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Economic Change:
Maidstone, Kent
1690-1730

Hugh William Brodie

A Thesis
in the
Department
of
History

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Master of Arts at
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Montréal, Québec, Canada

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ABSTRACT

Economic Change: Maidstone, Kent, 1690-1730
Hugh William Brodie

The historiography of the industrialising of the English economy gives rise to many generalisations which identify an eighteenth-century "revolution" or "starting point" in the economic changes which led to industrialisation. These generalisations mask the long, slow nature of change which was more evolutionary than revolutionary. The economy experienced gradual specialisation and diversification and an increased focus on production for domestic markets from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries which allowed it to develop a broader, more stable base.

Methods of production, manufacture and sale evolved, over a long period of time, into the industry based on machine technology, the factory system and greater capital investment of the classical Industrial Revolution. The initial changes in the economy were of organisation, infrastructure and attitude, not of just of technology of operation. These changes were a prerequisite to, not a result of, later industrialisation.

Maidstone, in the County of Kent, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, was chosen as a case study town for several reasons: the resources available for the town's development, the nature of the town's physical setting and economic development, the varied functions fulfilled by the town in the region, the value of the Maidstone case as being representative of other towns with similar or overlapping economic profiles and the depth and comprehensive nature of the town's records in the period of study.

Maidstone serves as an example of the many different changes which were occurring in the national economy. Some changes in the town's economy were occurring earlier than the nation as a whole, others later, but all the changes in Maidstone's economy had roots long before the end of the seventeenth-century and continued beyond the end of the eighteenth-century.

I would like to dedicate this work to my mother and father, Jeannie and Hugh, who provided me with the education, support, desire and example to pursue learning as an adventure in itself. And to my sisters, Ann and Gillian, for their patience in putting up with me living in another time and place these past few years.

I would like to acknowledge the kind cooperation of the staff at the Centre for Kentish Studies in County Hall, Maidstone.

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Abbreviations

Centre for Kentish Studies	CKS
Economic History Review	EHR
Kent County Council	KCC
Maidstone Borough Records	MBR
Transactions of the Royal Historical Society	TRHS

Chapter I

Introduction

The political economy of England, particularly that of its towns, was in flux during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. This period was a pivotal part of the long, gradual transition from an economy based on agrarian production to an economy based on specialised production of a diverse range of goods and services.¹ It would be accurate to identify this period, and the years on either side of it, as both a consumer and an industrial evolution rather than as a revolution. This analogy is taken from Ian Mitchell's essay on urban retailing, where it is applied solely to the development of retailing, but it could be applied to the entire period of economic transition from the late sixteenth to late nineteenth centuries.²

The industrialising economy of England in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was one in which methods and scale of production, manufacture

¹ C.H. Wilson, England's Apprenticeship: 1603 - 1763 (London, Longman, 1965); P. Deane and W.A. Cole, British Economic Growth (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1969); P. Mathias, The First Industrial Nation (London, Methuen, 1969); P. Clark and P. Slack, English Towns in Transition: 1500 - 1700 (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1976); D.C. Coleman, The Economy of England: 1450 - 1750 (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977); P. Deane, The First Industrial Revolution (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979); P. Clark, P. (Ed.), The Transformation of English Provincial Towns: 1600 - 1800 (London, Hutchinson, 1984); C.G.A. Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change: England 1500 - 1700, Volumes 2 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984); D.C. Coleman and P. Mathias, (Eds.), Enterprise and History (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984); M. Berg, The Age of Manufactures: 1700 - 1820 (London, Fontana Press, 1985).

² I. Mitchell, "The Development of Urban Retailing 1700 - 1815" in P. Clark, The Transformation of English Provincial, p. 278; E.A. Wrigley, "The Process of Modernisation and the Industrial Revolution in England", Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 3 (1972), pp. 228-29.

and sale, as well as consumer attitudes and purchasing patterns were changing. Often, though not always, these changes pushed the economy to evolve over a considerable period of time into industry based on machine technology, the factory system and greater capital investment: classic industrialisation. The initial changes in the English economy concerned organisation, infrastructure and attitude, but not technology.³ The English economy of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries may be described as being in the process of industrialising, but not yet as having attained classic industrialisation. That the English economy began to industrialise in this period demonstrates that the constraints on economic growth had been significantly reduced well before the middle of the eighteenth century.⁴

The industrialising economy of England focused on the equally important facets of specialisation, diversification and commercialisation.⁵ Specialisation took

³ Wrigley, "The Process of Modernisation"; P.H. Lindert and J.G. Williamson, "Reinterpreting Britain's Social Tables, 1688-1913", Explorations in Economic History, 20 (1983); R. Cameron, "A New View of European Industrialisation", EHR, 38 (1985); N.F.R. Crafts, British Economic Growth During the Industrial Revolution (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1985); E.A. Wrigley, Continuity, Chance and Change, The Character of the Industrial Revolution in England (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988).

⁴ Wrigley, Continuity, Chance and Change, p. 55.

⁵ E.L. Jones, (Ed.), Agricultural and Economic Growth in England 1650 - 1815 (London, Methuen, 1967); D.E.C. Eversley, "The Home Market and Economic Growth in England, 1750 - 1780" in Jones, E.L.; Mingay, G.E., Land, Labour and Population in the Industrial Revolution (London, Edward Arnold Ltd., 1967); N. McKendrick, "Home Demand and Economic Growth: A New View of the Role of Women and Children in the Industrial Revolution", in N. McKendrick, Historical Perspectives: Studies in English Thought and Society. (London, Europa Publications, 1974); T.S. Willan, The Inland Trade: Studies in English Internal Trade in the

the form of individuals producing or selling more specific ranges of goods and services or performing more specific tasks in the production or marketing process; diversification occurred when local economies shifted their style of output to produce a wider, more diverse range of goods and services.⁶ Both specialisation and diversification contributed to the increased stability and productivity of the English economy.⁷ Expanding consumer demand, and consciousness of it as an economic engine, pushed forward specialisation and diversification in local industries and enabled local economies to withstand economic fluctuations with less disruption. Commercialisation refers to methods of attracting buyers, to delivering goods to market, to the shift in focus from exports to domestic consumption and to the resulting social changes. These processes also affected marketing structures: fixed

Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1976); J.A. Chartres, Internal Trade in England: 1500 - 1700 (London, Macmillan, 1977); P. Mathias, The Transformation of England: Essays in the Economic and Social History of England in the Eighteenth Century (London, Methuen, 1979); N. McKendrick, J. Brewer, and J.H. Plumb, The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth Century England (London, Hutchinson, 1983); J. Thirsk, Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of Consumer Society in Early Modern England (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1978); J. Thirsk, The Rural Economy of England (London, Hambledon Press, 1984).

⁶ D.C. Coleman and A.H. John, Trade, Government and Economy in Pre-Industrial England (London, Hutchinson, 1976); P. Corfield, "The Industrial Town before the Factory; 1680 - 1780" in The Rise of the New Urban Society (Milton Keynes, Open University Press, 1977); P.H. Lindert, "English Occupations, 1670 - 1811", Journal of Economic History (40, 1980); N. McKendrick, J. Brewer, and J.H. Plumb, The Birth of a Consumer Society; Clark, The Transformation of English Provincial Towns.

⁷ Wrigley, Continuity, Chance and Change, pp. 126-29.

retail shops increasingly challenged the control of local markets and fairs and the authority of the guilds. They set the stage for later industrial development by gradually creating demand, capital and an extensive retail distribution system.⁸

In urban economic terms, an important part in assessing how well towns coped with change is to identify the challenges facing individual towns, while not necessarily placing too much emphasis on the change having occurred in a narrow period of time or in a set pattern. Although it is true that there was no universal pattern for urban development and that the use of national models often obscures important regional processes and changes,⁹ it is equally true that there were common or overlapping patterns of development for towns. It is possible to isolate a set of factors causing change over time in many towns without implying that these influences were of equal impact in all towns or that they were specific to urban economies alone.

The underlying premise of this essay, in studying the industrialising economy of England and of Maidstone, is that the process of economic change was long, slow

⁸ D. Davis, Fairs, Shops and Supermarkets: The History of English Shopping (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1966); P. Clark, The English Alehouse: A Social History 1200 - 1830 (London, Longman, 1983); R.M. Berger, "The Development of Retail Trade in Provincial England, 1550 - 1700", Journal of Economic History (40, 1980); McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb, The Birth of a Consumer Society; Mitchell, "The Development of Urban Retailing 1700 - 1815"; M.J. Walker, "The Extent of Guild Control of Trades in England, 1660 - 1820" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge University, Cambridge, 1985); H.-C. Mui and L.H. Mui, Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth Century England (Montréal and Kingston, McGill - Queen's University Press, 1989).

⁹ Corfield, "Urban Development in England and Wales", p. 219; Deane, The First Industrial Revolution, pp. 17-18.

and gradual and involved economic specialisation and diversification.¹⁰ This process of industrialising was of an evolutionary nature from a relatively undiversified, regulated, export-oriented and agrarian-dominated economy to a more diversified, relatively unregulated, domestic market-oriented and commercially-dominated economy and was well under way by the end of the seventeenth century.¹¹ The factors of economic change, described below, interacted with and affected each other over a long period of time and gradually emerged into the industrial economy of nineteenth-century England. Case studies of towns are a means of identifying the impact and variations of economic change at a local and regional level, as well as the extent to which types of development were common to groups of towns. This essay is a case study of the town of Maidstone in the County of Kent in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Maidstone contributes to the evolutionary argument because the town's economic history is one of gradual change, over an extended period, from an agrarian economy to a specialised, diversified commercial economy.

Maidstone's economy will be examined in order to discern the extent to which these factors of change affected the town and how well the models developed by historians for the national economy fit its case. Maidstone was chosen as a point of

¹⁰ Cameron, "A New View of European Industrialisation", p. 4.

¹¹ Wrigley, Continuity, Chance and Change, pp. 8-9; Crafts, British Economic Growth During the Industrial Revolution, pp. 10, 17, 61-66; Cameron, "A New View of European Industrialisation", p. 2-3.

comparison for several reasons. It enjoyed a diversity of natural and human resources. Its physical setting is important to its economic life. Its economic development proves to be complex and illustrative of several important themes. Its functional role in the region may clearly be seen. It is well documented by both primary and secondary literature.¹²

Maidstone is located on the River Medway in Kent about thirty-five miles south-east of London (see Map 1). It had a wealth of resources in terms of raw materials, individual skills and physical setting. Maidstone was, and is, situated in a wealthy and diverse agrarian and resource hinterland which furnished foodstuffs, industrial agrarian products, maritime support products and livestock of many kinds. In addition, Maidstone had flourishing sectors providing specialised goods and

¹² Works dealing with Kent and its economy, and making reference to Maidstone at times include the following: E. Hasted, A Historical and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent (Canterbury, Wm. Bristow, 1797-1801); W.H. Ireland, A New and Complete History of the County of Kent (London, C.Cirtue, 1829); D.C. Coleman, "The Economy of Kent under the Later Stuarts" (London, Unpublished University of London Ph.D. Thesis, 1951); E. Melling, Kentish Sources: III, Aspects of Agriculture and Industry (Maidstone, Kent County Council, 1961); C.W. Chalklin, Seventeenth Century Kent; A Social and Economic History (London, 1965); A. Everitt, "A Kentish Family Portrait" in Chalklin, C.W.; M.A. Havinden, Rural Change and Urban Growth 1500 - 1800 (London, 1974). Maidstone itself is, of course, less fully treated, but the following are useful histories dealing with the Town specifically: V.E. Morant, "Historical Geography of Maidstone" (London, Unpublished University of London M.A. Thesis, 1948); J.M. Russell, The History of Maidstone (Maidstone, Kent, Wm.S. Vivish, 1881); J. Hilton, Maidstone: An Outline History (Hadlow, Kent Archaeological Society, 1979). The following are more general histories which make direct reference to Maidstone: D. Defoe, A Tour Through England and Wales (London, J.M. Dent, 1724-5); D.C. Coleman, The British Paper Industry: 1495 - 1860 (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1958); P. Borsay, The English Urban Renaissance, The Development of Provincial Urban Culture, 1680-1760 (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989).

services, construction and distributive services. Maidstone also had an affluent and growing population throughout the period.¹³ Its proximity to London, to the Medway towns of Chatham - Rochester - Gillingham, and to the Royal Navy dockyards of the Thames and the Medway gave it regional advantages of access to markets and materials. The town's position as the principal point of exchange and the head of navigation on the River Medway made it a broker for regional trade.

Despite the advantaged material position of Maidstone, its history presents an intriguing sequence of crests and troughs in its economic evolution. In the early sixteenth century, the previously dominant stone-working industry deteriorated. The subsequently dominant woollen industry declined in the seventeenth century and was only partially replaced by threadtwisting, which the town government consciously brought to the town by the invitation of skilled Walloon artisans. Threadtwisting declined in its turn in the late seventeenth century, but was partially replaced by paper-making. As can be seen, these economic cycles had some overlap as one industry rose to its peak while its predecessor was deteriorating. Each of these major industries evolved in an increasingly rich and diverse tapestry of secondary economic activity, such as the provision of specialised goods and services, building construction and maritime support. An analysis of this history can tell us something of how a town in this period utilised its resources and was influenced by external factors.

The multiplicity of Maidstone's functions gives it substantial value as a case

¹³ Defoe, A Tour Through England and Wales, pp. 113-115.

study representative of towns with similar socio-economic profiles, in whole or in part. Royal Navy suppliers and victuallers and the government utilised Maidstone as an administrative and marshalling centre.¹⁴ Quarter sessions and county assizes were usually held in Maidstone and the town housed the County Gaol for the western division of Kent.¹⁵ The presence of the Archbishop's Palace, with his frequent residence there, and that of well-endowed churches and the educational, health and social activities associated with them, made Maidstone a regional ecclesiastical centre.¹⁶ All of these roles attracted economic activity and a substantial gentry and merchant population, giving Maidstone a role as a gentry town, supplying luxury goods and services to the prosperous sections of its population.¹⁷ A more detailed description of the town will be given in Chapter III on Maidstone itself.

The late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were pivotal, transitional times in Maidstone as the socio-economic changes which were prerequisite to the town's industrial and commercial development were already under way. Fortunately, Maidstone possesses rich documentary sources which support this picture in a more

¹⁴ Coleman, "The Economy of Kent under the Later Stuarts", pp. 239-40.

¹⁵ Russell, The History of Maidstone, pp. 280-82.

¹⁶ Hilton, Maidstone: An Outline History, p. 9 and Russell, The History of Maidstone, pp. 70-71, 96-7.

¹⁷ Defoe, A Tour Through England and Wales, pp. 114-15, 186 and Borsay, The English Urban Renaissance, pp. 30, 202.

precise manner. Of particular importance in the current context is the survival of full records of apprenticeship indentures and freemen's rolls for the period at hand. Although one can never be sure in this period that all workers in a particular trade or craft followed the formal requirements of apprenticeship and entrance into the freemenry, we may assume that most still did so and that these records show the levels of recruitment into occupations with relative accuracy.¹⁸ Towns often applied trade regulations differentially, allowing contraventions of regulations in prosperous times and enforcing them strictly in hard times, or vice versa.¹⁹ As a result, historians must be careful when using guild and apprentice source material, including the Maidstone apprentice indentures and freedom enrolments. Yet they do support incontrovertibly the picture of specialisation and diversification. In particular, they allow us to construct an occupational profile with some considerable precision, one such as John Pound has compiled for Norfolk in the sixteenth century.²⁰ This is especially useful in informing a discussion of economic activity in a particular place.

The records for study in Maidstone include the 367 apprentice indentures from 1692 - 1713 and the 898 freemen enrolments from 1694 - 1723, giving a total

¹⁸ Walker, "The Extent of Guild Control of Trades in England, 1660 - 1820", p. 34.

¹⁹ Corfield, The Impact of English Towns, p. 86; Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", p. 241 and Walker, "The Extent of Guild Control of Trades in England, 1660 - 1820", p. 69.

²⁰ J. Pound, "Social and Trade Structure in Norwich 1525-1575", Past and Present (34 July 1966), pp. 49-69.

of 1,265 detailed individual records over the period from 1692 to 1723.²¹ The records include a wide range of economic, occupational, familial and locational information which allows analysis of the economic profile of the town and the occupational changes which occurred over the period. Apprentices were generally used as worker trainees, while freemen had already acquired the necessary skills and were admitted to practice the trade in the town, as journeymen (skilled labourers) and masters (employers).

The apprentice indenture is that document drawn up when a young man or woman is bound as an apprentice to a master by a parent or guardian. It tells us the apprentice's name, father's name, town of origin, apprentice's trade, father's trade, master's trade, obligations of the master and apprentice to each other, indenture fee, date of indenture, date of commencement of service, date of registration in the borough and a description of the obligations of indenture for the master, the father [or mother if a widow] and the apprentice.²² The upkeep of the apprentice is spelled out in great detail and was often split between the master and the parents. In almost all cases the master would be bound to give the apprentice a sum of money and two sets of clothing (one for holy days and one for working days) at the end of the term of indenture. These records reflect the more long-term economic needs of

²¹ MBR, "Register of Apprentices Indentured: 1692-1713", CKS, KCC, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent and MBR, "Register of Freemen Enrolments; 1694-1723", CKS, KCC, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent.

²² MBR, "Register of Apprentices Indentured 1692 - 1713", CKS, KCC.

Maidstone as the individuals would not be fully ready to practice their trade for about seven years and, in the interim period, represented a pool of labour.

The freemen enrolments are those records of admission of individuals to the full economic privileges of the town - working, producing, manufacturing, buying and selling. They are made after either apprenticeship, purchase or patrimony conditions have been met. They contain information on the freeman's name, father's name, town of origin, freeman's trade, father's trade, trade of the freeman's past master [if applicable], reason for admission to the freedom of the town, registration fee, and notes on other conditions of admission.²³ Freemen were often bound to pay a penalty for not meeting their conditions of admission to the freedom of the town. As R.B. Dobson has shown for York at an earlier time, the admission of freemen was determined to some extent by the town's own perceived need for practitioners of particular specialities.²⁴ Continuing to practise a particular trade was often a condition of admission to the freedom. The town also gathered quite substantial sums of money from entry fines ranging from 6d up to £15. These records reflect the more short-term economic needs of Maidstone as the individuals were ready to practice their trade upon admission to the freedom of the town and represented a pool of skilled craftsmen and potential employers.

The trades practised in Maidstone, as detailed in the above records, have been

²³ MBR, "Register of Freemen Enrolments, 1694 - 1723", CKS, KCC.

²⁴ R.B. Dobson, "Admission to the Freedom of the City of York in the later Middle Ages", EHR, 2nd Series, 26 (1973).

divided into different trade groups. These divisions were made to cluster trades together to reflect the trade group to which they most appropriately belonged. Agrarian harvest trades were those in which the individuals are directly involved in the production or harvest of plants and animals for domestic or industrial use. Agrarian processing trades were those in which the individuals were involved in the primary preparation and processing of agrarian produce. Distributive trades were those in which the individuals acted as middlemen in the distribution of products produced by others or as salesmen for their own products. Industrial trades were those in which the individual was involved in one or more of a chain of activities associated with a given industry, such as paper-making or threadtwisting. Construction trades were those in which the individual was clearly involved in the construction of residences, public works, physical plants for industry or a combination of the three. Naval and transport trades were those in which the individual was involved in merchant shipping, the construction and support of shipping, both naval and merchant, and support of land transportation. Domestic and specialised goods and services were those in which a wide range of quite specific trades produced goods and services to meet consumer demand. These provided goods from trades which required a high degree of skill, such as goldsmiths producing detailed jewellery, or which produced goods for domestic consumption which might have been produced at a household scale previously, such as tallow chandlers producing candles. This trade group was necessarily the broadest as it encompassed many small-scale

production units.

An example of how this classification can be applied is in the different classification of a tanner and a glover. A tanner processed the fells or skins of livestock into several materials, such as leather, for use in other trades; the tanner did not produce an end-product in itself. The glover used an agrarian harvest product, but one which had already undergone primary processing, to produce a product for consumers' direct use.

The occupational profile constructed from these records will be broken down for comparison within the period of the records (1692 to 1723), as well as for comparison with the previous period, to demonstrate what type of economic change was occurring in Maidstone. These records will be used principally in three ways: the numbers of apprentices and freemen will be examined in combination; the trades of fathers and sons will be compared to identify inter-generational changes in economic activity; and the apprentice and freeman records will be split in half chronologically to facilitate comparison between the first and second half of each set of records. The periods for comparison are 1692 - 1702 and 1703 - 1713 for apprentices and 1694 - 1709 and 1709 - 1723 for freemen.

This profile allows us to ascertain several particulars about Maidstone's economy over time such as the distribution of economic activities in the town, as well as the trade to and from the town, and how it evolved over time. The degree of specialisation and diversification will be discernable from the numbers and types of

trades being practised. The records will also give us considerable information on the migration patterns of individuals and the possible impact on the population structure of the town.

Chapter II of the essay will summarise current scholarship on the main factors of change in late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century urban economies. Chapter III will examine and analyse Maidstone's physical, social and economic situation in further detail. This section will also examine how the main factors of change affected the town, and will draw most heavily on the primary sources showing occupational and related data. Chapter IV will draw together the factors of change and present conclusions based on the Maidstone experience and how it fits the historians' models.

Chapter II

Factors of Change and the Historians' Models

The closely interactive nature of the different factors of economic transformation in the English economy shows how analysis of change cannot follow a simple cause and effect model. Economic change had taken place across a wide spectrum of activities and had done so throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹ Using the term revolution to describe a process which took place over such an extended period of time is quite inappropriate.²

Some economic variables, such as the collapse of the wool and woollen cloth industries, over-reliance on foreign markets and war, provoked changes in economic structures at national, regional and local levels by exposing the vulnerability of the English economy to external influences. The profound effect of external influences on the English economy compelled it to focus more on domestic activities. Rising disposable incomes, increased real wages and changing work and purchasing habits, resulted in increased consumer purchasing power and greater market potential. Larger markets and higher consumer demand in turn helped to solidify England's widening economic base. The focus on internal trade and consumer demand forced further changes in traditional economic structures, such as the provision of credit, the division of labour, the improvement of transportation facilities and the altered role

¹ Wrigley, Continuity, Chance and Change, pp. 5, 11.

² Cameron, "A New View of European Industrialisation", p. 7.

of guilds.³ The growth and prosperity of many towns, but especially London, influenced local and regional economies throughout the nation as urban and national population growth accelerated.⁴ Such processes help show that the long transformation into a commercial economy was not a simple step-like progression. It often

³ J.A. Chartres, "Road Carrying in England in the Seventeenth Century: Myth and Reality", Economic History Review (30, 1977); W. Albert, The Turnpike Road System in England, 1663 - 1840 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972); D.H. Aldcroft, Transport in the Industrial Revolution (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1985); C.H. Wilson, "Land Carriage in the Seventeenth Century", Economic History Review (33, 1980); F. Crouzet, Capital Formation in the Industrial Revolution (London, Methuen, 1972); B.A. Holderness "Credit in English Rural Society pre 19th C", Agricultural History, 24 (1970), E. Kerridge, Trade and Banking in Early Modern England (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1988); M.J. Walker, "The Extent of Guild Control of Trades in England, 1660 - 1820" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge University, Cambridge, 1985); C.H. Wilson, Profit and Power: A Study of England and the Dutch Wars (London, Longman, 1957); C.H. Wilson, England's Apprenticeship: 1603 - 1763 (London, Longman, 1965); E.A. Wrigley; R.S. Schofield, The Population History of England 1541 - 1871 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1981); J. Thirsk, "The Fantastical Folly of Fashion: The English Stocking Knitting Industry, 1500 - 1700" in J. Thirsk, The Rural Economy of England (London, Hambledon Press, 1984),

⁴ F.J. Fisher, "The Development of London as a Centre for Conspicuous Consumption in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", TRHS, (4th Series, 30, 1948); E.A. Wrigley, "A Simple Model of London's Importance in Changing English Society and Economy, 1650 - 1750", Past and Present (37, 1967); F.J. Fisher, "London as an 'Engine of Economic Growth'" in J.S. Bromley and E.H. Kossman, (Eds.), Britain and the Netherlands in Europe and Asia, Volume IV (London, Macmillan, 1971); P. Corfield, "Urban Development in England and Wales in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries" in D.C. Coleman and A.H. John, Trade, Government and Economy in Pre-Industrial England; V. Pearl, "Change and Stability in Seventeenth Century London", London Journal, V (May 1979); R. Finlay, Population and Metropolis: London Demography: 1580 - 1650 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981); P. Corfield, The Impact of English Towns: 1700 - 1800 (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1982); A.L. Beier, and R. Finlay, The Making of the Metropolis: London 1500 - 1700 (London, Longman, 1986); S. Rappaport, Worlds within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth Century London (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989).

meandered uncertainly, without a clear definition of which path was to be followed.⁵

These elements of change in the English economy often operated at different times and rates, and in different combinations in the various regions of the country, with a positive impact in some towns and regions and a negative one in others.⁶ Generalisations allow historians to identify a "revolution" or "starting point" in the economic changes which led to industrialisation, but they also mask the long, gradual nature of change and can be quite misleading.⁷ Although historians dispute the period of transformation to a consumer society, they recognize the main characteristics and long duration of the processes of commercialising and industrialising the English economy. The economic transformations mentioned above did not begin with the start of this period, nor did they end with its passing. The documentation of economic change from the reign of Elizabeth to the middle of the nineteenth century serves to underline the gradual, interactive nature of the factors of such change.⁸

⁵ Wrigley, Continuity, Chance and Change, pp. 37 and 113.

⁶ Clark, The Transformation of English Provincial Towns 1600-1800, p. 20.

⁷ Cameron, "A New View of European Industrialisation", pp. 2-3; Crafts, British Economic Growth During the Industrial Revolution, pp. 6-7, 33; Wrigley, Continuity, Chance and Change, pp. 11-12.

⁸ Thirsk, The Rural Economy of England, Chapters XIII, XIV and XVI; Thirsk, Economic Policy and Projects, p. 19; Mathias, The Transformation of England, Chapters 1 to 3; Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change: Vol. II, Chapters 8 and 9; Berg, The Age of Manufactures, 1700 - 1820, *passim*; Corfield, The Impact of English Towns, Chapters 2 to 6; Corfield, "Tinker, Taylor, Bleeder, Grieve", p. 13; Deane, The First Industrial Revolution, *passim*; McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, The

The underlying direction of change in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century was towards economic specialisation and diversification over a wider economic base and towards a more balanced economy from the national to the local level. The gradual economic evolution of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was a fundamental prerequisite to the development of industry based on machine technology, the factory system and greater capital investment. These characteristics are most commonly associated with the classic mid-eighteenth-century Industrial Revolution, which was, in fact, one of the later stages of a long, drawn-out economic, social and political transition.⁹

Identification of these factors of change, and their complex interaction, help us to pose a number of important questions about the pace and structure of urban economic evolution in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. What adaptations did towns undergo in response to changing economic circumstances? Did foreign exports decline or did domestic markets simply expand until they were relatively larger? What caused consumer demand to grow? What impact did this growth have on the delivery of goods and services? What marketing methods emerged to respond to increased consumer demand? How did changing economic circumstances influence traditional structures of finance and trade organisation?

Birth of Consumer Society, p. 9; Wrigley, Continuity, Chance and Change, p. 95; Wrigley, "The Process of Modernisation", pp. 228-29.

⁹ Wrigley, Continuity, Chance and Change, pp. 5, 95, 101; Wrigley, "The Process of Modernisation", pp. 236-37.

It is important to stress that the ability of towns to adapt successfully to economic transformation was the main determining factor in their survival. The word **adapt** is important here as it implies that not all of the responses of towns, governments and people to change were conscious and well thought out, nor were they necessarily rapid. Often they were unconscious responses to almost unperceived stimuli. Not all adaptive responses were successful, and many towns failed to meet the challenge of changing conditions, despite attempts to adjust.

i) Structural Economic Change

Perhaps the most widely recognized reason for the changing economic profile of many towns was the decline of old, established industries. In the seventeenth century town economies suffered considerably as old staple industries declined, forcing both rural and urban economies to adapt to new circumstances and necessitating the cultivation of new industries. One old industry was seldom replaced simply or directly by a new one; diversification and specialisation were part of the response to changing economic conditions. Towns encouraged the development of a wide range of lesser trades in their economies, by such means as limited-term monopolies, to avoid recreating the potentially disastrous dependence on a single good or service.¹⁰ The emerging pursuits involved both new manufactured products

¹⁰ Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change: Vol. II, p. 37; Corfield, The Impact of English Towns, pp. 85-86.

(i.e., tobacco pipe-making) and new agricultural crops produced for industrial or recreational use rather than for food (i.e., hemp, hops, tobacco and flowers).

No industry declined more substantially or significantly than the wool and woollen cloth industries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It slipped from a position of almost absolute dominance (over 90% of total exports in the late sixteenth century) to one of only relative dominance by the last quarter of the seventeenth century, though wool remained the most important single export from England.¹¹ Disruptions in trade due to war and to growing Continental competition, as well as to the decreasing quality of English cloth, forced down exports so that in 1640 they were only one third of what they had been in 1606, despite government attempts artificially to suppress foreign competition.¹² The loss of Antwerp and Calais as wholesale markets was indicative of the decline of the English position.

Some contemporaries, such as Carew Reynel in the 1670s, stressed the importance of diversity in manufactures to resist depression.¹³ That such diversification was taking place is shown by the fact that although the **absolute** value and volume of English woollen cloth exports were greater by 1700 than in 1500, their

¹¹ P. Bowden, The Wool Trade in Tudor and Stuart England (London, Frank Cass & Co., 1971) pp. 43-45 and G.D. Ramsay, The English Woollen Industry, 1500 - 1750 (London and Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1982), p. 55.

¹² Clay, Economic Expansion And Social Change, p. 15; Ramsay, The English Woollen Industry, p. 25 and Wilson England's Apprenticeship, p. 25.

¹³ Carew Reynel, The True English Interest (London, 1674) as cited in Thirsk, Economic Policy and Projects, p. 146.

relative value and volume in the English economy had decreased. Other trade had helped to balance English exports and to buffer the English economy against an international depression in the woollen cloth trade, such as the expanding colonial market in manufactured goods.¹⁴ Diversification also gave greater stability to individual town economies by enabling them to absorb short-term fluctuations in demand for a given product or service. Although the decline in the wool industry caused severe short-term economic disruption in many parts of the English economy, the changes in the structure of the English economy proved to be of long-term benefit, as they helped build the economic and social infrastructure needed for industrialization.¹⁵

Kent provides good examples of this early diversification. As wool and woollen cloth manufacture declined, the Kentish economy was buoyed up as glass-making, paper-making, civil and naval shipbuilding and the manufacture of cordage, rope and sails all either appeared or expanded considerably to fill the gap left by the decline of wool related industries.¹⁶ In many places, such as the Kentish Weald, the woollen cloth industry had almost totally collapsed by 1700.

¹⁴ Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change, Vol.II, pp. 21-23; Ramsay, English Overseas Trade During the Centuries of Emergence (London, Macmillan, 1957), p. 241; Wilson, England's Apprenticeship, p. 183.

¹⁵ Wrigley, Continuity, Chance and Change, p. 37; Crafts, British Economic Growth During the Industrial Revolution, pp. 61-66, 90.

¹⁶ D.C. Coleman, "The Economy of Kent under the Later Stuarts" (London, Unpublished University of London Ph.D. Thesis, 1951), p. 140; Clark, The Transformation of English Provincial Towns, pp. 19-20.

Steady, gradual improvements in agricultural efficiency and productivity, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, released labour from traditional agrarian production, and provided greater agricultural profits and liquid capital, to apply to both new industrial and agricultural pursuits.¹⁷ These new pursuits made people increasingly dependent on wage labour and, as a result, spurred consumer demand for manufactured products by decreasing the time available for household production and increasing the amount of money circulating in the economy.¹⁸ Under-employment in agriculture also resulted in increased time which was devoted to income generation through domestic production.¹⁹

The economic attraction of towns, in terms of employment and income opportunities, is demonstrated by the sustained tendency of population to migrate towards towns where specialisation and diversification were producing new forms of employment.²⁰ Contrary to urban growth on the Continent, which was confined to

¹⁷ Jones, Agriculture and Economic Growth, pp. 178-179; Mathias, The First Industrial Nation, pp. 60-61; Crafts, British Economic Growth During the Industrial Revolution, p. 119; Wrigley, Continuity, Chance and Change, pp. 35-44.

¹⁸ Eversley, "The Home Market and Economic Growth in England, 1750 - 1780", pp. 208-210, Jones, Agriculture and Economic Growth in England 1650 - 1815, p. 21; J. Appleby, "Ideology and Theory: The Tension between Political and Economic Liberalism in Seventeenth Century England", American Historical Review (V. 81, n. 3, June 1976), p. 515; Mathias, The Transformation of England, p. 155.

¹⁹ Clark, The Transformation of Provincial English Towns, p. 21; Jones, Agricultural and Economic Growth in England 1650 - 1815, p. 23; Thirsk, "Industries in the Countryside", pp. 219-20 and Thirsk, Economic Policy and Projects, p. 3.

²⁰ P. Clark, "The Migrant in Kentish Towns: 1580-1640", pp. 136-137 in P. Clark, and P. Slack, (Eds.), Crisis and Order in English Towns; 1500 - 1700 (London and Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 145; Deane, The First Industrial

a limited number of large centres, urban growth in England was more diffused across towns of all sizes; as a result, England was the most urbanised of European countries by the end of the seventeenth century.²¹

The growing manufacturing, marketing and service function of towns gave them a marked advantage in attracting and retaining skilled workers. Most new industries were centred in towns by 1700, such as linen-weaving and tobacco pipe-making. As a result, towns gradually acquired specialised economic functions by rationalizing their economies and responding flexibly to the decline of older industries.²² Rationalisation was achieved by avoiding or limiting competition across the whole range of goods and services and by pursuing the industries for which the most materials and skills were available.²³ In many cases, specialisation changed over time as the skills or resources changed, showing that adaptation was an ongoing process, not a one-time occurrence. Towns had been obliged to adapt to change in the first instance and subsequently used the strategy to readjust to less

Revolution, pp. 154-156; M.J. Kitch, "Capital and Kingdom: Migration to Later Stuart London" in Beier and Finlay, The Making of the Metropolis: London 1500 - 1700, p. 239 and Mathias, The First Industrial Nation, pp. 177-179; Wrigley, "The Process of Modernisation", p. 227.

²¹ Wrigley, Continuity, Chance and Change, pp. 13-15.

²² Clark and Slack, English Towns in Transition, pp. 102-103 and P. Corfield, The Impact of English Towns, pp. 83-85.

²³ Clark, The Transformation of English Provincial Towns, p. 19 and C.B. Phillips, "Town and Country: Economic Change in Kendal; c. 1550 - 1700" in Clark, The Transformation of English Provincial Towns, p. 113.

severe economic crises, as well as to the regular up and down cycle of business fortunes.

Improved credit facilities were critical to economic expansion, though there is little agreement among historians on the chronology of the emergence, and provision, of banking and commercial services.²⁴ The absence of credit facilities before the middle of the seventeenth century restricted economic expansion and the gradual emergence of such facilities helped to relieve that restriction.²⁵ They evolved later into the more formal credit facilities of the late eighteenth century.

Yet even the expansion exemplified by the establishment of the Bank of England in 1694 rested on earlier efforts to overcome the limitations imposed by credit supply.²⁶ Shortly after 1650, groups of merchants and businessmen began pool their resources and set up banking facilities to sustain their own members through the vagaries of economic cycles and to provide these same members with a stable place for investment.²⁷ As the size of units of production increased, so did the need for credit facilities. Though many credit facilities remained *ad hoc* in nature, the early eighteenth-century saw the extension of these facilities from London

²⁴ Crouzet, Capital Formation in the Industrial Revolution, *passim*.

²⁵ Kerridge, Trade and Banking in Early Modern England, pp. 35-7.

²⁶ B.A. Holderness "Credit in a Rural Community 1660-1800", Midland History (III), pp. 94-116; B.A. Holderness "Credit in English Rural Society pre 19th C", Agricultural History (24, 1970), pp. 97-109 and Kerridge, Trade and Banking in Early Modern England, pp. 2, 33-4.

²⁷ Coleman, The Economy of England, p. 147.

to the nation as a whole.²⁸

Some adaptations were undertaken to promote economic stability and development with minimal resources, in part due to the unavailability of capital. Frequently the physical plants of older, declining industries were converted to facilitate use by the new industries, such as the conversion of fulling mills for use in paper manufacture.²⁹ This facilitated the economic evolution of some towns, without necessitating heavy capital investment. The structure of the capital market allowed those involved in most industries to invest only a small part of their capital (less than 15%) in fixed assets (the rest being in "movable assets" like raw materials and inventory).³⁰ These constraints made plant conversion an appealing and economical application of money and resources. It also allowed towns to sustain a more consistent level of economic activity than would otherwise have been the case. Towns would have been less likely to encourage or assist in the establishment of a new economic activity had it required the construction of an expensive physical plant.

Another example of economic adaptation and more efficient use of materials was the increased use of waste products for manufacturing, in which waste products from one industry provided a raw or supplementary material for another. D.M. Woodward contends that "the recycling of materials was of crucial significance in the

²⁸ Kerridge, Trade and Banking in Early Modern England, Chapters 4 and 5; Wrigley, "A Simple Model of London's Importance", p. 62.

²⁹ Coleman, The British Paper Industry: 1495 - 1860, p. 23.

³⁰ Mathias, The First Industrial Nation, pp. 133-34.

pre-industrial economy, making an important contribution to national welfare."³¹ Recycling amounted to expanding and intensifying the use of existing resources across a more diversified range of products. The Kentish paper industry depended entirely on waste products, such as linen rags, for production and it produced waste products such as pulp to manufacture paste board which was subsequently shipped to London in considerable quantities.³² Waste mash from the brewing and distilling industries was used as feed to raise hogs: a particularly good use of waste products as the mash was most available in the winter when other fodder material was most expensive.³³ It also helped to smooth the seasonal fluctuations in the price of pork by keeping the numbers of hogs ready for market more constant throughout the year.

In addition to using resources more thoroughly and efficiently to sustain or stimulate economic activity, towns often tried to develop industries which were oriented towards import substitution. The objectives of import substitution were to broaden the base of economic activities, to reduce dependence on foreign products and to reduce the currency drain on the English economy, while increasing domestic

³¹ D.M. Woodward, "Swords into Ploughshares: Recycling in Pre-industrial England", EHR (38, 1985), p. 175.

³² Mathias, The First Industrial Nation, p. 153 and Woodward, "Swords into Ploughshares", pp. 187-91.

³³ Mathias, "Agriculture and the Brewing and Distilling Industries in the Eighteenth Century", pp. 80-94 in Jones, Agriculture and Economic Growth.

production and employment and enriching the expertise of the home labour supply.³⁴ Prior to the seventeenth century, for example, most high-quality white paper for writing and printing had been imported, coarser brown paper being the only domestic manufacture of note.³⁵ In the later seventeenth century, the manufacture of high-quality white paper had become an important and profitable import substitution industry.

ii) Foreign and Domestic Markets

Closely linked to the economic adaptation of towns was a reorientation from an emphasis on exports to one on domestic consumer demand and commercialisation. It would be wrong to assume that the shift resulted in complete dependence on domestic markets and complete abandonment of foreign markets. Foreign trade continued to increase, but its relative importance in the national economy declined, as many factors contributed to increase both domestic consumer demand and domestic trade with the colonies.³⁶

There is considerable debate among historians as to the pace and timing of

³⁴ Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change, p. 36; Jones, Agriculture and Economic Growth, p. 178; Coleman, The British Paper Industry: 1495 - 1860, p. 23.

³⁵ Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change, pp. 36-9; Coleman, The British Paper Industry: 1495 - 1860, pp. 10-22.

³⁶ Davis, English Overseas Trade: 1500 - 1700, p. 9; Chartres, Internal Trade in England: 1500 - 1700, pp. 9-11; Coleman, The Economy of England: 1450 - 1750, pp. 135-40; Wilson, England's Apprenticeship, pp. 263-64.

this change. Thirsk clearly sees the genesis of domestic commercial society in the late sixteenth century.³⁷ Clay identifies the seventeenth century as its initial growth period, citing the thread and canvas production in Maidstone as examples of entirely home-market industries.³⁸ McKendrick's work minimizes consumer and commercial growth before 1700 in order to show the eighteenth century as the most important phase of commercial development.³⁹ Despite the debate over chronology historians are dealing with the same overall process and the extended period to which they refer underline the slow, evolutionary nature of change.

The English economy in this period was shifting from the simple extraction and export of relatively unprocessed materials to a more complex sequence of resource extraction, manufacture, and consumption / export, with more balanced import and export levels and self-sufficiency in production.⁴⁰ The more extended economic chain involved specialisation and diversification in activities which gave greater stability to the economy.

The importance of the growing colonial trade, particularly with the American colonies, as a part of the home market should not be underestimated in examining

³⁷ Thirsk, Economic Policy and Projects, p. 1.

³⁸ Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change, p. 38 & passim.

³⁹ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, The Birth of Consumer Society, p. 2.

⁴⁰ Chartres, Internal Trade in England, pp. 13-38.

the expansion of the domestic consumer market.⁴¹ The Navigation Acts confined trade with the colonies to English ships and English ports, effectively making the American colonies captive markets and resource hinterlands. Taking this into account, the overseas colonial markets should not be considered as foreign markets, but as domestic markets, because England had an effective monopoly over imports and exports with the colonies.⁴²

The effects of war on the English economy were complex and pervasive in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, but clearly also accelerated the focus on the domestic market. England was almost constantly at war in this period, with the Dutch, the Spanish or the French on the Continent. There was no tranquillity at home either as rebellions in Ireland and Jacobite risings in Great Britain before, during and after our period plagued the country.⁴³

War in this period was not as directly destructive to production, consumption or population as modern warfare. War disrupted access to Continental markets and to the flow of capital over the English Channel, forcing producers to concentrate on the domestic market and spurring consumer demand and domestic production at

⁴¹ Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change, p. 21 and Mathias, The First Industrial Nation, pp. 180-184.

⁴² Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change, pp. 21-22; Thirsk, Economic Policy and Projects, p. 118.

⁴³ B. Lenman, The Jacobite Risings in Britain 1689-1746 (London, Methuen, 1980), passim.

home.⁴⁴ Many products which had been imported before began to be manufactured at home, effectively approximating the planned import substitution described earlier. The disruption of foreign supplies of quality white paper, for example, stimulated domestic production of this product in Kent.⁴⁵

Warfare also brought on a shortage of shipping capacity as merchant ships were conscripted into the war effort, thus encouraging the building of naval and merchant ships throughout England.⁴⁶ The Royal Navy dockyards in Kent, on the Thames and Medway Rivers, could readily respond to that requirement. The need to victual the army on the Continent, in Ireland and in Great Britain, and the Royal Navy at sea, also stimulated economic activity. This was of particular importance to economic change in Kent, which furnished many of the required raw materials and trade skills, including foodstuffs, timber, ordnance, shipwrights and rope-makers.

iii) Consumer Demand

The increased importance of domestic markets and production awakened many producers and political economists to the importance of consumer demand as a driving force in economic growth. Late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century political economists began to see the entire population as producers and consumers

⁴⁴ Deane, The First Industrial Revolution, pp. 194-5.

⁴⁵ Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change, p. 36; Coleman, The British Paper Industry, p. 29.

⁴⁶ Mathias, The First Industrial Nation, p. 43.

of goods.⁴⁷ Yet explicit contemporary statements that consumer demand and consumption were strong do not identify the period at which commercialisation started. Rather it is a commentary on a process which, necessarily, must have begun considerably earlier. This must be taken into account when considering McKendrick's citation of Dudley North in 1691 identifying the "exorbitant Appetites of Men" as being the prime motivators to "Industry and Ingenuity".⁴⁸ Notwithstanding his citation of North, McKendrick argues that commercialisation was almost exclusive to the eighteenth century. By the turn of the eighteenth century contemporaries were aware that, even then, consumer demand was firing industrial and economic expansion. Carew Reynel expressed the view, in 1674, that the home market was primary, and foreign markets secondary, in importance to the national economy. As an example, he mentions the £1,000 per week trade in thread from Maidstone, as well as the paper industry.⁴⁹ There is evidence that there was a sizeable mass market for goods such as cheap earthenware, tobacco pipes, lace, ribbon, as early as the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century.⁵⁰

Growth in consumer demand included changes in the pattern and type of

⁴⁷ Defoe, An Essay on Projects, *passim*; Defoe, A Tour Through England and Wales, *passim*; Morris, The Journeys of Celia Fiennes, *passim*.

⁴⁸ Sir Dudley North, Discourses upon Trade (1691), as cited in McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, The Birth of Consumer Society, p. 15.

⁴⁹ Carew Reynel, The True English Interest (London, 1674) as cited in Thirsk, Economic Policy and Projects, p. 143.

⁵⁰ Thirsk, Economic Policy and Projects, p. 119.

purchases, as well as in the volume and frequency of purchases. The growth of consumer demand necessitated an expansion of the domestic and specialised goods and services sector and of the industrial and transportation sectors, as production moved towards supplying internal markets.

Increases in real wages and in overall family incomes augmented the proportion of family incomes which was available for the purchase of goods and services.⁵¹ These purchases would have included items formerly produced by the family for subsistence, in addition to luxury items. Consumer demand deepened and widened as rising real wages stimulated spending and as greater numbers of consumers bought a more extensive range of goods more frequently.⁵²

Falling food prices after 1660 greatly contributed to the long-term, sustained growth in real wages and the purchasing power of consumers.⁵³ Despite some serious, but temporary, set-backs in real wages, they were still one third higher in the 1680's than they had been in the 1610's, and in the 1710's they were one half higher than a century earlier (see Fig.1). The increasing number of women and children in wage labour caused family incomes and consumer demand to rise even faster than

⁵¹ Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change, pp. 32-3; McKendrick, "Home Demand and Economic Growth", passim and McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, The Birth of Consumer Society, pp. 23-4.

⁵² Mathias, The Transformation of England, p. 155.

⁵³ Mathias, The First Industrial Nation, p. 16; P. Bowden, "Agricultural Prices, Wages, Farm Profits and Rents" in Thirsk, The Agrarian History of England, pp. 3-8; Wrigley and Schofield, The Population History of England 1541 - 1871, pp. 402-415.

real wages in the later seventeenth century.⁵⁴ This substantial growth of family incomes led to an increase in consumer demand over the period.

This might help to explain how families could ride out the substantial fluctuations in the upward trend of real wages (see Fig.2). In our period there were two major downturns (1690's and 1710's) from which the economy must have taken several years to recover. Although there was a long term upward trend in real wages, the downturns were serious and must have seemed almost catastrophic at the time to wage-earners and consumers, in terms of the future economic outlook and short term ability to spend. There were also substantial seasonal fluctuations in industrial and agricultural wages.⁵⁵ Winter was a lean time for many wage-earners as wages hit seasonal lows and prices hit seasonal highs. Yet even though there were fluctuations, the rise in real wages was sustained and greatly contributed to expanding consumer demand.

People had come to realize that they could improve their standard of living with by-employment in handicraft production, such as the knitting of woollen stockings.⁵⁶ The resulting increase in incomes further stimulated consumer demand. This stimulation is shown by the fact that consumer demand grew in the same areas

⁵⁴ Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change, p. 29; McKendrick, "Home Demand and Economic Growth", passim.

⁵⁵ Jones, Agriculture and Economic Growth, p. 179.

⁵⁶ Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change, p. 32; Thirsk, "Industries in the Countryside" in Thirsk, The Rural Economy of England, p. 210.

of the economy where real wages were rising.⁵⁷ Rising real wages and increased consumer demand operated in tandem, the one stimulating the other.

Population growth fuelled economic expansion by accelerating the growth in demand (greater numbers of consumers) while at the same time providing the means of supplying this increased demand (more labour available for production). During this period population growth accelerated in England as a whole, and in the southeast particularly, after having fallen significantly in the third quarter of the seventeenth century (see Fig. 3).⁵⁸ England's population grew faster than that of any other European country from 1550 to 1800.⁵⁹ Contemporary views on population had certainly undergone a change during the seventeenth century. Robert Gray in 1600 saw population surplus as excess mouths to feed, while Carew Reynel in 1674 saw the nation as being short one million pairs of productive hands with which to alleviate depression.⁶⁰ A potential problem had become a potential resource.

Consumer demand was rising and the size of the domestic market was growing from both "push" (foreign competition and war) and "pull" (change in contemporary

⁵⁷ Mathias, The Transformation of England, p. 163.

⁵⁸ Wrigley and Schofield, Population History of England, 1541 - 1871, Table 7.8, pp. 208-9.

⁵⁹ Wrigley, Continuity, Chance and Change, p. 64.

⁶⁰ Robert Gray, as cited without reference and Carew Reynel, The True English Interest (London, 1674) as cited in Thirsk, Economic Policy and Projects, pp. 179-80.

economic thought, fashion, marketing and internal transportation improvements) factors. Contemporary awareness of consumer markets by producers contributed to changes in the demand, quality, variety and methods of manufacturing products.⁶¹

Some industries, recognizing the potential of the market in selling to the "lower orders", began to compete in supplying less durable goods. In the late seventeenth century shifting fashionability and novelty became more important in some consumer behaviour than long-term durability leading consumers to purchase goods more frequently.⁶² Some have seen these changes in consumption patterns as well under way by 1700, with supply patterns changing as well.⁶³ There was no simple cause and effect relationship between supply and demand; changes in the one begat changes in the other.

There was probably a darker side to the increased consumer demand. Many consumers, such as cottagers and landless labourers, were receiving a greater proportion of their income in cash from wages. The economic life of many people shifted from self-reliance and domestic production to dependence on cash from wages. This often resulted in doing with less in the way of goods and services, thus

⁶¹ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, The Birth of Consumer Society, pp. 15-17; Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change, p. 16.

⁶² Thirsk, "The Fantastical Folly of Fashion: The Stocking Knitting Industry, 1500 - 1700" in Thirsk, The Rural Economy of England, p. 236; Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change, p. 16.

⁶³ Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change, pp. 33-6; Borsay, The English Urban Renaissance, pp. 311-13.

reducing standard of living. Yet at the same time, rural consumers, in particular, exerted greater consumer demand by having now to purchase common household goods which they had once produced themselves.⁶⁴ The number of people using household production of domestic goods and services was declining by the end of the seventeenth century and, by extension, the number of people dependent on wage employment was increasing.⁶⁵ At the lower end of the economic scale, this points to a reduction in consumer flexibility to purchase, though confirming an increase in consumer demand. These people became a virtual captive consumer market, joining the commercial market by necessity rather than by choice.

The increase in consumer demand of the seventeenth century was not the pervasive consumer demand of later periods, but does seem to have represented a break with the past. In earlier times there had been a limited, and relatively prosperous, number of people who could buy consumer products. In referring to the eighteenth century, McKendrick says that the desire to consume was not new, but that the ability to consume was.⁶⁶ Although this ability to buy did not fully descend the social scale until mid- or late-eighteenth century, the roots of the shift seem to have gone back to the end of the sixteenth century. The proportion of people who were dependent on low-paying, seasonal agricultural work to supplement their

⁶⁴ Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change, p. 28; Mathias The First Industrial Nation, p. 62.

⁶⁵ Deane, The First Industrial Revolution, pp. 16-17.

⁶⁶ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, The Birth of Consumer Society, p. 2.

incomes declined and those dependent on by-employments for income supplements increased.⁶⁷ In conjunction with population growth, this meant that consumer demand became more substantial and dependable than previously, giving producers and suppliers a base upon which to develop new marketing methods. The towns themselves provided concentrated consumer markets for producers where these new marketing techniques could be brought to bear with the greatest effect for the new industries which were developing.

iv) Marketing Methods

Associated with the rise of domestic consumer demand was the transition from a distribution system based on local markets and fairs to one based on retail sales shops. The frequent and accessible displays of goods in these shops made people much more aware of the type of goods available to them. The greater the numbers of retail shops and their permanent displays of goods and services, the greater the increase in consumer demand. The expansion of the retail shop network had been necessitated by this increase in demand for regular, frequent (preferably daily) access to goods and services. Improved transportation and communication facilitated retail expansion which allowed shopkeepers to react more flexibly to fluctuations in supply and demand. Changes in sales and marketing practises (supply) came in response

⁶⁷ Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change, p. 28; Jones, Agricultural and Economic Growth, p. 37; Thirsk, Agrarian History of England and Wales, pp. 383-5.

to increasing real wages, growth in overall family incomes and population growth (demand) and resulted in a more integrated, structured system of retail trade.⁶⁸ Indeed, there was considerable interaction between changes in supply and in demand in this period.

We can identify the origins of the retail system in London as far back as Elizabethan times.⁶⁹ Shops began to increase substantially in numbers in the last decades of the seventeenth century, first in London, in gentry towns and in economically prosperous provincial centres and later in lesser urban centres and in rural locations.⁷⁰ Retail shops initially specialised in luxury and specialised goods for the well-to-do, but clienteles expanded as purchasing power descended the social scale and the emulation of gentry styles and fashions increased to stimulate demand.⁷¹ By the second half of the seventeenth century shops began to emerge as the normal place for consumers to spend money.⁷² By the onset of the eighteenth century they were essential components of the national distribution system

⁶⁸ Mitchell, "The Development of Urban Retailing", p. 264; Mui and Mui, Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth Century England, p. 12.

⁶⁹ Davis, Fairs, Shops and Supermarkets, pp. 66-67.

⁷⁰ Berger, "The Development of Retail Trade in Provincial England, 1550 - 1700", pp. 124-5; Borsay, The English Urban Renaissance, p.15; Davis, Fairs, Shops and Supermarkets, pp. 57, 67.

⁷¹ Berger, "The Development of Retail Trade in Provincial England, 1550 - 1700", p. 123, Davis, Fairs, Shops and Supermarkets, pp. 156-59.

⁷² Davis, Fairs, Shops and Supermarkets, p. 181.

and were well-established parts of the social and economic fabric of towns.⁷³

The expansion of the retail shop network was partly a result of the inability of the relatively infrequent, though regular, system of markets and fairs to meet increasing consumer demand.⁷⁴ Markets continued to be important in providing foodstuffs, while retail shops took over the functions of supplying much of the demand for domestic and specialised goods and services, especially among the gentry and affluent merchants, tradesmen and manufacturers.⁷⁵ It would be a mistake to see this as an abrupt transition because, though retail shops grew in importance throughout the period, markets and shops existed together through much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁷⁶ In fact, to this day elements of the market system are still present all over England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland.

Retail shops were not the only, or the first, threat to the economic role of public markets. Market tolls and regulations restricted trade and economic expansion and people used various means to evade them.⁷⁷ They set up trades

⁷³ Clark, The Transformation of English Provincial Towns, p. 21; Davis, pp. 67, 181.

⁷⁴ Berger, "The Development of Retail Trade in Provincial England, 1550 - 1700", p. 123; Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change, p. 35; Mui and Mui, Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth Century England, p. 10.

⁷⁵ Mitchell, "The Development of Urban Retailing", pp. 264-5.

⁷⁶ Mitchell, "The Development of Urban Retailing", p. 278; Mui and Mui, Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth Century England, p. 12.

⁷⁷ Mui and Mui, Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth Century England, p. 10.

outside town limits, and used inns and public houses as commercial exchanges, shops and transport centres.⁷⁸ These informal facilities complemented the established markets and fairs in several ways: they were more frequently and regularly available, they offered an alternative to the prices and selections offered in markets, and they thus provided an essential bridge between the market and retail systems.⁷⁹

Towns and regions which could readily communicate with a range of markets had a competitive advantage in marketing goods and services over other towns and regions. An improved transportation network facilitated access to a wider range of products and consumer goods.⁸⁰ In addition, it reduced the cost of marketing goods in a whole range of ways from shortening transit time (and, as a result, the amount of capital tied up in goods in transit) to improving the regularity of transportation and communications. In the seventeenth and eighteenth century changes in the transportation system meant the improvement of roads and the navigability of rivers, and, later, of the construction of canals.⁸¹

The provision of regular road carrying services also improved transportation and communication by regularising the movement of information and goods over

⁷⁸ Morant, "Historical Geography of Maidstone", p. 128; Coleman, "The Economy of Kent under the Later Stuarts", p. 141.

⁷⁹ Mitchell, "The Development of Urban Retailing", p. 269.

⁸⁰ Jones, Agricultural and Economic Growth, p. 39.

⁸¹ Chartres, "Road Carrying in England in the Seventeenth Century", pp. 87-88; Albert, The Turnpike Road System in England, 1663 - 1840, *passim*.

substantial distances.⁸² Counties like Kent were particularly well served by a network of roads in this area and were well provided for with this type of service (see Maps 2 and 4). In addition, this part of the county enjoyed ready access to navigable rivers. As a result of this established transport infrastructure, the new turnpike road systems of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century were not nearly as extensive, or necessary in terms of trade, to the south and east of London as they were to the north and west of the City (see Map 3). Transportation improvements helped sustain the commercial revolution of the seventeenth century by facilitating access to a wider range of products and consumers.

The changes to marketing were over a long enough period to label them "evolutionary" rather than "revolutionary".⁸³ McKendrick asserts that it was in the late seventeenth century that "consumption" lost its pejorative meaning and that "market" began to refer to an elusive concept of expandable spending rather than to a physical point of sale.⁸⁴ In doing so he recognises that many very important changes were under way before the eighteenth century. The changes in attitudes towards markets and consumption, taking place in the seventeenth century, were absolutely critical as a basis for the economic changes, such as specialisation and diversification. This process was not exclusive to retailing; there was considerable

⁸² Chartres, "Road Carrying in England in the Seventeenth Century" pp. 74, 89.

⁸³ Mitchell, "The Development of Urban Retailing", p. 278; Davis, Fairs, Shops and Supermarkets, *passim*.

⁸⁴ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, The Birth of Consumer Society, p. 14.

occupational specialisation and economic diversification going on in the economy as a whole, and in the manufacturing sector specifically.

v) Specialisation and Diversification

As the nation's demands for goods and services grew and new industries developed, there was an increasing diversification and specialisation in occupations, products and services in towns to meet specific market requirements. This meant a shift from general trades to specific trades and a corresponding increase in the number of trades practised. Specialisation allowed producers to increase or decrease output more readily in response to changes in demand for specific products. At the same time, the diversification in manufacturing allowed producers to produce a greater range of goods and services appealing to a wider range of customers. The lack of specialisation and diversification in the pre-industrial economy had restricted its ability to expand production in response to changes in consumer demand and production methods.⁸⁵

Occupational specialisation in late seventeenth-century England took place in most sectors of the economy, from manufacturing and commerce to services and the professions.⁸⁶ Technological and organisational innovation sprang from this

⁸⁵ Deane, The First Industrial Revolution, pp. 15-17.

⁸⁶ J. Patten, English Towns 1500-1700 (Folkestone, Kent, Wm. Dawson and Sons, 1978), Chapter 4.

specialisation in the workforce.⁸⁷ It is, however, somewhat difficult to accept the contention of some historians, such as McKendrick⁸⁸ and Corfield,⁸⁹ that this process was peculiar to the eighteenth century, especially given the number of other historians who point to the seventeenth century as the start of specialisation in occupations and industry.⁹⁰ Late seventeenth-century political economists, such as Defoe, were much more acutely aware of the importance of domestic economic processes than previous political economists had been and, as a result, they recorded economic observations in greater detail.⁹¹ If these contemporaries began to be so clearly aware of the processes they described, it is likely that the processes had begun considerably earlier.

Existing trades expanded and new trades emerged when goods (such as cloths, candles, pottery and furniture) began to be purchased which had previously been

⁸⁷ P. Corfield, "Tinker, Tailor, Bleeder, Grieve", p. 13.

⁸⁸ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, The Birth of Consumer Society, passim.

⁸⁹ P. Corfield, "Tinker, Tailor, Bleeder, Grieve", passim.

⁹⁰ Clark, The Transformation of English Provincial Towns: 1600 - 1800, passim; Clark and Slack, English Towns in Transition: 1500 - 1700, Chapter 7; Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change, Vol.II, Chapter 8; Coleman and Mathias, Enterprise and History, passim; Coleman, The Economy of England: 1450 - 1750, Chapters 5, 8 and 9; Deane, The First Industrial Revolution, Chapters 3, 4, 9 and 14; Thirsk, Economic Policy and Projects, passim; Thirsk, The Rural Economy of England, Chapters XII, XIV and XVI.

⁹¹ Defoe, An Essay on Projects; Defoe, A Tour Through England and Wales.

made in households.⁹² Tradesmen and craftsmen could not increase production to meet demand across their entire range of goods and had the choice of partially serving a wide range of customers or fully serving a narrower range of customers. Most producers narrowed their range of manufactures and produced greater numbers of specific products to meet demand. Economic development was enhanced by the interaction amongst producers of these many diverse goods and services.⁹³ Thus, as more trades appeared, there was a greater potential for economic innovation, specialisation and diversification.

Production units also had to specialise, resulting in economic diversification to meet growing consumer demand. Although technology, commerce and industry became more specialised during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the unit of production remained that of the workshop, albeit expanded workshops with more specialised workers, until the last decades of the eighteenth century.⁹⁴ Seventeenth-century Kentish paper mills were examples of this and were more important as forerunners of future industry with its more developed division of labour, than for

⁹² P. Ripley, "Village and Town, Occupations and Wealth in the Hinterland of Gloucester, 1660-1700", Agricultural History Review, 32 (2) 1985, passim; McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, The Birth of Consumer Society, p. 23; Wilson, England's Apprenticeship, pp. 67-8; Mathias, The Transformation of England, p. 153.

⁹³ P. Corfield, "Tinker, Tailor, Bleeder, Grieve...", p. 13.

⁹⁴ Clark, The Transformation of English Provincial Towns, p. 25; Berg, The Age of Manufactures, pp. 40-1; Crafts, British Economic Growth During the Industrial Revolution, p. 69.

their actual economic contribution to the economy.⁹⁵

Specialisation and division of labour occurred in the transformation of old trades and domestic tasks, the appearance of new trades and the overall increase in the number of trades practised, all of which contributed to greater productivity and efficiency.⁹⁶ It occurred, like other changes, over a much longer period than most individual historians seem willing to admit. The revolution of industry was actually an evolution of crafts.⁹⁷

vi) Guilds and the Organisation of Production

Economic change depended on a comparatively unregulated, flexible, competitive economic environment which was diametrically opposed to the regulated, hierarchic system of guilds and markets. The evolution away from traditional economic structures, such as small workshops and markets and fairs, often came at the expense of trade and craft organisations, such as the guilds, which were forced to adapt or disappear.

The place of guilds in the changes in the production and marketing of goods

⁹⁵ Chalklin, Seventeenth Century Kent, p. 154; Coleman, The British Paper Industry, p. 38.

⁹⁶ Beier, "Engine of Growth: the Trades of London" in Beier and Finlay, The Making of the Metropolis: London 1500 - 1700, p. 147; Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change, p. 84; Corfield, The Impact of English Towns 1700 - 1800, p. 85; Wrigley, "The Process of Modernisation", p. 231.

⁹⁷ Everitt, "Country, County and Town", p. 104.

and services, and the question of whether guilds declined or evolved in the face of changing conditions remains the subject of considerable historiographic debate.⁹⁸ Conventional historiography describes how guilds had evolved in the context of a static economy and deteriorated, either gradually or abruptly, in a growth economy. The rationale for this was that guilds required a surplus of labour and relatively inelastic consumer demand to survive.⁹⁹ Since the English economy of the seventeenth century was moving in the opposite direction, this theory would have doomed the guilds to eclipse. Even if decline were not inevitable, it would have been increasingly difficult to maintain labour and production regulations in the face of labour shortages and increased consumer demand.

The changing role of guilds must be seen as both a cause of economic change, due to their control of production and labour, and a result of it, due to the changes taking place in production of goods and services and in consumer demand. As Michael Walker's recent work demonstrates, we must not accept uncritically the theory of gradual, continuous, inevitable guild decline. Guilds frequently must have

⁹⁸ As Michael Walker states in his still unpublished Cambridge University Ph.D. thesis, some historians have described guilds declining in a long, slow, but continuous and inevitable manner (i.e. D.C. Coleman, F.J. Fisher, L.A. Clarkson); others see forces pushing guilds away from traditional practices, but are unsure as to the guilds' responses to these pressures (i.e. K. Wrightson, C.H. Wilson); still others view guilds as having been flexible institutions which degenerated and regenerated repeatedly in response to changing economic conditions (i.e. D. Palliser, M.J. Walker). Walker, "The Extent of Guild Control of Trades in England, 1660 - 1820", pp. 14-25.

⁹⁹ Corfield, The Impact of English Towns, p. 86.

relaxed their restrictions in order to respond flexibly to change.¹⁰⁰ Given the great variety of guilds, their activities and level of prosperity and the rate of economic change in different regions throughout England, it is difficult to see all guilds reacting to economic change in the uniform fashion described by many historians.

Walker describes several phases of change in guild control of urban economies.¹⁰¹ Merchant, or to use Walker's term "entrepreneurial", guilds, including tradesmen such as mercers, drapers, merchants and mongers of many sorts, were the first to change in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Manufacturing guilds, comprised of tradesmen such as tailors, shoemakers and smiths, were next, in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. This is the group upon which technical, organisational and mechanical innovations in the scale and methods of production had their most profound effect. It is the only one in which Walker identifies the distinct collapse of individual guilds. Service and construction guilds, with tradesmen such as barbers, surgeons, shipwrights and house-carpenters were the last to adapt in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.¹⁰²

Yet when we consider that new specialised and diversified trades seldom set up guild organisations, we cannot deny that the guild system was losing the struggle

¹⁰⁰ Walker, "The Extent of Guild Control of Trades in England, 1660 - 1820", p. 40; Corfield, The Impact of English Towns, p. 86.

¹⁰¹ Walker, "The Extent of Guild Control of Trades in England, 1660 - 1820", pp. 126-153.

¹⁰² Walker, "The Extent of Guild Control of Trades in England, 1660 - 1820", p. 135.

against the advent of a more flexible economic system.¹⁰³ Retail marketing and new, specialised production allowed outside traders and craftsmen to operate in corporate towns, without joining guilds.¹⁰⁴

Tellingly, Walker does not see that all groups of guilds faced inevitable decline. In most cases, he sees change as a loss of absolute control, but of continuing and strong economic influence. In almost all cases he sees a cycle of degeneration and regeneration, similar to, and linked to, the ups and downs of the business cycle. Economic fluctuations aside, guilds maintained considerable ceremonial and political influence.¹⁰⁵ Walker puts forward very convincing arguments which are different, and better documented, than the models of universal and inevitable guild decline. His contention that guild responses varied in both type and degree of success seems to hold considerable validity.

People tend to adapt by changing their approaches in order to survive. There is no reason to believe that the leaders and members of guilds would have behaved differently. Towns and guilds must often have applied regulations differentially, allowing contraventions or strict enforcement depending on the economic

¹⁰³ Thirsk, Economic Policy and Projects, p. 173.

¹⁰⁴ Clark, The Transformation of English Provincial Towns, p. 24.

¹⁰⁵ Walker, "The Extent of Guild Control of Trades in England, 1660 - 1820", pp. 156-170; Corfield, The Impact of English Towns, pp. 87-88.

climate.¹⁰⁶

xi) Summary

The move away from over-dependence on a single industry, the production of wool and woollen cloth, served as a key to England's economic development. To survive adversity in some of its parts, an economy required a diversified base. We have seen such diversification appear in the seventeenth century, due to the decline of the wool industry and the necessity of engaging in other areas of economic production and distribution.

This economic evolution included a shift in economic orientation from foreign export markets to domestic consumer markets. Compensation for the decline of export markets required accelerated consumer demand. A variety of factors, such as rising real wages, increasing family incomes and changing purchasing patterns, worked toward this end. Increased consumer demand, in turn, necessitated changes in the delivery of goods and services. The shift from regulated markets and fairs towards unregulated retail shops and informal transactions gave consumers more frequent and dependable access to goods and services. Retail shops also placed goods and services more in the public view and, as a result, made their own contribution to rising consumer demand. All of these aspects of economic change

¹⁰⁶ M.J. Walker, "The Extent of Guild Control of Trades in England, 1660 - 1820", p. 69.

underwent substantial change over a prolonged period of time.

Increasing specialisation and diversification in the English economy at an individual, local, regional and national level accelerated these changes in production and supply. In order to meet increasing demand English producers and distributors specialised in a narrower range of goods and services. At the same time the number of trades increased through diversification as the economy broadened across a wider base.

A developing infrastructure of transportation facilities, population growth and the impact of war also provided economic stimuli which promoted the gradual transition from the old ways to the new. Guilds adapted to these changing economic circumstances in a variety of ways, with varying success. London clearly played a dominant, if not always positive, role in the economic development of towns and regions.

In general, Maidstone had a more stable economy than many other towns in this period because of its rich resource base, expanding population and access to markets. The town's economy in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century had a diversified economic base and many specialised trades and industries. Let us now examine how Maidstone's economic situation in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries corresponds with the historians' models.

Chapter III

Maidstone and Economic Change

i) The Maidstone Setting

Maidstone, in the county of Kent, is situated about thirty-five miles southeast of London (see Map 1). The town was particularly well suited as a centre for transport and processing of agrarian produce because of its location on the Medway River. Maidstone is only 8-10 miles up the Medway from its confluence with the Thames and was at the head of navigation of the Medway during our period (see Map 5). This made Maidstone a point of exchange in the transportation of many products brought from the rich hinterland of the town and allowed it to play the interesting dual role of an important coastal trading town and major inland market town. In addition to its geographical importance, history had given the town a strong religious, judicial and political role of a local, county and, occasionally, national scope. In order to understand the regional importance of Maidstone these three roles deserve a further explanation.

The presence of the Archbishop's Palace in the town since 1348, and the presence of well-endowed churches (such as St. Mary's and, subsequently, All Saints) made Maidstone a regional religious centre.¹ Although the Archbishops of Canterbury were not in permanent residence in Maidstone, they stayed in the town frequently and took an interest in its development. Religious activity was also

¹ Hilton, Maidstone: An Outline History, p. 9; Russell, The History of Maidstone, pp. 70-71, 96-7.

focused on Maidstone because of the considerable presences of religious non-conformists in the town (such as Dutch Calvinist refugees, Baptists, Presbyterians and other Dissenters). The natural result of having prosperous or influential religious establishments and individuals in the town was the establishment of schools (such as the College of All Saints), hospitals (such as the Hospital for Pilgrims) and almshouses, which were also privately supported.²

In addition to these relatively benevolent institutions Maidstone harboured the Archbishop's Brambles Prison for the incarceration of offenders against religious laws, such as the Non-conformists, heretics and excommunicants. The prison was given over to the Crown in the reign of Henry VIII and later to the town.³ There was also a public prison in Maidstone; in fact it was the County Gaol for the western half of Kent. A public gaol was required in Maidstone due to the concentration of judicial activity in the town which resulted numerous criminals requiring suitable lodgings.

Courts were often held at Maidstone because it was so much more central and accessible than any other town in Kent.⁴ Maidstone was one of several major towns in Kent where the Assizes were held in Early Modern times and from the beginning

² Russell, The History of Maidstone, Chapters III, IV, and V.

³ Hilton, Maidstone: An Outline History, p. 22; Ireland, A New and Complete History of the County of Kent, pp. 626-27; Russell, The History of Maidstone, p. 276.

⁴ Hilton, Maidstone: An Outline History, pp.20-25; Russell, The History of Maidstone, p. 280.

of the seventeenth century they were almost always held at Maidstone. Additionally, the quarter sessions for the western division of Kent were held at Maidstone.⁵

The political importance of Maidstone resulted from the activism of many prominent members of the town, both for and against the government of the day. The wealth and prominence of the citizens of Maidstone, described by Daniel Defoe⁶, gave them an importance which necessitated their participation in the great events of the day. Maidstone was critical in three major rebellions against the Government before our period: Wat Tyler's Rebellion of the fourteenth century, Jack Cade's Rebellion of the fifteenth century and Sir Thomas Wyatt's rebellion of the sixteenth century.⁷ In fact, Sir Thomas Wyatt, of Allington just outside Maidstone, began his rebellion in the town.⁸ Maidstone also stood out for the Royalists during the Civil War, obliging Lord Fairfax to go to the trouble of storming and taking it in 1648.⁹ Maidstone was also an administrative centre for Royal Navy suppliers and victuallers and for the their Majesties' Governments.¹⁰

⁵ Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", p. 129; Russell, The History of Maidstone, pp. 280-82.

⁶ Defoe, A Tour Through England and Wales, pp. 113-14.

⁷ Russell, The History of Maidstone, pp. 32-69.

⁸ Hilton, Maidstone: An Outline History, pp. 18-19.

⁹ Hilton, Maidstone: An Outline History, pp. 24-25; Russell, The History of Maidstone, pp. 245-74.

¹⁰ Coleman, "The Economy of Kent under the Later Stuarts", pp. 239-40; Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", pp. 4-5, 118-20.

The political structure of Maidstone was that of a self-perpetuating oligarchy, drawn from the freemenry of the town. In theory, the Mayor was chosen for one year from the twelve Jurates or Aldermen, who selected their own replacements from a Commonality of twenty-four freemen which in turn chose its members from the entire freemenry of the town.¹¹ In practice, the Jurates were usually influential masters, not merely ordinary freemen. The town had its charter revoked and re-issued on many occasions through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and at each re-incorporation the Mayor and Aldermen were appointed.¹² Of the Mayor and eleven Aldermen named in the reincorporation of 1682, half were indenturing apprentices to themselves or sponsoring freemen for admission to the town in our apprentice and freemen records, a sure sign of prosperity. Each of these twelve men became mayor in the next decades: five served only once, three served twice, three served thrice and one, William Weldish, served seven times.¹³ Between them these individuals served as Mayor twenty-seven times out of forty years, often in the same rotating order, as if they were simply taking turns, surely not a very open political structure.

The varied regional roles, described above, were largely dependent on Maidstone's agrarian and resource hinterland which supplied the town with abundant

¹¹ Russell, The History of Maidstone, pp. 183-205.

¹² Newton, The History and Antiquities of Maidstone, pp. 20-25.

¹³ Russell, The History of Maidstone, pp. 410-12.

raw materials (see maps 5 and 6). Industrial crops (such as hemp, hops and flax), food crops (such as fruit and vegetables), minerals (such as fuller's earth), livestock for meat, wool and leather; timber for construction, fuel and ships; hard ragstone for paving, construction and cannon ammunition were all readily available from the area surrounding the town.¹⁴

The wealth of Maidstone's hinterland contributed enormously to the diversity of economic activity and to the general stability and prosperity of the town's economy. The area surrounding Maidstone was filled with populous villages both wanting and supplying the goods and services which were part of the town's economy. Ships which left the town laden with raw materials and products derived from the town and its hinterland returned filled with products otherwise unattainable locally.¹⁵

Another key to Maidstone's prosperity was its proximity to London and the Medway Towns of Rochester, Chatham and Gillingham (see Map 6). The populations of these towns not only supported the trade and economy of Maidstone, but also the Royal Navy dockyards of Chatham and the Thames Valley, which Maidstone supplied with a great range of raw materials and victuals. For the Royal Navy dockyards at Chatham and on the Thames, Maidstone supplied "vast quantities

¹⁴ Coleman, "The Economy of Kent under the Later Stuarts", pp. 57-136; Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", pp. 115-63; Russell, The History of Maidstone, pp. 307-31.

¹⁵ Coleman, "The Economy of Kent under the Later Stuarts", p. 238; Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", p. 209.

of timber" (primarily oak) for ship construction and refitting.¹⁶ Maidstone shipped timber out for use in the expanding domestic construction industry. It also served as the marshalling centre for Royal Navy ordnance made in the High Weald foundries (see Map 5) and transported to the dockyards down-river. Proximity to London and the Medway towns stimulated many sorts of economic activity, especially as consumer markets expanded. Maidstone's access to these mass markets for consumer goods and services gave it opportunities far greater than many comparably sized towns elsewhere in England.

Maidstone supplied both London and the Medway Towns with livestock (such as veal, beef, mutton, lamb, pork, poultry and fish) and market gardening produce of many kinds (such as vegetables, fruit and nuts) from its wide surrounding hinterland.¹⁷ The livestock trade around Maidstone furnished not only meat for food, but also leather for making gloves, shoes and boots, much of which was consumed in other markets.¹⁸ Local hemp production encouraged the making of rope, primarily for the Royal Navy dockyards at Chatham, but was also directed to local, regional and national domestic consumption.

Maidstone was the centre of Kentish hop production, having been endowed

¹⁶ Hasted, The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent, Vol IV, p. 267.

¹⁷ Hasted, The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent, Vol IV, pp. 267-71; Russell, The History of Maidstone, p. 324.

¹⁸ Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", p. 218.

naturally with the loam soils and moderate climate upon which hops thrive.¹⁹ The raising of hops stimulated a growing brewing trade in the town and in the nation; by the middle of the eighteenth century, Kent was the principal hop producing area in England.²⁰ The town's proximity to the London labour market was also crucial here for the harvesting of hops was very labour-intensive.²¹ At harvest time in August thousands of poor East Londoners were drawn out of the City by the prospect of relatively high hop-picking wages in West Kent.²² In order to draw on external labour resources, the local economy first had to absorb the local unemployed and underemployed, providing seasonal relief to this disadvantaged group.

Maidstone was greatly endowed with large natural underground reserves of water which ensured local fresh water supplies even in the face of drought.²³ The Medway, Loose and Len rivers converge at Maidstone (see Map 5) and enabled the development of industries (such as paper manufacture) which were dependent on access to large amounts of fresh water to power the mills.²⁴ The strength of other

¹⁹ Russell, The History of Maidstone, p. 320.

²⁰ Bowden, "Agricultural Prices, Wages, Farm Profits and Rents", in Thirsk, The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Volume V, ii: 1640 - 1750, pp. 97-9; Hasted, The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent, Vol IV, p. 268.

²¹ Bowden, "Agricultural Prices, Wages, Farm Profits and Rents", in Thirsk, The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Volume V, ii: 1640 - 1750, p. 97.

²² Russell, The History of Maidstone, p. 322.

²³ Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", p. 19.

²⁴ Coleman, The British Paper Industry, p. 34.

local industries such as cloth-making, brewing and distilling also depended to a great degree on the presence of abundant, dependable amounts of fresh water. The town's position also gave it an advantage in transporting to London and other towns, such as Canterbury and Calais, the paving and building stone from quarries around the town, but this industry had declined almost to insignificance by our period.²⁵

Through most of the seventeenth century the Medway was navigable only to Maidstone, making the town the principal point of exchange for its considerable resource hinterland (see Maps 4, 5 and 6).²⁶ The growth of Maidstone's role as a point of exchange encouraged the development of a transportation infrastructure for the collection and distribution of the raw materials from its hinterland and for its manufactured goods. The suitability of the Medway to transporting bulk goods and the extensive existing road network helps to explain the lack of new turnpike roads in the area. Edward Hasted wrote that work on the Medway was begun in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in order to improve navigation and extend it further upstream to Tonbridge.²⁷ That the allocation of resources for improvements to the transportation infrastructure was integral to trade and economic growth contemporaries recognized as early as the sixteenth century. The importance of river trade, particularly with the capital city, to the local economy is indicated by the fact

²⁵ Russell, The History of Maidstone, pp. 307-8.

²⁶ Willan, The Inland Trade, p. 21.

²⁷ Hasted, The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent, p. 277.

that over half of the apprentices indentured and freemen enrolled in naval and transport trades were hoymen for the river and coastal trade and their numbers were increasing over the period (see Table 1). As the industries and manufactures of the town developed there was more than adequate transportation to facilitate transport to market.

If we look at Map 4 (Road & River Transportation) and Map 6 (Hop & Fruit growing areas) it is easy to see that Maidstone was a local transport centre. Its accessibility from almost any direction ensured Maidstone's stability and importance.²⁸ The maps also show that the Medway is the natural route through the gap in the North Downs, through which road construction would have been difficult. Above Maidstone the road network serviced the hinterland quite well though road transport was difficult in winter. Even though road transport lagged behind water carriage in importance long into the eighteenth century for market towns, such as Maidstone, the roads surrounding the town were improving greatly in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.²⁹ Maidstone was not on a turnpike road, though it was on a major road from the capital to the south coast and was at the focal point of an intricate regional road network. The road network around Maidstone affected the transport of goods to town for water transport down the river. Maidstone's access to a navigable river also meant that turnpike road

²⁸ Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", p. 5.

²⁹ Newton, The History and Antiquities of Maidstone, p. 9; Chartres, Internal Trade in England, p. 39.

systems of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century were not nearly as extensive, or as necessary in terms of trade, to the area around Maidstone as they were to the north and west of London (see Map 3).³⁰

Maidstone supplied raw materials for industries in many areas of England. The wool and woollen cloth industry of England, still important even after its relative decline, required fuller's earth to remove the oils and impurities from the wool itself. Central Kent held one of the two main deposits in England of this all-important raw material, much of which came through Maidstone.³¹ Maidstone drew some of its raw materials from outside the immediate area, such as the linen rags collected in London for the manufacture of white writing paper.³² Similarly, the Royal Navy dockyards of the Lower Medway and the Thames valley supplied Maidstone with old ropes and sails for the manufacture of coarse brown paper, the more "ancient" of the two types of local paper manufacture.³³

Figure 4 shows some of the economic chains associated with Maidstone's major industries and reflects the complex interaction of the various levels of production, manufacture and distribution. A more detailed description of one of

³⁰ Albert, The Turnpike Road System, pp. 35 & 41.

³¹ Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", p. 180.

³² Coleman, The British Paper Industry: 1495 - 1860, pp. 37-8; Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", p. 211; Russell, The History of Maidstone, p. 326.

³³ Coleman, The British Paper Industry, p. 27; Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", p. 209.

these chains will show the complexity and interaction of economic activity in Maidstone. Looking at the bottom left hand of Figure 4 we see the chain beginning with hemp production and the manufacture of rope. The hemp required primary processing to strip the leaves away and render the stems into their composite fibres before it was passed on to the rope-makers. The fibres then went through the process of braiding and twining into various types of rope, rough twine and string. For the lighter forms of rope, twine and string, the principal markets were manufacturers and producers, who used it for packing and shipping goods, and consumers, who used it for general household activities and small crafts. The principal markets for Maidstone's heavier sorts of rope were the naval and merchant shipping dockyards of the lower Medway and Thames valley, where they were used in ship construction, maintenance and refitting. This, however, was not the end of the chain for this product. As the heavy rope being used on naval and merchant ships wore out, it was gathered by representatives of Maidstone paper-makers and returned to the town, as mentioned above. Once there it was processed, often in converted tulling mills, into coarse brown paper. This brown paper was then used, mainly in packaging and shipping of local products, by various businessmen and tradesmen. At the end of the chain was the individual consumer, who may well have found a household use for the paper once again before it was finally discarded. As this example has shown, the interaction between the trade groups, the products and the markets of the town was complex, and symbiotic. In its complexity it involved

many different types of specialised and diversified economic activities, which helped the town maintain stability and prosperity.

All of the geographic resources with which Maidstone was endowed promoted a more diversified economy than many other towns possessed. Specialisation in local industry had begun by this time with the emergence of larger workshops producing a specialised range of goods, as in the paper-making industry. Individual craftsmen began producing or selling a more specific range of goods (i.e. competition with cordwainers appearing in the form of boot-makers and shoe-makers). Maidstone's economy was also diversifying across a wider range of trades, enhancing its stability in the face of economic fluctuations. Even before the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Maidstone's economic profile had been evolving, specialising and diversifying.

From the thirteenth to mid-sixteenth century, the Maidstone economy prospered from the extraction and sale of its natural resources virtually unrefined. Quarrying of stone for paving, construction and cannon ammunition was the principal activity and export of the town, but resource extraction also involved timber for domestic and naval construction and fuel, and fuller's earth for wool processing.³⁴ Maidstone's industries at this time were really primary processing activities, aimed at the preparation of raw materials for export from the town. Stone-work, metal-work, wood-work, leather-work and the preparation of wool and woollen cloth were

³⁴ Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", pp. 63-100.

the main types of industry, clearly different than the manufacturing industries which would appear later.

The sixteenth century saw two developments which were critical to the evolution of the town's economy. First, the Royal Navy began to use Maidstone as an important collection and supply centre, for goods such as timber and ordnance from the Weald and foodstuffs from Maidstone's hinterland, helping the town develop its transportation facilities, such as wharves and warehouses on the Medway, which benefitted it so much as time went on.³⁵ This had results beyond support for the Royal Navy. Wealden wool production needed easier market access and this improved ability to move goods allowed the fulling and finishing portions of the wool industry to develop in the town, where local clothiers preferred to be situated.³⁶

The second development was the timely arrival of Flemish and Walloon textile workers from the Low Countries, fleeing persecution by the Spanish.³⁷ These workers had skills in woollen and silk manufacture, and later arrivals had skills in thread manufacture, which had not been present in the town prior to their arrival. The arrival of these workers, and the concentration of clothiers in the town, gave a vigorous boost to the textile industry. It also helped Maidstone to begin to move away from mere resource processing towards manufacturing. This was the beginning

³⁵ Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", pp. 117-18.

³⁶ Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", pp. 120-21.

³⁷ Newton, The History and Antiquities of Maidstone, pp. 101-2; Russell, The History of Maidstone, pp. 309-10.

of the broadening of the economic base of the town which provided for its prosperity in our, later, period of study.

The profound effect which the growth of London had on the economy of the nation at this time bore particularly on Kent and the other Home Counties. Maidstone had a large role in fulfilling the growing needs of the City. Transportation improvements (i.e. the River Medway and the enhanced road network) had begun to take effect in the widening of Maidstone's resource and market hinterland.

ii) Maidstone Apprentice and Freeman Records

The picture which emerges from the discussion of the preceding pages is thus one of economic diversity and also of prosperity. Indeed, in guarding against a collapse of the local economy by the decline of any single major industry, that very diversity ensured a greater degree of economic stability and growth than most towns could hope to enjoy. Still, the picture remains to this point impressionistic, and the sources from which it has been drawn have been secondary and often antiquarian in nature. It will be drawn more surely still if it can be shored up with a firmer documentary base. The records selected for analysis are the 367 apprentice indentures from 1692 - 1713 and the 898 freemen enrolled from 1694 - 1723 for the Borough of Maidstone, or 1,265 individual records providing detailed familial,

locational and economic information.³⁸ The information in the individual records and the total number of the records allows us to construct a fairly comprehensive occupational profile. Table 1 shows the totals of Maidstone apprentices and freemen identified with specific trades in the town.

The purpose of the analysis of the records is to identify the principal characteristics of the Maidstone economy. The type of trade to and from the town, the degree of specialisation of occupations and diversification of trades will be discernable from the types and numbers of trades being practised. The records will also give us considerable information on the migration patterns of individuals and their impact on the population structure of the town. As population will serve as background information to other aspects of Maidstone's development, let us examine some of the aspects of the town's population dynamics, before proceeding to examine economic activities and their evolution.

iii) Population Dynamics

Throughout our period the population of Maidstone was increasing at a rapid rate, from 2,600 in 1570, and stood at about 4,000 at the turn of the eighteenth century. Figure 5 shows the population of Maidstone from the late sixteenth to the late eighteenth centuries. The long intervals between population estimates, such as

³⁸ These records, and the methodology used in their analysis, are described in some detail on pages nine through thirteen of the introduction.

the eighty-seven years between the 1695 and 1782 figures, have resulted in the deceptively smooth population curve on the graph.³⁹ Russell uses the Maidstone poor-rate assessments for his population figures up to 1695. He uses the data from the census undertaken by the Curate of All Saints Church, Gilbert Innes, in 1695 and that undertaken by one of his successors, John Denne, in 1782. Thus the figures for the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are fairly exact, while those preceding them are tax-based estimates and, therefore, somewhat less exact.

Maidstone does not seem to have experienced marked fluctuations in population as did the nation as a whole in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (see Fig. 5). The population of England rose from between 5.2 and 5.8 million between 1650 and 1750, experiencing a substantial drop of about 420,000 in from the 1660s to the 1680s and a lesser drop of about 185,000 at the end of the 1720s.⁴⁰ Maidstone's population increased by about 75% between 1650 and 1750, during which period the nation's population increased by less than 12%. Maidstone's population was thus growing at a greater rate than the national population, possibly due to the release from the threat of disease and to increased migration.⁴¹ The rate of population growth in Maidstone showed considerable acceleration in the last decades of the seventeenth century. It increased by about 50% over the last quarter

³⁹ Figures for the graph are from The History of Maidstone, pp. 222-37.

⁴⁰ Wrigley and Schofield, The Population History of England 1541 - 1871, pp. 208-9.

⁴¹ Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", p. 120.

of the seventeenth and first quarter of the eighteenth centuries alone.

Most towns depended on immigration, rather than natural increase, for any increase in population, especially an increase of the magnitude experienced by Maidstone.⁴² The Maidstone case confirms the importance of migration to a town economy, as 36% of apprentices indentured from 1692-1713 were not of the town. Of this group, about 50% came from more than ten miles away and almost 17% from greater than thirty miles, some from as far away as Devon, Shropshire and Northamptonshire (see Fig.6). This does not fit into Peter Clark's model describing most Kentish migrants as short-range, nor does it fit his description of betterment migrants as generally short-range.⁴³ It may indicate that these individuals had a relative certainty of being indentured on arrival and that transportation had improved enough since the early Stuart period described by Clark to facilitate such migration.

Fluctuating labour requirements of Maidstone's businesses affected migration. The average number of apprentices indentured per year in Maidstone between 1692 and 1713 was 18, while 1698 had 57 and 1703 had but 4. The average number of freemen enrolled per year in Maidstone between 1694 and 1723 was 43, while 1714 had 99 and 1716 had only 12. Though close together, these years have labour intakes which vary greatly from the average and represent the flexibility with which the town

⁴² Clark and Slack, English Towns in Transition; 1500 - 1700, pp. 82-86; Clark, "The Migrant in Kentish Towns, 1580-1640", passim.

⁴³ Defined as short-range, low-frequency migrants in search of social mobility in Clark, "The Migrant in Kentish Towns 1580 - 1640", in Clark and Slack, Crisis and Order in English Towns, p. 132.

was able to respond to economic requirements.

The growth of individual trades in the town was assisted by bringing in non-native apprentices, particularly when the labour requirements of a given trade could not be met locally. Over one third of the thirty hoymen apprentices came from elsewhere, half of the ten apprentice gingerbread bakers came from outside Maidstone, as did one third of the town's apprentice gardeners, four fifths of apprentice grocers originated beyond the town, and five of the eight upholsterer apprentices indentured did not come from the town. In contrast, declining trades did not receive the injection of new blood from elsewhere. Amongst mariners, for example, only one of fifteen apprentices was from Maidstone. The data on the origins of freemen are too scant to make the same type of comments for them.

The growth of prosperous trades and decline of stagnant ones is also demonstrated in the progression from the ranks of the apprentices to those of the freemen. Well over half of all Maidstone apprentices also became freemen of the town, but it is the trades of these individuals which are most important. About 45% of the apprentices who became freemen were in the domestic and specialised goods and services trade group, compared to the 35% in that trade group for all freemen. The same is true of the naval and transportation trade group. Almost 16% of the apprentices who became freemen were made free in this group, compared to 9% for all freemen. Conversely, only one individual who graduated from apprenticeship to the freemenry was in the agrarian harvest trade group, as compared to 23 for the

entire freemenry.

The domestic and specialised goods and services trade group yields several instances of individuals being apprenticed in general trades, such as cordwainers or weavers, only to be admitted to the freedom in more specialised trades, such as shoemakers or linen weavers. There are no examples of the reverse occurring. Leaders of the town's economy encouraged specialisation and diversification by its selective admission of individuals involved in certain trades into the town economy.

Why did Maidstone attract substantial numbers of migrants? The answer is quite simple. Maidstone attracted immigrants because it was a judicial (a regional court and jail), administrative (a customs and excise office), business (many markets, fairs and inns), industrial (a wide range of Kentish industries), economic (burgeoning domestic and specialised goods and services) and transportation focal point.⁴⁴ According to Defoe and Hasted, this furnished Maidstone with a relatively affluent and rapidly growing population.⁴⁵ All of these qualities made the town a place of substantial economic opportunity for residents and immigrants.

In economic terms, the importance of population growth and migration lies in the dependence of new and specialist industries on labour as their first and

⁴⁴ Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", p. 4; Defoe, A Tour Through England and Wales, pp. 114-15.

⁴⁵ Defoe, A Tour Through England and Wales, p. 114; Hasted, The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent, Vol. IV, pp. 300-1.

principal resource.⁴⁶ As consumer demand rose, the economy required new workers for training and for the production of goods and services. Maidstone's population growth provided these workers, in addition to being a further catalyst to consumer demand. The increase in Maidstone's population made the town more able to develop economically than many others, particularly those more distant from London. Yet despite all of these advantages, Maidstone's economic development was not one of unhindered, unswerving prosperity.

iv) Economic Evolution: Specialisation and Diversification

Maidstone provides evidence that the adaptation to new conditions could be very complex. Economic evolution was not simply a case of one old industry being replaced by one new industry; diversification of economic activity and specialisation of occupation and production also occurred. The decline of old and the rise of new industries was not a one-time occurrence nor a simple linear progression. A "new" industry could decline or require further economic adaptation in order to succeed.

The major industries of Maidstone were far from stable over the long term, but the town's economic evolution was enhanced by the increasing presence and stability of secondary industries (i.e. those involved in the processing of agricultural goods, such as brewing and leather-working). The major industries of Maidstone went through a repeated cycle of emergence, prosperity, dominance, decay and

⁴⁶ Thirsk, Economic Policy and Projects, p. 158.

replacement. This cycle saw, for example, the flourishing of stone-working in the fourteenth, fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. As this industry declined, woollen cloth-making and finishing rose to a peak between 1570 and 1620, dying out in the early eighteenth century. As woollen industries declined, thread-making rose to prominence and began to fail between 1600 and 1750. Thread was then replaced by paper-making in the seventeenth century.⁴⁷

Each of these successive major industries held a less dominant position in the town's economy as secondary industries and the production of goods and services developed and the town economy diversified. Yet despite the up and down cycle, the town's economy remained on a sound footing because of its diversity, its easy transportation access, its abundant raw materials, its agricultural richness, its access to supplies of fresh water and its proximity to London and other markets and to the naval markets of the lower Medway and Thames valley. These factors, and the presence of stable secondary industries, allowed Maidstone to absorb periodic declines in its major industries without sinking into the economic doldrums faced by less diversified, single industry towns, such as Coventry in the sixteenth century.⁴⁸

The impact of the decline of the woollen cloth industry, certainly of major importance in Maidstone, was twofold. Much Wealden broadcloth had gone through the fulling mills of Maidstone to be processed on its way to market. Thus the

⁴⁷ Morant, "The Historical Geography of the County of Kent", pp. 3-4.

⁴⁸ C. Phythian-Adams, Desolation of a City: Coventry in the Later Middle Ages (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979), passim.

collapse of the Wealden cloth industry, as well as that of Maidstone, caused the decline of fulling in Maidstone and the closing or conversion of fulling mills in the town.⁴⁹ The flow of the cloth trade had also supported part of Maidstone's shipping industry which must have felt the decline of the cloth industry, at least in the short term. In this instance the case of Maidstone tends to confirm what was going on in the nation as a whole, in terms of the disruptive economic effect of a decline in the cloth industry.

Maidstone provides an example of what Thirsk describes as government initiatives to stimulate new industries, partly in reaction to the decline of the wool and woollen cloth industries.⁵⁰ The municipal government's introduction of threaddtwisting to Maidstone was clearly a project to establish a new trade and was initiated in the late sixteenth century, fitting Thirsk's model nicely. The authorities wanted the townsfolk to accept foreigners into their midst and, as a result, it was necessary to protect the livelihoods of the town inhabitants. The Maidstone Corporation petitioned Elizabeth I to allow it to invite Walloon refugees to come to establish and train Englishmen in the art of making thread. The Walloons were prohibited from practising any trade already being followed in the town.⁵¹ Prohibiting newcomers from practising established trades served a dual purpose: it

⁴⁹ Russell, The History of Maidstone, pp. 315-6.

⁵⁰ Thirsk, Economic Policy and Projects, *passim*.

⁵¹ Chalklin, Seventeenth Century Kent, p. 116.

protected the trades of Englishmen and made the town economy less vulnerable to the decline of a single industry by contributing to the town's economic diversification.

By the middle of the seventeenth century threadtwisting was well established as a vertically integrated industry. It was stimulating other activities in the town economy, such as the local production of flax and hemp for thread and rope manufacture. In addition to flax being used for fine linen thread for domestic consumers and manufacturers, flax was used extensively in producing rough thread for the sealing of hop bags after the harvest.⁵² Threadtwisters also made hemp twine and rope for households and, especially, for naval customers at the dockyards on the Thames and the Medway. Naval customers were critical in maintaining the industry as competition from other areas took some markets away.⁵³ This reflects the interdependence, as well as the diversity, of the local economy around Maidstone and on the Medway. Threadtwisters were also entrepreneurs, not just manufacturers, and had a large role in the marketing and sale of their products.⁵⁴

By the start of the eighteenth century, threadtwisting was beginning to suffer competition from the West Country, which had cheaper labour. The number of threadtwister apprentices indentured dropped by roughly seventy percent between 1692-1702 and 1703-13, and the number of threadtwister freemen enrolled dropped

⁵² Russell, The History of Maidstone, p. 318.

⁵³ Coleman, "The Economy of Kent under the Later Stuarts", pp. 197-8.

⁵⁴ Chalklin, Seventeenth Century Kent, p. 128.

by roughly sixty-five percent between 1694-1709 and 1709-1723. Yet despite this decline the thread industry remained one of Maidstone's dominant industries. As can be seen in Table I, threadtwisters made up 4.2% of apprentices indentured from 1692 to 1713 and 4.8% of freemen enrolled from 1694 to 1723, representing one third of the individuals practising the town's industrial trades. Maidstone thread had a national reputation for quality and was in great demand for domestic consumption and hop-bagging well into the eighteenth century.⁵⁵

The new industry which rose to a position of importance in Maidstone, after the decline of threadtwisting was paper-making. The manufacture of coarse brown paper for such uses as wrapping had gone on in Maidstone for many years. The manufacture of high-quality white paper in Maidstone was an example of the developing industries which were aimed at import substitution.⁵⁶ England's output of this product was virtually nil in the mid-seventeenth century, but it was supplying about two-thirds of the nation's needs by 1720.⁵⁷ England's demand had been met previously with Continental imports. There was a clear attempt to exploit the disruption in supply caused by persistent war on the Continent throughout the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Between 1671 and 1700 seven paper mills were operating in the Medway valley within two or three miles of Maidstone,

⁵⁵ Newton, The History and Antiquities of Maidstone, pp. 101-3; Russell, The History of Maidstone, p. 318.

⁵⁶ Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change, p. 36.

⁵⁷ Coleman, The British Paper Industry: 1495-1860, p. 23.

representing a substantial workforce and an important local industry.⁵⁸ For the period as a whole paper-makers represented 4.6% of apprentices indentured and 4.0% of freemen enrolled (see Table 1) or roughly one third of the industrial trade group of Maidstone. In addition, the numbers of paper-makers rose substantially from the previous generation. The number of apprentices and freemen practising the trade increased by roughly 150% since the time of their fathers (see Table 2).

Although threadtwisters and paper-makers maintained their proportion inside the industrial trade group, this group as a whole declined. Industrial trades made up 12.1% of the apprentices indentured and 12.5% of the freemen enrolled for the entire period (see Table 1), but fell from almost one fifth to below one tenth in the period of study, a drop of about fifty percent. This does not mean that industry became less valuable in absolute terms, but that expansion in other areas made industrial production of less value relatively. This represents a major, though declining, portion of the economic activity in the town in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The seventeenth century was the initial growth period in trades oriented towards domestic consumption and industrial trades in Maidstone were outstripped by those producing specialised goods and services in catering to that clientele.

The sponsorship of economic growth in the town, as with the Walloon immigrants and threadtwisting, was not confined to the town government. In the

⁵⁸ Chalklin, Seventeenth Century Kent, pp. 151-2.

Maidstone apprentice records there is an individual named Alexander Fisher, perhaps the descendent of the sixteenth-century Town Clerk of the same name, who paid the indenture fees of fifty-one apprentices, as a gift. These indenture fees were by no means insubstantial, averaging over £9 5s per apprentice, a very large sum in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Besides the fact that he paid the indenture fees of almost one out of every seven apprentices between 1692 and 1713, there are several additional indications that this individual was acting to promote the diversification and stability of the Maidstone economy. He promoted domestic and, particularly, specialised goods and services trade . Almost two thirds of the apprentices Alexander Fisher helped to enter the town economy were in this trade group. He sponsored the indentures of a blacksmith, a collar-maker, 13 cordwainers, 2 gingerbread bakers, 2 locksmiths, 3 tailors, 7 tobacco pipe-makers, a tool-maker and 2 wig-makers. Almost all of these individuals later became freemen of the town. Another interesting note is that few of the masters to whom Mr. Fisher helped indenture apprentices were involved in the political life of the town, as far as can be ascertained. In fact, most of the masters involved took on relatively few apprentices. Alexander Fisher seems to have helped these masters to expand small enterprises, or to stabilise marginal ones, in a trade group of increasing importance to the town's economy. We do not know the motivations for his actions, which may have been benevolent, political or mercenary, but we can be sure that he was an example of how, even when not directly involved in politics, individuals could exert

a strong influence on the direction and pace of the town's development.

The political elite of Maidstone also had a very important role in the town economy. In their business lives, the individuals who served as Mayor during the period covered by our apprentice (1692 - 1713) and freemen (1694 - 1723) records were responsible for the indenture of 18 apprentices and the enrolment of 30 freemen (the total was probably greater for freemen because almost two-thirds of freemen enrolments have no sponsoring master). The individuals thus brought into the town's economy were important for their occupations, rather than their numbers. The majority followed trades of increasing importance to the town economy. The political elite encouraged the emergence of specialised goods and services trades producing for the domestic market, construction, and domestic shipping. Of the 18 apprentices, there were 4 retail grocers, 3 carpenters and 3 milliners and 3 hoymen. Of the 30 freemen, there were 3 apothecaries, 7 gardeners, 4 retail grocers, an upholsterer, a locksmith, a haberdasher, 3 carpenters, 2 lathcleavers (woodworkers), and 4 hoymen.

The influence of the political elite was not confined to those apprentices and freemen which they themselves brought into the town. They could also strongly influence the numbers and trades of individuals allowed into the town economy. This is particularly true of the apprentices and freemen from outside Maidstone because freemen of the town had certain inherent rights to gain admittance for their sons to apprenticeship and to the freemenry. Eldest and second sons of Maidstone freemen

also paid lower entry fees than other individuals. There were substantial differences in the trades taken up by locals and by immigrants. Of the 129 apprentices who did not come from Maidstone, almost 45% were apprenticed into domestic and specialised goods and services trades, well above the 37% for apprentices from the town.

Maidstone's geographical and political situation allowed the town to prosper and grow over a considerable period of time (see Map 7). The areas shown on the map represent the actual extent of the town at the dates indicated in the legend. Its growth is confirmed by a substantial and expanding construction trade group within the town economy. This trade group represented 13.2% of apprentices indentured from 1692 to 1713 and 16.3% of freemen enrolled from 1694 to 1723 and was growing continuously as the period progressed. Over the period apprentices indentured in this area increased by fifty percent within the trade group, and freemen also enrolled rose marginally. The proportion also grew substantially from the previous generation; apprentices and freemen made up 15.0% of the combined set of records, or roughly a forty percent increase over the proportion of their fathers engaged in the same activity (see Table 2). The expansion of the construction trade group indicates a prosperous urban economy and a growing population.

Rural prosperity was also important to the economy of the town. The importance of processing agrarian products, such as leather and grain, to the Maidstone economy indicates that these activities contributed substantially to the

local economy. These trades represented 7.8% of apprentices indentured and 8.0% of freemen enrolled. Over the period the proportion of apprentices and freemen involved in these trades increased; apprentices by almost ten percent and freemen by almost thirty percent within the trade, from 1692 - 1723. At the same time, the number of people involved in agrarian production remained relatively stable or declined in Maidstone, reflecting the new methods and increasing efficiency of agrarian production in this period.

The type of agrarian production in the town was also changing towards the domestic consumer market. Gardeners, rather than farmers or fishermen, made up the bulk of individuals involved in agrarian production in Maidstone. An examination of apprentices, freemen and their fathers shows that gardeners made up more of the agrarian harvest trade group than all the other harvest trades combined, and their numbers were increasing throughout the period. Market gardening was oriented much more towards domestic demand than farming in general and, in Maidstone particularly, was accelerated by the town's proximity to the growing London market and its rising demand for market gardening produce.⁵⁹

These changes in the agrarian harvest and agrarian processing trade groups of the town's economy had a positive effect. Maidstone's economy provided goods imported from outside the region for these workers and producers, as well as

⁵⁹ M. Thick, "Market Gardening in England and Wales", in Thirsk, The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Volume V, ii: 1640 - 1750, p. 510.

providing the transport facilities for the finished goods produced by them. The increased traffic stimulated by this trade was a catalyst for the production of domestic and specialised goods and services. The increase in incomes resulting from these activities provided new consumer demand, though periodic disruptions meant that the process was not smooth and steady.

In addition to the periodic fluctuations in the upward trend of real wages over the years, which were described in Chapter II, there were substantial seasonal fluctuations in wages. For example, in Maidstone in 1698, the quarter sessions set wages for joiners at 10d to 20d per day in the summer, 7d to 14d per day in the winter. Roughly the same differences were set for plumbers, bricklayers, glaziers and plasterers.⁶⁰ This meant that wages were at their annual low point at the same time that food prices were at their annual high. The drop in wages was probably due to two factors: shorter winter working hours and the greater availability of labour as agricultural use of labour was at a seasonal low. The increase in incomes and real wages experienced both long- and short-term fluctuations, but continued to rise over the long run.

Notwithstanding fluctuations in economic well-being throughout the period from 1685-1730, Maidstone continued to rely on its surrounding rural hinterland and its secondary industries as its base of prosperity. Yet the town's economic structure was evolving to become more resilient in the face of external pressures and

⁶⁰ Russell, The History of Maidstone, p. 317.

influences. Some aspects of Maidstone's development were planned at a municipal level, but most were *ad hoc* reactions to changing economic conditions. In the most general sense the changes can be identified as the dual socio-economic processes of specialisation and diversification.

Maidstone had an extensive, and increasing, trade group providing domestic and specialised goods and services. The increase in the number of people practising and in the number of trades being practised in this trade group indicates increased consumer demand and of the degree of focus on the internal market. This trade group represented 40.3% of apprentices indentured from 1692 to 1713 and 34.6% of freemen enrolled from 1694 to 1723, and its growth accelerated as the period progressed. Apprentices indentured in this trade group increased by over forty-five percent and freemen enrolled rose by over twenty-five percent within the trade group from 1692 to 1723. The proportion also grew substantially from the previous generation; apprentices and freemen made up over twelve percent more individuals in this trade group than had their fathers (see Table 2). This trade group of the economy was so dominant and was expanding so rapidly that its growth indeed drove the economic development of the town.

The value of stable major industries, such as threadtwisting and paper-making, should not be under-estimated, but it was clearly the specialisation and diversification in goods and services which fuelled the growth of the Maidstone economy, as it made up anywhere from a third to half of the occupations practised in the town. In

addition, the number of trades being practised in this trade group increased as the period progressed (see Table 3). Maidstone trades data also shows an increase in the number of trades and individuals practising trades in the construction and the naval and transport trade groups, from the previous generation (see Table 2). Specialisation and diversification laid a solid base from which the town economy could develop without apprehension of the decline of a single, dominant industry and its disruptive effect.

The diversification of Maidstone's economy is reflected in the increasing number and types of trades practised in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Table 3 shows the number of trades being practised in Maidstone by fathers, apprentices and freemen. In all three cases there is an increase in the number of trades. Apprentices and freemen practised almost 25% more trades than their fathers. There is an increase of about 16% in the number of trades practised by apprentices from the first to the second half of the period covered. For freemen the increase is 4.5% over the period of study (see Table 3). Though a smaller increase, it still reinforces the trend to economic diversification in the town, as shown by the two larger increases. In each instance, it is the number of trades in the domestic and specialised goods and services trade group which grew in the most pronounced manner.

The development of individual trades also reflected the increasing specialisation of the economy as a whole. Gingerbread bakers made up 2.3% of all

apprentice indentures from 1692 to 1713 and freemen enrolled from 1694 to 1713, but the number of apprentices indentured quadrupled and the number of freemen enrolled tripled from the first to second part of their respective sets of records. There were no fathers of apprentices and freemen in Maidstone who were gingerbread bakers, but, the 10 apprentices and 13 freemen gingerbread makers made up a substantial number of individuals brought into a single trade of the town economy over the period (see Table 1). Gingerbread bakers made up one third of the agrarian processing trade group in the town and outnumbered bakers by ten to one for both apprentices and freemen. Rather than producing the full-range of baked goods as bakers had previously, they were specialising in certain forms of baked goods. This is underscored by the fact that bakers, as a general trade, were declining in numbers in Maidstone over the period, though their numbers did not make up a significant proportion of apprentices or freemen. The presence of increasing numbers of individuals producing gingerbread was significant for a two reasons: it was a specialised, luxury item and it was produced with a valuable spice, ginger, which was a preservative, enabling it to be shipped greater distances.

This trend of general trades being augmented or replaced by more specific was also evident in the making of clothes. The trade of tailoring was augmented by more specialised trades such as glove-making, hat-making and hosiery in Maidstone in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century to meet increasing demand. Of the fathers of apprentices and freemen, there were 4 glovers, 1 hatter and 1 hosier.

Of the apprentices and freemen themselves, there were 5 glovers, 2 hatters and 3 hosiers.

Often the level of occupational specialisation and structural change was masked by the records, which would only have indicated such specialisation for the master or his most specialised journeymen. There was a slight decline in the proportion of apprentices and freemen in paper-making as the period progressed. Rather than reflecting a decline in the importance of paper-making to the town, it probably reflected an increase in the size of the workshop. Each master was presiding over larger numbers of more specialised employees and each master represented a larger proportion of the paper industry's workforce, than was the case for some other industries. Unfortunately these specialised labourers do not appear in the apprentice and freemen records. Entirely new occupations had emerged, such as vatmen, couchers and layers, who made up the workforce of the paper industry at Maidstone, but these trade names were more rapidly assimilated into the production processes than into the official record-keepers' lexicon. Thus despite apparently declining numbers, the trade of paper-making continued to increase in significance in Maidstone throughout the eighteenth century and remains an important activity in the town to this day.⁶¹

Specialised workers, such as those involved in the paper industry, still made up only a small portion of the total Maidstone workforce, but they, and their

⁶¹ Russell, The History of Maidstone, p. 327.

workshops, were important beyond their numbers. For example, seventeenth-century paper mills contributed only modestly to the economy at the time but served as forerunners of future large scale industry.⁶² Excepting the rag collectors who gathered the raw materials for the product, labourers in such mills were all highly skilled and were employed in workshops of up to fifteen people.⁶³ Workshops of this size were larger and more specialised than most other contemporary production units. The degree of specialisation in these workshops anticipated things to come in terms of division of labour and task specialisation. These larger more specialised plants and workforces were still much smaller than later factories, but they helped to break down the social constraints against large, centralised modes of production, increased time discipline and the associated impersonalisation of the workplace. Changes in Maidstone's economy using existing resources, new technologies and larger workforces - as demonstrated by the paper industry - exemplify the gradual shift from traditional, regulated production to modern, unregulated, specialised and diversified production.

Specialisation of the labour force was accompanied by the specialisation and diversification of the workplace. Plant conversion was an appealing and economical means of acquiring specialised facilities with a minimum of capital investment. In the case of Maidstone some disused fulling mills were adapted for manufacturing

⁶² Chalklin, Seventeenth Century Kent, p. 154.

⁶³ Chalklin, Seventeenth Century Kent, p. 153; Coleman, The British Paper Industry, pp. 24-39.

paper and even some of the old equipment could be used for new purposes (for example, fulling hammers could be modified for making paper and boards).⁶⁴ Paper-making allowed Maidstone to shift part of its production away from the cloth industry. The shift from fulling to paper-making in local mills displayed the specialisation and diversification characteristic of the changing economic circumstances. The evolution of the production of goods and services in Maidstone was complex, though it confirmed many trends described by historians for England as a whole.

The provision of these goods and services to consumers was undergoing equally profound and pervasive change. The clientele was also becoming more specialised. The presence of the well-developed trade group producing specialised goods and services underlines the fact that Maidstone also had a substantial population of prosperous citizens and that the surrounding area had an affluent gentry.⁶⁵ The apprenticeship and freemen records confirm the existence of affluent shoppers; the number of goldsmiths, whitesmiths, barbers, barristers, collar-makers, cutlers, tobacco pipe-makers, wig-makers and other tradesmen catering to the well-to-do increased markedly. Moreover, Maidstone's proximity to Tunbridge Wells, a spa town, would certainly have drawn numerous representatives of the upper classes through the town and thereby also encouraged the provision of these goods and

⁶⁴ Chalklin, Seventeenth Century Kent, p. 154.

⁶⁵ Defoe, A Tour Through England and Wales, pp. 114-15, 186; Borsay, The English Urban Renaissance, pp. 30, 202.

services.

v) Exchange of Goods and Services

As a point of exchange for a large and resource-rich hinterland and as a trading town so near to London, Maidstone was involved in the change in orientation from foreign to domestic markets from early on. As described above for the trade of gardeners, the economy of Maidstone increasingly focused on the domestic market, particularly that of London. This section deals with the patterns of Maidstone's trade and distribution.

Since a great proportion of Maidstone trade was river-oriented, the type of river transportation used to deliver goods to and from Maidstone can serve as a rough indicator of whether these goods were destined for foreign or domestic markets.⁶⁶ The river trade of Maidstone depended on both mariners (international and long-haul traffic) and hoymen (river and coastal traffic). In Maidstone, as with England as a whole, domestic trade was becoming relatively more important than foreign trade in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The growth in the importance of domestic trade was most marked by a comparison of the apprentices and freemen with the previous generation. Hoyman apprentices and freemen increased six hundred percent over their fathers, from 9 to 58, while mariner apprentices and freemen had increased by only about one hundred percent over their

⁶⁶ Newton, The History and Antiquities of Maidstone, p. 100.

fathers, from 9 to 19 (see Table 2). The relative decline in the importance of foreign trade was most marked within the period of 1692 to 1723. The numbers of both apprentices and freemen recorded as hoymen were stable or slightly increasing as the period progressed. On the other hand, apprentices indentured as mariners fell by three quarters, and freemen enrolled as mariners fell by more than half during the period of study. In addition, of the Maidstone apprentices who became freemen, six were apprenticed as mariners and gained the freedom of the town as hoymen. Conversely, no apprentice hoymen became freemen as mariners.

The falling proportion of mariners relative to hoymen confirms the increasing focus on domestic trade. The trend was probably due to two processes: greater emphasis on local, regional and London consumer markets and the concentration of overseas shipping in London. Most coastal trade went to London for distribution, even that which was destined for export abroad, since London served as a distribution, consumption and export centre.⁶⁷ As with the nation as a whole, the reduced influence of foreign trade in Maidstone was relative and foreign trade continued to be of considerable importance to the town's economy.

As the focus of trade shifted away from foreign to domestic markets, so did the domestic market shift from regulated to unregulated transactions. The use of inns and public houses for business transactions circumvented market tolls and

⁶⁷ Willan, The Inland Trade, p. 122.

regulations and allowed businessmen to buy and sell more flexibly.⁶⁸ The inns and public houses played the role of commercial exchanges, shopping and transportation centres. One historian has argued that these informal transaction facilities complemented the established markets and fairs.⁶⁹ Although this may be true, it was also the case that the inns served as transaction centres because of considerable disillusionment with the selections offered and regulations imposed at markets and fairs. Inns served as an essential link between market and retail systems.⁷⁰

Regardless of the reason, inns were becoming important points of interaction, not only in business, but also in transport and communications.⁷¹ Although there is no specific evidence that this informal transaction network actually existed in Maidstone, the large number of inns in the town in the seventeenth century (forty-six) certainly would have facilitated such activity (see Map 8). This sizable number of inns was a result of Maidstone's role as a point of exchange on the transportation network and its prosperity in relation to its markets. The majority of these inns were adjacent to, or within a short distance of, the market place, which would have greatly facilitated the informal transactions described above.

⁶⁸ Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", p. 128; Coleman, "The Economy of Kent under the Later Stuarts", p. 141.

⁶⁹ Clark, The Transformation of English Provincial Towns, p. 22; Clark, The English Alehouse, p. 9.

⁷⁰ Mitchell, "The Development of Urban Retailing", p. 269.

⁷¹ Clark, The English Alehouse, p. 138.

Defoe mentions that Maidstone was the best market town in the county in the first quarter of the eighteenth century.⁷² The fact that Maidstone's markets and fairs prospered indicates that the town's economy may have been slower to move towards a retail shop-centred orientation than those whose economies were less prosperous, but probably began moving away from the regulations of the markets and fairs. This is partly due to Maidstone's role as a point of exchange, not an end market, which encouraged the town's merchants to exploit wholesale markets, rather than retail sales.

vi) The Influence of London and the Medway Towns

The proximity of London - "undoubtedly the most diversified centre in Britain, and possibly Europe, by 1700"⁷³ - had a profound effect on the evolution of Maidstone in terms of industry, politics, agriculture and economy. Defoe describes

⁷² Defoe, A Tour Through England and Wales, p. 113.

⁷³ The demands of London consumers promoted growth in some towns (i.e. by purchasing coal from Newcastle upon Tyne) while its commercial and manufacturing competition adversely affected other towns (i.e. some, though not all, port towns). Beier, "Engine of Manufacture: The Trades of London"; Chartres, "Food Consumption and Internal Trade"; Dietz, "Overseas Trade and Metropolitan Growth" and Kitch "Capital and Kingdom: Migration to Later Stuart London" in Beier and Finlay, The Making of the Metropolis: London 1500 - 1700; Corfield, "Urban Development in England and Wales in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries"; Corfield, The Impact of English Towns: 1700 - 1800; Finlay, Population and Metropolis: London Demography: 1580 - 1650; Fisher, "The Development of London as a Centre for Conspicuous Consumption"; Fisher, "London as an 'Engine of Economic Growth'"; Pearl, "Change and Stability in Seventeenth Century London"; Rappaport, Worlds within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth Century London; Wrigley, "A Simple Model of London's Importance".

how "London is supplied with more particulars from Maidstone than any other market town in England".⁷⁴ These "particulars" included cattle, timber, grain, fruits, vegetables, Kentish ragstone for paving, fine white sand for glass. Many of the crops grown, such as market gardening produce and hops, and industries practised, such as paper-making and threadtwisting, were oriented towards a consumer market, and towards London as a centre of conspicuous consumption. Proximity to both London and the Medway Towns benefited Maidstone's economy by stimulating agriculture, industry and trade.⁷⁵

London's relationship with Maidstone was more reciprocal than might be at first thought. The City acted both as a consumer and a supplier of labour, raw materials and manufactured goods. London supplied considerable seasonal labour to Kent, which was important to sustaining trade in Maidstone. The Maidstone area was particularly suited to the production of hops and most inhabitants, "of all degrees", had some land in hop production.⁷⁶ The hop trade helped furnish a good portion of the town's wealth, but it also benefited London. Maidstone supplied considerable amounts of hops to the expanding London brewing industry and employed thousands of East London labourers to harvest this lucrative crop, a

⁷⁴ Defoe, A Tour through England and Wales, p. 113.

⁷⁵ Fisher, "London as an 'Engine of Economic Growth'", passim.

⁷⁶ Ireland, A New and Complete History of the County of Kent, p. 625.

practice that endured well into the twentieth century.⁷⁷ If London had not been so close, it is doubtful that Maidstone would have been able to exploit hop cultivation on the same scale, because of the labour-intensive nature of its harvest.

Raw materials not only flowed into London, they also flowed out. Woollen and linen rags were sent back to Maidstone as the hoys returned from the City. These were important raw materials for the manufacture of white paper. High-quality white paper was an important product for shipment from Maidstone to the London printing industry and to the local, regional and national clergy and upper classes. Many other centres could not develop white paper-making as an industry because of the difficulty in acquiring raw materials and the costs of transporting the bulky final product. Discarded ropes and sails from Royal Navy dockyards on the Medway and the Thames were also brought to Maidstone for making brown paper.⁷⁸ Brown paper went to London and elsewhere as wrapping paper and packaging material for the rapidly expanding internal trade of the seventeenth century.

Of course London was not the only consumer of these manufactures, but it was by far the most important. The City had manufactures of its own, but it was more important as a trade and distributive centre.⁷⁹ London became a supplier of

⁷⁷ Russell, The History of Maidstone, p. 322.

⁷⁸ Chalklin, Seventeenth Century Kent, p. 152; Coleman, The British Paper Industry, p. 26.

⁷⁹ Wrigley, "A Simple Model of London's Importance", p. 62.

demands for provincial centres as it increased its role as a distributive centre for imports from abroad, as well as the rest of England.⁸⁰ Maidstone's increasing ability to supply the capital with agricultural products resulted in the town's increasing ability to purchase luxury foodstuffs and household wares from the City.⁸¹

In addition to London, the produce of Maidstone was distributed to the substantial number of prosperous and populous towns in the Maidstone area which had to be supplied with local goods and with those specialised and luxury goods brought through Maidstone from a distance.⁸² The latter goods were often unavailable locally, but could be bought in London. The growing predominance of hoymen over mariners in the Maidstone economy, shown in the apprentice and freemen records and described above, is a confirmation of the increasing influence of the two-way traffic with London. Maidstone served as a distributive centre for imported goods within the confines of the its large regional hinterland.

The other principal influences over Maidstone's development were the Medway Towns of Rochester, Chatham and Gillingham in Kent; these towns sit adjacent to each other near the confluence of the Thames and Medway rivers. The impact of these towns was strong, not only because of their own substantial consumer markets, but because of the building, maintaining and victualling of Royal Navy ships

⁸⁰ Clark and Slack, English Towns in Transition; 1500 - 1700, p. 76.

⁸¹ Chalklin, Seventeenth Century Kent, p. 182

⁸² Newton, The History and Antiquities of Maidstone, p. 9.

at the dockyards in Chatham and the Thames valley. By the mid-seventeenth century the Royal Navy was taking advantage of the scale of Maidstone's wharves and storehouses as well as the town's resource hinterland by using Maidstone as a natural supply centre and assembly point for victualling and construction materials.⁸³

As a result, warfare had a major impact on the local economy. The need to victual the armies on the Continent and the Royal Navy at sea stimulated trade, particularly in the Medway valley where products of this type were a focus of the local economy. Warfare brought on scarcities of those goods which had been imported, but also promoted the domestic production of these same goods, such as the manufacture of fine white paper mentioned above. In addition, Maidstone's economy benefited from increased shipments of timber and ordnance from the Weald to the Royal Navy dockyards, as shown by the increase in the number of timberbrokers in the town economy. There were three apprentice and freemen timberbrokers in Maidstone from 1692-1723, while there had been none amongst the fathers of the apprentices and freemen.

Looking at Figure 7, we can see there was a trend to increased activity in ship construction towards the end of the seventeenth century at the Chatham Royal Navy dockyard. The construction dropped off from 1700 to 1730, when it picked up again. This pattern roughly reflects the pattern of wars in which England was engaged at the time. Even though there was continuous activity in maintaining already existing

⁸³ Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", p. 120.

ships, the activity or inactivity of ship construction at the dockyards must have had a corresponding and substantial effect on the Maidstone and Medway economies. As a result, this effect would likely have been more detrimental to those trades involved in ship construction and in supplying ship construction materials, than to those supplying victuals for ships crews. This would have been counter-balanced by a shortage of shipping capacity caused by ships being diverted to the war effort, which would have encouraged the building of merchant ships to continue the consumer trade.⁸⁴ It may also have encouraged the use of road transportation in the area. War alleviated economic stress by utilising unemployed or under-employed labour to meet the additional demand created by the armed forces and the shortages in the local and national economies.⁸⁵

The evolution of Maidstone's economy and the impact on it of the economic processes active in the English economy give us a good example of how an individual town reacted to change. It also shows us how the development of a specific town depended simultaneously on national and international influences general to all towns and on local and regional influences unique to its situation.

From examining the apprentice indentures and freemen rolls, we have seen that Maidstone's economy was specialising and diversifying during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The evolution of the Maidstone economy was

⁸⁴ Mathias, The First Industrial Nation, p. 43.

⁸⁵ Mathias, The First Industrial Nation, p. 207.

not one of steady and continuous prosperity. The town's major industries underwent a repeated cycle of emergence, development, prosperity and decline, but the town's economy was relatively sound over a long period. The stability of the town's economy was due to a solid and diversified base of specialised secondary economic activities. This base was expanding throughout the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries with the development of new trades such as gingerbread-making. Maidstone served as an example of how increasing focus on domestic consumer markets manifested itself at a local level. The increasing focus on coastal and river transportation demonstrated the town's awareness that domestic markets were increasing in importance. On the foundation of a rich resource hinterland, a prosperous and growing population and its position as local transportation hub, as well as its role as a political, economic, religious and judicial centre, Maidstone was well situated to take its place in the evolution of the English economy.

Chapter IV

Conclusions

The transformation of the English economy from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century affected almost all facets of society.¹ The older economy was traditional, relatively undiversified, regulated, export-oriented and agrarian dominated. The newer economy was more diversified, relatively unregulated, domestic market-oriented and dominated by commerce. The transition from the former to the latter was slow and gradual with no precise delineation between the two.² In reality they operated as a composite system as different elements of the national economy adapted to changing conditions. Manufacturing was on a small scale, but contributed substantially to the national economy, and was growing, specialising and diversifying throughout the period. In the early years of the transition, the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, change was spurred on by a need to recover from national economic depressions caused by the decline of established and dominant staple export industries. The economy had been so dependent on wool and woollen cloth exports that its collapse depressed the entire

¹ Wrigley, "The Process of Modernisation", pp. 228-29.

² Wrigley, Continuity, Chance and Change, pp. 8-9; Crafts, British Economic Growth During the Industrial Revolution, pp. 10, 17, 61-66; Cameron, "A New View of European Industrialisation", p. 2-3.

national economy.³

Maidstone's economy suffered less than the nation as a whole because of its relative diversification, its resource-rich hinterland and its geographical advantages. In Maidstone, the decline of wool, the rise and decline of thread-making, the rise of paper-making and the increase in the provision of goods and services took well over 150 years. Taken together, these changes had a pervasive economic impact extending across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as described by Thirsk, and well into the eighteenth century, as described by McKendrick.⁴ This shift in economic activity also helped move Maidstone's economy from production for export towards production for domestic consumption. Along the way the process displayed characteristics of both the Thirsk and McKendrick models, and in the end defeats attempts to squeeze the economic transition of Maidstone into a unitary model of a narrow time frame.

According to Thirsk the early phase of economic adaptation was characterized by planned, government supported projects aimed at providing viable economic alternatives to staple exports. Projects began in the context of a strictly regulated economy under government direction and funding and, as a result, were for the most part cautious and well thought out. The persistent and successful efforts of the

³ Bowden, The Wool Trade in Tudor and Stuart England, *passim*; Thirsk, "Seventeenth-Century Agriculture and Social Change" in Thirsk, The Rural Economy of England, pp. 184-5.

⁴ Thirsk, Economic Policy and Projects, *passim* and McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, The Birth of a Consumer Society, Introduction.

Maidstone corporation to bring in threadwisters from the Low Countries exemplifies this approach in Maidstone.

Late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century economic change was driven by the opportunity to exploit new and expanding consumer demand.⁵ Morant's work and the Maidstone data showing the increasing number of apprentices and freemen in domestic and specialised goods and services trades indicate that Maidstone's economy was also involved in this development.⁶ There was also a greater focus on Maidstone's capacity to capitalise on domestic trade, which enabled the town to move its goods to outside markets. This phase of economic development was less planned and more reflexive than the previous one because flexible consumer demand and competition began to dominate the responses of merchants, traders and manufacturers.

Clay, Corfield, Mathias, Coleman, Berg and McKendrick all agree that these changes were taking place, but each places the process in a progressively later time period.⁷ The driving force for economic change shifted from the necessity to recover

⁵ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, The Birth of a Consumer Society, p. 1; Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change, p. 16; Mathias, The Transformation of England, p. 155.

⁶ Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", p. 218; MBR, "Register of Apprentices Indentured: 1692-1713"; MBR, "Register of Freemen Enrolments; 1694-1723".

⁷ Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change; Corfield, The Impact of English Towns: 1700 - 1800; Mathias, The First Industrial Nation; Mathias, The Transformation of England; Coleman, The Economy of England: 1450 - 1750; Coleman, Industry in Tudor and Stuart England; Berg, The Age of Manufactures;

from depression to the desire to profit from consumer demand. Some of the projects described by Thirsk were quite profitable, and over the seventeenth century more economic projects or enterprises were successful. This undoubtedly prompted more people in England to venture into new trades and occupations, without the explicit support and encouragement of governments, in order to capitalise on the opportunities of mass markets and increasing consumer demand. Despite this, we must recognize that there has never been a time since the Elizabethan age when funding of industrial and commercial projects was the exclusive jurisdiction of the public or private sector, even to the present day. Like the changing importance of markets and fairs in relation to retail shops, public and private funding coexisted with each other. Indeed, they often complemented each other.

As a result of this process the economies of England, and of Maidstone, moved from Thirsk's model (early seventeenth-century publicly-sponsored and regulated projects) into those described by Clay, Corfield, McKendrick and others (seventeenth and eighteenth century with more emphasis on unregulated private initiative and funding). In moving from one model to another the English economy was going through different phases of the same overall process of economic expansion. The gradual change in the thinking of political economists through the seventeenth century such as Gray, Reynel and Defoe tends to confirm the slow,

1700 - 1820; McKendrick, "Home Demand and Economic Growth"; McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, The Birth of a Consumer Society.

steady nature of economic adaptations. Because of its diversification, Maidstone experienced less in the way of economic depression than the nation as a whole, and other towns specifically, but it experienced similar developmental phases in economic growth.

The importance of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries is that this was when the elements of change came together. Large parts of the country were undergoing the same types of economic change, albeit at different rates, and the foundations of new patterns of mass production and mass consumption were being laid. The principal catalyst for economic change was increased consumer demand and it arose for many reasons: population increases, rising real wages and greater family incomes, increased availability of consumer goods, greater access to retail sales facilities, and transportation improvements being the most important. As demand patterns changed, so did the methods of production and supply, which specialised and diversified in response to increased demand. Specialisation and diversification produced a greater range of goods which were made available to a larger proportion of the population, extending further down the social scale.⁸ The concentration of the Maidstone economy on the provision of domestic and specialised goods and services is reflective of the reorientation of production towards domestic consumption. All these adaptations required changes in economic thinking and organisation as well as in social attitudes which could only have taken place over an

⁸ Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change, pp. 27-34.

extended period of time.

In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the economic transition was nearing a maturity which allowed the economy of the mid-eighteenth century to expand without the constraints which had limited previous growth.⁹ Some parts of the nation remained economically and technologically backward, or only displayed partial development, for a long time. For this and other reasons they were slower to join in the commercialisation enjoyed by the rest of the nation. Maidstone had many geographical and resource advantages, and it worked to extend them, by such means as the enhancement and extension of Medway River's carrying capacity, which allowed it to maintain its prominent economic position despite changing products and markets.¹⁰ The balanced economy of the town allowed it to fare better than the nation in general, which suffered more serious economic declines. Nevertheless, England as a whole was undergoing a long-term economic expansion unprecedented in its history.

If historians focus on short periods of time, they overlook many of the more gradual and profound aspects of change. Although it is important to identify and explain the attributes of change in each short period, it is equally important to keep these in perspective and to link them to previous and subsequent ones. This is of paramount importance when examining the pathway to industrial development in

⁹ Cameron, "A New View of European Industrialisation", p. 4.

¹⁰ Coleman, "The Economy of Kent under the Later Stuarts", p. 142.

England. Too much focus on the technical aspects of industrial development can lead to the conclusion that the process was simpler, later and shorter than it was in reality.

Contrary to McKendrick's view of the eighteenth century as the birth of consumer society, this essay would identify the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries as the birth of a consumer society orienting itself towards domestic production and consumption because of the collapse of the wool trade and the beginnings of economic specialisation and diversification. These were the years when the economy first felt the power of the domestic market and the fragility of foreign ones. The early and mid-seventeenth century was the childhood of commercialisation when consumer demand began to grow to such a degree that political economists and businessmen began to take notice. It was grudgingly realised that the economy was changing, but businessmen and politicians were reluctant to change with it. The adolescence of consumer society began in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries when the national economy was developing and beginning to direct itself towards economic expansion through domestic production and sales. As with real adolescents, this was a period of fluctuation as consumers experimented with fashion for the first time on a large scale.¹¹ The economy was moving away from its over-regulated parent of earlier times. Consumer society moved into its adult stage in the mid-eighteenth century when the commercial economy came into its own and

¹¹ Thirsk, "The Fantastical Folly of Fashion", pp. 235-6.

developed without the old constraints. People acquired the ability to afford, and opportunity to acquire, goods which they had been unable to previously. The description of the prosperity of Maidstone, made by contemporary Daniel Defoe, would indicate that the town was at least as prosperous as the nation as a whole, probably more so.¹² Business and industry started to exploit this and to determine their own fates by creating demand through vehicles such as advertising and marketing in the style of men such as Josiah Wedgwood.¹³ The strong development of the transport and specialised goods and services trades in Maidstone show how internal markets and consumer demand were influencing the town's economic development. The improved standard of living in most of the population underlines how the society had matured and was providing for itself quite well. Maidstone serves as an example of the many different changes which were occurring in the national economy. Some changes in the town's economy came earlier than in the nation as a whole, others later, but all the changes in Maidstone's economy had roots long before the end of the seventeenth century.

Specialisation and diversification were involved in almost all social and economic changes, and they assisted in the widening of national, regional and local economic bases.¹⁴ This widening in the economic base gave greater stability which, in turn, allowed capital accumulation, long-term investment in fixed assets, enhanced transportation facilities and a more developed division of labour which subsequently

¹² Defoe, A Tour through England and Wales, p. 113.

¹³ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, The Birth of a Consumer Society, p. 101.

¹⁴ Wrigley, Continuity, Chance and Change, pp. 126-29.

became the Industrial Revolution of the mid- to late eighteenth century, based on machine technology, the factory system and greater capital investment.

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Appendix 1: Tables

TABLE 1: Maidstone Apprentice & Freemen Trade Groups
 Column 1: Apprentices: 1692 - 1713, Column 2: Freemen: 1694 - 1723.

1) Agrarian Harvest Trades		4) Industrial Trades		7) Domestic and Specialized Goods and Services	
Farmer	1	Dyer	1	Apothecary	2 4
Fisherman	1 1	Felt-maker	2 1	Armourer	1
Gardiner	12 15	Flax Draper	1	Barber	7 6
Husbandman	5 5	Flax-dresser	1	Barrister	4
Labourer	1	Fuller	1	Basket-maker	3 3
-----		Linen Draper	2	Bellman	1
Total	18 23	Linen Weaver	4 5	Blacksmith	15 18
Percentage	4.7% 4.4%	Paper-maker	17 17	Bodice-maker	1
-----		Ribbon Weaver	1	Bolt-maker	1
2) Agrarian Processing Trades		Rope-maker	1	Bookbinder	1
-----		Thread-twister	19 28	Brasier	1 3
Baker	1 1	Turner	5	Clerk	1
Brewer	1 4	Weaver	4 2	Clock-maker	2 1
Butcher	9 4	Woollen Draper	1	Collar-maker	5 3
Distiller	1	-----		Cooper	1 1
Dry Salter	1	Total	47 66	Cordwainer	51 54
Gingerbread Baker	10 13	Percentage	12.1% 12.5%	Cutler	2 4
Maltster	6 9	5) Construction Trades		Glover	1 4
Mealman	1	-----		Goldsmith	1 2
Miller	1 7	Bricklayer	11 30	Gunsmith	1
Millwright	1 1	Brick-maker	3 1	HARRIER	1 3
Tanner	1	Carpenter	22 34	Hatter	2
-----		Freemason	1	Heel-maker	1 4
Total	30 42	Glazier	1 1	Hosier	1 2
Percentage	7.8% 8.0%	Joiner	10 13	Lath-cleaver	2
-----		Painter & Stainer	1 1	Locksmith	6 4
3) Distributive Trades		Pipe-maker	2 2	Man Midwife	1
-----		Plumber	1 2	Milliner	3
Chapman	1	Sawyer	1	Music Master	1
Clothier	2	-----		Musitioner	1 1
Costermonger	2	Total	51 86	Pastry Cook	1
Felmonger	2 2	Percentage	13.2% 16.3%	Patton-maker	7 2
Fruiterer	3 6	6) Naval & Transport Trades		Sadler	1 1
Grocer	10 18	-----		Shoemaker	1 4
Haberdasher	1 3	Carrier	1	Surgeon	2
Hair-buyer	1	Hoyman	32 26	Tailor	12 17
Innkeeper	1 1	Mariner	15 4	Tallow Chandler	2 3
Ironmonger	3 3	Shipwright	4 5	Tobacco Pipe-maker	9 6
Merchant Tailor	2	Waggoner	2	Tool-maker	1 6 -
Ostler	1	Wheelwright	6 10	Upholsterer	8 9
Salesman	1 2	-----		Watch-maker	1
Threadman	1 2	Total	57 48	Whitesmith	1
Timber Broker	2 1	Percentage	14.7% 9.1%	Wig-maker	6
Victualler	32	-----		Total	156 182
Vintner	2 2	-----		Percentage	40.3% 34.6%
-----		-----		-----	
Total	28 79	-----		-----	
Percentage	7.2% 15.0%	-----		-----	

TABLE 2: Maidstone Apprentice & Freeman Trade Groups
 Column 1: Father and Column 2: Apprentice or Freeman: 1692 - 1723

1) Agrarian Harvest Trades			4) Industrial Trades			7) Domestic and Specialised Goods and Services		
Farmer	1		Dyer	3	1	Apothecary	2	6
Fisherman	4	2	Felt-maker	1	3	Armourer	1	1
Gardiner	24	27	Flax Draper		1	Barber	11	19
Husbandman	28	10	Flax-dresser	1	1	Barrister		4
Labourer	10	1	Fuller	4	1	Basket-maker	1	6
-----			Linen Draper	1	2	Bellman		1
Total	66	41	Linen Weaver	5	9	Blacksmith	9	33
Percentage	11.8%	4.5%	Paper-maker	8	34	Bodice-maker		1
-----			Ribbon Weaver		1	Bolt-maker	1	1
2) Agrarian Processing Trades			Rope-maker	2	1	Bookbinder		1
Baker	6	2	Thread-twister	39	47	Brasier		4
Brewer	1	4	Turner		5	Clerk	3	1
Butcher	25	13	Weaver	4	5	Clock-maker	1	3
Distiller	3	1	Woolcomber	1		Collar-maker	4	8
Dry Salter	3	1	Woollen Draper	3	1	Cooper	9	2
Gingerbread Baker		23	-----			Cordwainer	64	106
Maltster	23	15	Total	72	112	Cutler	2	6
Mealman		1	Percentage	12.9%	12.2%	File-maker	1	
Miller	6	8	5) Construction Trades			Glover	4	5
Millwright	1	2	-----			Goaler	1	
Tanner	3	1	Bricklayer	27	41	Goldsmith	4	3
-----			Brick-maker	1	4	Gunsmith		1
Total	71	71	Carpenter	26	56	Harrier	3	4
Percentage	12.7%	7.7%	Carpenter	26	56	Hatter	1	2
-----			Freemason	1	1	Heel-maker		5
3) Distributive Trades			Glazier	1	2	Hosier	1	3
Chapwoman	1		Joiner	5	23	Lath-cleaver	1	2
Chapman		1	Painter & Stainer		2	Locksmith	4	10
Cheesemonger	1		Pipe-maker	2	5	Man Midwife		1
Clothier	2	2	Plumber	1	3	Mercer	7	
Costermonger	1	1	Sawyer		1	Milliner	3	3
Felmonger	2	3	-----			Music Master		1
Fruiterer	6	9	Total	64	138	Musitioner	2	2
Grocer	12	28	Percentage	11.5%	15.0%	Pail-maker	1	
Haberdasher	10	4	6) Naval & Transport Trades			Pastry Cook		1
Hair-buyer		1	-----			Patton-maker	2	9
Innkeeper	6	2	Carrier	3	1	Potter		1
Ironmonger	1	6	Hoyman	9	58	Sadler	2	6
Merchant Tailor	2	2	Lighterman	1		Shoemaker	2	4
Ostler		1	Mariner	9	19	Swingler	1	
Oylman	1		Shipwright	1	9	Surgeon	3	2
Salesman	1	3	Tideman	1		Tailor	16	29
Threadman		3	Waterman	2		Tallow Chandler	5	8
Timber Broker		3	Waggoner		2	Tobacco Pipe-maker	4	15
Victualler	15	32	Wheelwright	12	16	Tool-maker	1	1
Vintner	1	4	-----			Turner	4	
-----			Total	38	105	Upholsterer	2	17
Total	62	105	Percentage	6.8%	11.4%	Watch-maker		1
Percentage	11.1%	11.4%	-----			Whitesmith		1
-----			7) Domestic and Specialised Goods and Services			Wig-maker	1	8
-----			-----			-----		
-----			-----			Total	184	348
-----			-----			Percentage	33.0%	37.8%

Table 3: Number of Trades Practiced in Maidstone by
Fathers, Apprentices and Freemen: 1692-1723.

Trade Groups 1692-1723	Fathers		Appr/ Free	
1 Agrarian Harvest Trades	4	4.44%	5	4.46%
2 Agrarian Processing Trades	9	10.00%	11	9.82%
3 Distributive Trades	14	15.56%	18	16.07%
4 Industrial Trades	12	13.33%	14	12.50%
5 Construction Trades	7	7.78%	9	8.04%
6 Naval & Transport Trades	8	8.89%	6	5.36%
7 Domestic and Specialised Goods and Services	36	40.00%	49	43.75%
TOTAL	90	100.00%	112	100.00%

This represents a change of
24.44% in the number of trades practiced in Maidstone
between generations.

Number of Trades Practiced by Maidstone Apprentices.

Trade Groups 1692-1713	1692-1702		1703-1713	
1 Agrarian Harvest Trades	2	4.08%	3	5.26%
2 Agrarian Processing Trades	6	12.24%	5	8.77%
3 Distributive Trades	7	14.29%	7	12.28%
4 Industrial Trades	6	12.24%	5	8.77%
5 Construction Trades	3	6.12%	8	14.04%
6 Naval & Transport Trades	4	8.16%	4	7.02%
7 Domestic and Specialised Goods and Services	21	42.86%	25	43.86%
TOTAL	49	100.00%	57	100.00%

This represents a change of
16.33% in the number of trades practiced in Maidstone
from the first to the second half of the sample.

Number of Trades Practiced by Maidstone Freemen.

Trade Groups 1694-1723	1694-1709		1709-1723	
1 Agrarian Harvest Trades	2	2.99%	5	7.14%
2 Agrarian Processing Trades	8	11.94%	7	10.00%
3 Distributive Trades	11	16.42%	11	15.71%
4 Industrial Trades	11	16.42%	8	11.43%
5 Construction Trades	7	10.45%	7	10.00%
6 Naval & Transport Trades	5	7.46%	5	7.14%
7 Domestic and Specialised Goods and Services	23	34.33%	27	38.57%
TOTAL	67	100.00%	70	100.00%

This represents a change of
4.48% in the number of trades practiced in Maidstone
from the first to the second half of the sample.

Appendix 2: Figures

Population and Real Wage Index

1620 - 1750

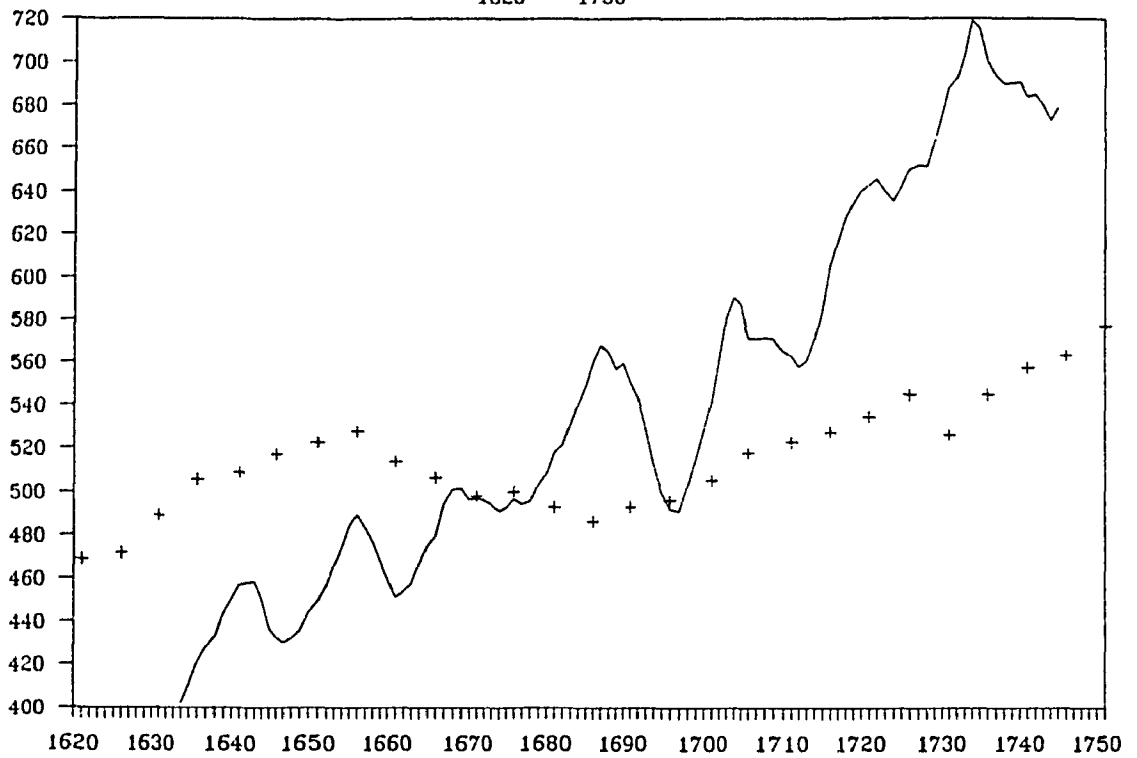


Figure 1
— Real Wages 10yr avg + Population (0,000s)

Data taken from E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, The Population History of England 1541 - 1871, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 532-33 and 642-43.

Real Wage Index

Annual and Decennial: 1630 - 1750

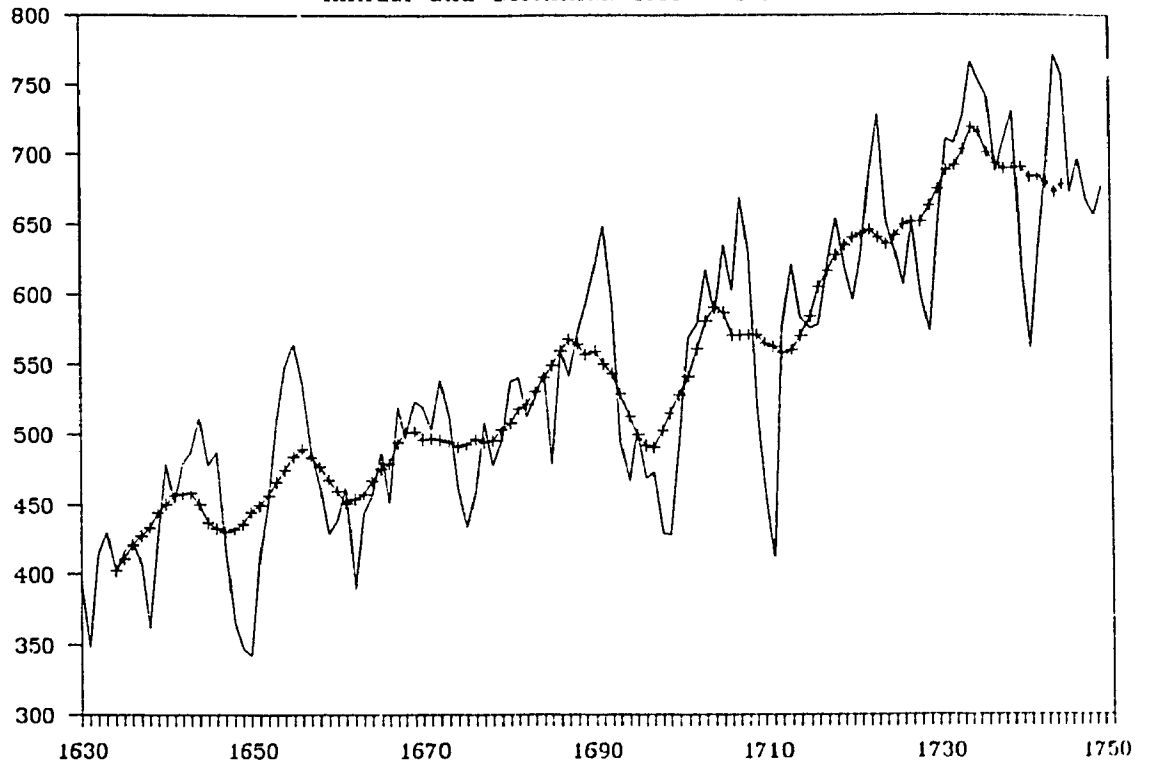


Figure 2
— Real Wage Index
+ 10 Yr Avg of Index

Data taken from E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, The Population History of England 1541 - 1871, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 642-43.

Population Totals: England 1616 - 1766

Quinquennial Figures

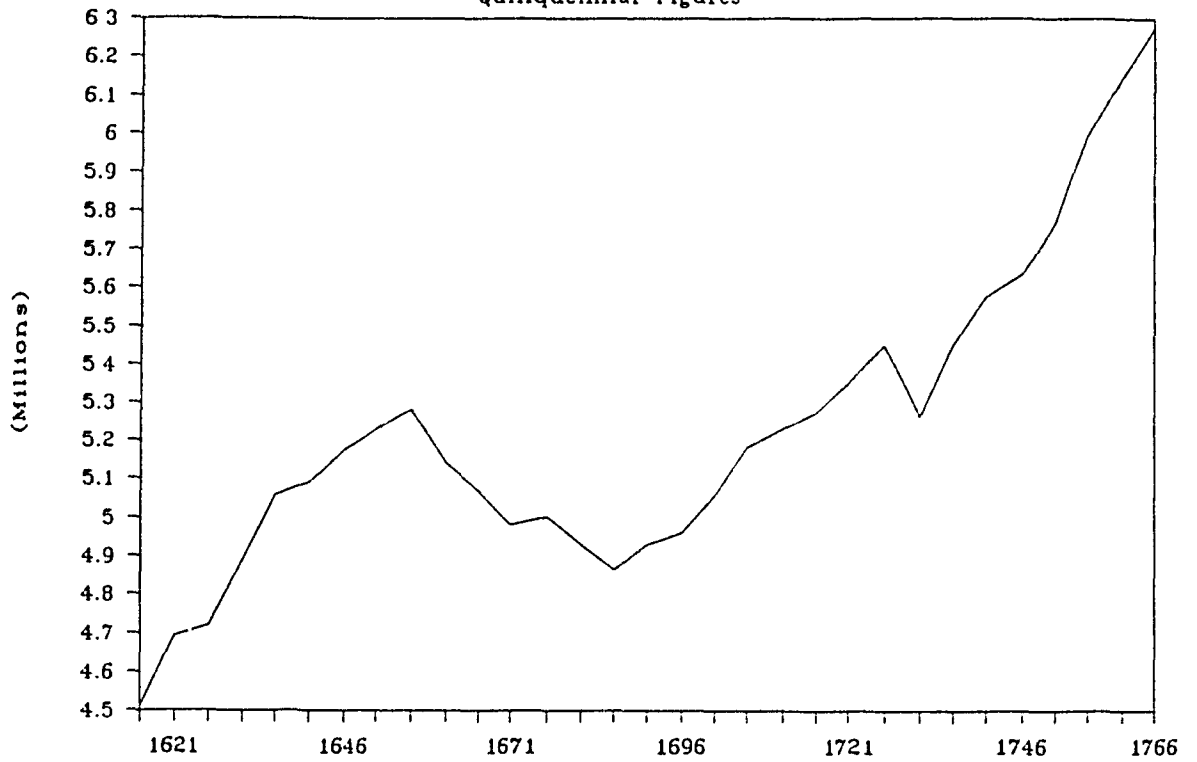
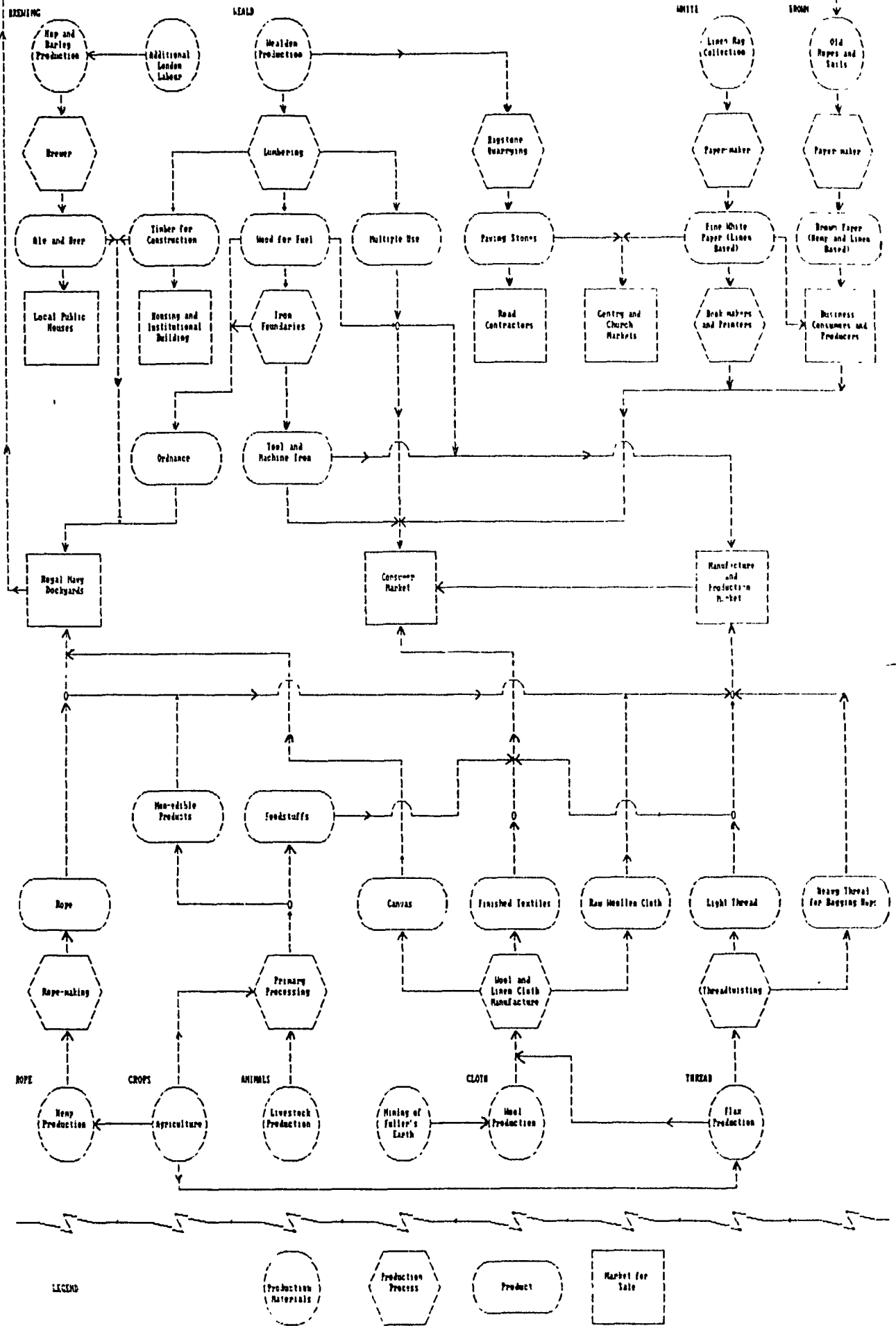


Figure 3

Data taken from E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, The Population History of England 1541 - 1871, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 532-33.

Walden's Primary Economic Chain



Population Totals: Maidstone

1570 - 1782

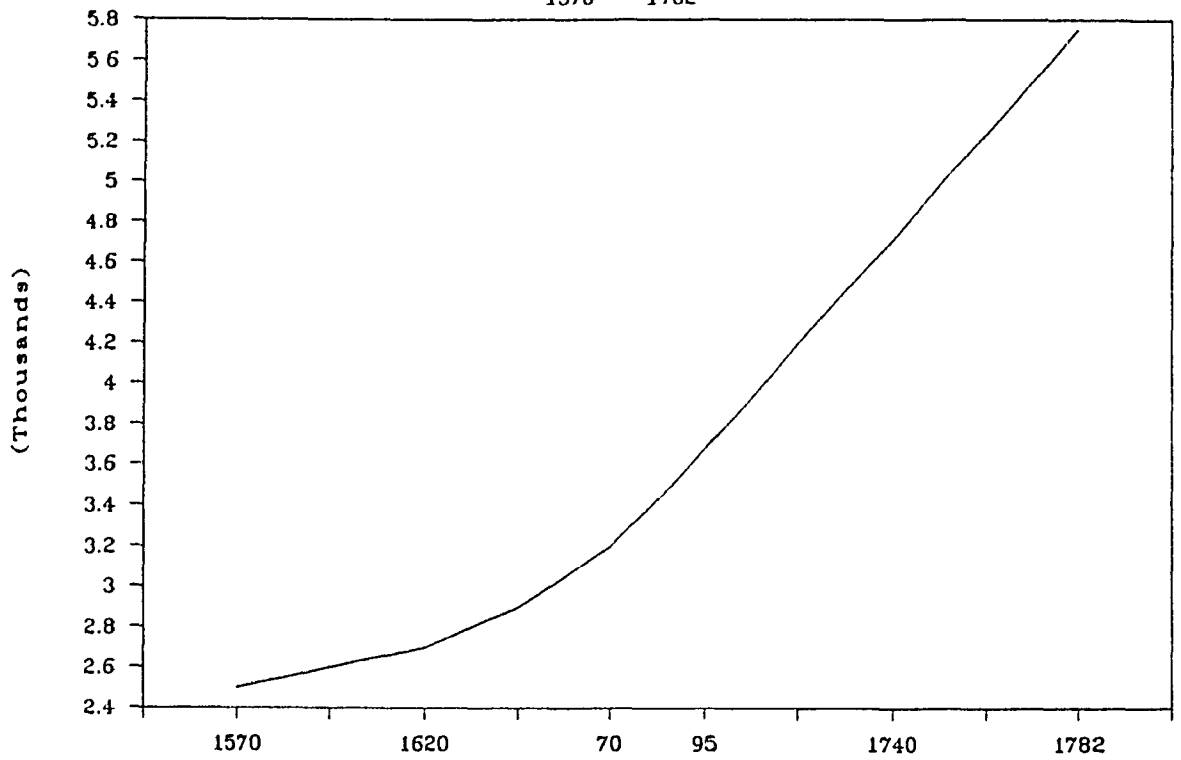


Figure 5

Data taken from J.M. Russell, The History of Maidstone,
(Maidstone, Kent, Wm.S. Vivish, 1881), p. 22-37.

Apprentices Travelling to Maidstone

(Distances are in Miles)

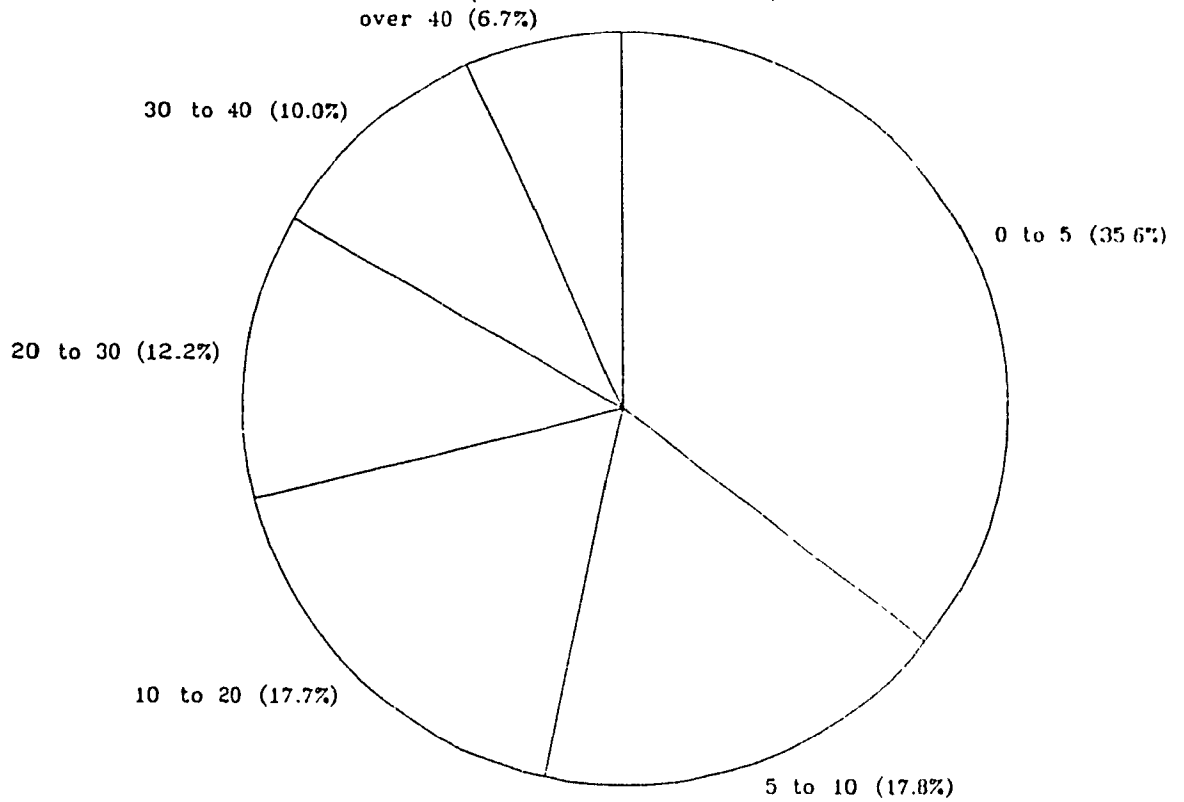


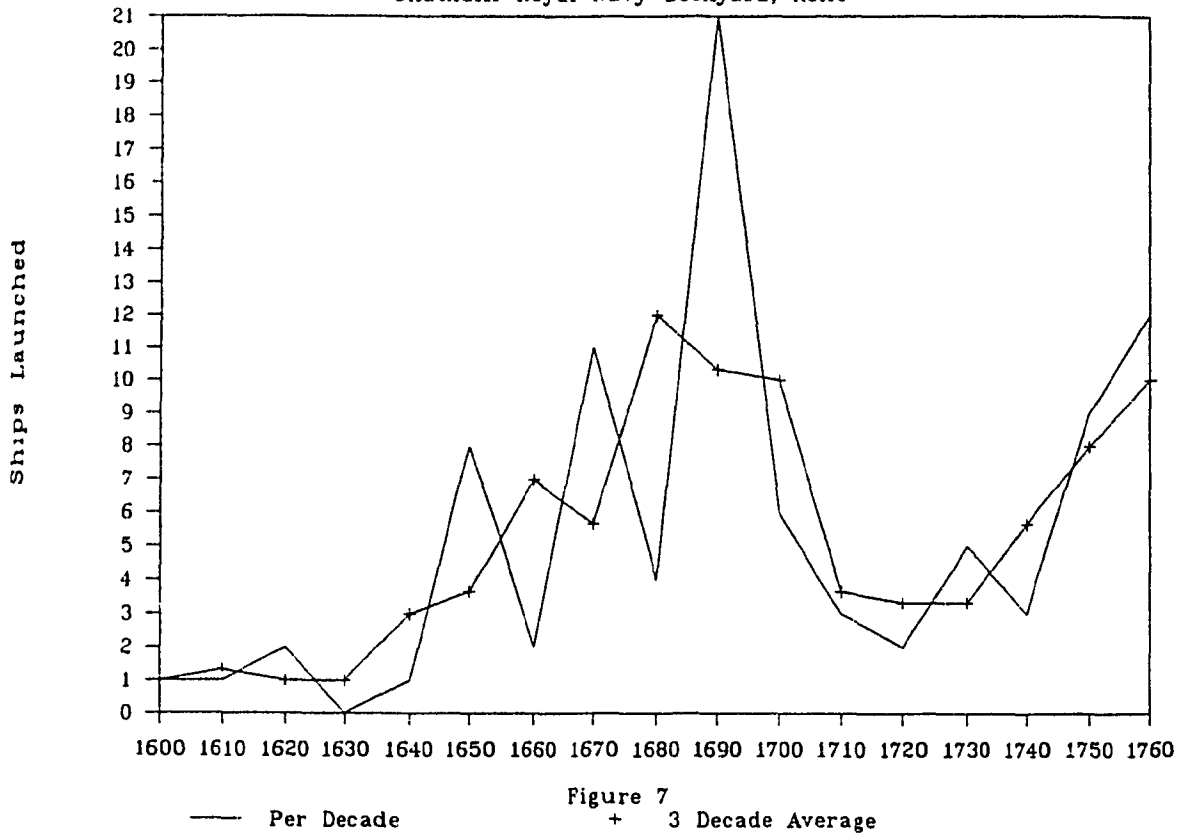
Figure 6

NOTE: These figures represent the thirty-six percent of apprentices indentured from 1692 -1713 who did not come from Maidstone itself.

Derived from Maidstone Borough Records, "Register of Apprentices Indentured 1692 - 1713", Kent County Archives, Kent County Council, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent.

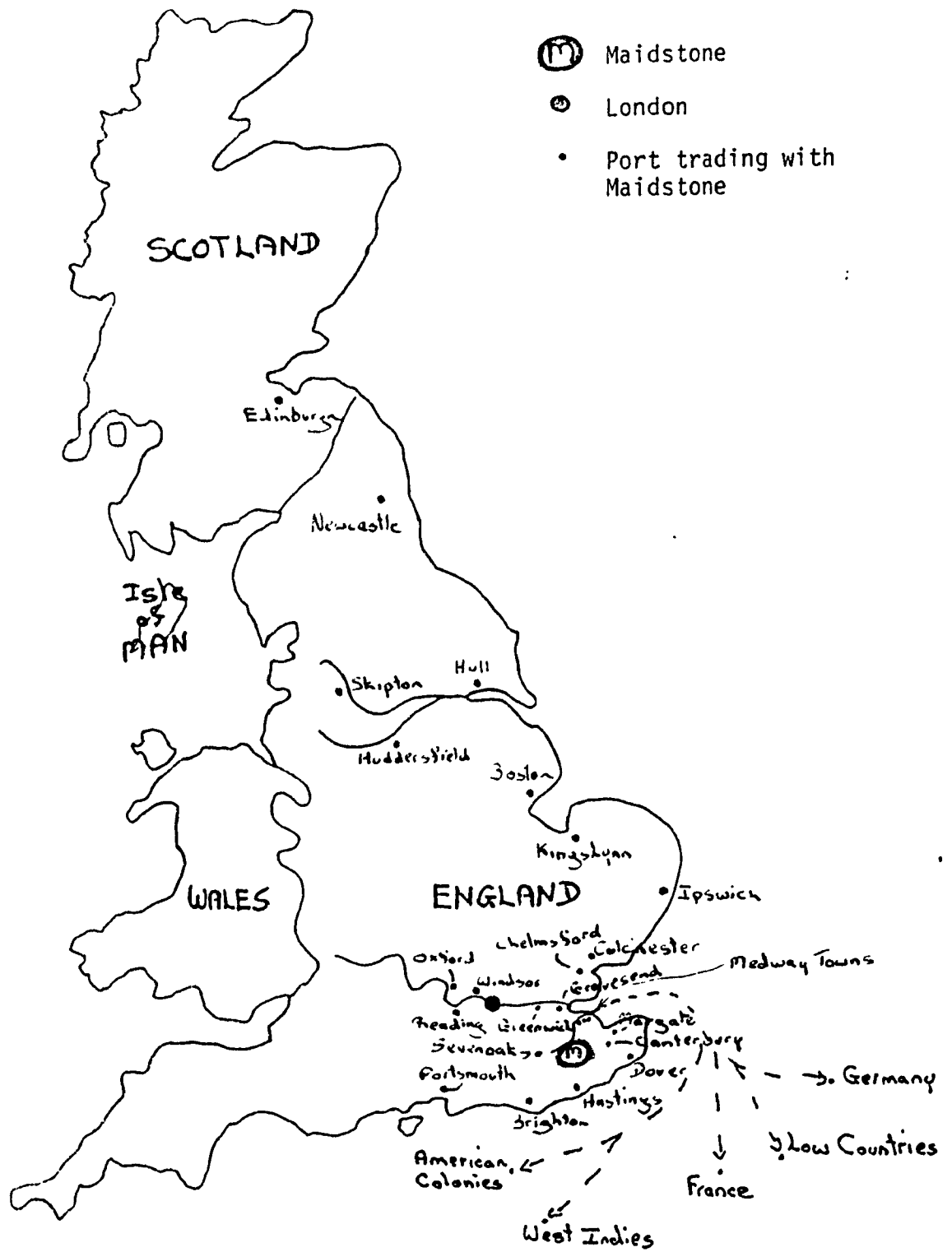
Number of Ships Launched

Chatham Royal Navy Dockyard, Kent



Data taken from Ship Construction Log, Royal Navy Dockyard, Chatham, Kent.

Appendix 3: Maps

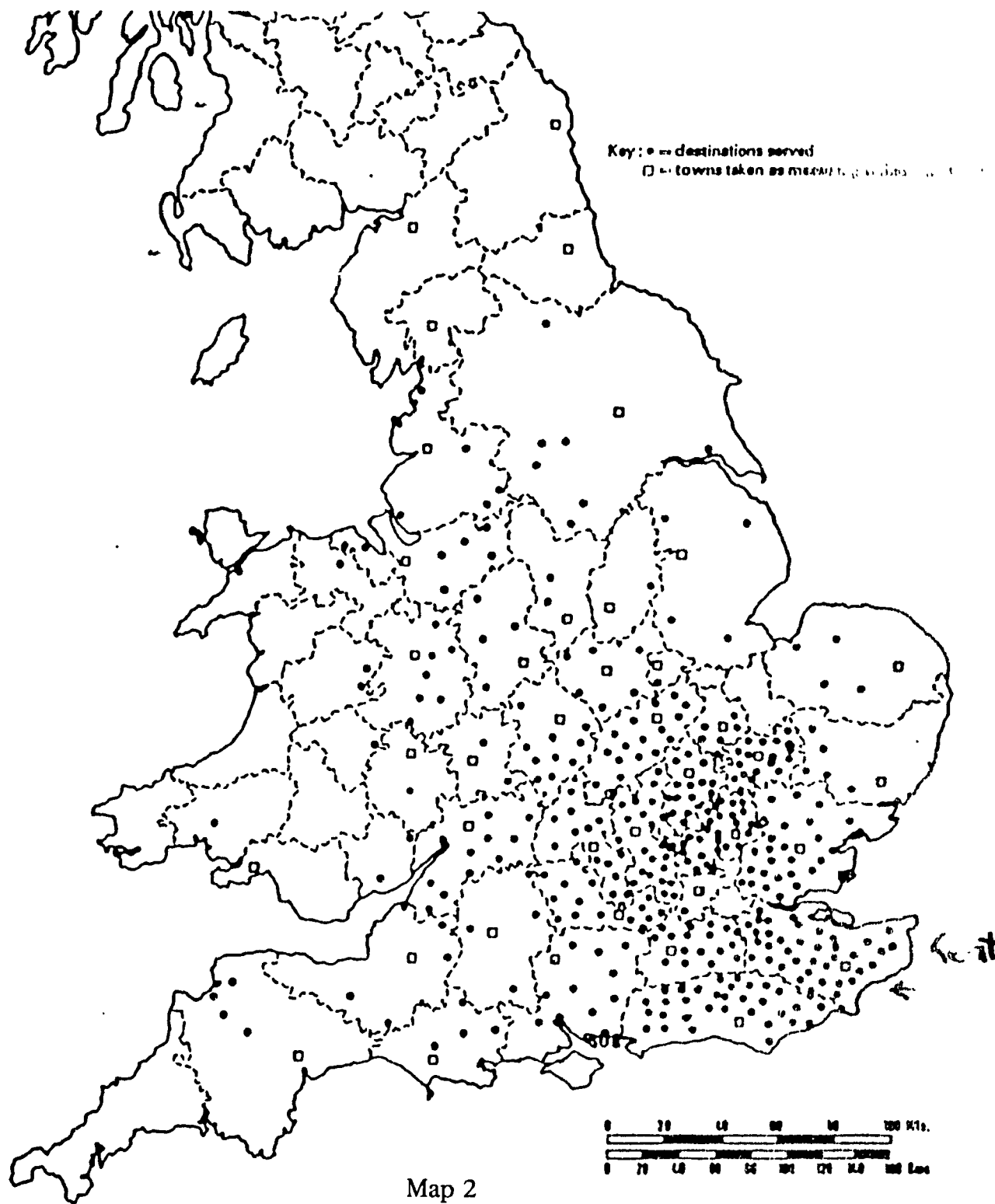


Great Britain and Maidstone

MAP 1

Taken from V.E. Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", London, Unpublished University of London M.A. Thesis, 1948.

Principal Destinations of Road Carrying Services in 1715



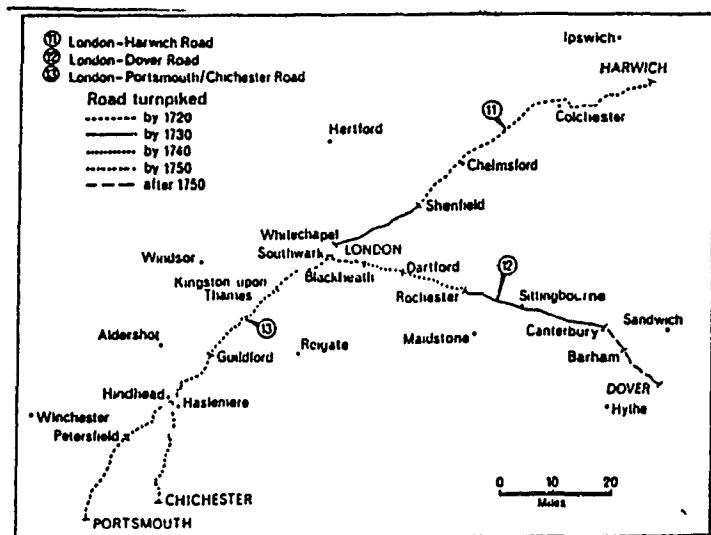
Map 2

Taken from J.A. Chartres, J.A., "Road Carrying in England in the Seventeenth Century: Myth and Reality", Economic History Review, (30, 1977).

Turnpike Roads to London



Roads to the north and west of London

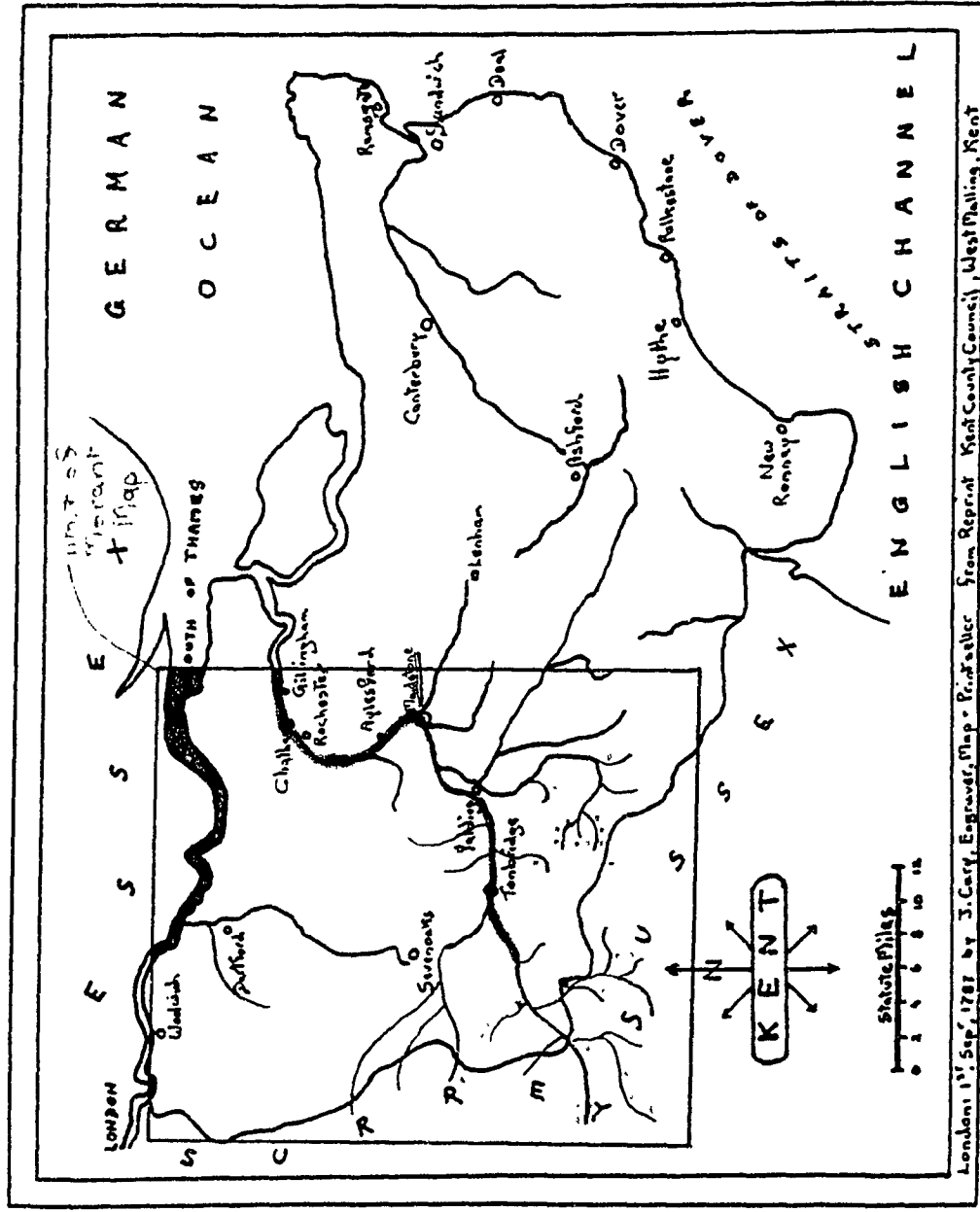


Roads to the east and south-west of London

Map 3

Taken from Albert, W., *The Turnpike Road System in England, 1663 - 1840*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972).

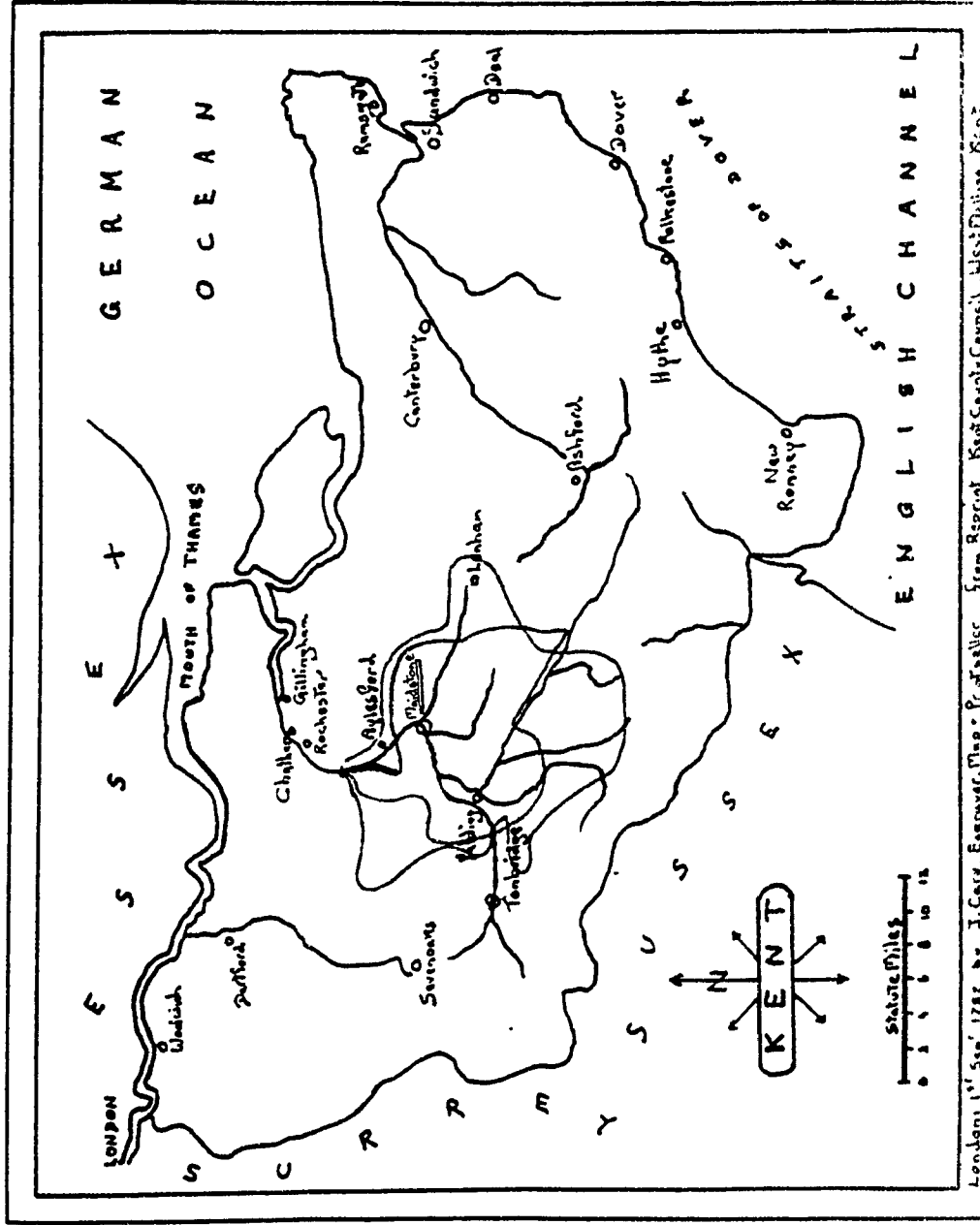
Navigation of the River Medway



Map 5

Taken from V.E. Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", London, Unpublished University of London M.A. Thesis, 1948.

Hop and Fruit Growing Areas near Maidstone

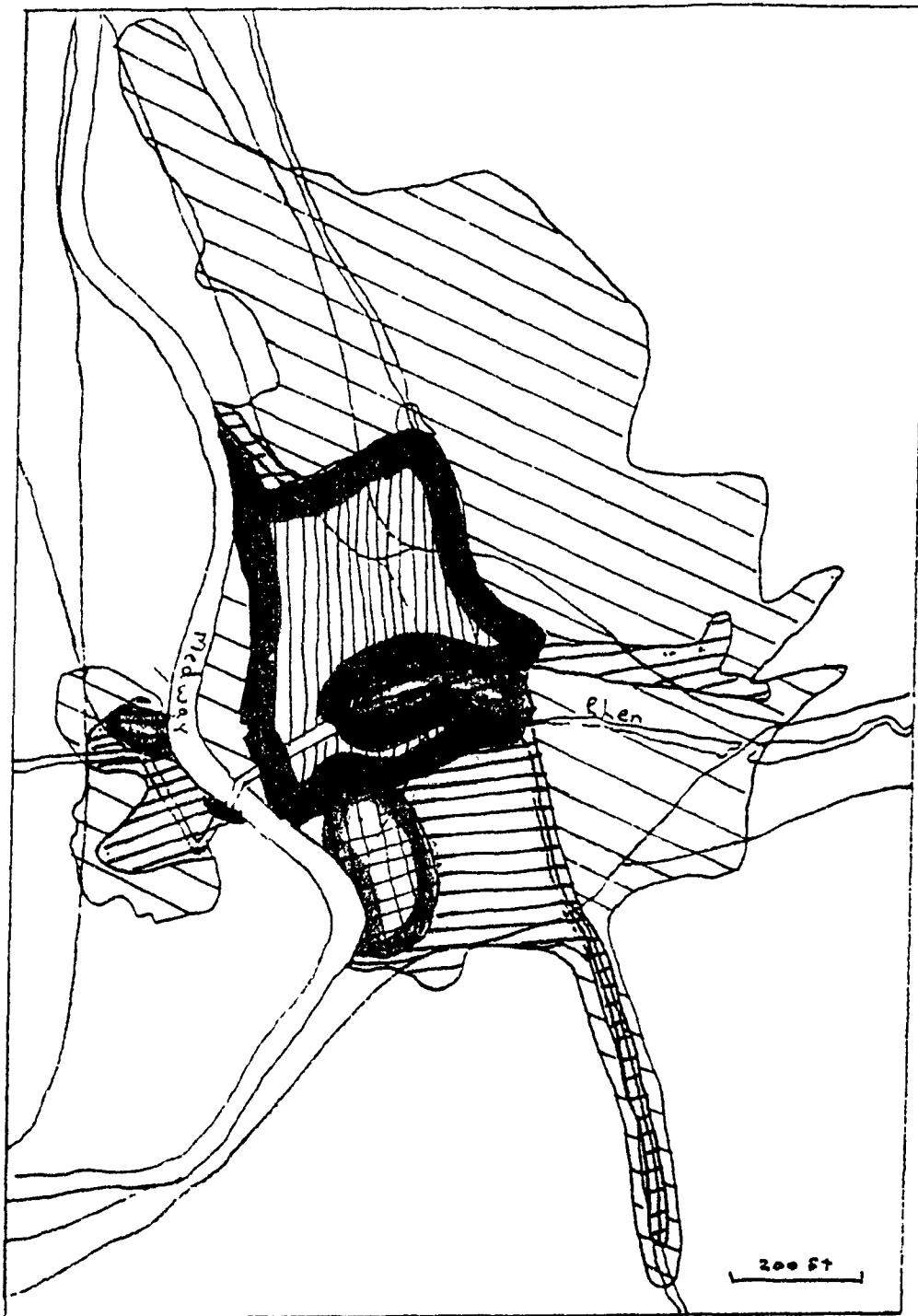


Mid-Kent
Fruit Belt

Principal
Hop and
Fruit Areas

Taken from V.E. Morant. 'The Historical Geography of Maidstone'. London, Unpublished University of London Thesis, 1952.

The Growth of Maidstone in Extent



Map 7

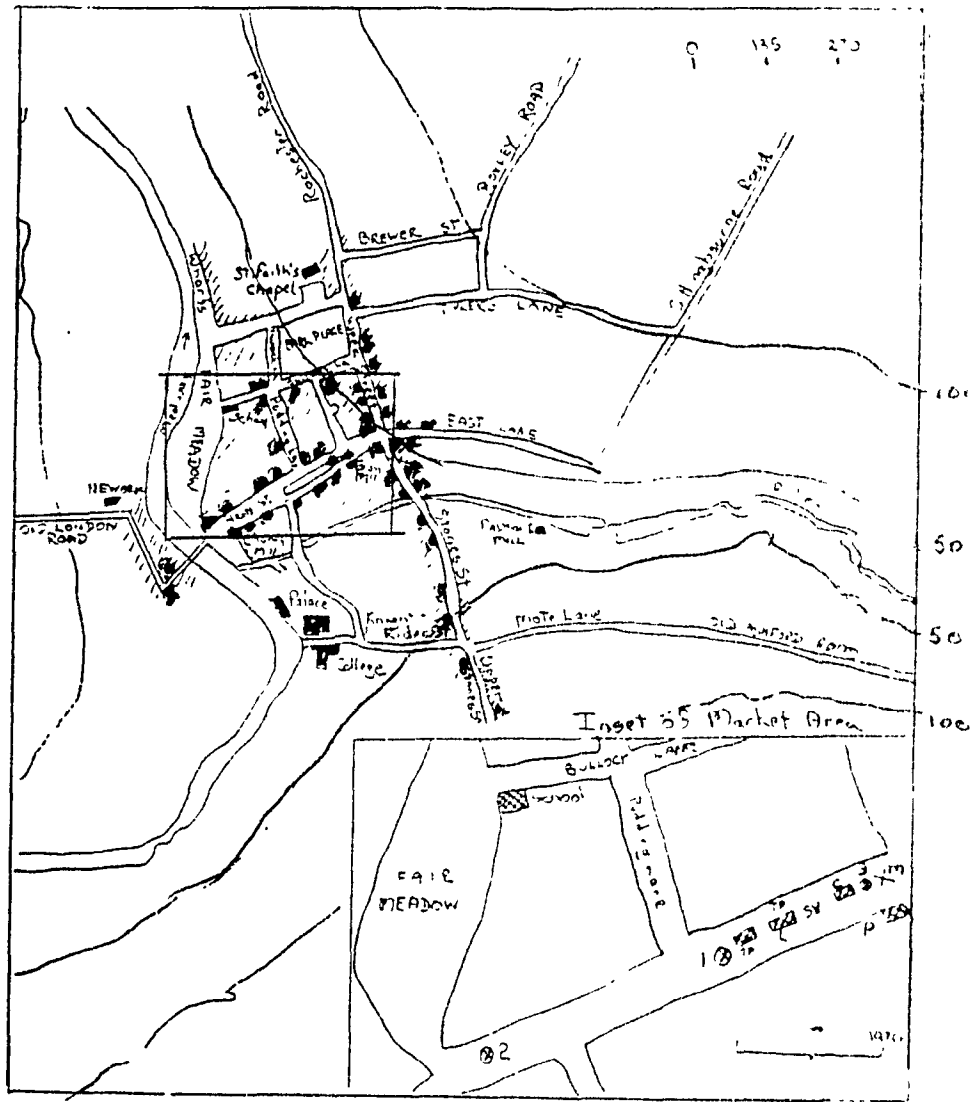
Medieval Nuclear Areas
Extent in 1778

Approximate Extent in 1600
Extent in 1837



Road

Taken from V.E. Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", London, Unpublished University of London M.A. Thesis, 1948.

Maidstone in the Seventeenth Century



Map 8

- | | |
|---|--|
| O - Conduit | • Inn present in 1699 |
| L - Lower Court House and Town Hall | SH - Shambles |
| C - Corn Market and Upper Court House | TP - Town Prison |
| M - Market Cross | P - County Prison |
|  Area built up in 1700 . |  Contour Line (50ft) |

Taken from V.E. Morant, "The Historical Geography of Maidstone", London. Unpublished University of London M.A. Thesis, 1948.