

FIELDS OF FOOD FOR LONDON? SUPPLIES FROM THE HOO PENINSULA, KENT, IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Gillian Draper

SUMMARY

This paper considers recent research on London's food supply from its hinterlands by examining the Hoo Peninsula, in the wider context of agriculture and resources from the Kentish seaboard and ports. Considering other supplies besides grain, it opens up the lives of farmers, fishermen, shippers, traders and merchants, and their connections with London and its citizens. In order to extend our knowledge of Hoo as part of a highly commercialised zone influenced by the London market, this article draws on a variety of documents, including a number of charters newly available in a fully source-critical edition.

INTRODUCTION

The 1990s saw an immense amount of work on the grain supply to the medieval City of London (Campbell *et al* 1993). London's population increased sixfold between 1086 and 1300 to perhaps 60–80,000 inhabitants, and its demand for foodstuffs grew greatly, with manors along the north Kent coast becoming important suppliers and transfer points. Much evidence came from ecclesiastical lords of Kent, particularly Christ Church Priory, Canterbury, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, who both had a number of large manors bordering the Thames estuary which forms the north Kent coast (Fig 1). The bulk of the data came from demesne accounts and Inquisitions Post Mortem of the late 13th century

onwards, especially from large manors such as Barksore which lay to the east of Gillingham and Grange on the Medway estuary, Leysdown on the Isle of Sheppey, Cliffe on Hoo (Campbell 2010, 28, 40–4) and Gillingham manor, a detached part of which lay on the eastern end of the Hoo Peninsula (*ie* the Isle of Grain). Nearly half of the net grain yields from the demesnes of such lords was marketed to supply the great demands of London, and the lesser demands of much smaller urban centres such as Rochester and Maidstone in Kent (Campbell 2000, 21, 55–8, 63–4, 260–1). In 1283–5, pasture and meadow were very notable features of the Grain demesne, although barley and wheat were also grown, in a ratio of 7:1, and were processed at a windmill there (Witney 2000, 114). The location of Cliffe on the chalk upland of Hoo but with river access to London stimulated Christ Church Priory to promote high grain yields on its manor (Campbell 2010, 40). The Cliffe bedels' rolls show that slightly more acres of barley (both spring and winter) than wheat were grown in 1291. Oats, rye, vetch and peas together made up just over the third of the demesne acreage, in roughly equal proportion, but by 1371 wheat acreage had just overtaken that of barley. Throughout the period most demesne grain was sold with barley, intended for brewing, although a little was kept for human consumption (Smith 1963). Peasant communities, like

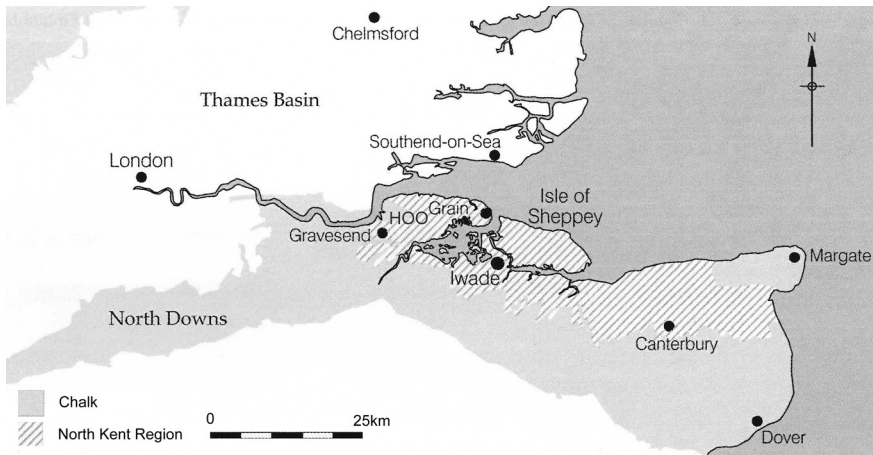


Fig 1. London and the north Kent region including the Hoo Peninsula and Isle of Grain showing the mixed geology and soils and the chalk ridge of the North Downs (map provided by kind permission of Pre-Construct Archaeology) (scale 1:1,250,000)

lords, also sold much of their grain and animal produce, and herrings, sprats and oysters in the network of small local markets on Hoo (below). There were also some strategically placed regional urban markets which had emerged by the 13th century to handle 'bulk consignments destined for London and elsewhere' including Rochester, Maidstone and Faversham (Galloway 2012, 9). The exceptional survival and detail of the demesne accounts, together with certain royal records, made it possible for the embanking of the tidal Thames to be analysed also (Galloway 2010). This embanking protected the valuable marshlands bordering the river from flooding and also facilitated the building of the simple quaysides which vessels required for loading, especially the larger cogs in use from the 13th century onwards.

Geology is crucial in defining the nature of the Hoo Peninsula. Its central ridgeway and western side are part of the chalk downland of north Kent (Fig 1). Reclamation involving embanked fields took place near the centre of the peninsula around Cooling at the end of the 12th century (below), leaving the fringe of low-lying saltings to be exploited for their own particular resources and protecting the drained land from erosion by keeping the tidal river and creeks away from it. Hoo was crossed from north to south by the Yantlet Creek, which in the Middle

Ages completely separated off the eastern end of the peninsula, the Isle of Grain. The Yantlet Creek, leading from the Thames to the Medway (or 'West Swale' as Speed marked it; Fig 2) was used, in conjunction with the River Swale which ran to the south of the Isle of Sheppey, as a short cut on a major sailing route from Westminster down the Thames estuary to Cinque Ports such as Dover, Sandwich or Hastings, or to cross the channel. The Swale was in effect an eastern arm of the Medway and had been a 'critical part' of a major trans-continental trading route along the northern Kent coast since at least the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age (Allen 2012, 1). Using the short cut avoided sailing around the north of the Isle of Sheppey, although the cut was bedevilled by marshes, mudflats and uninhabited islets. Local knowledge or a local pilot was needed to navigate here. Immediately to the south of Hoo lay the manor of Grange (or Grench, to the east of Gillingham; Fig 2) with a riverfront on the Medway estuary. The use of the Grange riverfront for the distribution of produce may have begun as early as the later 11th century when Odo, Bishop of Bayeux and Earl of Kent, held not only Grange but also the valuable demesne manors of Hoo and Shorne on the peninsula (Draper 2016). The tidal flow in the Medway estuary tended to scour the Grange riverside at Gillingham Reach while

allowing extensive saltings to build up on the Hoo side. Grange was a liberty of the Cinque Ports as a limb or member of its distant head port, Hastings in Sussex. Grange provided a steersman through the difficult waters of the Swale/Medway estuary for the Hastings portsmen when they were summoned to sail to Westminster in their town vessels with flags, horns and trumpeters on ceremonial occasions, for example victory celebrations in the 13th century, or to transport the king or his forces down the Thames (*Cal Cl R* 1259–61, 211, 250; Draper & Meddens 2009, 13–14, 38–9; Meddens & Draper 2014, 4).

SETTLEMENT: MARKETS, FAIRS AND THE THAMES FERRY

In 1156 William de Ypres (one-time supporter of King Stephen) held half of Hoo manor and the whole of Shorne from Henry II. He lost his lands on Hoo, as elsewhere in Kent, in 1157 and they came into the hands of William, Henry II's brother, after whose death the Shorne lands went to three of his knights (*DB: Kent*, 5, 93; Flight 1997, 71, 72, n 12, 76). There may have been a market at Shorne as early as 1219, and a grant of a Thursday market and fair (29 June for three days) was made in 1271 to Roger de Northwood. Northwood was a Kentish magnate and administrator, and in 1277 was commissioned to enquire into the collection of wharfage at the quay next to Rochester Bridge. Northwood held lands at Southwark, Lambeth and Camberwell as well as Shorne manor (Musson 2004; Letters 2013). A fair at Higham on Hoo was granted by King John (1199–1216) to be held at the manor of Lillechurch, which had been conveyed in the late 1150s to an offshoot of the Benedictine nunnery of St Leonard, Stratford-at-Bow (Tower Hamlets), when Mary, daughter of King Stephen, and some nuns moved to Hoo, establishing Higham Priory which collected the revenues of the Thames ferry crossing to Essex. The nuns' move may have followed discord at Stratford (Freeman 2007), but Stephen's military interest in controlling crossings to Essex should also be noted.¹ There were several other markets and fairs on Hoo reflecting its high pre-Black Death population level and economic activity. An early market at Hoo St Werberh

held by Maud de Canvill was granted by her to the Cistercian abbey of Boxley, on the east side of the Medway near Maidstone (Fig 2), and confirmed in 1189 by Richard I. A Tuesday market and fair on 1 November at All Hallows Hoo was granted in 1271 to Reading Abbey, whose major Hoo estate lay in that parish at Windhill (below). However, the market and fair were not apparently being held by 1293. A fair on 1 September was granted to the rector of Cliffe in 1257. Fairs and markets are significant evidence of settlement and commerce, and many existed well before they are first recorded, as at Hoo St Werberh. This weekly market, and those of All Hallows and Shorne, are likely to have been local markets for inhabitants to purchase fish, foodstuffs, fuel such as firewood and broom, and other goods required weekly. Not only local inhabitants but also merchants involved in the London, national and even international trade, including some men of Florence, could purchase less-frequently needed goods at the fairs of Hoo St Werberh, Shorne, Higham and Cliffe, such as locally produced grain, sheep and lambs' wool, animals, salt, leather and pottery (Smith 1963, 147–51; Draper 2009, 68–9, 154, 190). The 1334 Lay Subsidy shows that the Hoo Peninsula was an area of high taxpayer density and wealth, although not so densely populated nor quite so wealthy as Thanet, urban areas such as Faversham or the hundreds bordering the lower Medway (Hanley & Chalklin 1964, 66, 68).

There were no medieval towns on the Hoo Peninsula apart, maybe, from the port of Cliffe. Traditionally Cliffe was notably important in the early Middle Ages, although the suggestion that early charters concerned with church councils held at *clofesho* refer to Cliffe at Hoo is now usually discounted (Brooks & Kelly 2013, pt 1, 311–12). Cliffe manor had important timber assets, rare on Hoo, which belonged to Christ Church Priory and could be transported widely by water. In the early 14th century (1334) a 'coggere', a man using the standard transport ship of the day, the cog, is recorded on Hoo, and a 'schipman' at Shamwell Hundred which included Cliffe. There were a quay and a crane at Cliffe for loading and unloading, recorded in the mid-15th century, although likely to have existed much earlier.

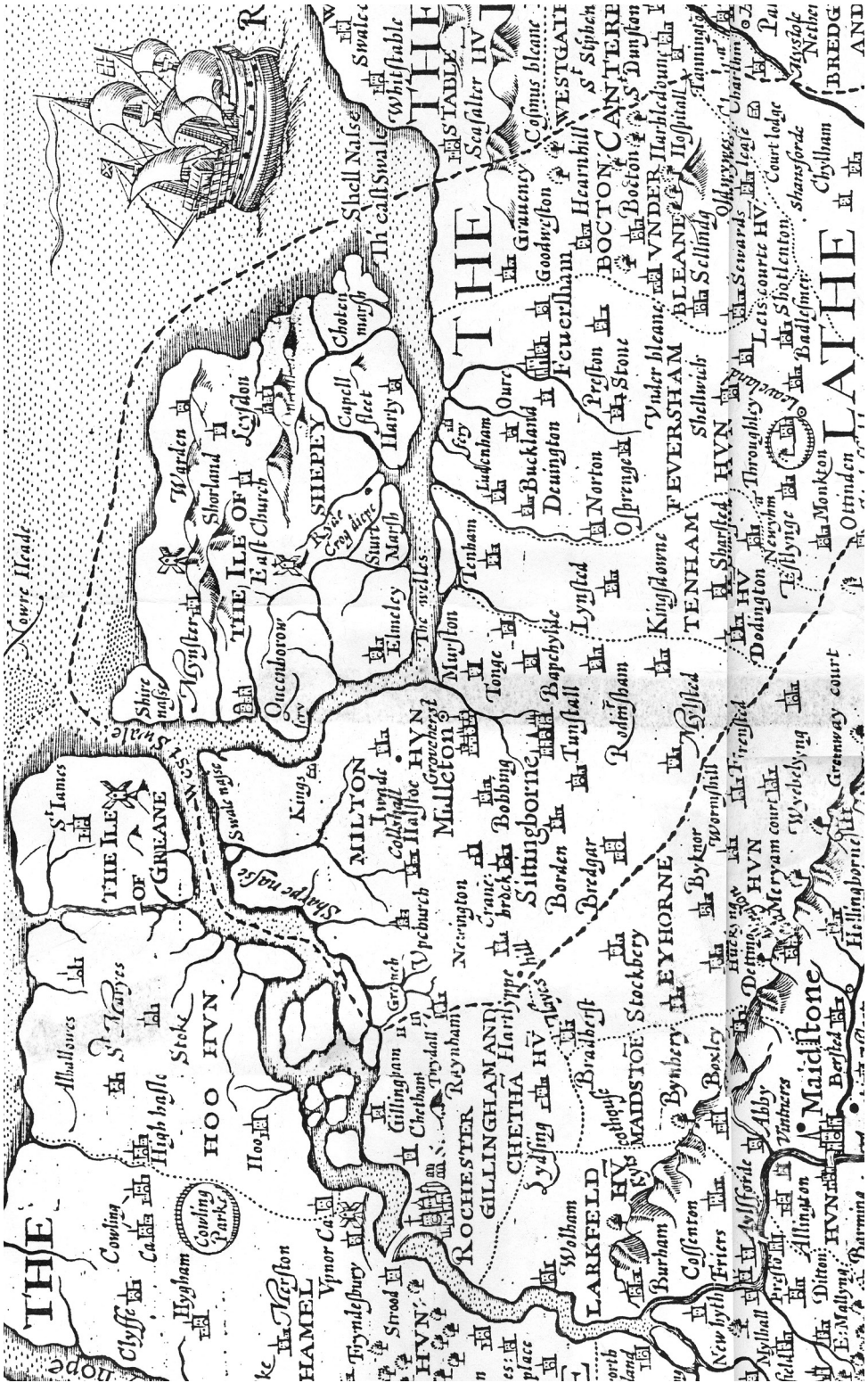


Fig 2. Part of John Speed's map of Kent c. 1611 showing Hoo Peninsula, marked HOO HVN[DRED], and Grain, marked THE ILE OF GRAINE. Chylffe (Cliffe), Hygham (Higham), Cowling (Cooling), Allhallowes, Hoo, High Hatstol[w] and Stoeke are shown. All except Cooling reached the marshland edge of the Thames or Medway estuary (West Swale) (north is to the top of the map)

Unusually no carpenters are recorded in the Hundreds of Hoo and Shamwell in contrast to other hundreds along the Thames estuary, suggesting that timber from these two hundreds was sold at a distance rather than locally for ship or house construction (Draper 2010, 68–9, 72). The Hundred of Hoo contained two people named from an area called Ropelond, indicating a ropewalk where ropes were made for boats, which would have been for fishing and collection of shellfish, and for local and more distant transport. At least one man taxed in these hundreds, William the tailor (*cissor*), was of London. He was a man of substance, paying the very high contribution of 8s ½d in Hoo Hundred, where the average was 3s 3d, and more even than Sir Stephen de Cobeham of the notable elite Kent family, who paid 6s 5d (Hanley & Chalklin 1964, 68, 112–13, 132).

ESTATES, RECLAMATION AND FIELDS

The relationship between settlement, estate holdings and marshland on the Hoo Peninsula, and the intended destination of its agricultural products, was examined from the records of its major estate holders from the Middle Saxon period onwards as part of a study by the author for Historic England (Draper 2013; Newsome *et al* 2015). These lords were the monarch, Christ Church Priory Canterbury, Higham Priory and subsequently St John's College Cambridge which received its lands and preserved its documents (Underwood 2008, xxxiii).² Place-names in later 8th-century AD charters from the Higham area point not only to the importance of arable but also timber management, stock-raising, 'pear-orchards and summer pasture'.³ Pear growing is documented in this locality from the late medieval period and still remains a feature of central Hoo now, partly due to suitable soils and climate.⁴

The religious community at Canterbury acquired lands on Hoo from the early 9th century AD onwards: *Clive* (Cliffe), Cooling and *Osterland* or 'oyster land' which probably lay in what became Stoke parish, four miles (6.4km) east of Cooling. The Christ Church lands at Cliffe, Cooling and *Osterland* reappear in a grant of a lease of the priory's sheepfolds there made between 1191 and

1213. A man called Godfrey de la Dene, one of the priory's prominent lessees, appears four times in the chirograph recording this lease.⁵ Small sub-rectangular fields, defined by drainage ditches and embankments on which roads or lanes run, are identifiable between Cliffe and Cooling on historic and contemporary maps, aerial photos and in the landscape, suggesting that this area represents these early priory lands which had been reclaimed and made into small arable fields with the sheepfolds situated on them to facilitate manuring. Godfrey de la Dene was particularly interested in areas where reclamation could take place, notably on Romney Marsh where he was involved in reclamation which produced a very similar landscape of small regular fields with banks and ditches (Draper 2005, 22, 28–30). Godfrey also attested a grant of eight acres (*c.*3ha) of 'defensible land', both freshmarsh and saltmarsh, at Frindsbury on the southwest of Hoo, and a conveyance of land of the archbishopric at Southwark.⁶ The tenants' farming activities are less visible, but disputes with the rector appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury over valuable tithes of lambs and mills were recorded frequently from 1229. In 1277 *Magister* Richard de Stratford, rector of Cliffe and of St Mary-le-Bow, London, withdrew from his dispute against Christ Church Priory and its settlers and tenants. The dispute had concerned the tithes of the sheepfolds at Cliffe as well as the rebuilding of a house in the parish of St Mary-le-Bow.⁷ By the late 13th century, the folding of sheep at specified times for manuring purposes in the priory's sheepfold was an obligation of the tenants of Cliffe and Cooling on a highly organised and professional manor, whose demesne was so significant in supplying London with food.⁸

A sub-manor of Cliffe, Cardons, was held in the reign of Edward I (1272–1307) by the heirs of Robert Cardon, Alice Salamon and Robert le Ram, whose name perhaps suggests the kind of farming carried out on the manor. Cardons was named from a family who are known first of all as wine merchants and were later connected with Genoese merchants of Sandwich and London.⁹ Grimoard Cardon of Villeneuve-sur-Lot, Guyenne, was a large-scale importer of wine into London, whose cargo of 62

tuns was taken from a ship off Sandwich by Flemish pirates in 1317. This caused Edward II to issue a writ in 1320 to the sheriffs of London to impound goods and merchandise of any men of Flanders within their bailiwick to the value of £100 (*Cal Cl R* 1313–18, 257; exemplified in *Cal Pat R* 1330–4, 391).¹⁰ The manor was held by gentlemen of Cliffe surnamed Cardon, and with Sandwich and London connections, until after Cade's rebellion (*eg Cal Pat R* 1446–52, 355, 657). In 1476–7 rents from Cardons manor were granted to the London Charterhouse, which had 480 acres (*c.*194ha) in total.¹¹ The nature of agriculture at Cardons is indicated in a Charterhouse rental of 1507–8 in which the lessee of Cardons for 20 years, Thomas Boydon, paid £3 6s 8d a year for his dwelling, his doves, barn, stable, granaries and other farm buildings including the hog-sty. In addition, Thomas Boydon held a Charterhouse tenement of 25 acres (*c.*10ha) in Higham for £3 2s, once held by a Londoner. The Charterhouse also held the Bull Inn in Rochester. The three Charterhouse rentals of its lands on Hoo mention cows and calves, rather than sheep, raised on a marsh at Cliffe named Litliham, which the Charterhouse was leasing out. These rentals contain mainly personal names and money rents but do indicate a move from sheep to cattle-raising on Hoo in response to changing demand, as in other marshland areas of Kent (Draper 1998, 115–18). After the Dissolution, the lands on Hoo discussed here were granted to Thomas Gibbons, citizen and vintner of London, to hold *in capite* by knight's service, and shortly afterwards he alienated them to Oliver Leder, apparently he of London and Great Staughton (Hofman 1982).

FISHING AND OTHER PRODUCE, MERCHANTS, TRADERS AND TRANSPORT

Much fish was caught in and around the Hoo Peninsula. A number of fisheries are noted in the Domesday Book, for example one at Higham, two fisheries in one part of Hoo manor held by a layman and similarly a fishery in Stoke manor (*DB: Kent*, 5:92, 93, 105; Brooks & Kelly 2013, pt 2, 963). There is little or no documentary, place or personal name evidence of medieval salt making on

Hoo, in contrast to the Romney Marshes, perhaps suggesting that the fish was not salted but rather transported straight up the Thames to London or down the Medway to Rochester and Maidstone where the holders of the Domesday fisheries also had landholdings.

The supply of fresh fish to London was a complex operation (Colson 2014, 24–5). The fish traders who supplied London from the main fishing ports in Kent and East Sussex, the Cinque Ports, seldom appear in national records as merchants even though they operated on a large scale, for example Daniel Rough, the town clerk and 'fishmonger' of New Romney (Draper & Meddens 2009, 26). Their activities were regulated by the Cinque Ports themselves and so, together with their names, they are embedded as 'barons' or 'Portsmen' in the extensive documentation of these towns (Draper 2009, 18–20, 91–5; *cf* Nightingale 2000, 38). On occasion traders or merchants operating outside the Cinque Ports are found in other records, such as John *mercator*, the last witness to a deed which conveyed a payment of 4s from *Grimmeson* in Hoo to Christ Church Priory, Canterbury, in the early 13th century. John himself may well have lived in Canterbury.¹² Another later instance is John Stocker the elder who in 1438 shipped 80 woollen cloths worth £100 from Queenborough on Sheppey and was prosecuted for having done so without paying the appropriate taxes. A consortium of London merchants 'led by a notable London mercer William Meldreth' had hired a ship (*La Marie*) in which John Stocker dispatched the cloths. John's role had been 'a junior one' and he was really just the shipper. North Kent traders such as John were at a disadvantage when London merchants 'shipped wool and cloth down the Thames on barges, having paid taxes in London, and merely used their ports, such as Queenborough (Sheppey), for transhipment to ocean-going vessels' (Stocker 2014, 130–1).¹³

Who were the men who transported Hoo's produce to London? Kent's coast and major river was full of mariners and their vessels, some of whom had both London and Kent connections. In the later 14th century some of the mariners who appear in the Pipe Rolls under Kent owned or captained vessels with

London names, for instance John Pomfret, master of a vessel called *La Paul of Loundrs* in 1365–6 and John Jetour, master of a vessel called *La Trinite de la Tour* in 1369–70.¹⁴ The mariners working the Kent coastline used their vessels in a multi-purpose way: sometimes for transporting goods, sometimes taking horses across the channel, sometimes acting as pirates and sometimes sailing with a royal fleet in wartime. Most vessels based on Hoo were small; for example, only four out of 17 from Cliffe were used for naval operations in the middle decades of the 14th century. Vessels ranged from 20 tons for fishing vessels to 60 to 80 tons for merchant ships. On urgent occasion London masters were permitted to impress Kent, and indeed Essex, ships, masters and men.¹⁵ For example in 1374, local men were recruited and paid to go to sea on the king's service but failed to turn up. A joint commission was made to the Sheriff of Kent and John Whitlok, master of a London ship called *la Thomas de la Tour*, to bring them back to service or imprison them. The men were from Higham, Shorne and Chalk on the Hoo Peninsula and Gillingham, Strood and Milton nearby (*Cal Pat R* 1370–4, 494). They were presumably 'fisher-farmers' of the Kentish coastal zone whose livelihood combined fishing, short coastal voyages to transport goods and the farming of smallholdings (Ayton & Lambert 2014, 77).

Higher up the social scale was Thomas de Windhill, merchant of All Hallows parish on the northern side of Hoo, who in 1329 owed a debt to Thomas de Hambledon, citizen, vintner and merchant of London. The case was heard before John de Grantham, Mayor of London, and a writ was sent to the Sheriff of Kent in connection with the case by John de Pulteney, similarly Mayor of London, and who was also a wool merchant and major Kentish landowner and builder of Penshurst Castle (Barron 2004, 13, 100; Axworthy 2004).¹⁶ Thomas de Windhill's debt should be seen in the context of other such (unpaid) debts of more than twenty Kentish merchants recorded in the Certificates of Statute Merchant and Statute Staple between 1289 and 1464. Trade in wool, in particular, and other goods depended on a network of credit for which medieval taverns in ports such as Cliffe and

Rochester provided important contacts; one of the debtors in these certificates was both a taverner and merchant.¹⁷ They reveal the Kentish credit network of this period outside the Cinque Ports confederation and the following points can be briefly made. London men were important in offering credit to Kentish men, and/or were assiduous in pursuing their debts.¹⁸ Wool was probably the most important of the traded goods, although skins and spices also featured. Indeed, another debtor was Sir William Moraunt, Sheriff of Kent, who lived at Chevening near a market and hythe on the River Darent which reached the Thames at Dartford.¹⁹ Men like Moraunt and several of his associates obtained certificates to export wool in the 1340s.²⁰ Wool production in Kent in the 14th century was not on the scale of that of southern or south-western England, which was exported via London or Bristol, but was important for local men like Moraunt and Thomas de Windhill. A small place such as All Hallows on Hoo, earlier a fair and marketplace, may well have been a convenient location from which to export wool while avoiding the legal requirement to do so via the staple ports and pay the wool custom. Similarly on the southern side of Hoo, Gillingham merchants exported wool illicitly from 'the port of Medway' by 1275.²¹ However, the holders of nearby Grange could claim that goods might be exported legally without paying custom since it was a Cinque Ports Liberty; nevertheless in 1386 the granting of permission to a London man to use Grange as a port for wool exports was explicit. An order was made 'to the bailiffs of Grange and the collectors of customs in that port in the parish of Gillingham to allow John Steyndrop to load at Grange without payment of custom or subsidy and to bring to London two sarplers (four sacks) of wool by the sea coast and to unload it there' (*Cal Cl R* 1385–9, 173–4). Letters of the Mayor of London were required to certify Steyndrop's action if he did so, and two London men, Robert Uagate and John Cornwaille, were to act as mainpernors or sureties. John Steyndrop was permitted to bring Kent wool to London and sell it there without paying the dues but not export it (Meddens & Draper 2014, 5).

THE PORT AND MANOR OF GRANGE

In September 1348, at the onset of the Black Death, the manor of Grange and its chapel were acquired for £200 from Thomas de Hastings, son of Sir William de Hastings of Surrey, by a London fishmonger, Richard Smelt. This was presumably to provide Smelt and his family with a refuge from the plague-ridden city.²² Smelt was Sheriff of London in 1354–5 (*Cal Pat R* 1354–8, 500; *Cal Cl R* 1354–60, 63, 110).²³ As a riverside manor with useful Cinque Port privileges, Grange may have had a role in Smelt's trade of fishmonger as a centre of (re)distribution where deep-sea or coastal fish catches could be unloaded on to small vessels which used the private wharves in London rather than the two public wharves where the citizens charged tolls (*cf* Barron 2004, 53). If Smelt was anything like Daniel Rough, the fishmonger of New Romney at this period, he would have supplied a great variety of fish to many towns in the south and east including London, Uxbridge (Middlesex) and Wallingford (Berkshire) on the Thames. Riverine and estuarine north Kent was well known for its fishing industry, including the collection of shellfish such as cockles and oysters, much of which would also have supplied London (Murray 1945, x). Grange manor with its chapel and chantry passed from Smelt to Richard de Croydon in 1365, another wealthy London fishmonger who may have sold fish both wholesale and retail (Darby 1972, 1, 8, 13–15). It then passed in 1374 by marriage to John Philipot, a local Kentish man who became an immensely rich London merchant, wool exporter and Calais stapler, and an alderman, sheriff, MP and mayor of London (Hasted 1797–1801, iv, 238).²⁴ Philipot obtained the manor of Grange in *c.*1374, not least as a place of strategic defence of his interests in cross-Channel wool exporting during a time of war and piracy. Philipot substantially rebuilt the chantry chapel of the manor of Grange and had the stonework around its great window prominently decorated with his arms. However, at his death in 1384 he was buried in the London Friars Minor (Grey Friars) where he had a monument, the last recorded member of the aldermanic class to be buried there in the 14th century.²⁵

After Philipot's death his widow Margaret married Adam Bamme, a goldsmith and future mayor of London and, to cut a long story short, Grange was inherited by their son Richard Bamme, esquire, goldsmith and mayor.²⁶ Nearly £500 were confiscated from Adam Bamme's estate for an alleged debt when he was collector of the wool customs in the Port of London, but Richard Bamme did well by his inheritance from both his father and mother and by his first marriage to Joan, daughter of John Martin, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas. Richard Bamme held numerous parcels of land in the archbishop's manor of Gillingham too, on either side of Grange, and notably along the Medway waterfront. He actively consolidated many of his plots by making exchanges with one Simon Wyze (Baker 1964, 7–8, 20). Richard died in 1452 and was buried, like his parents, in St George Botolph Lane, City of London, where his monument described him as living in Gillingham, that is, at Grange (Strype 2009, II.x.172).²⁷ Richard's will recorded that besides Grange, he had manors, mills, pasture, tenements and rents in both the City and Kent. He had five named manors in Kent and also other lands which lay in six parishes in the Darent valley near Dartford, and also at Crayford on the River Cray. Bamme provided for his son and daughter out of these properties in Kent and those he held in the City. The manor of Grange, however, was intended for Richard's second wife to whom it was confirmed in a charter which pre-dated the will.²⁸ After Richard's death, Grange remained in the hands of female descendants who were in effect Kentish gentry rather than Londoners. It became a backwater as did the Hoo Peninsula across the Medway estuary.

CONCLUSION: THE TRANSFORMATION OF HOO AFTER THE BLACK DEATH

The later 14th century saw the beginning of an economic, and especially an agricultural, depression in Kent which followed repeated episodes of plague and huge population loss. The productive medieval demesne manors of Cliffe, Stoke and Grain, formerly so important in supplying London with grain were turned over to lessees and pasture,

and from sheep to cattle grazing. Fairs and markets declined, and Higham Priory passed into the hands of an outside body, St John's College Cambridge, which had little interest in it. The relatively flourishing small port of Cliffe never recovered from being largely burned down in 1520. The depression in south-east England lasted generally until the early or mid-16th century, but for most aspects of Hoo's economy and society there was little upturn even after that. By 1664, Hoo, along with Sheppey and Romney Marsh, had the lowest population density in Kent, in contrast to the 1330s, when it had been wealthy, populous and significant in supplying London. There were well above average levels of poverty in the parishes of St Mary's Hoo and All Hallows. There was no shipbuilding on Hoo, no urban centre, no grammar school nor any of the new industries which were a notable feature elsewhere in the county. Defensive activity of course became concentrated to the south around the Medway towns, beyond Hoo, between the 16th and 19th centuries. Sailing vessels were much larger than those of the medieval period and simply sailed past Hoo between London, the east Kent ports and resorts and beyond, as in time did steam vessels. In 1824 the Thames and Medway canal from Gravesend to Strood running south of Higham effectively bypassed the peninsula, at a time when modern industrial development based around its coastline was just beginning.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank the convenors and members of the Medieval and Tudor London Seminar, Institute of Historical Research, where this paper was first presented, and the editor and reader for their advice.

g.m.draper@kent.ac.uk

NOTES

¹ Stephen, Matilda and their supporters held castles both in Essex and on the north Kent coast, including the Maminot family, who built a castle at Deptford, near the later Sayes Court, and close to Stephen's urban property at Southwark (Gaimster 2005, 35).

² St John's College Cambridge archive classes

D and E include grants of land in Higham, Lilliechurch, Hoo, High Halstow and Cliffe, the ferry in 1391, and fields surrounding Higham ferry wall area in 1382 (Draper 2013).

³ The lands later lay in Higham parish and possibly also in Shorne to the west or Frindsbury to the south, with one charter being a 10th-century copy but with estate boundaries and witness-list apparently from an 8th-century AD source (Brooks & Kelly 2013, pt 1, 353–9, 387–91, 401, 404).

⁴ *Eg*, a 'pyrry' croft at Grange, 1483, Kent History and Library Centre, Maidstone U55 M453.

⁵ Canterbury Cathedral Archives (hereafter CCA) DCc CA C/276.

⁶ Frindsbury: Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre DRc_T173_3, feoffment c.1200, fine 40s, 1 seam of rye; Southwark: CCA DCc CA/S/302, 303, date ?1203.

⁷ CCA DCc CA/C/286.

⁸ A survey of sheep in named 'hopes' (areas of enclosed marshland) and held by named men was also carried out, demonstrating the professionalism of the priory's demesne farming on Hoo. The tenants were also obliged to transport letters for the priory and its officials (CCA DCc CA/B/263). Agricultural practices were similar to those of Romney Marsh (Gross & Butcher 1995, 110).

⁹ Cardon is a rare byname/surname in medieval records, the family apparently existing only in Kent, as here, and in Suffolk.

¹⁰ The National Archive (TNA) SC 8/281/14034 (c.1327 petition).

¹¹ Together with those of another sub-manor of Cliffe called Mortimers lands in Higham (TNA SC11/344; SC 11/348: where the 480-odd acres appear, on verso; SC 11/353; SC12 2/54), rentals of London Charterhouse miscellaneous properties in Cliffe, Higham, Frindsbury, Chatham and Rochester, of late 15th and early 16th centuries (*cf* Knowles 2007, 250, 259).

¹² Judging by names of other witnesses (CCA DCc CA/M/275).

¹³ Stocker (2014, 131–3) discussed the whole venture and the political ramifications.

¹⁴ TNA E372/211/257d; E372/215/179d, the number following E372 is the roll number, final number the image number; Anglo-American Legal Tradition 2015. Jacob (nd) identified the names of ship masters and their vessels in these Pipe Rolls. In 1318 one John Jetour, esquire, perhaps father of the above, appears in connection with debts owed to Guillhelm Servat, king's merchant (Gascon Rolls Project 2014).

¹⁵ The other Hoo vessels were presumably used for fishing and transport of grain and other goods up the Thames (Ayton & Lambert 2014, 69, 76, table 4, and esp n 33, 77).

¹⁶ TNA C 241/102/151; C 241/100/59.

¹⁷ The debtor was Nicholas atte Soles (Sole), of Canterbury, taverner and merchant, the creditor was William de Vaus, of Canterbury, merchant, the amount £47. Held before John de Gisors, Mayor of London, William Trent, in the presence of Hamo Goodcheap, Simon de Broughton (Brouthone), Geoffrey Hayward and Thomas de Weityngg (TNA C241/81/156 (1315)). Hamo de Godchep was a mercer and sheriff of London in 1315 (Barron 2004, 326).

¹⁸ Other trading places were Sandwich, Canterbury, Faversham and Tonbridge, Greenwich and Strood (TNA C241/147/153).

¹⁹ Chipstead and Riverhead respectively (Draper 1999, 99; Nightingale 2000, 49).

²⁰ TNA C241/18/158 (1289); C241/100/78 (1318). Moraunt's debt concerned 40 sacks of wool, good and sufficient, worth £4 19s 8d a sack, and the creditor was John Cundy of Sandwich (TNA C241/117/64), 'part of the small group of wealthy men' dominating urban and parochial administration at Sandwich between the mid-13th and mid-14th centuries (Clarke *et al* 2010, 61–2, 66, 81).

²¹ Recorded in the Hundred Rolls for 1274–5 (Hundred Rolls 2010).

²² The deed was enrolled and money paid in December 1349, but Smelt already held Grange manor in September 1348, claiming through the service of finding two men with two oars with the Hastings ships rather than half a knight's fee (*Cal Cl R* 1346–9, 585; 1349–54, 148–51).

²³ Purchases by Londoners were often located at Greenwich or inland near river courses such as those of the Cray or Darent (Brown 1976, 150–3).

²⁴ Philipot's career has been noted widely in relation to London, finance, politics and customs (Nightingale 2004; Strohm 2014, 97, 112–20, 174). For this and what follows see Meddens and Draper 2014, 6–11.

²⁵ Dr Christian Steer, pers comm.

²⁶ Margaret Philipot was briefly married first to John Fitznichol. Adam Bamme was one of three 'experts in jewels' who valued a crown, part of Richard II's treasure which was pledged as security for a loan (Stratford 2008, 219).

²⁷ For Adam Bamme see also 'C R' 1993.

²⁸ TNA PROB 11/1, fol 132.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, T, 2012 'Bronze, boats and the Kentish seaboard in prehistory: the role of coastal Kent in a major trans-continental trade route' *Archaeol Cantiana* 132, 1–20
- Anglo-American Legal Tradition, <http://aalt.law.uh.edu/IndexPri.html> (accessed 5 February 2015)
- Axworthy, R, 2004 'Pulteney, Sir John (d. 1349)' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22887> (accessed 30 April 2015)
- Ayton, A, & Lambert, C, 2014 'A maritime community in war and peace; Kentish ports, ships and mariners, 1320–1400' *Archaeol Cantiana* 134, 67–103
- Baker, A, 1964 'Open fields and partible inheritance on a Kent manor' *Econ Hist Rev* 17, 1–23
- Barron, C, 2004 *London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People 1200–1500*, Oxford
- Barron, C, & Davies, M, (eds) 2007 *The Religious Houses of London and Middlesex*, London
- Barron, C, & Sutton, A, (eds) 2014 *The Medieval Merchant: Proceedings of the 2012 Harlaxton Symposium*, Donington
- Brooks, N, & Kelly, S, 2013 *Charters of Christ Church Canterbury, Parts 1 and 2 Anglo-Saxon Charters* 17 and 18, Oxford
- Brown, A, 1976 'London and north-west Kent in the later Middle Ages: the development of a land market' *Archaeol Cantiana* 92, 149–56
- Cal Cl R: Calendar of Close Rolls* (various volumes), London
- Cal Pat R: Calendar of Patent Rolls* (various volumes), London
- Campbell, B, 2000 *English Seigniorial Agriculture, 1250–1450* Cambridge Studies in Historical Geography 31, Cambridge
- Campbell, B, 2010 'Agriculture in the High Middle Ages' in Sweetinburgh (ed) 2010, 25–54
- Campbell, B M S, Galloway, J A, Keene, D, & Murphy, M, 1993 *A Medieval Capital and its Grain Supply: Agrarian Production and Distribution in the London Region c. 1300* Historical Geography Research Series 30, London
- Clarke, H, Sweetinburgh, S, & Jones, B E A, 2010 *Sandwich, the 'completest medieval town in England': A Study of the Town and Port from its Origins to 1600*, Oxford
- Colson, J, 2014 'London's forgotten company? Fishmongers – their trade and their network in later medieval London' in Barron & Sutton (eds) 2014, 20–40
- 'C R', 1993 'Bamme, Adam (d.1397), of London' in J S Roskell, L Clark & C Rawcliffe (eds) *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1386–1421*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline>.

- org/volume/1386-1421/member/bamme-adam-1397 (accessed 13 July 2013)
- Darby, M, 1972 *John Philipot, a 14th-Century London Merchant* unpub MSc dissertation, London School of Economics
- DB: *Kent*: Morris, J, (ed) 1983 *Domesday Book: Kent*, Chichester
- Draper, G, 1998 'The farmers of Canterbury Cathedral Priory and All Souls College Oxford on Romney Marsh c.1443–1545' in J Eddison, M Gardiner & A Long (eds) *Romney Marsh: Environmental Change and Human Occupation in a Coastal Lowland* Oxford University Committee for Archaeology 46, Oxford, 109–28
- Draper, G, 2005 'Small fields and wet land: inheritance practices and the transmission of real property in the Romney Marshes c.1150–1390' *Landscapes* 6, 18–45
- Draper, G, 2009 *Rye: A History of a Sussex Cinque Port to 1660*, Chichester
- Draper, G, 2010 'Timber and iron: natural resources for the late medieval shipbuilding industry in Kent' in Sweetinburgh (ed) 2010, 55–78
- Draper, G, 2013 'Hoo marshland field systems' English Heritage unpub report no. 6384
- Draper, G, 2016 "'Land and marsh": settlement, colonisation and consolidation, c.800–1220' in S Sweetinburgh (ed) *Early Medieval Kent, 800–1220*, Martlesham, 43–65
- Draper, G, & Meddens, F, 2009 *The Sea and the Marsh: The Medieval Cinque Port of New Romney Revealed through Archaeological Excavations and Historical Research* Pre-Construct Archaeology Monograph 10, London
- Draper, K, 1999 *A History of the Parish of Chevening*, Chevening
- Flight, C, 1997 'The Earldom of Kent from c.1050 till 1189', *Archaeol Cantiana* 117, 69–82
- Freeman, J, 2007 'The priory of Stratford at Bow' in Barron & Davies (eds) 2007, 242–6
- Gaimster, M, 2005 'Saxons in Deptford' *London Archaeol* 11, 31–7
- Galloway, J A, 2010 "'Piteous and grievous sights": the Thames marshes at the close of the Middle Ages' in J A Galloway (ed) *Tides and Floods: New Research on London and the Tidal Thames from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century* Centre for Metropolitan History Working Papers 4, London, 15–27
- Galloway, J A, 2012 'Metropolitan food and fuel supply in medieval England: regional and international contexts' in P van Cruyningen & E Thoen (eds) *Food Supply, Demand and Trade: Aspects of the Economic Relationship between Town and Countryside (Middle Ages–19th Century)* Brepols CORN Series 14, Turnhout, 7–18
- Gascon Rolls Project, 2014 www.gasconrolls.org/en/ (accessed 5 February 2015)
- Gross, A, & Butcher, A, 1995 'Adaptation and investment in the age of the great storms: agricultural policy on the manors of the principal lords of the Romney Marshes and the marshland fringe' in J Eddison (ed) *Romney Marsh: the Debatable Ground* Oxford University Committee for Archaeology Monograph 41, Oxford, 107–17
- Hanley, H, & Chalklin, C, (eds) 1964 'The Kent Lay Subsidy of 1334/5' in F Du Boulay (ed) *Documents Illustrative of Medieval Kentish Society* Kent Records 18, Ashford, 58–172
- Hasted, E, 1797–1801 *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent* 12 vols, Canterbury
- Hofman, T, 1982 *The History of Parliament Trust 1964–2015*, www.historyofparliamentonline.org (accessed 18 November 2015)
- Hundred Rolls, 2010 <http://www.kentarchaeology.ac/khrp/hrproject.pdf> (accessed 9 May 2011)
- Jacob, K, nd 'Ship masters and their vessels, 1200–1500' *My Jacob Family*, <http://www.myjacobfamily.com/historical%20manuscripts/vessels.htm> (accessed 5 February 2015)
- Knowles, D, 2007 'The London Charterhouse' in Barron & Davies (eds) 2007, 247–59
- Letters, S, 2013 *Online Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England and Wales to 1516*, <http://www.history.ac.uk/cmh/gaz/gazweb2.html> (accessed 29 June 2016)
- Meddens, F, & Draper, G, 2014 'Out on a limb: insights into Grange, a small member of the Cinque Ports confederation' *Archaeol Cantiana* 135, 1–35
- Murray, K, 1945 *The Register of Daniel Rough, Common Clerk of Romney, 1353–1380* Kent Records 16, Ashford
- Musson, A, 2004 'Northwood, Roger of (d. 1285)' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20337> (accessed 1 February 2015)
- Newsome, S, Carpenter, E, & Kendall, P, 2015 *The Hoo Peninsula Landscape*, Swindon
- Nightingale, P, 2000 'Knights and merchants: trade, politics and the gentry in late medieval England' *Past Present* 169, 36–62
- Nightingale, P, 2004 'Sir John Philipot (d. 1384)' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22107> (accessed 30 April 2015)
- Smith, A, 1963 'Regional differences in crop production in Mediaeval Kent' *Archaeol Cantiana* 78, 147–60
- Stocker, D, 2014 'Wool, cloth and politics 1430–1485: the case of the merchant stockers of Wyboston and London' in Barron & Sutton (eds) 2014, 127–45

- Stratford, J, 2008 'Richard II's treasure and London' in M Davies & A Preston (eds) *London and the Kingdom: Essays in Honour of Caroline M. Barron, Proceedings of the 2004 Harlaxton Symposium*, Donington, 212–29
- Strohm, P, 2014 *The Poet's Tale: Chaucer and the Year that made the Canterbury Tales*, London
- Strype, J, 2009 (1720) [Adam Bamme] in *A Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster*, <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/strype/search.jsp?keyword=bamme&sin=content%2C+glosses§ion=&allany=all> Version 1.0 (accessed 7 February 2017)
- Sweetinburgh, S, (ed) 2010 *Later Medieval Kent, 1220–1540*, Woodbridge
- Underwood, M, 2008 *The Cartulary of the Hospital of St John the Evangelist, Cambridge* Cambridge-shire Records Society 18, Cambridge
- Witney, K, 2000 *The Survey of Archbishop Pecham's Manors 1283–85* Kent Records 28, Maidstone