1212, p. 103, translated in F. R. H. Du Boulay, *The Lordship of Canterbury* (London, 1966), 104; *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1247–58*, 161; *Calendar of Charter Rolls* **1** (1226–57), 410. For the identification of the bounds of the area of free warren, *see* I. D. Margary, 'Roman roads from Pevensey', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **80** (1939), 32–3.

[36] ESRO, AMS 5896/5, m. 2; ESRO, GLY 1595; GLY 1222.

[37] *Custumals of Battle Abbey*, 14–16; *Victoria County History of Sussex* **9**, 242; Searle, *Lordship and Community*, 160; G. Vanderzee (ed.), *Nonarum Inquisitiones in Curia Scaccarii* (London, 1807), 393. The boundary of Broomham Park is shown on ESRO, BAT 4419.

[38] Brandon, 'Medieval clearances', 143; *Calendar of Charter Rolls 1427–1516*, 13–14; Lambeth Palace Library, ED 1900; ESRO, A2300 (Crowhurst account rolls, account of Michaelmas 1405–6); BL, Add. Roll 31359.

[39] Domesday Book i, 16a; ESRO, GIL 32; ESRO, SAS/LB 34; PRO, C133/77 (3); ESRO, SAS/Aber 68; Brandon, 'Medieval clearances', 137–8.

[40] ESRO, SAS/Budgen 9; *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1405–8*, 185; ESRO, SAS/LB 34; ESRO, SAS/C 250; BL, Add. Roll 31503, m. 1r.; Harvard Law School, manorial records 68.

[41] Rackham, *The History of the Countryside*, 123, commenting on data from L. Cantor, *The Medieval Parks of England: a Gazetteer* (Loughborough, 1983) which, however, gives an incomplete list for East Sussex.

[42] PRO, C134/100 (15); ESRO, A1244, enfranchisement no. 27; ESRO, BAT 4419; *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1301–7*, 347; PRO, C145/38 (10).

[43] C. C. Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages: Social Change in England* c. *1200–1520* (Cambridge, 1989), 109; R. H. Hilton, *The English Peasantry in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1975), 37–53. For an attempt to examine the peasant economy in this way, *see* C. C. Dyer, *Lords and Peasants in a Changing Society: the Estates of the Bishopric of Worcester, 680–1540* (Cambridge, 1980), 316–54.

[44] Bodleian Library, MS. Sussex Charter 171; *Manuscripts Preserved at Penshurst Place* **1**, 107.

[45] The analysis is based on references to trespass in the court rolls of Brede (HMAG, JER collection (Brede court rolls, unlisted); PRO, SC2/205/59), Bucksteep (BL Add Rolls 31309–13, 32604–5, 32643, 32647, 32674–5, 32678; ESRO, ASH L1597–8), Crowham (ESRO, AMS 5686), Crowhurst (ESRO, A2300 (Crowhurst court rolls)), Hammerden (ESRO, SAS/CO/B 1–5), Herstmonceux (ESRO, D507; ESRO SAS/Budgen1–20; Harvard Law School, manorial records 68–78; Bodleian Library Ms. Sussex Roll 5; BL, Egerton Roll 8838), Playden (ESRO, AMS 4883–6) and Udimore (HMAG, JER collection (unlisted Udimore accounts)).

[46] BL, Add. Rolls 71301–6; HMAG, JER collection (unlisted Udimore accounts); Searle, Lordship and Community, 289; R. A. Pelham, 'The agricultural geography of the Chichester estates in 1388', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **78** (1937), 200, table II; Brandon, 'Agriculture and the effects of floods and weather at Barnhorne', 75.

[47] Searle, *Lordship and Community*, 289–90; Brandon, 'Agriculture and the effects of floods and weather at Barnhorne', 72–3, table 1; M. Mate, 'The agrarian economy of south-east England before the Black Death: depressed or buoyant?', in B. M. S. Campbell (ed.), *Before the Black Death: Studies in the 'Crisis' of the Early Fourteenth Century* (Manchester, 1991), 81–2; Harvard Law School, manorial records 74.

[48] HEH, BA 452. On the ratio of the price of various grains, *see* D. L. Farmer, 'Prices and wages', in H. E. Hallam (ed.), *Agrarian History of England and Wales* **2** *(1042–1350)* (Cambridge, 1988), 795.

[49] Searle, *Lordship and Community*, 272–86; Brandon, 'Agriculture and the effects of Floods and weather at Barnhorne', 71–7; PRO, C135/151 (14), m. 6.

[50] BL, Add. Roll 31310, m. 6v.

[51] R. A. L. Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory: a Study in Monastic Administration* (Cambridge, 1943), 136–8; M. Mate, 'Medieval agrarian practices: the determining factors?', *Agricultural History Review* **33** (1985), 23; P. F. Brandon, 'Demesne arable farming in coastal Sussex during the later Middle Ages', *Agricultural History Review* **19** (1971), 134; BL, Add. Rolls 31088; 31309, m. 7r.; 31311.

[52] On the effect of marling generally, *see* W. M. Mathew, 'Marling in British agriculture: a case of partial identity', *Agricultural History Review* **41** (1993), 97–110. Brandon, 'Agriculture and the effects of floods and weather at Barnhorne', 77; J. L. M. Gulley, 'The Wealden landscape in the early seventeenth century and its antecedents' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1960), 141; BL, Add. Roll 31310, m. 2r.; CKS, U1475/M237; ESRO, SAS/Budgen 2.

[53] Brandon, 'Demesne arable farming in coastal Sussex', 134, n. 4; PRO, E315/56, f. 1r.; BL, Add. Roll 31086; *Rotuli Hundredorum* 2, 218; Mate, 'Medieval agrarian practices', 23, n. 5; BL, Add. Roll 71300; HEH BA 436; ESRO, SAS/Budgen 5; ESRO, NOR 18/3; BL, Add. Roll 32686; Searle, *Lordship and Community*, 291, n. 5.

[54] ESRO, SAS/CO/B 72; R. V. Lennard, 'The composition of demesne plough-teams in twelfth-century England', *English Historical Review* **75** (1960), 193–207; P. D. A. Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village: Cuxham 1240 to 1400* (Oxford, 1965), 57–8; J. Langdon, *Horse, Oxen and Technological Innovation: the Use of Draught Animals in English Farming from 1066 to 1500* (Cambridge, 1986); BL, Harl. MS. 3586, f. 46v.

[55] HMAG, JER collection (unlisted Udimore accounts); *cf.* Brandon, 'Agriculture and the effects of floods and weather at Barnhorne', 84–5; BL, Add. Roll 32721.

[56] PRO, SC12/15/46; BL, Add. Roll 31310, m. 3v. For a 16th-century assessment of the value of Wealden heathland for cattle, *see* ESRO, SAS/J 606.

[57] Brandon, 'Agriculture and the effects of floods and weather at Barnhorne', 84; BL, Add. Roll 32689; HMAG, JER collection (unlisted, Bundle A); ESRO, AMS 4884, m. 21r.; ESRO, A2300 (Crowhurst court rolls), m. 3r.; ESRO, SAS/Budgen 6; PRO, JUST 1/933, m. 1r.; W. Cunningham, *The Growth of English Industry and Commerce* (Cambridge, 5th edition, 1912) 1, 634, 635.

[58] ESRO, SAS/Budgen 10; ESRO, A2300 (Crowhurst court rolls), *passim*.

[59] ESRO, AMS 4884, mm. 1v., 21r.; HMAG, JER collection (Udimore courts of Wednesday after St James ap. 23 Edward III (29th July 1349), 5th April 24 Edward III (1350)); ESRO, A2300 (Crowhurst court rolls), mm. 1r., 3r.; BL, Egerton Roll 8838; ESRO, AMS 5686, m. 9r.

[60] The court rolls of the manors of Bivelham (BL, Add. Rolls 31080–86), Bucksteep, Crowham, Crowhurst, Hammerden, Herstmonceux, Playden, Robertsbridge (CKS, U1475/M237), Udimore and Wartling (BL, Add. Rolls 31311, 31315, 31502–14, 32599–617, 32619–24, 32626–54, 32656–7, 32659, 32662–8, 32670, 32672–98, 32700–706, 32708–18; ESRO, ASH L1597–8) were used in the analysis. For other sources, *see* note 45 above. Dyer, *Lords and Peasants in a Changing Society*, 323–4.

[61] M. Mate, 'Pastoral farming in the south-east England in the fifteenth century', *Economic History Review* 2nd series, **40** (1987), 531.

[62] PRO, SC12/15/46; *Custumals of the Sussex Manors of the Archbishop of Canterbury*, 140; BL, Add. Roll 31310, m. 5r.; Harvard Law School, manorial records 68; BL, Add. Roll 31309, m. 6r.; HMAG, JER collection (unlisted Udimore court rolls); BL, Add. Rolls 32737.

[63] ESRO, SAS/Budgen 1; BL, Add. Roll 36689; ESRO, SAS/Budgen 17. For other references to apples and pears, *see* BL, Add Roll 31310, m. 4r. and E. J. Courthope & B. E. R. Formoy (eds.), *Lathe Court Rolls and Views of Frankpledge in the Rape of Hastings,* AD *1387 to 1474*, Sussex Record Society **37** (1934), 46.

[64] ESRO, ASH B9; PRO, SC6/1021/5; HMAG, JER collection (unlisted Udimore court rolls); ESRO, FRE 6909. For fruit growing and cider making in the same area in the 16th century, *see* C. E. Brent, 'Rural employment and population in Sussex between 1550 and 1640', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **114** (1976), 41.

[65] *See* Brent, 'Rural employment and population in Sussex', 39–41 for later 16th- and 17th-century agriculture in the region. HEH, BA 995 (consulted from ESRO, AMS 5926/34–9); L. F. Salzman, 'Early taxation in Sussex, part II', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **99** (1961), 16–18. The printed returns give only a partial summary of the document. J. F. Willard, *Parliamentary Taxes on Personal Property 1290 to 1334: a Study in Medieval English Financial Administration* (Cambridge (Massachusetts), 1934), 77–85 also suggests subsidies were charged upon the excess of goods and stock above that needed for sustenance and farming.

[66] *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1354–58*, 70, 578–9; R. A. Pelham, 'Studies in the historical geography of medieval Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **72** (1931), 173; HMAG, JER collection (unlisted Udimore account rolls), ESRO, A2300 (Crowhurst court rolls), m. 1v.; *Accounts of the Cellarers of Battle Abbey*, 45. For Kent, *see* K. P. Witney, 'The woodland economy of Kent, 1066–1348', *Agricultural History Review* **38** (1990), 37–8; Du Boulay 'Denns, droving and danger', 85–7; BL, Add. Roll 71306. R. A. Pelham, 'Timber exports from the Weald during the fourteenth century', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **69** (1928), 176, 178–80.

[67] M. Clough, 'The estates of the Pelham family in East Sussex before 1500' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1956), 147–9; ESRO, ASH 198; PRO, SC6/1028/7; *Accounts of the Cellarers of Battle Abbey*, 42, 45; Searle, *Lordship and Community*, 267.

[68] HMAG, JER collection (unlisted Udimore accts).

[69] Custumals of Battle Abbey, 21–2; C. R. J. Currie, 'Timber

supply and timber building in a Sussex parish', *Vernacular Architecture* **14** (1983), 52–4; BL, Add. Rolls 32620, m. 2r.; 31503, m. 1r.; 32674, m. 6r.; ESRO, SAS/Budgen 17. The timber trees are defined in BL, Add. Roll 31508, 32683.

[70] BL, Add. Roll 32657, mm. 6v., 7r.; ESRO, A2300 (Crowhurst court rolls), mm. 1v., 3r., 9r., 19r.

[71] ESRO, A2300 (Crowhurst court rolls), mm. 8r.–v. For land held by Thomas Natelegh in Battle, *see* also BL, Add. Ch. 20042. BL, Add. Roll 71301; PRO, E179/189/35, m. 3r.; *Custumals of the Sussex Manors of the Archbishop of Canterbury*, 37. More generally, *see* J. R. Birrell, 'Peasant craftsman in the medieval forest', *Agricultural History Review* **17** (1969), 91–107.

[72] PRO, SC6/1028/7; *Calendar of Close Rolls 1288–96*, 70; R. A. Pelham, 'The foreign trade of Sussex 1300–1350', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **70** (1929), 109; *Accounts of the Cellarers of Battle Abbey*, 45, 111. The account roll for Burwash in 1295–6 lists no sales of charcoal as 'no one came to buy' (PRO, SC6/1116/9, m. 10r.), implying that in other years it was sold to merchants. PRO, E179/189/41, m. 18v. A misreading of the Patent Roll printed as *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1354–58*, 70 by W. D. Cooper, *A History of Winchelsea* (London, 1850), 120 is the source of the persistent myth that large-scale charcoal burning was carried out at Winchelsea.

[73] On the glass industry not discussed here, *see* G. H. Kenyon, *The Glass Industry of the Weald* (Leicester, 1967), on and rural industry generally, J. Thirsk, 'Industries in the countryside', in F. J. Fisher (ed.), *Essays in Economic and Social History of Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1961), 70–88.

[74] H. Cleere & D. W. Crossley, *The Iron Industry of the Weald* (Leicester, 1985), 89, 90; PRO, E326/4039. The forge at Roffey was leased by the widow of Walter de Bonewyk. Walter was clearly a person of some substance as his position towards the head of the witness-lists in PRO, C146/4714 and BL, Add. Ch. 17296 suggests. *Victoria County History of Sussex* **2**, ed. W. Page (1907), 242.

[75] J. H. Money, 'Medieval iron-workings in Minepit Wood, Rotherfield, Sussex', *Medieval Archaeology* **15** (1971), 86–111; D. W. Crossley, *The Bewl Valley Ironworks* (London, 1975); Cleere & Crossley, *The Iron Industry of the Weald*, 92; BL, Add. Roll 32615, m. 4v. For Ralph Kenne as a tenant, BL, Add. Ch. 13605, BL, Add. Ch. 42640–41, 42644, and as a witness see, ESRO, SAS/RF 1/209, ESRO, AMS 4457, HMAG, HPL/B4–6, BL, Add. Ch. 42639, 42649. For Alan Kenne *see* HMAG, HPL/B4, BL, Add. Ch. 42638, 42649 and for Richard Kenne, BL, Add. Ch. 13605.

[76] A. D. F. Streeten, 'Craft and industry: medieval and later potters in south-east England', in H. Howard & E. L. Morris (ed.), *Production and Distribution: a Ceramic Viewpoint* (Oxford, 1981), British Archaeological Reports, international series **120**, 323–46; K. J. Barton, *Medieval Sussex Pottery* (Chichester, 1979); A. J. F. Dulley, 'Excavations at Pevensey, Sussex, 1962–6', *Medieval Archaeology* **11** (1967), 219–20; K. J. Barton & E. W. Holden, 'Excavations at Michelham Priory', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **105** (1967), 7; C. C. Dyer, 'The social and economic changes of the later Middle Ages, and the pottery of the period', *Medieval Ceramics* **6** (1982), 37; PRO, SC2/205/59, mm. 3v., 10v.; HMAG, JER collection, Bundle D (Brede court rolls); J. Bleach, 'The medieval potters of Ringmer', *Ringmer History* **1** (1982), 43–54.

[77] J. Thirsk, *The Rural Economy of England: Collected Essays* (London, 1984), 225; *Lathe Court Rolls and Views of Frankpledge in the Rape of Hastings*, 38; *Custumals of the Sussex Manors of the Archbishop of Canterbury*, 75; PRO, C145/38 (10); BL, Harl. Ch. 87 G 35; PRO, C135/252; ESRO, AMS 5592/107; BL, Add. Roll 32675, m. 6r. Survey of the Manor of Robertsbridge, 137; the fields called Lower Fulling Mills and Upper Fulling Mills are shown on ESRO, TD/E 86, parcels 22, 23. ESRO, ASH 198.

[78] Searle, *Lordship and Community*, 299–303; CKS U1475/Q4, 5, 6; *Rotuli Hundredorum* 2, 218; *Lathe Court Rolls and Views of Frankpledge in the Rape of Hastings*, 120–21, 128–9, 136–7. On the sale of oak bark, *see* BL, Add. Roll 71304.

[79] BL, Add. Ch. 20156;. ESRO, SAS/CO/B 4, m. 3v.; ESRO, SAS/CO/B 71, B 73.

[80] Lincoln's Inn Library, Hale MS. 87, ff. 59r., 69r.–v.; *Custumals of Battle Abbey*, 40. For the location of Saltland, *see* J. A. Brent, 'Alciston Manor in the later Middle Ages', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **106** (1968), map facing 89. R. A. Pelham, 'Some further aspects of Sussex trade during the fourteenth century', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **71** (1930), 183–5; ESRO, RYE 136/51; A. R. Bridbury, *England and the Salt Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1955), 168–71; *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1436–41*, 485.

[81] PRO, SC2/205/59, mm. 1r., 10v.; BL, Add. Ch. 13605; *Nonarum Inquisitiones*, 373; HMAG, HPL/B14, B36; BL, Add. Roll 32675, m. 3v.

[82] B. M. S. Campbell, J. A. Galloway, D. Keene & M. Murphy, *A Medieval Capital and Its Grain Supply: Agrarian Production and Distribution in the London Region c. 1300* (London, 1993), 24, 86; Pelham, 'The foreign trade of Sussex 1300–1350', 93–118; Pelham, 'Some further aspects of Sussex trade during the fourteenth century', 171–204; Pelham, 'Timber exports from the Weald during the fourteenth century', 170–82.

[83] On seasonal work outside the Weald, *see* P. F. Brandon, 'Demesne arable farming in coastal Sussex during the later Middle Ages', *Agricultural History Review* **19** (1971), 118. M. F. Gardiner, Medieval Settlement and Society in the Eastern Sussex Weald before 1420 (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1995), 267–8 attempts an estimate of the number of landless tenants.