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Abstract

This study explores the agrarian economy of Romney Marsh and its hinterland, c. 1730-90. It offers a fresh contribution to current knowledge in respect of landlord-tenant relations, landholding structures and farming practice. Some 60 years are covered, framed within a wider context embracing two distinct and contrasting economic phases that characterized the long eighteenth century.

Special reference to the Knatchbull family affords in-depth insight into an eighteenth century Kentish landed estate, whose interests lay on the marsh and its hinterland. There is an appraisal of the character and values of Sir Wyndham Knatchbull in his official and unofficial roles at the head of the community. Aspects of the Home Farm economy of Mersham Hatch are explored. Particular attention is paid to landlord-tenant relations, and the multi-dimensional nature of negotiations for substantial holdings on Walland Marsh. The impact of a windfall inheritance is seen when, from 1763, the seventh baronet succeeded to the estate.

Using early Land Tax evidence for the region, there is a comprehensive analysis of landownership and land occupation structures, c. 1746-90. An unusually large area is covered, for an exceptionally early period, adding substantially to current knowledge. Marsh tax evidence discloses landownership and land occupation structures on Walland/Denge, 1738-91. Used in tandem with the tax listings, the wider interests of 'dual-regional' farmers are more fully appreciated, and for whom knowledge has hitherto been confined to their operations on the marsh. These findings, together with the investigation of previously unexplored aspects of farming practice, offer fresh insight into the symbiotic relationship between the marsh and its hinterland.

The influence of ties of social obligation and market-led considerations on landlord-tenant relations are recurring themes. On the marsh, tenant initiative and market demand are seen as the main driving forces that re-shaped patterns of landholding over the period.

**THE AGRARIAN ECONOMY
OF ROMNEY MARSH
AND ITS HINTERLAND,
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO THE KNATCHBULL ESTATE,
*c. 1730-90***

by

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**Thesis submitted
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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¹ Investigations culminating in the surprising discovery that sheep are not as stupid as we thought. Neuroscientific evidence suggests they can recognise faces - and not only those of their fellow sheep, but also the faces of us humans. Moreover, sheep can remember the faces of familiar individuals even after long periods of separation. K. M. Kendrick, A. P. da Costa, A. Leigh, M. R. Hinton and J. W. Peirce, ‘Sheep don’t forget a face’, in *Nature*, 414 (2001), pp. 165-6.

Canterbury Christ Church might be the best place to seek asylum. Fenella Jones has been an ongoing source of help on many levels; the words of Ann Still have been invaluable. Thanks are due to Christine Starr. The support of Canterbury Vineyard (notably Jim Denison, Wendy Morrell and Leasa Merrill) are greatly valued. Above all, heartfelt thanks are due to the One (affectionately known as 'HQ') in Whom all things hold together.

Finally, the responsibility for any remaining errors, shortcomings and all other 'Things Unseen and Forgott' contained herein is entirely my own.²

² A catch-all phrase sometimes used by assessors when compiling probate inventories.

Abbreviations

AgHEW – *The agrarian history of England and Wales*

AgHR – *Agricultural history review*.

American Hist. Rev. – *American historical review*.

Arch Cant – *Archaeologia Cantiana*.

Canadian J. Hist. – *Canadian journal of history*.

CKS – Centre for Kentish studies.

DNB – *Dictionary of national biography*.

EEBO – *Early English books online*.

EKAC – East Kent archives centre.

EcHR – *Economic history review*.

EngHR – *English historical review*.

ESRO – East Sussex record office.

J. Hist. Geog. – *Journal of historical geography*.

J. Hist. Sociology – *Journal of historical Sociology*.

J. Mod. Hist. – *Journal of modern history*.

J. Roy. Soc. Arts – *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*.

KASMI – Kent archaeological society monumental inscriptions.

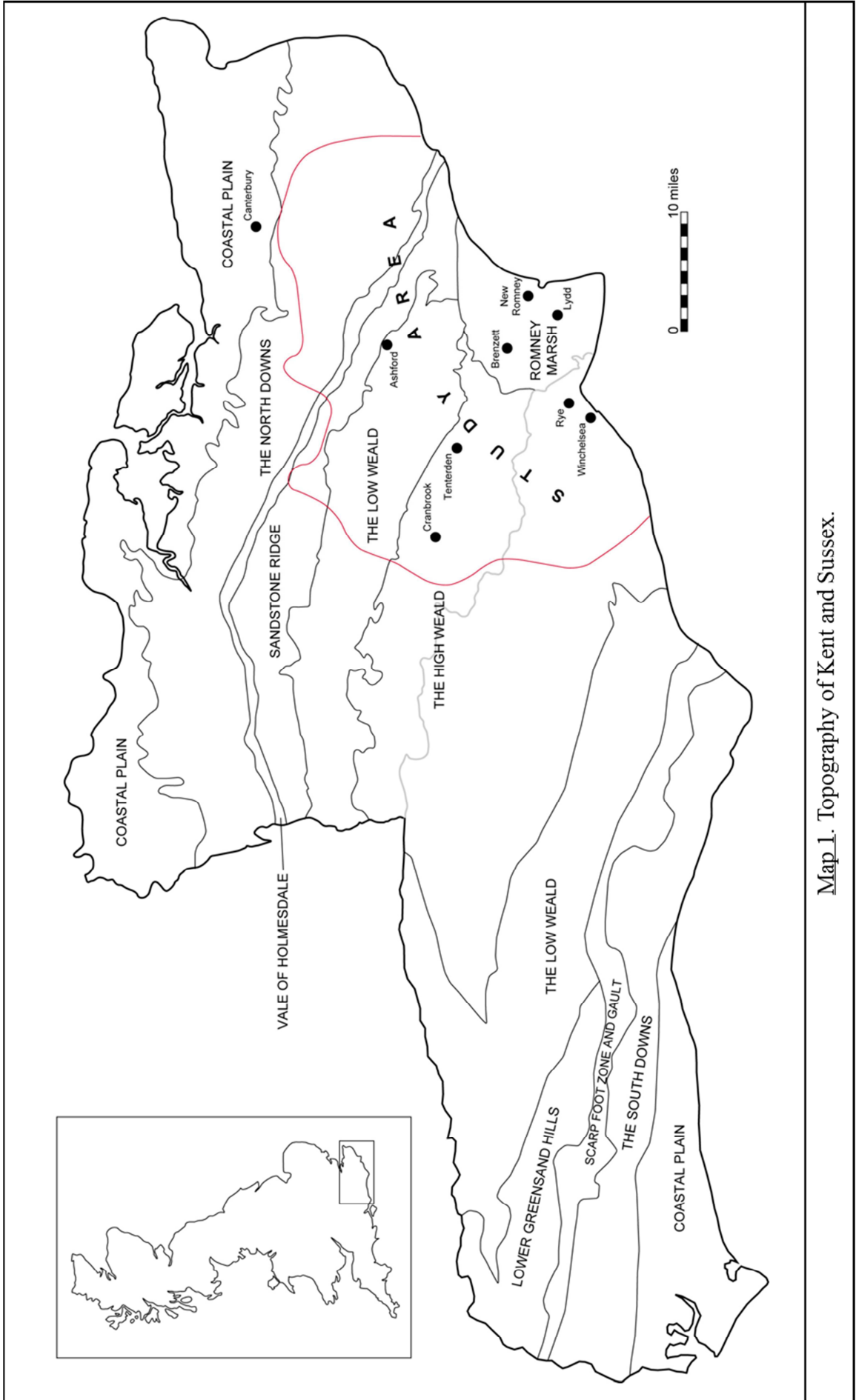
LTA – Land Tax assessment.

Quart. J. Econ. – *Quarterly journal of economics*.

The Historical J. – *The historical journal*.

Trans. Roy. Hist. Soc. – *Transactions of the Royal historical society*.

VCH – *Victoria county history*.



Map 1. Topography of Kent and Sussex.



Map 3. Romney Marsh, taken from William Dugdale's *The History of Imbanking and Draying of Divers Fens and Marshes* (London, 1662).

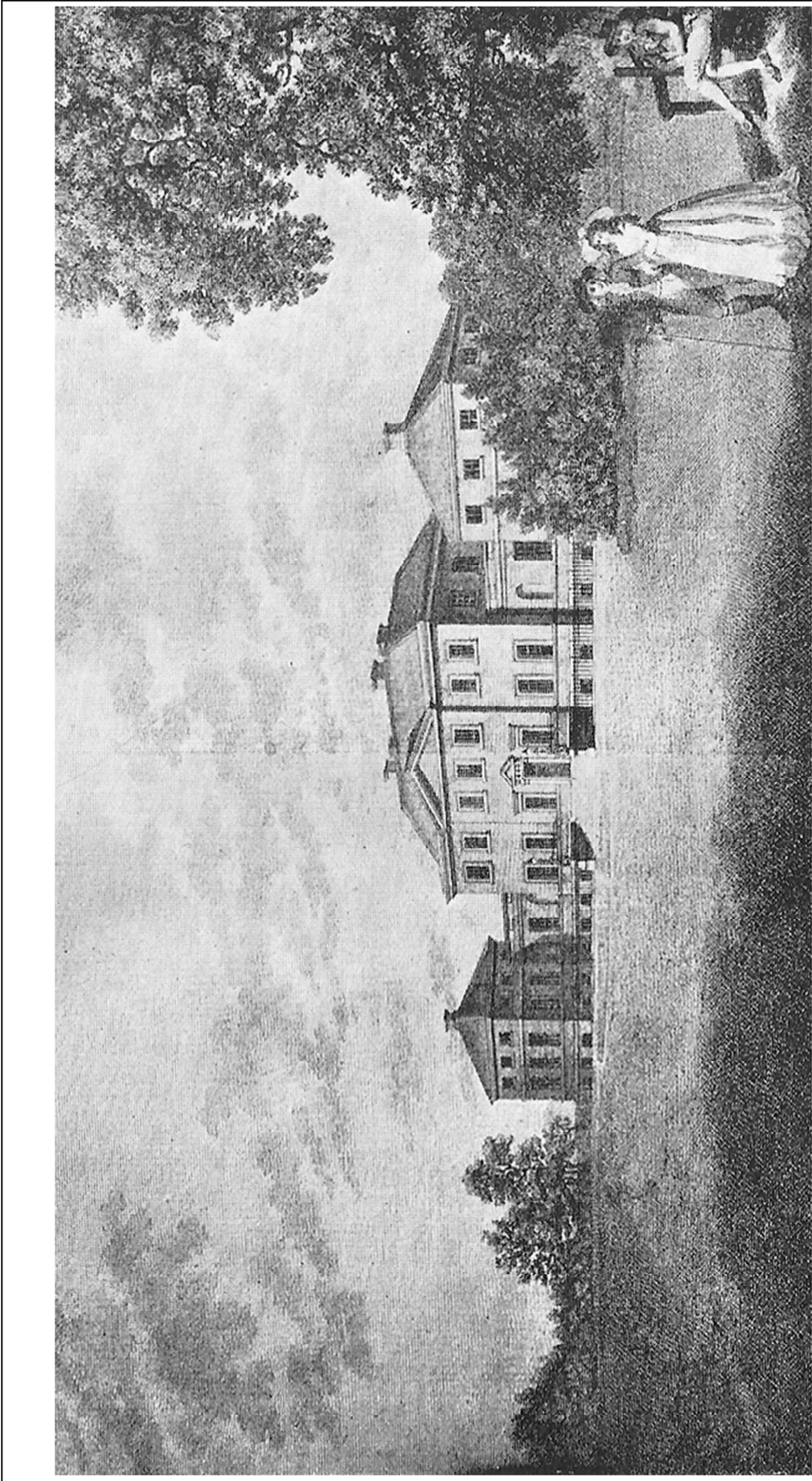


Fig 1. The mansion, Mersham-Hatch, c. 1780. Source: C. Bruyn Andrews (ed.), *The Torrington Diaries 1781-94* (1934).

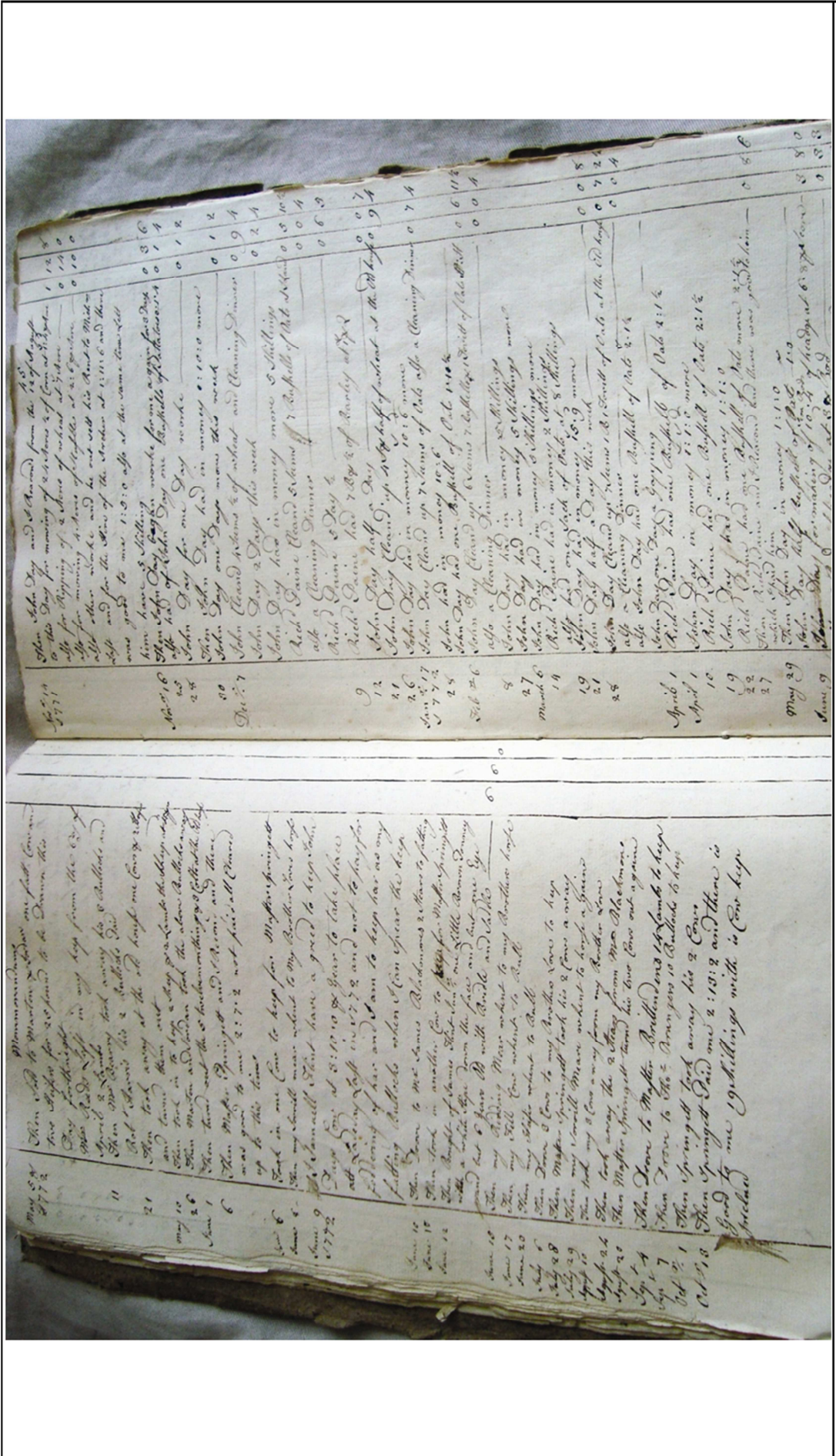


Fig. 2. Extract from the farming diary of Samuel Flint of Biddenden. Source: CKS U301 E6.

Chapter one. Romney Marsh and the surrounding region in context.

In anticipation of the themes to be explored in what follows, this chapter comprises two parts. Part one offers an overview of the region under study, outlining pertinent boundaries, physical features, soils, settlement patterns and farming systems.¹ Reference will also be made to manufacturing industries and townships. Part two considers the broader historical and economic context within which the development of Romney Marsh and its hinterland should properly be considered.

1. An overview of the region.

Map 1 illustrates the main topographical features of the counties of Kent and Sussex, while Map 2 identifies the region under examination here. In addition to Romney Marsh, it includes (in Sussex) parts of the High Weald and (in Kent) the Low Weald. Also included (for those areas to the north and east of Ashford) are parts of the Vale of Holmesdale, the Sandstone Ridge and the North Downs. Altogether, the region comprises a consolidated tract of overwhelmingly old-enclosed land in excess of c. 240,000 acres, taking in some 73 ‘ancient’ parishes lying within a 20-mile radius of Brenzett, a parish situated at the heart of Romney Marsh.² Parishes (with acreages) are listed in Appendix 1, Table 1.1, and coded into groups according to their location.

The region, overwhelmingly rural, was agriculturally diverse. It may, very broadly, be divided into three areas, with the North Downs ridge acting as the boundary line between (to the east) areas suited more to arable cultivation and (to the west) the predominantly pastoral areas of the Sandstone Ridge and Weald. To the south, and stretching to the coast, lay the sought-after pasturelands of Romney Marsh. The make-up and distribution of the region’s inhabitants, their settlement patterns and farming systems were varied, largely determined by the nature of the landscape, the environment and available resources.³

¹ For discussion of the influences defining a coherent ‘region’ see A. Everitt, ‘Country, county and town: patterns of regional evolution in England’, *Trans Royal Historical Society*, 29 (1979), pp. 79-81; J. Thirsk, *England’s agricultural regions and agrarian history, 1500-1750* (1993), pp. 11-36.

² ‘Ancient’ parishes, existing prior to 1597, served both secular and church purposes. F.A. Youngs, Jr., *Guide to the local administrative units of England 1: Southern England*, (1979), pp.viii, xvi; W. Page (ed.), *The Victoria history of the county of Sussex*, II (1907), p.191; B. M. Short, ‘The south-east: Kent, Surrey, and Sussex’, in J. Thirsk, (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales*, V:I, (1984), p. 294.

³ Physical features, soils and agricultural diversity have been largely determined by the geology of the region. The impact of the landscape and environment on population geography is explored in M. J. Dobson, ‘Population, disease and mortality in south-east England, 1600-1800’ (unpublished D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford, 1982) chs. 4 and 5; id., *Contours of death and disease in early modern England* (1997), chs 1 and 2; id., ‘Population’, in A. Armstrong (ed.), *The economy of Kent, 1640-1914* (1995), pp. 7-15. For geology and soils, see S. J. Fordham, and R. D. Green, *Soils of Kent* (1980), ch.1; A. M. Everitt, ‘The making of the agrarian landscape of Kent’, *Arch Cant.*, XCII (1976), pp. 6-8; A. D. Hall and E. J. Russell, *A report on the agriculture and soils of Kent, Surrey and Sussex* (1911), pp. iv,1-16; W. Page, (ed.), *The Victoria history of the county of Kent 1* (1908), pp.1-25; T. W. Horsfield, *The history of the county of Sussex 1* (1835), pp. 8-23; C. Young, ‘The physical setting’, in T. Lawson and D. Killingray (eds.), *An historical atlas of Kent* (2004), pp. 1-6; R. Williams, ‘Geology’, in K. Leslie and B. Short (eds.), *An historical atlas of Sussex* (1999), pp. 2-3; id., ‘Natural regions’ in Leslie and Short (eds.), *Atlas of*

The size and shape of many of the parishes included were also influenced by the lie of the land as well as human activity. Map 2 shows that Wealden parishes are relatively large, a consequence of post-Conquest forest clearance.⁴ On Romney Marsh, long, narrow and relatively straight-sided parish outlines originated from ‘innings’ (reclamation projects) begun in the eleventh century, on what was to become Walland Marsh.⁵ On the marsh-edge, a run of six parishes follow the contours of the landscape; originally, settlements were on higher ground, although the boundary lines extended down onto the marshlands below, to accommodate the grazing of livestock.⁶

To some extent the geographical extent of the region chosen for investigation has been determined by the nature of the marsh-uplands farming economy. As one late-eighteenth century observer put it, ‘The marsh is but thinly inhabited ... *and many of the occupiers live at a considerable distance some even so far as twenty miles and more.*’⁷ Within this hinterland lived the overwhelming majority of so-called ‘dual-regional’ farmers, whose operations depended to a greater or lesser extent upon a combination of marsh- as well as uplands holdings. Some dual-regional farmers lived more than 20 miles away from the marsh (and therefore outside the region covered here). Nevertheless, all the indications are that they were few in number. Thus far, research has uncovered the names of many of these farmers, but only in respect of the marshland facet of their operations. The fresh evidence presented in this study will, for the first time, break new ground by uncovering something of the extent of their operations on the marsh hinterland.⁸

Sussex, pp. 6-7; D. Robinson, ‘Soils’, in Leslie and Short (eds.), *Atlas of Sussex*, pp. 4-5; id., ‘The coast and coastal changes’ in Leslie and Short (eds.), *Atlas of Sussex*, pp. 8-9.

⁴ For example, Woodchurch, Halden and Biddenden.

⁵ Fairfield, Brookland, Brenzett and Ivychurch. Fairfield and Brookland were wholly reclaimed areas that became parishes in their own right. The straight-sided outlines of Brenzett and Ivychurch were extensions of the compact, irregularly-shaped parishes already established on Romney Marsh Level. Parish boundaries on Romney Marsh have altered little since the early Middle Ages. N. Brooks, ‘Romney Marsh in the early Middle Ages’ in J. Eddison and C. Green (eds), *Romney Marsh: evolution, occupation and reclamation* (1988), p. 92, cited in S. Hipkin, ‘The structure of land occupation in the Level of Romney Marsh during the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries’ in J. Eddison, M. Gardiner and A. Long (eds), *Romney Marsh: environmental change and human occupation in a coastal lowland* (1998), p. 154; S. Rippon, ‘Romney Marsh: evolution of the historic landscape and its wider significance’, A. Long, S. Hipkin and H. Clarke (eds) *Romney Marsh – coastal and landscape change through the ages* (2002), pp. 88-90, 92 (Fig. 6.5); P. Brandon, *The Sussex landscape*, (1974), pp.70-5; W. Topley, ‘On the relation of parish boundaries in the south-east of England to great physical features’, *J. Anthropological Institute* 3 (1874), p. 32; A. Everitt, *Continuity and colonization: the evolution of Kentish settlement* (1986), pp. 34-8.

⁶ Kenardington, Warehorne, Orlestone, Ruckinge, Bilsington and Bonnington.

⁷ Italics mine. D. Jones, ‘Sheep farming in Romney Marsh in the eighteenth century’, p. 5. This was a letter written in 1786, but not sent ‘on account of its extraordinary length and expense of its postage’. It was later transcribed as *Occasional paper of Wye College* 7 (1956).

⁸ S. Hipkin, ‘The structure of landownership and land occupation in the Romney Marsh region, 1646-1834’, *AgHR* 51 (2000), p. 72; Circa 1840 some marsh-uplands farmers were domiciled outside the 20-mile limit, in areas with an above average proportion of grassland. Kain suggested that the Sussex tithe files would reveal that ‘... some of the 107 farmers who appear to occupy land only in the marsh might occupy land outside the county of Kent.’ R. J. P. Kain, ‘The land of Kent in the middle of the nineteenth century’, unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of London (1973), pp. 314, 316.

The Kent uplands – the North Downs and Sandstone Ridge

Comprising, in the main, sheep pasture and woodland, the North Downs were sparsely populated.⁹ Typical of the variety of soils to be found within a small area was the parish of Hastingleigh. Extending to just 500 acres, it included chalk, very stony soil and a considerable amount of open downland interspersed with small pieces of woodland.¹⁰ Like the North Downs, the Sandstone Ridge was also relatively thinly populated. Here, there were generally light soils suitable for arable production, together with a good deal of pasture land.¹¹ The uplands parish of Mersham illustrates the variety to be found. Some parts of the parish contained sandy soils, plus loam mixed with quarry-stone, while other parts were made up of rich pasture, heathland, as well as areas of heavy clay.¹² The fortunes of a number of holdings located on the uplands will be further considered in chapter six.

The Weald

The Wealden Plain (or Low Weald) in Kent was a comparatively level, low-lying belt of poorly drained land with, in the main, heavy, impervious clay. The High Weald was generally made up of a rather infertile combination of clay, sand and sandstone.¹³ Poor drainage on low-lying areas made the land especially costly and hard to work. Hence, a contemporary observer remarked that it could take ‘four horses with difficulty [to] plough an acre per day ...’.¹⁴ Such practical problems might partly explain why Wealden farms were generally relatively small.¹⁵ Traditionally, the Weald specialised in cattle rearing and fattening. Pasture then, was also a significant feature of the landscape.

Contemporary observers were unanimous in their view of the Weald as an underdeveloped agricultural backwater, ‘...disgusting to ride over, and most discouraging to farm in’.¹⁶ The roads were atrocious. Contemporary historian Edward Hasted remarked of the roads in one parish as

⁹ Dobson, ‘Population’, in Armstrong (ed.), *Economy of Kent*, p. 9.

¹⁰ E. Hasted, *The history and topographical survey of the county of Kent*, with an introduction by A. M. Everitt (1972 reprint of the 2nd edition, first published between 1797-1801), 8, p. 28. Hereinafter Hasted, *History*.

¹¹ Larger fields tended to be found in areas given over to arable production. C. W. Chalklin, *Seventeenth century Kent* (1965), p. 73; G. Buckland, *On the farming of Kent* (1845), p. 271.

¹² Hasted, *History*, 7, pp. 592-4.

¹³ G. E. Mingay, ‘Agriculture’, in Armstrong, (ed.) *Economy of Kent*, p. 53.

¹⁴ Inadequate drainage often resulted in late sowing, a late harvest, and frequently, the wheat season was lost altogether. In Kent, only in the Weald were oxen employed as draught animals. It took a yoke of eight to ten oxen to do the same job as a team of four horses. J. Boys, *General view of the agriculture of the county of Kent* (1805) pp. 20-1, 183-4; A. Young, Rev., ‘General view of the agriculture of the county of Sussex’ in W. Marshall, *The review and abstract of the county reports to the Board of Agriculture from the several agricultural departments of England*, 5 (1813), p. 459.

¹⁵ Chalklin, *Kent* (1965), pp. 10-11.

¹⁶ Cited in Hall and Russell, *Soils*, p. 7. See also J. Chartres, ‘Road carrying in England in the seventeenth century: myth and reality’, *EcHR*, 30 (1977), pp. 73-94; D. Gerhold, ‘The growth of the London carrying trade, 1681-1838’, *EcHR*, 41 (1988), pp. 392-410.

‘...hardly passable after any rain [and] so miry, that the traveller’s horse frequently plunges through them up to the girths of the saddle; and the wagons sinking so deep in the ruts, as to slide along on the nave of the wheels and axles of them ... [while] in extreme dry weather in summer they become exceedingly hard, and by traffic so smooth as to seem glazed ... though a single hour’s rain renders them so slippery, as to be very dangerous to travelers.’¹⁷

Hence, Wealden farmers thought twice before attempting even the shortest of journeys. On 30 May 1735, Samuel Pattenson of Biddenden complained about the difficulties attendant on taking sheep to his neighbour’s sheep-wash, ‘... by reason the roads were so dirty I know not how to drive them ...’.¹⁸ In winter, agricultural produce could only be carried by pack-horse and the movement of heavy goods rendered impossible. Only with the development of the turnpike road system from the mid-eighteenth century did things, slowly, improve.

Despite the practical difficulties, a Wealden farmer could have a surprisingly wide sphere of operations in the eighteenth century, as illustrated by the farming diary of Samuel Flint of Biddenden.¹⁹ Covering the period 1766-83, Flint’s journal gives a remarkable insight into the scope of a specialized cattle rearing enterprise.²⁰ Significantly too, it throws light on the contribution made by the agistment of livestock to the symbiotic relationship between the marsh and its hinterland. Aspects of Flint’s operations will be further explored in chapter nine.²¹

As one of the most heavily wooded regions in England, the Weald yielded immense quantities of timber (mainly oak). Hence, any eighteenth century landlord with a stretch of Wealden woodland at his disposal was sitting on a potentially highly profitable asset.²² The economic importance, to the Knatchbull estate, of owning extensive woodlands in two wealden parishes will be considered later in this thesis. Plentiful local supplies were used to build the characteristic oak timber-framed ‘Wealden’ farmhouses, many of which pre-date the sixteenth century. As a major supplier to the navy, the Weald was the principal source of timber for the largest English naval dockyard, located on the river Medway at Chatham. Nonetheless, the parlous state of the roads meant that logs might be held up for over a year before they could be

¹⁷ Hasted, *History*, 7, p. 220. Brandon, *Sussex landscape*, pp. 177-83; Boys, *General view*, pp. 199-201; W. Albert, *The turnpike road system in England, 1663-1840* (1972), pp. 77-83.

¹⁸ CKS U301 E12.

¹⁹ CKS U301 E6.

²⁰ Wealden grassland yielded valuable hay for cattle fodder. See C. W. Chalklin, ‘The rural economy of a Kentish Wealden parish 1650-1750’, *AgHR*, X (1962), pp. 29-45. For crop production see Boys, *General view*, pp 3, 21.

²¹ ‘Agistment’ refers to the taking in and caring for livestock at an agreed rate of payment. Hipkin, ‘Landownership’, pp. 72-3.

²² E. J. T. Collins, ‘The agricultural servicing and processing industries’, in G. E. Mingay (ed.), *Agrarian history of England and Wales*, VI (1989), p. 487; Hall and Russell, *Soils*, pp. 49-51; Chalklin, *Kent*, pp. 105-7.

hauled overland to their destination. Moreover, the cost of carriage could equal, if not exceed, the original purchase price of the raw timber.²³ A valuable by-product of oak timber was bark, with charcoal, hop-poles, and domestic firewood the by-products of coppice wood.²⁴ The supply of Wealden timber and wood to Romney Marsh was another facet of the marsh-uplands rural economy.

Romney Marsh, 'the large watry place'.²⁵

As map 3 illustrates, the c. 45,000 acres that make up Romney Marsh comprises three contiguous marshlands, namely the Level of Romney Marsh (c. 23,500 acres), Walland Marsh (c.16,500 acres) and Denge Marsh (c. 2910 acres).²⁶ As one of the largest stretches of coastal wetland in England, Romney Marsh has long been of archaeological and historical interest. It has also attracted more recent attention across a broad spectrum of academic disciplines, all serving to highlight the importance of geomorphology in the course of its economic development.²⁷ To this day, Romney Marsh is still associated with some of the richest pasture in the world.

Yet environmentally, the marsh is an inherently fragile tract of land. From time immemorial, flooding from the sea posed a constant threat. From very early on therefore, there emerged a series of special regulations to ensure the marsh's survival, all of which demanded considerable amounts of manpower, materials – and money – to implement. Consequently, Romney Marsh Level became the first expanse of English marshland to be protected 'against the force of the sea, and inundation of other Waters'.²⁸ Taxes (scots) were levied on marsh tenants, according to occupied acreage, and which paid for the upkeep of sea defences and the internal network of watercourses ('waterings').²⁹ For the shoring-up of the three-mile long sea defence known as

²³ See R. G. Albion, *Forests and sea power – the timber problem of the Royal Navy, 1652-1862* (1926), esp. pp. 81, 104.

²⁴ There were important legal distinctions between the terms 'timber' and 'wood'. See Collins, 'Agricultural industries', p. 484, note 300.

Oak bark was used for leather tanning. From the late eighteenth century, the exigencies of war led to ever-increasing demand for leather by the army (for boots and saddles) and one knock-on effect was the steady rise in price for bark. Collins, 'Agricultural industries', p. 466, 474-6; L.A. Clarkson, 'The English bark trade, 1660-1830', *AgHR* 22 (1974), pp. 136-46. O. Rackham, *Woodlands* (2006 edition), p. 287.

Charcoal was used as fuel for the Wealden iron industry and despite the industry's decline in the eighteenth century, charcoal manufacture in Sussex was, c. 1800, still important. Young, 'General View ... Sussex' in Marshall, *Review and abstract* 5: p. 461; D. K. Worcester, 'East Sussex landownership – the structure of rural society in an area of old enclosure, 1733-87' unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1950) pp. 44-51; G. Hammersley, 'The charcoal iron industry and its fuel, 1540-1750', *EcHR*, 26 (1973), pp. 593-613.

²⁵ William Lambard, *The perambulation of Kent* (1656 edition), p. 208.

²⁶ Each had its own governing body, or Commission of Sewers. In practice, there was considerable overlap in the records pertaining to, and personnel serving on the respective Commissions.

²⁷ Long, Hipkin and Clarke (eds.), *Romney Marsh: coastal and landscape change*, pp. ix-xv, 205-8.

²⁸ Henry de Bathe, *The Charter of Romney Marsh* (1686 reprint), p. 6.

²⁹ Liability for marsh taxation normally fell on the occupier, according to acreage occupied. Hipkin, 'Structure of land occupation', in Eddison, Gardiner and Long (eds), *Romney Marsh: environmental*

Dymchurch Wall, marshmen relied on huge quantities of faggot wood and hop-poles, battened down with oak piles and overlaths. The raw materials were sourced from timber contractors all over the marsh hinterland, including the Weald.³⁰

Collectively, this advanced system of administration became known as ‘the Laws and Customs of Romney Marsh’ which, as early c. 1250, were already recognised as ‘Ancient Custom’. Their influence spread as marsh regulations were adopted elsewhere; and marsh officials, regarded as specialists in their field, were sometimes called upon to travel long distances to offer their expertise.³¹ By the seventeenth century, these regulations were recognised as an ‘ancient landmark’ in legal history, the ‘... Rule and Standard whereunto all the other Marshes and Fenns in this Nation, were to conform’.³² Indeed, until the nineteenth century, sewers-rates throughout the country were levied according to the marsh taxation system.³³ Also, fundamentally important was the accurate measurement of marshland to the nearest half-acre. Moreover, the provision of comprehensive surveys and detailed maps were vital to the successful workings of the system, as were meticulous, up-to-date records of who occupied what, and where.³⁴ All were integral to the ethos of the marsh system, aspects of which we will revisit later on.

change and human occupation, pp. 148-50; id., ‘Tenant farming and short-term leasing on Romney Marsh, 1587-1705’, *EcHR* 53 (2000), pp. 650-2.

³⁰ See EKAC S/Rm/Mz2; EKAC S/Rm/Mc2. In the eighteenth century, the cost of maintaining Dymchurch Wall could, at times, reach £7,000 a year. S. Bendall, *Mapping and displaying an English marshland landscape in the mid-eighteenth century* (2003), passim; Boys, *General view*, pp. 12-3; Jones, ‘Sheep farming’, p. 4; D. Beck, ‘The drainage of Romney Marsh and maintenance of the Dymchurch Wall in the early seventeenth century’, J. Eddison (ed.), *Romney Marsh: the debatable ground* (1995), pp. 164-7. The sea walls were to be measured according to the special marsh rod of 20 feet, used until 1461, when the standard rod or perch (16.5 feet) was adopted. For the specialised nature of the regulations (including the selection of faggot-makers, sworn under oath to make faggots of the correct size) see M. Teichman-Derville, *The Level and the Liberty of Romney Marsh*, pp. 10, 25-7.

³¹ A. E. B. Owen, ‘The custom of Romney Marsh and the statute of sewers of 1427’, *Arch Cant*, 116 (1996), pp. 98-9; Teichman Derville, *Level and Liberty*, p.16.

³² Edward Coke, *The fourth part of the institutes of the laws of England concerning the jurisdiction of courts* (1644 edition), pp. 276-7; Sir William Dugdale, *History of Imbanking and Drayning of Divers Fenns and Marshes* (1662 edition), p.16. Written in the seventeenth century, Dugdale’s research came at a time of heightened interest in agricultural improvement, which had a bearing on the reclamation of the Lincolnshire fens. See F. Willmoth, ‘Dugdale’s *History of Imbanking and Drayning*: a ‘Royalist’ antiquarian in the Sixteen Fifties’, *Historical Research*, 71 (1998), p. 301; H. G. Richardson, ‘The early history of Commissions of Sewers’, *EngHR*, 34 (1919), p. 385; J. Eddison, *Romney Marsh – Survival on a Frontier* (2000), p. 24. In addition to Kent and Sussex, the Laws and Customs of Romney Marsh are referred to in respect to the Thames Marshes and nine other English counties. Dugdale, *Imbanking and Drayning*, pp. 16, 45-59, 60-8, 83-7, 91-2, 95-6, 98-102, 109, 128ff, 134, 139, 141-243, 267, 360.

³³ Namely, according to the principle of ‘benefit received’ by the tenant in terms of flood prevention and drainage, irrespective of the size or value of the acreage occupied. E. Cannan, *History of local rates in England* (2nd edition, 1912), pp. 112-14.

³⁴ Compared to the rest of the country, Romney Marsh was ‘unusually rich’ in sixteenth century maps. There were probably much earlier maps, although any that did exist would have been lost in the fire that (c. 1598) destroyed the marsh administration’s headquarters at New Hall, Dymchurch, that housed all their records. Maps drawn up subsequently and which have survived have proved highly accurate. S. Bendall, ‘Enquire “When the same platte was made and by whom and to what intent”: sixteenth century maps of Romney Marsh’, *Imago Mundi*, 47 (1995), pp. 35, 37, 43.

A comprehensive survey of Romney Marsh Level was carried out between 1652-4. This entailed the production of a new set of detailed maps, all of which have survived. This exercise was repeated a century later, when local surveyor Thomas Hogben of Smarden was commissioned to produce yet another, completely updated set of maps. Every field was measured, and the ownership noted of every parcel of

Until the Black Death, Romney Marsh was predominantly under arable cultivation, and relatively densely populated.³⁵ During the later medieval period however there was a shift to livestock farming. Acreage was overwhelmingly given over to pasture, and became renowned as ‘... a marvelous rank grownd for fedyng of catel, by the reason that the gresse groweth so plentifully’.³⁶ The marsh landscape was made up of fields enclosed by water-filled dykes or post and rail fencing. As with the maintenance of Dymchurch Wall, marshmen were reliant on Wealden timber, and ‘immense quantities of oak posts and rails ... [were] annually brought out of the woodlands of the Weald ... for the repairs of the fences.’³⁷

Not only was the marsh environmentally fragile, it was also an extremely unhealthy, often fatal, place to live. Hasted observed that ‘throughout the whole of [the marsh] both the air and water make dreadful havoc on the health of the inhabitants of this sickly and contagious country, a character sufficiently corroborated by their pallid countenances and short lives’.³⁸ What contemporaries called the ‘ague’ or ‘marsh fever’ we now know to have been malaria. If nothing else but in the interests of health, the marsh was a place to avoid; not surprisingly, it was the most thinly inhabited area in the region.

Eighteenth century commentators tended to divide the marshlands between ‘two different degrees of goodness – the breeding land which is the general quality of the marsh and the fattening land, which are the prime pieces and very rich.’³⁹ The latter were highly prized, so that ‘... when once a field is become a good old meadow, it is held sacred’, with heavy penalties included in lease covenants should they be ploughed up, although rarely (if ever) did they need to be invoked.⁴⁰ Prime pasture could be found everywhere, albeit intermixed with inferior land. Indeed, there could be big variations in soil quality between adjacent fields. In the parish of Midley for example, a field described as ‘good fattening pasture, producing a beautiful close herbage’ lay alongside another fit only for ‘rushes ...[and] buttercups ...’.⁴¹ Moreover, while Walland

land. It was the job of Thomas Maylam, deputy clerk of the Level, to reproduce, in manuscript form, all the information Hogben had included on the maps, having linked it with the information contained on the maps they were to replace. Names of occupiers were also to be included in the schedule. The quality of Hogben’s work was such that in the nineteenth century, many of the tithe maps for marsh parishes were revised using his survey. Hipkin, ‘Landownership’ pp. 69-70; R. J. P. Kain and H. C. Prince, *The tithe surveys of England and Wales* (1985), p. 57. See also Eddison, *Survival*, p. 27.

³⁵ Eddison, *Survival*, pp. 65, 88, 97.

³⁶ Hipkin, ‘Landownership’, p. 72 and note 6; John Leland, *Itinerary* (c. 1535-43), cited in J. Whyman, ‘The unchanging face of Romney Marsh: selected references’, *Cantium*, 4 (1972) p. 48.

³⁷ J. Boys, *General view*, p. 13.

³⁸ Quoted in Dobson, ‘Death and disease in the Romney Marsh area in the seventeenth- to nineteenth centuries’ in Eddison, Gardiner and Long (eds.), *Romney Marsh: environmental change and human occupation*, p. 175.

³⁹ Jones, ‘Sheep farming’, p. 9.

⁴⁰ Daniel Price, *A system of sheep-grazing and management as practiced in Romney Marsh* (1809), p. 22; Boys, *General view*, p. 121. ‘Fattening’ pasture was the highest quality, followed by ‘breeding land’, then rough grazing land. For further explanation and twentieth century classifications see G. H. Garrad, *A survey of the agriculture of Kent* (1954), pp. 74-5.

⁴¹ Hall and Russell, *Soils*, p. 162.

included some of the most fertile land to be found anywhere on Romney Marsh, it was, in parts, ‘much subject to inundations, and ... covered with water for the greatest part of the year, by which the lands are rendered almost useless’.⁴²

The breeding and fattening of livestock on Romney Marsh was, therefore, akin to a fine art, as was the management of the land on which they grazed. Contemporary observer Daniel Jones concluded that ‘grazing, where one has money at command and can get a tolerable parcel of good land at a moderate rent, is the prettiest and most gentlemanlike business’. But it was not necessarily easy. ‘It is not everyone who is capable of being a good Grazier’ he explained, ‘as their business is to make the most they can of their grass, it requires a man of *sense* and *judgement* to do that to the most advantage’.⁴³ The fortunes of some of these livestock specialists will be further explored later in this study.

Industries and towns.⁴⁴

In the Weald, iron and cloth had been the two main manufacturing industries in the early modern period. The Weald’s immense timber resources ensured its prominence in the nation’s iron (and especially gunfounding) industry.⁴⁵ Following rapid growth that peaked in the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth centuries the Wealden iron industry went into a long, slow decline over the next c. 150 years, and by c. 1790 had all but died out.⁴⁶

The heart of the textile industry lay in and around Cranbrook. Reaching its height by the early seventeenth century, the industry gradually declined thereafter and, by the 1790s, had all but disappeared, and none of the town’s old-established families of clothiers remained.⁴⁷ The industry’s decay also had a knock-on effect on population density in textile-producing districts, with many emigrating to Ireland, Europe or America.⁴⁸

⁴² Hasted, *History*, 8, p. 476.

⁴³ Jones, ‘Sheep farming’, pp. 6-7.

⁴⁴ Overall, seventeenth century Kent could boast of around 25 so-called ‘small towns’ with a population of 400 or more, while in Sussex towns were fewer and smaller. By c. 1750 population levels were about the same as they had been 100 years before. Chalklin, *Kent*, p. 24; Dobson, ‘Population, disease and mortality’, pp. 68-71.

For further discussion of what constituted a ‘rural’ or an ‘urban’ settlement in pre-industrial English society see P. Clark and P. Slack, *English towns in transition 1500-1700* (1976), pp. 4-5; Dobson, ‘Population, disease and mortality’, pp. 68-71.

⁴⁵ D. Defoe, *A tour through the whole island of Great Britain* (1971), p. 141; H. C. Tomlinson, ‘Wealden gunfounding: an analysis of its demise in the eighteenth century’, *EcHR*, 29 (1976), pp. 383-400; Chalklin, *Kent*, pp. 116-23; P. Brandon, *The Kent and Sussex Weald* (2003), pp. 129-40.

⁴⁶ Hammersley, ‘Charcoal’, pp. 593-6.

⁴⁷ Circa 1660, the population of Cranbrook was probably around 1200 to 1300 (considerably less than a hundred years earlier). Circa 1790 it was said to be around 3,000. Hasted, *History*, 7, p. 92; Dobson, ‘Population, disease and mortality’, p. 78; Chalklin, *Kent*, pp. 32, 116-23. See also L. Flisher, *Cranbrook, Kent and its neighbourhood area, c. 1550-1670* (2003), unpublished PhD thesis, University of Greenwich, chs. 1, 2, 3 and 8; A. Poole, *A market town and its surrounding villages – Cranbrook, Kent in the later seventeenth century* (2005), *passim*.

⁴⁸ Dobson, ‘Population, disease and mortality’, p. 78.

By contrast, the much smaller Wealden town of Tenterden had seen considerable prosperity, on account of its links to the marsh.⁴⁹ In the late eighteenth century, with a population of c. 2000, Tenterden was said to be ‘well built ... having many genteel houses, or rather seats, interspersed throughout it’ belonging to substantial families such as Curteis, Haffenden, Blackmore and Stace, ‘... and several others, most of whose wealth, as well as that of the inhabitants of this town in general, has arisen from its near neighbourhood to Romney-Marsh, where most of them have some occupation in the grazing business.’⁵⁰ Tenterden grazier John Mantel was cited as ‘one of the instances of the quick accumulation of the riches from [the marsh]’ because it reputedly took just 14 years (to 1687) to make enough money to buy a substantial residence on top of land and property worth £800 in annual rent. Equally representative of those who had profited from their marsh interests was Humphrey Wightwicke who (in 1721) left an estate worth £2,434-9s-8d, half of which consisted of a 1250-strong sheep flock and 39 cattle.⁵¹

Roughly 10 miles to the east of Tenterden lay the market town of Ashford. Like its Wealden counterpart it was relatively small yet prosperous, with ‘many of the inhabitants of a genteel rank in life.’⁵² Ashford was an important commercial centre, thanks to its strategic position. Located on the uplands (between the North Downs, the Sandstone Ridge and the Stour valley) the town linked the predominantly corn growing areas to the north of the county with the pastoral areas of central Kent and the Weald.⁵³ Eighteenth century marsh records also reflect the significance of the economic links between Ashford and Romney Marsh, insofar as the annual General Sessions meetings of the Walland/Denge Sewers Commissions were held in the town, at the Saracen’s Head public house. These Commissions would typically include a number of the town’s gentry (also marsh landowners) among its members. The town and its environs were also home to several substantial marsh-uplands farmers, who would have owed much of their wealth to the marshland facet of their operations.⁵⁴

Long-term stagnation and decline were the blight of the coastal townships adjacent to the marsh. In Sussex, Winchelsea’s economic misfortunes had set in from the fourteenth century. By c. 1720, with so few houses, it was said to look more like ‘the skeleton of an ancient city than a real town’.⁵⁵ Rye’s economic fortunes had suffered as a result of the effects of longshore drift and

⁴⁹ With an estimated population of around 500 in the seventeenth century, it was only about half the size of Cranbrook. Chalklin, *Kent*, p. 32.

⁵⁰ Hasted, *History*, 7, pp. 204, 212.

⁵¹ Livestock were kept at home and on the marsh. Wightwick also had the means to lend out money in excess of £750. CKS PRC27/41/104.

⁵² Ashford’s population was around 2000 c. 1790. Hasted, *History*, 7, pp. 534, 536.

⁵³ Regular corn and livestock markets were held in the town.

⁵⁴ For seventeenth century examples, see Hipkin, ‘Tenant farming’, pp. 671-2. In 1768, eight tenants, domiciled in Ashford occupied, between them, some 706.5 acres on Romney Marsh Level. CKS U951 E12; EKAC S/D/SO3; EKAC S/Rm FSc6/7.

⁵⁵ The medieval town hall remained intact, as did the town’s corporate status, complete with mayor and aldermen. Defoe, *Tour*, pp. 146, 691; C. Morris (ed.), *The illustrated journeys of Celia Fiennes, 1685-c. 1712* (1982), p. 129; L. F. Salzman (ed.), *VCH Sussex*, IX (1937), p. 64.

marsh reclamation. Until the mid-sixteenth century it had been the only major harbour between the Thames and Portsmouth. Thereafter it experienced a steady deterioration.⁵⁶

On the marsh itself, the medieval town and port of Romney (subsequently Old Romney) had similarly suffered, with fatal consequences to its maritime economy.⁵⁷ By the eighteenth century it had long been reduced to a straggling village.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, this belied the wealth to be made from the marsh for some of the parish's resourceful inhabitants. In August 1735 for instance, William Haffenden of Old Romney, styled 'grazier', left assets worth £2196-13s-8d, including 2417 sheep and 189 cattle valued at £1156-6s and £175-2s respectively, and located in nine different locations across the marsh.⁵⁹

New Romney's maritime economy was also irreparably damaged by the silting up of its harbour, so that from the mid-seventeenth century onwards it was a port in name only with, at best, a population of no more than 450. With, by c. 1790, a population of around 500, it had seen little change in 150 years.⁶⁰ Nonetheless, it included an elite core of marsh graziers who had made some serious money from specialist livestock farming.⁶¹

Lydd, lying some three miles inland from the English Channel, was roughly twice the size of New Romney with (c. 1790) around 1000 inhabitants.⁶² Reputedly, most were either fishermen or smugglers. Nonetheless, like New Romney, Lydd's residents included a privileged minority of specialist livestock farmers whose wealth equalled that of the abovementioned Wealden farmer Humphrey Wightwicke (or indeed others like him based in Tenterden whose marshland interests had contributed significantly to their prosperity).

⁵⁶ S. Hipkin, 'The impact of marshland drainage on Rye harbour, 1550-1660', in J. Eddison (ed.), *Romney Marsh: the debatable ground* (1998), p. 138.

⁵⁷ In 1287, a storm that washed away Old Winchelsea also caused irreparable damage to the town and port of Romney. The harbour was choked by the force of the shingle, and the course of the river Rother was also changed. Despite attempts to rectify the situation, this marked the beginning of the end of the town's position as a flourishing port, whose trade until that time had extended to northern Europe and Scandinavia. (The town and port of New Romney arose out of the old town's demise as a port.) A. Roper, 'Romney Marsh – the Fifth Quarter', *Cantium*, 4 (1972), p. 29; S. Rippon, 'Romney Marsh: evolution of the historic landscape and its wider significance' in Long, Hipkin and Clarke (eds.), *Romney Marsh: coastal and landscape change*, pp. 85-6, 91, 97.

⁵⁸ Hasted, *History*, 8, p. 440.

⁵⁹ CKS PRC 11/80/235.

⁶⁰ New Romney's population stood at around 500 c. 1790. Hasted, *History*, 8, p. 449.

⁶¹ S. Hipkin, 'The worlds of Daniel Langdon: public office and private enterprise in the Romney Marsh region in the early eighteenth century', in Long, Hipkin and Clarke (eds.), *Romney Marsh: coastal and landscape change*, pp. 173-79.

⁶² Hasted, *History*, 8, pp. 421-2.

2. The broader historical and economic context

For present purposes, the period c. 1730-90 can be split roughly in half, embracing two 30-year periods either side of c. 1760. The decade c. 1750-60 also marks the dividing line between two distinct and contrasting phases characterizing the broader economic landscape over the long eighteenth century. Significantly then, the first 30 years with which we are concerned falls at the tail-end of the first economic phase (c. 1650-1750) while the next 30 years (to c. 1790) coincides with the earlier part of the second phase (c. 1750-1820). It is not the intention here to discuss the complexity and diversity of the agrarian economy in England, c. 1650-1820. However, pertinent aspects of long-term movements in prices, population and rent levels discussed in the historiography will now be summarized in order to place the agrarian economy of the region into a proper, wider historical framework.⁶³

The c. 150 years from c. 1500-1650 witnessed large-scale inflation, a rapidly growing population and increased demand for land. By contrast, the c. 100 years from c. 1650 were relatively stable, in that ‘agricultural prices in general changed by only a few percentage points, compared with the sixfold increase recorded in the preceding century and a half.’⁶⁴ These figures disguise considerable variation, depending on supply, demand or location. While grain prices saw an overall drop of around 12 per cent, there was a proportionally greater fall in wheat and barley prices than in those for oats. The latter, used chiefly as a fodder crop, was increasingly in demand to supply the metropolitan market as well as an expanding inland carriage trade.⁶⁵ Prices in general remained more buoyant in areas easily accessible to London and continental Europe (north Kent being a prime example).⁶⁶

⁶³ For (1) c. 1650-1750 see P. Bowden, ‘Agricultural prices, wages, farm profits and rents, 1640-1750’, in P. J. Bowden (ed.), *Economic change: wages, profits and rents 1500-1750* (1990), pp. 13-167; C. Clay, ‘Landlords and estate management in England, 1640-1750’, in C. Clay (ed.), *Rural society: landowners, peasants and labourers 1500-1750* (1990), pp. 246-378; Thirsk (ed.), *AgHEW*, V:I, passim; id., *AgHEW*, V:II, passim; K. Wrightson, *Earthly necessities* (2002), chs. 10, 11, 12; H. R. French and R. W. Hoyle, *The character of English rural society* (2007), ch 1; E. L. Jones, ‘Agriculture and economic growth in England, 1660-1750: agricultural change’ in E. L. Jones (ed.), *Agriculture and economic growth in England 1650-1815* (1967), pp. 152-171. (2) c. 1750-1830 see Mingay (ed.), *AgHEW* VI, chs 2, 6, 7; J. D. Chambers and G. E. Mingay, *The agricultural revolution 1750-1880* (1966), ch 5; M. E. Turner, J. V. Beckett and B. Afton, *Agricultural rent in England 1690-1914* (1997); id., *Farm production in England 1700-1914* (2001).

⁶⁴ Bowden, ‘Agricultural prices’ in Bowden (ed.), *Economic change*, p. 189. See also B. Coward, *Social change and continuity in early modern England 1550-1750* (1988), pp. 38-41, 138-9.

⁶⁵ In the seventeenth century, where conditions favoured the cultivation of oats, production increased in strategically located areas. This trend was particularly noticeable on the Kent uplands where (on the Sandstone Ridge) oats made up 32 per cent of sown acreage between 1680-1700 (compared to 13 per cent between 1600-20). Chalklin, *Kent*, pp.77-9; M. Overton, *Agricultural revolution in England* (1996), pp. 64, 94; Bowden, *Economic change*, pp. 350-1.

⁶⁶ Low grain prices post-1660 also had the effect of encouraging regional specialization, while agricultural improvements led to higher yields. The end result was an increase in the size of many farms, as larger tenants made economies of scale to maintain income. For further discussion on the arguments for a tenant-led versus a landlord-led increase in farm size see French and Hoyle, *English rural society*, pp. 24-28; J. Broad, ‘The fate of the Midland yeoman, 1620-1800’ in *Continuity and change* 14 (1999), pp. 325-47; R. C. Allen, *Enclosure and the yeoman*, pp. 13-5. The use of the turnip as winter fodder played an important role in increased productivity according to contemporary evidence. See R. A. C. Parker, *Coke of Norfolk*, pp. 52-3. Jones has argued that post-1660, agricultural improvement was to some extent a by-

While grain prices fell, livestock prices rose by around 18 per cent overall. Yet again however, there was much variation.⁶⁷ Sheep farmers experienced mixed fortunes. Wool producers did not fare well, especially from the 1620s, when prices slumped in the wake of a depressed cloth industry and the ban on wool exports.⁶⁸ On the other hand, market demand led to a steady climb in mutton prices, so that many wool growers changed tack, and instead produced mutton for a burgeoning London market.

Leaving aside the effect of London's growth on market demand, broader, national demographic trends significantly influenced the development of the agrarian economy from the mid-seventeenth century. The long-term rise in population experienced in the century from c.1550 came to an end by c.1650.⁶⁹ There followed a long-and-drawn-out phase of stagnation in which (c.1650-1700) the population declined slightly and then (to c.1760) rose only very gently.

Accompanied by an equally prolonged period of weakened competition for tenancies, rents either remained static or fell over many parts of the country. Furthermore, with a combination of low grain prices, agricultural improvements and higher yields, economies of scale were needed to stay competitive. And finding the considerable capital needed to stock a farm was perhaps the greatest obstacle to expansion.⁷⁰ For the small farmer, stumping up enough money to invest in more stock was particularly difficult.⁷¹ Under these circumstances landowners and farmers were often hard-pressed, and their preoccupation with these difficulties is evident from the tenor of contemporary farming correspondence. On the one hand, rentiers tended to suffer as a result of falling demand for land. Yet at the same time, weaker tenants were in danger of being forced out by larger tenants with the resources to increase their acreage. In the later seventeenth century, these conditions were exacerbated by an unprecedented level of taxation to pay for a succession

product of the strict settlement (a legal device facilitating large mortgages to be raised on landed estates) which gave added incentive to increase income by employing efficient stewards and tenants who, having improved farm output, would (in theory) pay higher rents. Wrightson, *Earthly necessities*, pp. 234-6. See also Overton, *Agricultural revolution*, ch. 3; Thirsk, 'Agricultural policy: public debate and legislation', in Thirsk (ed.), *AgHEW*, V:II, pp. 302-3; E. L. Jones, 'Agriculture 1700-1780' in R. Floud and D. McCloskey (eds.), *The economic history of Britain since 1700*, I, 1700-1860 (1981), pp. 75-8; Bowden (ed.) *Economic change*, pp. 350-1. For further discussion on the coastal metropolitan grain trade in the seventeenth century, especially the rise in demand for oats, see S. Hipkin, 'The coastal metropolitan corn trade in later seventeenth century England', *EcHR* (2011), DOI:10.1111/j.1468-0289.2010.00777.x; A. H. John, 'English agricultural improvement and grain exports, 1660-1765', in D. C. Coleman and A. H. John (eds.), *Trade, government and economy in pre-industrial England* (1976), pp. 45-67; D. Ormrod, *English grain exports and the structure of agrarian capitalism 1700-60* (1985), *passim*.

⁶⁷ Equally, from year to year, there could be considerable fluctuations in the price of any one crop or breed of livestock. Bowden, *Economic change*, pp. 320-41; Wrightson, *Earthly necessities*, p. 230.

⁶⁸ P. J. Bowden, *The wool trade in Tudor and Stuart England* (1962), pp. xviii, 7-10, and ch. 7; G. D. Ramsey, *The English woollen industry, 1500-1750* (1982), p. 19; Thirsk, 'Agricultural policy', pp. 363-6.

⁶⁹ E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The population history of England 1541-1871* (1981), pp. 207-9. See also Coward, *Social change and continuity*, pp. 34-8, 137-8.

⁷⁰ G. E. Mingay, 'The size of farms in the eighteenth century', *EcHR*, 14 (1962), pp. 471-5, 478-80.

⁷¹ One option, for an owner-occupier, might be to sell some acreage, and then rent it back while continuing to farm the land, albeit as a tenant. Broad, 'Midland yeoman', pp. 335-6; French and Hoyle, *English rural society*, p. 36; Mingay, 'Size of farms', p. 486.

of military campaigns, culminating (in 1697) with the introduction of the Land Tax. As will be seen later in this study, the burden of taxation was heavier in areas, like Kent, that lay closer to London.⁷²

The closing decades of this earlier phase (c. 1650-1750) were marked by the so-called 'agricultural depression', whose chief proponent was G. E. Mingay.⁷³ He argued that to qualify as a full-blown depression, a collective set of symptoms should be present, namely an abnormally large turnover of tenants, heavy rent arrears, rent reductions to attract new tenants and abatements for existing occupiers of larger farms. There would be a tendency for landlords to meet the cost of repairs that tenants would otherwise have paid. There would also be a tendency for substantial tenants to make economies of scale. More recently however, the depth of depression identified by contemporary observers as well as in the traditional historiography has been called into question, with the suggestion that the difficulties were not so deep or prolonged as earlier thought. Take rent arrears. Turner, Beckett and Afton's findings suggest that only 'in isolated years' in the early eighteenth century did arrears exceed more than five per cent of a landed estate's annual rent.⁷⁴ Certainly, the effects of the depression were felt to a greater or lesser extent over many parts of the country, with tenants falling into arrears, land lying vacant and rents either static or falling.⁷⁵ Arable farmers felt the worst effects of low grain prices, with the most serious difficulties occurring in the 1730s-40s.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, they did better in some regions than others. In 1733, when grain prices were particularly low, William Stout, a Lancashire trader, saw farmers in the south experiencing 'great relief' by exporting grain to Europe, while many farmers in parts of the north-west went out of business and rents fell.⁷⁷

The second phase (c. 1750-1820) was in marked contrast to the one just outlined. Socio-economic developments were driven primarily by demographic change, insofar as the stagnation of the c.70 years to c.1720 was followed by a time of slow but steady population growth which,

⁷² The Land Tax nonetheless helped to see England emerge, militarily, as a world power by 1700. Wrightson, *Earthly necessities*, pp. 228, 255-7; Thirsk, 'Agricultural policy', pp. 326-8; Clay, 'Landlords and estate management', pp. 304-5.

⁷³ G. E. Mingay, 'The agricultural depression, 1730-50', *EcHR*, 8 (1956), pp. 323-38; J. V. Beckett, 'Regional variation and the agricultural depression, 1730-50', *EcHR*, 35 (1982), pp. 35-51.

⁷⁴ Turner, Beckett and Afton, *Rent*, p. 227. Between 1734-6, arrears on the Coke estate in Norfolk escalated to well over £4,000 per annum, a third of the estate's annual rent, whereas in the later 1720s they averaged under £2,000 per annum. Chambers and Mingay, *Agricultural revolution*, pp. 40-1.

⁷⁵ In Cumbria, a predominantly pastoral region, Beckett found a tendency for rents to rise during the 1720s and 1730s, but with a levelling off in the 1740s. Beckett, 'Regional variation', p. 37. See also Turner, Beckett and Afton, *Rent*, p. 51; Mingay, 'Size of farms', p. 484; Bowden (ed.), *Economic change*, pp. 356-7.

⁷⁶ The 1730s to 1740s saw an exceptionally long run of favourable weather and good harvests. The price of wheat averaged only c.30s a quarter and the price of barley fell to between 10s and 15s a quarter. The price of oats fell by a much smaller margin. Ormrod, *Grain exports*, pp. 56-7, 125 note 50; Bowden (ed.), *Economic change*, pp. 350-1; Overton, *Agricultural revolution*, p. 64.

⁷⁷ Corn Bounty subsidies encouraged exports. A secondary purpose of the Corn Bounty Act (1672) was to ease the burden of direct taxation on landowners. Ormrod, *Grain exports*, p. 58.

from c.1760, accelerated.⁷⁸ Rising consumer demand brought better grain and meat prices to many farming regions and with it, greater demand for land. Agricultural productivity also continued to improve.⁷⁹ These developments echoed something of the socio-economic change that took place in the c. 100 years from c. 1500, and which had acted as a stimulus to the art of surveying and map-making when, in a rapidly rising market, landlords sought to establish precisely how many acres they owned, for which they could charge the highest possible rent.⁸⁰ However, the economic stagnation that set in from the mid-seventeenth century put paid to further progress in matters of surveying.⁸¹

With the economic upturn from the 1760s, farmers began to enjoy better profits, especially those with fixed costs in the form of long leases.⁸² Landlords, by contrast, had to wait until leases expired before they could raise the rent. This left, on average, a time-lag of around 15 years before rents caught up with rising prices.⁸³ Coincidentally, from the 1760s, the Society of Arts sponsored an annual award for the best county map.⁸⁴ This further prompted a renewed enthusiasm for map-making and surveying, both of which, having laid virtually dormant for the previous c. 100 years, were enjoying a revival. The land market was firmly on the rise once

⁷⁸ Wrigley and Schofield, *Population history*, pp. 207-9; E. A. Wrigley, 'Marriage, fertility and population growth in eighteenth century England', in R. B. Outhwaite (ed.), *Marriage and society* (1981), pp. 137-85. The rate of population increase varied considerably, and was regionally specific. E. A. Wrigley, 'English county populations in the later eighteenth century', *ECHR*, 60 (2007), pp. 35-69; J. Rule, *Albion's people* (1992), pp. 1-9.

⁷⁹ For a historiographical review and discussion of the nature and timing of the agricultural revolution and the relationship between rising population and higher livestock densities, crop yields per acre and overall yields see B. M. S. Campbell and M. Overton, 'A new perspective on medieval and early modern agriculture: six centuries of Norfolk farming c. 1250-c.1850', *Past and Present*, 141 (1993), pp. 38-105, esp. pp. 41-2, 93-9. There is also evidence to suggest that between 1700-1800, the fastest growth in terms of cereal yields took place before 1735, rather than post-1760. N. F. R. Crafts, *British economic growth during the industrial revolution* (1985), pp. 42-44. See also Turner, Beckett and Afton, *Farm production*, ch. 1, esp. pp. 18-22; M. E. Turner, 'Agricultural productivity in England in the eighteenth century: evidence from crop yields', *ECHR*, 35 (1982), pp. 489-506.

⁸⁰ The dissolution of the monasteries had also stimulated demand for surveys by the new owners of hitherto church-owned land.

⁸¹ For a historiography of surveying and map-making, see J. B. Harley, 'The Society of Arts' and the surveys of English counties 1759-1809', *J. Roy Soc Arts*, 112 (1963), No. 5089, p. 43; F. M. L. Thompson, *Chartered surveyors – the growth of a profession* (1968), pp. 9-10; K. Wrightson, *English society 1580-1680* (1993 edition), pp. 130-1; D. Thomas, 'The Elizabethan Crown lands: their purposes and problems' in R. W. Hoyle (ed.), *The estates of the English crown 1558-1640* (1992), pp. 64-8; R. Hoyle, 'Shearing the hog': the reform of the estates, c. 1598-1640', in Hoyle (ed.), *Estates of the English Crown*, pp. 204-29; A. McRae, 'To Know One's Own: estate surveying and the representation of the land in early modern England', *The Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 56 (1993), pp. 333-57; id., *God speed the plough: the representation of agrarian England, 1500-1660* (2002 edition), ch. 6; S. Bendall, *Maps land and society* (1992) passim; J. B. Harley, 'The re-mapping of England, 1750-1800', *Imago Mundi*, 19 (1965), pp. 56-67; S. L. Macey, 'The Compleat Plattmaker: British chart and map making, 1650-1750', *Eighteenth century studies*, 12 (1979), pp. 527-37; E. Hughes, 'The eighteenth century estate agent' in H. A. Croune, T. W. Moody and D. B. Quinn (eds.), *Essays in British and Irish History*, (1949), pp. 189-91; A. G. Hodgkiss, *Discovering antique maps* (1992), passim. See also P. Laxton (ed.), *The new nature of maps: essays in the history of cartography* (2001), passim.

⁸² B. Holderness, 'Prices, productivity and output' in Mingay (ed.), *AgHEW*, VI, pp. 92-100, 110-11, 118; see also pp. 996-7; Chambers and Mingay, *Agricultural revolution*, p. 111.

⁸³ Turner, Beckett and Afton, *Rent*, pp. 232-6.

⁸⁴ Annual awards were offered from 1759 to 1809. Maps were to be on a scale of one inch to one mile. The later half of the eighteenth century saw mapmaking established on a firm scientific basis. Cartography was further advanced by the establishment (in 1791) of the Ordnance Survey and (in 1795) the Hydrographic office.

more, and rentiers again realised (as they had a century before) that for want of a decent map, much of the financial potential of their land remained untapped. Furthermore, the expense of commissioning a survey would be far outweighed by the potential rewards, for ‘by [the surveyor’s] means rents are rased, and Lands knowne to the uttermost Acre’.⁸⁵

From the late eighteenth century and throughout the Napoleonic wars, the population continued to grow apace and this, coupled with the exigencies of war, encouraged further acceleration in consumer demand, food prices and rents.⁸⁶ There is also evidence to suggest a rise in owner occupation nationwide.⁸⁷ It was not until the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars that the economic brakes brought to an end the upward spiral of prices and rents with, in the years post-1815, widespread depression and a credit crunch that sent many farmers on the road to bankruptcy.⁸⁸

These then are the essential characteristics of the wider agrarian economy from c. 1650 to c. 1820. Within this broader landscape lay the counties of Kent and Sussex. Strategically positioned close to London and with relatively cheap sea-borne transport, Kent supplied food for much of the capital’s growing population.⁸⁹ Hence, by the seventeenth century, north-west Kent was firmly established in market gardening, while, as intimated above, even in the depressed economy of the 1730s-40s, the corn-growing farms of north Kent and specialist Wealden- and marshland livestock operations continued to find a ready market in London and beyond.⁹⁰ Nonetheless, for the eighteenth century, little detailed research has yet been done on landed estates in either county, under whose auspices records for many of these enterprises would naturally be found.⁹¹ Thus, one aim of this study is to break new ground by tracing the fortunes

⁸⁵ From John Norden’s *Surveyors Dialogue*, quoted in McRae, ‘To know one’s owne’, p. 341; Thompson, *Chartered surveyors*, pp. 9-10.

⁸⁶ A. H. John, ‘Farming in wartime: 1793-1815’, in E. L. Jones and G. E. Mingay (eds.) *Land, labour and population in the industrial revolution* (1967), pp. 28-47. See also C. Emsley, *British society and the French wars, 1793-1815* (1979); G. Hueckel, ‘English farming profits during the Napoleonic wars, 1793-1815’, *Explorations in Econ Hist*, 13 (1976), pp. 331-345. Statistics showing the general upward trend in food prices disguise the fact that, for example, the price of beef rose far more than that of mutton or pork during the war years. See also G. Hueckel, ‘Relative prices and supply response in English agriculture during the Napoleonic wars’, *EcHR*, 29 (1976), pp. 401-14, and esp. pp. 405-6; H. G. Hunt, ‘Agricultural rent in south-east England, 1788-1825’, *AgHR*, 8 (1959) *passim*.

⁸⁷ J. V. Beckett, ‘The decline of the small landowner in England and Wales 1660-1900’ in F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), *Landowners capitalists and entrepreneurs* (1994), pp. 91, 98-100, 102; Chambers and Mingay, *Agricultural revolution*, p. 131.

⁸⁸ Chambers and Mingay, *Agricultural revolution*, pp. 112-3; Emsley, *British society*, pp. 170-1; Hunt, ‘Agricultural rent’, *passim*.

⁸⁹ Freight charges for water transport were roughly one third less than the cost of land carriage. Baker, ‘The marketing of corn in the first half of the eighteenth century: north-east Kent’, *AgHR*, 18 (1970), pp. 129-31, 137.

⁹⁰ Thanks to corn subsidies, and north Kent’s close proximity to the continent, the county’s corn growers were able to increase their exports to Europe. See Ormrod, *Grain exports*, pp. 16-24, 56-8.

⁹¹ Mingay’s work covers Sir Jacob Bouverie’s estate in and around Folkestone for around six years (from 1716). Hunt’s findings cover Lord Darnley of Cobham’s estate in north-west Kent, 1788-1825. Baker’s main area of research was the marketing of corn and the hop industry in north-east Kent. Arnold’s work covers yeoman Richard Hayes of Adisham and Roake’s, the 266-acre Camer estate. For the Weald of Kent, the farming enterprise of Samuel Flint of Biddenden is discussed in chapter nine of this thesis. See G. E. Mingay, ‘Estate management in eighteenth century Kent’, *AgHR* 4 (1956), pp. 108-113; Hunt, ‘Agricultural rent’, *passim*; Baker, ‘The marketing of corn’, *passim*; *id.*, *Agricultural prices, production*

of some of these farming operations, and specifically those located on the marsh and/or its hinterland.

Prior to that however, there remains for consideration one further aspect of the wider rural economy, namely landlord-tenant relations and, more specifically, the tenures by which farms were held. In order then, to place much of what follows into a broader historical context, the main tenures extant in England, c. 1650-1820 - namely freehold, customaryhold and beneficial leasehold - will now be outlined, together with the rights that typically, each might convey to the occupier.⁹²

Freehold tenure conveyed the maximum possible legal rights to an owner, who often paid only a nominal sum known as a quit rent.⁹³ If not owner-occupied, freehold land was generally leased for a term of years at a rack rent. This, simply put, amounted to the highest rent that the land would bear. It was not uncommon for the lessee of freehold land to sublet all or part of his holding (subject to prior permission from the freeholder).⁹⁴

The most common form of customary tenure was copyhold, under which land was held by right of a copy of the manor court roll.⁹⁵ Rent was paid by means of an entry fine, often a substantial sum, as well as an ancient customary rent in the form of a fixed sum which, with the passage of time, transmuted into a notional figure, well below the market value if let at a rack rent.⁹⁶ There were two types of copyhold tenure, copyhold of inheritance and copyhold for lives. The former was prevalent in the east of England, the latter in the western counties. Copyhold of inheritance was almost as good as freehold, insofar as it comprised a secure perpetual tenancy, with the right to sell and inherit. That said, specific terms and conditions could vary from manor to manor, and be open to dispute although (with what was effectively a perpetual tenancy) the landlord's ability

and marketing, with special reference to the hop industry: north-east Kent (1981); R. Arnold, *A yeoman of Kent* (1949); M. Roake, 'The Camer estate 1716-1852, unpublished MA thesis, University of Kent (1969); A. Davison, 'A particularly convenient and useful' arrangement: the symbiotic relationship between the agrarian economy of Romney Marsh and the surrounding region in the eighteenth century', in Long, Hipkin and Clarke (eds.) *Romney Marsh: coastal and landscape change*, pp. 190-204. For further general discussion of Kentish farming in the eighteenth century see Mingay, 'Agriculture', in Armstrong (ed.), *Economy of Kent*, pp. 63-9.

⁹² For an overview, see Overton, *Agricultural revolution*, pp. 33-6; French and Hoyle, *English rural society*, pp. 31-5; Clay, 'Landlords and estate management', pp. 325-78; M. Turner, 'Corporate strategy or individual priority? Land management, income and tenure on Oxbridge agricultural land in the mid-nineteenth century', *Business history* 42 (2000), pp.1-3.

⁹³ A 'relief' was also due on the death of a tenant or when the property was sold. D. R. Clarke, 'The land-family bond in east Sussex c. 1580-1779', *Continuity and change* 21 (2006) p. 351.

⁹⁴ See Turner, Beckett and Afton, *Rent*, pp. 13-5. Sub-letting was more common in life-leasehold tenancies. Clay, 'Landlords and estate management', pp. 218n, 333, 350.

⁹⁵ For an overview of customary tenure and life leasehold see Clay, 'Landlords and estate management', pp. 325-35. For a discussion of copyhold and freehold tenures in the sixteenth- and seventeenth centuries see M. Campbell, *The English yeoman* (1983 edition), ch. 4. See also French and Hoyle, *English rural society*, pp. 31-2.

⁹⁶ From the sixteenth century onwards, rack rents became increasingly widespread across the country as customary tenures were gradually replaced.

to exploit his estate was limited.⁹⁷ Copyhold for lives, by contrast, was not permanent in nature, but lasted for the lives of named individuals, usually three in succession. While strictly speaking, there was no right to inherit, son would often follow father into the tenancy. In competitive environments however, copyholders for lives were, potentially, more vulnerable to exploitation by their landlords because their tenure (unlike copyhold of inheritance) was more akin to leasehold.⁹⁸

Compared to land leased at a rack rent, lands occupied by copyholders of inheritance did not, generally, receive much attention from their owners who, likely as not were absentee rentiers. Copyholders of inheritance, as *de facto* freeholders, were more-or-less left to get on with it because owners could do nothing to increase their own income. On larger holdings of this sort, acreage was often sublet, sometimes in small units. Effectively then, the tenant acted as the landlord, to whom the sub-tenants paid their rent direct, usually on a yearly tenancy at a rack rent, with no contact with the owner-proper. The latter, under these circumstances, had little control over what happened on his own land, especially as the tenant was under no obligation to seek permission to sublet, provided a subtenancy lasted no longer than a year at a time.⁹⁹ Very broadly, customary tenure remained important for much of the seventeenth century, and indeed, survived in many places into nineteenth century England. There was also much local variation, with customary and freehold tenures intermingled or adjacent.¹⁰⁰

Beneficial leasehold was the means by which church- and college-owned land was normally held. In some respects it was not dissimilar to lifeleasehold tenure that predominated on lay-owned

⁹⁷ Clarke, 'Land-family bond', p. 343. Tenant right, prevalent in the north, was similar to copyhold of inheritance, except that the tenant was liable to a fine on a change of lord as well as tenant. French and Hoyle, *English rural society*, pp. 8, 31-2; Clay, 'Landlords and estate management', p. 327n; Campbell, *Yeoman*, pp. 148-53.

⁹⁸ R. W. Hoyle, 'Tenure and the land market in early modern England: or a late contribution to the Brenner debate', *EcHR* 43 (1990), p. 7.

⁹⁹ Clay, 'Landlords and estate management', p. 333; id., 'Lifeleasehold in the western counties of England 1650-1750', *AgHR*, 29 (1981), pp. 83-96. French and Hoyle found that in respect of copyhold of inheritance, while land could be sublet, the process of establishing this right could be protracted. Presumably this applied to periods longer than a year. Significantly however, it allowed copyhold land to be purchased by those seeking an investment income from the land rather than farming it themselves. French and Hoyle, *English rural society*, pp. 31-2. In the east Sussex parish of Brede, rentals for 1716 disclose that in addition to the 96 tenants holding freehold property, and the 29 holding copyhold, a further 31 were recorded as subtenants. See Clarke, 'Land-family bond', p. 356.

¹⁰⁰ Beckett and Turner argue that ancient tenures (namely copyhold and beneficial leasehold) survived largely because little was required of the legal owners, so there was no incentive to change. J. V. Beckett and M. E. Turner, 'Freehold from copyhold and leasehold. Tenurial transition in England between the 16th and 19th centuries', in B. J. P. van Bavel and P. Hoppenbrouwers (eds.), *Landholding and land transfer in the North sea area, from the late middle ages to the 19th century* (2004), pp. 282-92, and esp. pp. 282-4; M. Turner and J. Beckett, 'The lingering survival of ancient tenures in English agriculture in the 19th century', in F. Galassi, K. Kauffman and J. Liebowitz (eds.), *Land, labour and tenure: the institutional arrangements of conflict and co-operation in comparative perspective*, (1998), pp. 97-113, and see especially pp. 101-3 for an overview of regional patterns in respect of ancient tenures at the end of the eighteenth century. See also Campbell, *Yeoman*, p. 119.

land in the south-west of the country.¹⁰¹ Common to both were entry- and renewal fines, small annual ‘reserved’ rents and land let for lives rather than terms of years. In addition, tenants commonly sublet their holdings at a rack rent.¹⁰² Further discussion of the beneficial leasehold system will follow in chapter seven.

As for the broad spectrum of leasehold tenure in the post-Restoration period, the length of tenancy could vary enormously. Much would depend on whether the tenure was lifeleasehold or for a term of years at a rack-rent, the geographical location, and/or prevailing economic conditions. In the south-west, a region characterized more by copyhold tenure, 99-year leases terminable on three lives were usual. In east and south-east England by contrast (where lifeleasehold tenure was not so common) leases for terms of years predominated, although it was not unusual to find yearly tenancies.¹⁰³ In East Anglia and the south-east, most leases were for 21 years or less, while in post-Restoration Kent, they could be anything from three- to 21 years, with seven years the most common.¹⁰⁴ Regardless of the length of a lease, the first priority of a responsible rentier was to secure a suitable tenant.¹⁰⁵ Hence, setting the level of rent could be as much a social exercise as an economic one, with confidence in the individual as a good tenant recognized as part of the deal.¹⁰⁶

In addition to formal tenancy agreements, farms could also be let on terms known as tenancy-at-will. This was a verbal arrangement with no formal security against eviction although in practice, security of tenure could be as good as a lease for a term of years. Indeed, it was common for a farm let on this basis to be occupied by successive generations of the same family. Furthermore, the tenant usually had the advantage of not being liable for repairs. Hence, for an occupier of a

¹⁰¹ Clay estimated that church-owned land in England and Wales accounted for around six- to seven per cent of the overall value of the nation’s landed property. Clay, ‘The greed of Whig bishops? Church landlords and their lessees 1660-1760’, *Past & present*, 87 (1980), p. 129. Hoyle, ‘Brenner debate’, p. 7; French and Hoyle, *English rural society*, pp. 8, 32.

¹⁰² Church- and college-owned land was generally let in large blocks to substantial private owners. Under the beneficial leasehold system, the administration and the risk were passed to the lessee who paid a lower rent in return. The institution levied a high entry fine plus substantial renewal fines (either every seven years or upon the ‘dropping’ of a life). Clay, ‘Greed of Whig bishops’, p. 130; A. Davison, ‘Aspects of corporate landownership and the fortunes of livestock farmers on Walland Marsh and Denge Marsh c. 1730-90’ in M. Waller, E. Edwards and L. Barber (eds.) *Romney Marsh: persistence and change in a coastal lowland* (2010), pp. 141-54.

¹⁰³ Yearly tenancies were formal agreements, either written or verbal. With a tenancy-at-will, technically speaking, a tenant’s only right was to collect his crops. Moreover, there was, in theory at least, no security against eviction. In practice however, suitable tenants could occupy farms on this basis for long periods, even to the next generation. Clay, ‘Landlords and estate management’ pp. 335-9; Chambers and Mingay, *Agricultural revolution*, p. 46.

¹⁰⁴ Chalklin, *Kent*, p. 60. Leases tended to be shorter because of higher demand for land and better agricultural prices near London, thus giving the landlord an option to increase the rent more often.

¹⁰⁵ It has been suggested that prior to the outbreak of the Napoleonic wars, neither consumer demand nor competition for tenancies were strong enough to have a noticeable effect on the length of leases. Clay, ‘Landlords and estate management’, pp. 69, 340-1; Turner, Beckett and Afton, *Rent*, pp. 14, 68, 107; Chambers and Mingay, *Agricultural revolution*, p. 47.

¹⁰⁶ Turner, Beckett and Afton, *Rent*, pp. 11-2. See also Mingay, ‘Size of farms’, pp. 473-4; Wrightson, *Earthly necessities*, pp. 281-4

smaller farm, this type of informal agreement might well be preferable to a formal one where he would have to foot the bill for some (if not all) repairs.¹⁰⁷

Rent was normally due either once- or twice-yearly (Michaelmas and/or Lady Day). In practice, arrangements could be more flexible, with up to six months or so elapsing after the due date before a farmer settled his account. Distinctions could be blurred when it came to the difference between a full-blown arrears or a late payment, when the latter might in actuality be regarded as normal in some circumstances but not others.¹⁰⁸ Unseasonal weather, a poor or late harvest or outbreaks of disease often conspired to prevent farmers promptly settling their accounts.¹⁰⁹

The nature of landlord-tenant relations could vary from one set of individuals to another. For instance, in the process of setting the level of rent for a holding, we know little about the way in which taxes and repairs were shared between parties, both of which affected the difference between the annual rent and the actual amount pocketed by the landlord.¹¹⁰ In this regard, for purely practical reasons, absentee landlords in particular might have preferred to pass on full responsibility for taxes and repairs to the tenant, and agree a proportionally lower rent, albeit still a market rent. In addition, even in respect of leases for terms of years fixed, ostensibly, at a rack rent, much could depend on the degree to which the final agreed amount was purely market-led, or influenced by ties of social obligation. Such things, in terms of a monetary value, are hard to quantify.¹¹¹ The impact of ties of social obligation versus market-led considerations on landlord-tenant relations will be further considered in chapter eight.

Where did the landholding structure of the region under study fit into this wider picture over the long eighteenth century? While customary tenures characterized much of seventeenth- and eighteenth century England, this was not true of Kentish landholding because historically, manorial control in the county was weak and copyhold tenure was rare.¹¹² This (coupled with the custom of partible inheritance) distinguished Kent as a county of small freeholders, with

¹⁰⁷ Repairs were proportionally a greater burden on smaller farms. Clay, 'Landlords and estate management', pp. 335-9. See also Chambers and Mingay, *Agricultural revolution*, p. 46; Mingay, 'Size of farms', p. 477.

¹⁰⁸ Turner, Beckett and Afton, *Rent*, pp. 33-4.

¹⁰⁹ See for example, J. Broad, 'Cattle plague in eighteenth century England', *AgHR* 31 (1983), pp. 104-15; C. F. Mullett, 'The cattle distemper in mid-eighteenth century England', *Agricultural history* 20 (1946), pp. 144-65; J. D. Post, 'Climatic variability and the European mortality wave of the early 1740s', *J. Interdisciplinary History* 15 (1984), pp. 1, 6; Overton, *Agricultural revolution*, p. 18, 202-3. Dobson's chronology of epidemic disease and mortality, 1682-1800 includes, for most years, data for weather patterns, harvests and grain prices. Dobson, *Contours*, 417-49. For discussion on the effect of the weather on the supply and demand of agricultural produce from the sixteenth century see Bowden (ed.), *Economic change*, pp. 3, 30-1, 37, 43-56, 233-9, 243-7.

¹¹⁰ Net rental was reckoned as 'the gross revenue less outgoings for repairs, improvements, land tax and expenses of administration' and which amounted, 'at best ... [to] only about two-thirds or three-quarters of the gross revenue', while on poorly-managed estates, 'tenants were allowed to pay their rents as much as two or three years in arrear [so that] bad debts reduced [the net income] even further.' Mingay, *English landed society*, pp. 53-5.

¹¹¹ Turner, Beckett and Afton, *Rent*, p. 81.

¹¹² This section has largely been taken from Chalklin, *Kent*, chs 3 and 4.

‘property in land ... very much divided, there being few extensive possessions but what are intersected by other persons’ property’.¹¹³ This, in the view of contemporary observers, encouraged an unusually high degree of cohesion in social relations. In terms of *acreage*, the overall landownership structure was dominated by large owners who, to be cost-effective, preferred to deal in large units let to carefully chosen and well-resourced tenants. Of these large estates, church-owned holdings were let on beneficial lease. Lay-owned holdings on the other hand, were normally let on leases for terms of years.¹¹⁴ In later seventeenth century Kent, lay owners rarely (if ever) charged premiums for granting a new lease.¹¹⁵ This no doubt reflected the relatively weak demand for land that marked the wider agrarian economy, c. 1660-1750.

We noted earlier that for eighteenth century Kent and Sussex, there is a dearth of knowledge about individual landed estates, whose records have the potential to reveal so much more about landlord-tenant relations. Neither, as yet, has much been uncovered in the way of farming records, and so we are still largely in the dark as to many of the day-to-day dynamics of farming practice, especially in respect of dual-regional operations. In addition (and with the exception of Hipkin’s findings for Romney Marsh) we have only a very sketchy idea about the nature of landownership and land occupation structures. The Land Tax evidence will be used (in chapter five) to explore, for the first time, landownership and land occupation structures in the marsh hinterland, and trends over time.

Landlord-tenant relations, farming practice and landownership/land occupation structures; these are the main strands that intertwine their way through the chapters to follow. It was Chambers and Mingay’s view that in the early-eighteenth century, ‘the English system of landlord and tenant ... was one of partnership, in which the costs and risks of farming were shared’, a system that, at its best was, they concluded, ‘reasonably efficient and flexible’.¹¹⁶ This may or may not have been broadly true of England as a whole. However, albeit for one small corner of the south-east of the country, the evidence used in this study will help to join up the dots in the wider, national picture, by uncovering aspects of landlord-tenant relations, farming practice and landholding structures, often with the richness and immediacy of a fly-on-the-wall account. Overall, it is hoped that what follows will shed further light on the nature of landlord-tenant relations in the eighteenth century, influences contributing to their attitudes towards the land, and

¹¹³ Boys, *General view*, p. 27. Freehold tenure and partible inheritance were characteristics of gavelkind. M. Zell, ‘Landholding and the land market in early modern Kent’ in M. Zell (ed.), *Early modern Kent 1540-1640* (2000), pp. 39-47.

¹¹⁴ Seven-year tenancies were the most usual, although tenancy-at-will was also common on smaller farms and estates in mid-seventeenth century Kent. Chalklin, *Kent*, pp. 46-9, 55-7, 60, 71. In neighbouring Sussex, copyhold tenure was more common than in Kent. In Clarke’s study of family property rights in eastern Sussex, the downland parishes examined (Streat and Westmeston) were found to be copyhold-dominated, while Brede (a Wealden parish) was mainly freehold. Moreover, copyhold tenure characterized the county’s downland parishes generally, and freehold tenure its Wealden parishes. For present purposes, we can be confident that the majority of the land in the Wealden part of the marsh hinterland (whether in Kent or Sussex) was freehold. Clarke, ‘Land-family bond’, pp. 344-7.

¹¹⁵ If they did, these entry fines were minimal. Chalklin, *Kent*, p. 60.

¹¹⁶ Chambers and Mingay, *Agricultural revolution*, p. 21.

the degree to which an agreed amount of rent was determined by the market or ties of social obligation. One thing however is certain. There is no one-size-fits-all answer and it is as well to remember Mingay's note of caution of the dangers of explaining away complex changes in terms of 'some single key factor' when situations are not clear-cut, and to be reminded that 'it is of the nature of history that the great conception is self-destructive since it inspires the patient work of detailed investigation which gradually qualifies, undermines, and eventually overthrows it.'¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ G. E. Mingay, *The gentry: the rise and fall of a ruling class* (1976), p. 57.

Chapter two. The Knatchbull family and estate.

In this investigation, special reference will be made to the Knatchbull estate in Kent. The purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of the family's fortunes and place them into a proper, wider historical context. An extensive estate archive has survived, much of which covers the eighteenth century. That evidence of this type has survived at all is significant, given that '...for the mass of landowners there is barely the odd estate history to rely on...'.¹ However, the fact that particularly comprehensive records were compiled in the first place is, in itself, an indicator that the owners were conscientious, and their accounts can be trusted.² Indeed, the material employed in this study has proved to be of outstanding quality and will, it is hoped, speak for itself. Take for example, Sir Wyndham Knatchbull's private journal, 'Hatch Memoranda'.³ Covering the years 1734-45, this reveals much about Knatchbull's day-to-day activities, official and otherwise, together with an insight into the tenor of social relations both inside and outside the local community. It uncovers something of the wrangles with the local vicar about tithes payments, as well as a behind-the-scenes look at marsh administration. It is particularly significant in respect of landlord-tenant relations by recounting, almost verbatim, a series of conversations between Knatchbull and his marsh tenants. This provides a quite possibly unique insight into landlord-tenant relations over a c. nine year period. Reference will also be made to an off-the-record account of Sir Wyndham Knatchbull's role as a justice of the peace.⁴ Taken together, these sources reveal a good deal about the character, values and sphere of influence of this leading member of the county's greater gentry.⁵

Additionally, for the years 1730-88, an unusually comprehensive series of estate and rent accounts reveal yet more about landlord-tenant relations and changes over time. They include data for the entire estate in Kent, for which supporting information regarding rentals can be found in Appendix 2. Significantly for present purposes, holdings were all located within the region under investigation here, either on the uplands, the Weald of Kent, or Romney Marsh.

This chapter takes a broadly chronological format. In the first place, some salient points are sketched as to the family's history until 1730, when Sir Wyndham Knatchbull (fifth baronet) inherited the estate. This is followed by an overview of the Home Farm and wider estate, with an appraisal of Sir Wyndham's character and values. The fortunes of the estate from c. 1745 are then traced, including the impact of a substantial windfall inheritance. Mention will also be made of the sixth baronet, whose plans to build a new mansion were abruptly halted after his premature

¹ Turner, Beckett and Afton, *Rent*, p. 138.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 77-83.

³ CKS U951 E12.

⁴ CKS U951 O4.

⁵ In this study, the terms 'greater gentry' and 'aristocracy', are synonymous. See J. V. Beckett, *The aristocracy in England, 1660-1914* (1986), ch. 1, esp. pp. 21-2; L. Stone and J. C. Fawtier Stone, *An open elite* (1984), ch. 1.

death in 1763. This project was subsequently finished by his successor, Sir Edward Knatchbull, whose farming accounts shed light on aspects of the Home Farm economy from 1770.

1. The Knatchbolls, 'Gentlemen of 'auncient stocke'.⁶

The Knatchbolls were among the 40 or so families that (in the eighteenth century) made up the county's greater gentry. Unlike some of Kent's newer arrivals to gentry status, these aristocrats were native to Kent, their ancestors having lived there since medieval times. This was especially the case among those based in parts of the county further away from London.⁷ The name 'Knatchbull' can be traced back to the thirteenth century, to one Clement Nechebol from the Walland Marsh area; and the family probably owed its early prosperity to the profits made from farming on Romney Marsh.⁸ In 1486 Richard Knatchbull purchased the uplands estate of Mersham Hatch. In keeping with aristocratic aspirations, successive generations of Knatchbolls sought to improve and expand their estate. By the eighteenth century, the country seat of Mersham Hatch was firmly established as a tangible, enduring expression of the family's prestige and influence in the county and beyond.⁹ Moreover, it has stood the test of time. To this day, a proportion of the estate is still in Knatchbull ownership, including a deer park and nearly 1,000 acres of woodland, home to one of the county's reputedly best game shoots. Furthermore, only as recently as 2002 did the family give up farming on land that had belonged to them since 1486.¹⁰

Sir Norton Knatchbull, first baronet (1601-85), was one of Kent's foremost livestock farmers.¹¹ Cheyne Court Farm in Walland Marsh was central to his operations, the scale of which is reflected in the estate accounts. In 1669 for example, around 1,220 sheep were purchased from 21 different people; in February 1671 Knatchbull received £674-11s-8d in part payment for 722 sheep and cattle; and in the same year he made £369 from wool sales alone.¹² By 1684, rental income from this well-managed and profitable estate topped £1,535. Sir Norton was also progressive in outlook, taking an active interest in agricultural improvement. He was responsible for sending three separate reports to the newly founded Royal Society, in which he described

⁶ Lambard, quoted by Chalklin, *Kent*, p. 192.

⁷ A. M. Everitt, *The community of Kent and the Great Rebellion 1640-60* (1966), pp. 37-8, 41, 44; Chalklin, *Kent*, pp. 192-3; Mingay, *Gentry*, p. 9; P. Laslett, 'The gentry of Kent in 1640', *Cambridge Hist J.*, IX (1948), pp. 148-64; M. Zell, 'Landholding and the land market in early modern Kent' in Zell, ed., *Early modern Kent*, p. 49.

⁸ Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Kentish family*, p. xiv.

⁹ For discussion of the functions of the country house see Stone and Stone, *An open elite*, part III; R. Wilson and A. Mackley, *Creating paradise* (2000), ch. 1; M. Girouard, *Life in the English country house* (1978); Beckett, *Aristocracy*, pp. 330-9, 344.

¹⁰ Taken from a *Daily Telegraph* article dated 25 April 2002, in which it was reported that Michael-John Knatchbull (a godson of the Queen and grandson of the late Earl Mountbatten of Burma) announced with 'deep regret' that due to the 'unsustainable losses' suffered as a result of a combination of a huge fall in prices over several years, foot and mouth disease and bad weather, he was giving up farming 2,000 acres of land, farmed by the Knatchbolls since 1486. Telegraph.co.uk.

¹¹ Baronetcy was an inheritable title created in 1611 by James I.

¹² Chalklin, *Kent*, p. 102.

farming practice in different parts of the county, together with results of experiments conducted by local farmers on land drainage and the preparation of seed wheat.¹³

The Knatchbulls were, primarily, rentiers. Successive baronets also fulfilled the usual social, judicial, political and administrative roles commensurate with their standing in the county. Thus, at any one time, a Knatchbull might be found serving as a member of parliament, justice of the peace, and/or crown commissioner. For example, Sir Norton Knatchbull's parliamentary career began in 1640, and (apart from the civil war years) continued until 1679. He also founded the Ashford Free Grammar School, for which 32.5 acres on Romney Marsh Level were held in trust, the rental income paying the schoolmaster's stipend.

The Knatchbulls were no more immune than others from the precariousness of life in a world in which, irrespective of social status, death and disease were an ever-present threat. Consequently, a lack of direct male heirs (or perhaps a lack of any direct heirs at all) was not uncommon, and with it, the diversion of wealth and land to a more distant relative.¹⁴ The reason why Sir Norton Knatchbull came into the Mersham estate (in 1636) was because his uncle (and namesake), despite three marriages (and living to the respectable age of 67) nevertheless died childless. Yet a sometimes remarkable degree of toughness and longevity sat alongside high mortality rates, especially early childhood death. For Sir Norton Knatchbull this was underlined by the fact that while 11 of his 13 children died very young, he lived to be 84 years old, and was sufficiently fit and well to remain actively involved in politics until his late seventies, quite an achievement by any standards.

In large part due to the competent administration of Sir Norton Knatchbull, the estate was left in a financially healthy position on his death (in 1685). Indeed, just one year later, his son and successor Sir John was recorded as the largest private landowner by far on Walland, with 1224 acres, 119 acres of which were farmed direct.¹⁵ The family was again blighted by the early deaths of nine out of 12 of Sir John's children, and with no direct male heir, the estate passed (in 1696) to his only surviving brother Thomas (third baronet). Thomas subsequently settled some 241 acres of marshland on his daughter Catherine upon her marriage. This landholding will be the subject of a case study in chapter eight, exploring landlord-tenant relations on Walland in the 1770s.

Sir Thomas Knatchbull's only surviving son, Edward, became the fourth baronet, succeeding to the estate in 1711. Prior to this however, Edward had (in 1698) married Alice Wyndham, and we

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹⁴ An overview of demographic factors and their impact on inter-generational inheritance see Clay, 'Landlords and estate management', pp. 292-7. See also J. D. Chambers, *Population economy and society in pre-industrial England* (1972), pp. 1-29; Mingay, *English landed society*, p. 80.

¹⁵ EKAC S/W/FSz 2. I owe this reference to Dr. Stephen Hipkin.

will see that this alliance was to prove highly advantageous for future generations, beginning with their eldest son Wyndham who was (in 1730) to succeed the fourth baronet. It happened that Wyndham's mother, Alice, had an uncle, Thomas Wyndham (her father's brother) who, in 1731, became Lord Chancellor of Ireland. Two years later Thomas inherited a large fortune from *his* uncle, the Earl of Thomond. After Thomas' death in 1745, the bulk of this £60,000 windfall inheritance went to Sir Wyndham Knatchbull (by then the fifth baronet) as the closest surviving male relative. This is further testimony to the genealogical twists and turns that could randomly occur; while the failure of male heirs could spell the end of one family line, a windfall inheritance resulting therefrom could also mean unexpected advancement for another.

2. Sir Wyndham Knatchbull, fifth baronet

Following Sir Edward Knatchbull's death in 1730, Sir Wyndham inherited the Kent estate. As Table 2.1 shows, he succeeded to a country seat made up of a dilapidated mansion, together with the Home Farm, comprising c. 410 acres including a deer park and woodland. The wider estate

Table 2.1: The Knatchbull estate in 1730.

Name	Location	Acres	Rent £ pa
Home Farm – incls Mersham-Hatch, deer park, warren	Mersham, Smeeth, Braborne, Wye	410.0	275.0
Bockhanger Wood & Priestfield	Mersham	51.0	30.0
Sub-total – Home Farm		461.0	305.0
East Lenham Farm	Lenham	420.0	160.0
House, Mill	Lenham	-	8.0
Land	Lenham	unk	16.0
Longhose Field	Mersham	2.0	1.5
'Home Land'	Mersham	80.0	60.0
Mill House & Land	Mersham	24.0	18.0
Quarrington Farm	Mersham	120.0	60.0
Farm	Mersham	20.0	12.0
Smith's Forge	Mersham	1.5	9.0
House	Mersham	-	5.0
House in the Park	Mersham	-	3.0
Land	Smeeth	10.0	8.0
Marshland ¹	Romney Marsh Level	32.0	26.0
Marshland	Romney Marsh Level	32.5	29.0
Marshland	Walland	320.0	342.0
Marshland	Walland	332.0	350.0
Marshland	Walland	150.0	200.0
Marshland	Walland	339.0	360.0
Sub-total - other		1883.0	1667.5
Total		2344.0	1972.5

Sources. CKS U274 T1 2/5.

¹ The 'Schoolland', held in trust for Ashford Free School, with rental income to pay the Master's stipend of £30. It was not liable to the Land Tax.

(all rented out) consisted of a collection of houses, farms and land located in several parishes on the Kent uplands as well as Romney Marsh. Albeit ramshackle and run-down, the mansion at Mersham Hatch was nonetheless a social and political power base. As a large household-family it was also a source of employment for local tradesmen and farm labourers.¹⁶ The Home Farm catered for domestic consumption, as well as the inevitable round of more formal social and business activities integral to the function of the mansion itself.¹⁷ As will be seen, the deer park, while serving as a display of the family's wealth and prestige, also supplied food and other resources.

On Knatchbull's arrival, the day-to-day running of Mersham Hatch depended on 15 full-time servants and staff, plus a number of tradesmen and labourers in husbandry. The domestic staff included a housekeeper, housemaid, cook, butler, together with four other servants. Knatchbull also employed a dairymaid, gamekeeper and gardener, as well as a groom, coachman and footman, all of whom reported to the bailiff who was, effectively, the farm manager, but who also oversaw the tradesmen working in the house. The bailiff was expected

To be the eye of his Master, and to overlook everything that belongs to the Article of Farming, and to lend a helping hand where 'tis necessary, as in helping home with the Corn, Hay, etc.

To look after the fields, that there are no gaps, gates broken, etc.

To take care that they are properly prepared for sowing seasons.

To sow them himself.

To take care the Crops are reap'd in proper seasons.

To be constantly with and overlook the labourers.

To see the Barns etc. are clean and in good order, and secure against the weather.

To look to the Poultry.

To take care of keeping the Corn clean etc.

To look after the Cattle, viz. Oxen and Cows.

To see they have proper pasture, and fodder when necessary.

To take care to get their disorders remedied.

To see the Dairy Maid goes about her business properly.

To see proper care is taken of the Swine.

¹⁶ In the eighteenth century, 'when English people spoke or wrote about 'families', it was not the nuclear unit that they had in mind. 'Family' could mean a household, including its diverse dependants, such a servants, apprentices, and co-resident relatives. Accordingly, Samuel Johnson defined 'family' as 'those who live in the same house'. N. Tadmor, *Family and friends in eighteenth-century England* (2001) pp. 19, 18-24.

¹⁷ See also Beckett, *Aristocracy*, pp. 158, 164.

To take care of the Pigeon House, that the Pidgeons are fed and preserved.
 To look after the Brewing Vessels, that they be in repair, and sweat and clear.
 To look after the Hub. Tools, Waggons, Ploughs, etc.
 To take care of the Sheep, and see that they have no Ailings.
 To shift their pastures properly.
 To buy in; and draw off when fat, both Sheep, and large Cattle.
 To look after the Horses, especially the Coachhorses in Winter.
 To look after the Woods, and see none of the Trees are injured.
 To see the Wood is fell'd, and brought home in proper time, and loose pieces picked up.
 To look after the Nursery, and keep the Weeds under.
 To keep thistles and brakes under by mowing in proper time.
 To look after the Hopground.
 To look after all the Workmen, Carpenters, Bricklayers, about the house, as well to [the] Ploughman, and see they all do good days works, and to be always about the fields; to see that all things are in order; and to send me word of any thing that is done wrong in my absence.¹⁸

While Knatchbull was away, the bailiff bought/sold livestock, paid local taxes and kept accounts, and they settled up on his return.¹⁹ The baronet was absent for a good part of the year (usually from the end of October until the following June) when, as we will see, he stayed in the capital for the 'London season'. This phenomenon was very much part of the wider social context of post-Restoration England for the aristocracy and led to increasing absenteeism from their country estates. It has been suggested that this absenteeism was the most powerful influence in the emergence of the estate steward 'as a man of diverse and far-reaching responsibilities.'²⁰

With a rental value of £275 per annum in 1730, the c. 410 acres comprising the Mersham Hatch estate was spread over four uplands parishes (Mersham, Smeeth, Brabourne and Wye) all of which were relatively well-drained, with fertile, mixed soils. The farm extended to around 90 acres, a combination of meadow (c. 20 acres), pasture (c. 42 acres) and arable land (c. 26 acres), as well as a small hopground. In 1734, by Knatchbull's estimation, the Home Farm might fetch on average, 15s an acre overall. There was, of course, considerable variation depending on land quality and use. Hence, the hopground was reckoned to be worth around 10 shillings an acre, while '... the 12 and 8 acres meadow may be worth about 20s an acre'. As for pasture land, 'the

¹⁸ A single, loose sheet of paper, headed 'Bailiff'. CKS U951 F18/2.

¹⁹ CKS U951 E12; CKS U951 A12; CKS U951 F18/2.

²⁰ The terms 'steward' and bailiff' were used very loosely in early modern England. D. R. Hainsworth, *Stewards, lords and people* (1992), pp.12-3, 17-21. See also J. V. Beckett, 'Estate management in eighteenth century England: the Lowther-Spedding relationship in Cumberland', in J. Chartres and D. Hey (eds.), *Land and society 1500-1800*, (1990), pp. 55-72; G. E. Mingay, 'The 18th century land steward', in Jones and Mingay (eds.), *Land labour and population*, pp. 3-27.

10 acres [may be worth] about 10s, the Upper Horse Park about 15s, [and] the Lower [Horse Park] about 10s ... [while] all the sowing ground of which Stonerocks is the best, about 12s-6d, one with another.²¹ The remaining c. 320 acres were given over to a c. 205 acre deer park, plus a further c. 115 acres of woodland both of which were worth around 12s-6d an acre.²²

As a status symbol, the ownership of a deer park was a ‘must-have’ for any member of the aristocracy out to ‘make or preserve a grandeur, and caus[ing him] to be respected by [his] poorer neighbours.’²³ By the eighteenth century however, Knatchbull’s deer park was one of only a few surviving in the county.²⁴ Indeed, from c.1500, the number of parks had been declining steadily across the country. There were various reasons for this, not least because, as a luxury, they were ‘a wayne comoditie’ that few could afford to maintain.²⁵ As deer required a large amount of land on which to roam, they were also an uneconomic use of acreage, especially if this could be put to more profitable use to feed a population that (in the century from c. 1550) was growing apace.²⁶ The question of the morality of hunting for sport alone had also become, to a lesser extent, another motive for disparking. Furthermore, the ravages of the civil war on the countryside meant that in the post-Restoration period, deer-hunting as a sport never fully recovered.²⁷ Indeed, any one of these factors may have influenced the first baronet’s decision (c.1650) to dispark more than one hundred acres.²⁸ Albeit somewhat reduced in size, the park remained, its survival testimony not only to the Knatchbills’ ability to better withstand some of the economic and political pressures of the preceding century, but also as a visible statement of the estate’s prestige.

The park, while not commercially viable, nonetheless yielded a diversity of produce. Its woodland was an important source of timber, and the land itself was integral to the working farm insofar as sheep, cattle and horses could (in the summer) graze alongside the deer (of which there were c.140 in 1734).²⁹ Primarily however, the park served as a specialist ‘game larder’, catering for domestic consumption and hospitality at home and in Knatchbull’s London quarters.³⁰ Venison was a speciality, long regarded as a delicacy, a status symbol fit only for the elite. Indeed, from Norman times, deer were protected under ‘forest law’ and from 1389, with the introduction of the first Game Law, deer hunting was made illegal for all but wealthy

²¹ 26 November 1734. CKS U951 E12.

²² CKS U274 T1 2/5 (unfoliated).

²³ John Houghton, Collection of Letters ii, pp. 73-4, quoted in K. Thomas, *Man and the natural world, 1500-1800* (1983), p. 202.

²⁴ In 1596, Lambard mentioned 54 ancient deer parks; only eight remained by the 1770s. Chalklin, *Kent*, pp. 12-3.

²⁵ William Harrison, quoted in G. Harvey, *Parkland* (2002), pp. 65-6.

²⁶ Wrigley and Schofield, *Population history*, pp. 207-9; Coward, *Social change and continuity*, p. 34.

²⁷ For further discussion see E. Griffin, *Blood sport* (2008), pp. 102-8; Thomas, *Natural world*, pp. 150-4, 160-3, 201-3, 254, 257. See also G. Roberts, *Woodlands of Kent* (1999), pp. 100-5.

²⁸ Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Kentish family*, pp. 22-3.

²⁹ 30 July 1734. CKS U951 F18/2. Harvey, *Parkland*, p. 51; O. Rackham, *Woodlands*, pp. 139-41, 539.

³⁰ Harvey, *Parkland*, ch. 2.

landowners.³¹ In the giving of hospitality, the offering of venison as a ‘treat’ (gift) spoke volumes by way of reinforcing the social hierarchy as well as consolidating loyalty and friendship.³² Similarly, it could be used during election campaigns as a way to encourage freeholders to vote a certain way. However, as will be seen later in this chapter, on one occasion this tactic (as Knatchbull, with some amusement, was to inform a colleague) did not go quite according to plan.

The park was also a carefully managed habitat for a variety of lesser game as well as fish. It was home to a rabbit warren that kept the house regularly supplied. Sales were also generated to the surrounding neighbourhood.³³ In the winter of 1730/1 for example, 24 rabbits were sold, fetching 1s-8d a pair.³⁴ There was also a highly productive pidgeon house, while pheasant and partridge were regularly on the menu. Further, the fish stocks in the boatpond (plus the smaller ‘stewpond’) were carefully managed.³⁵ No loss was insignificant enough to escape Knatchbull’s notice: one prompted a memoranda lamenting the fact that ‘All the 4 carp put into the boatpond died, and all the little pikes, no cause appearing on the drawing of it unless the blackness of the mud.’³⁶

As well as trees located within the park, the estate boasted c.135 acres of woodland, all of which Knatchbull ‘kept in hand’ for his own use. Well-managed woodland was a valuable resource for any landed estate, and Knatchbull’s was no exception.³⁷ In the 1730s for example, the fencing to the deer park was gradually replaced using timber taken from oak trees specifically chosen for that purpose. The baronet was fully aware of the savings to be made by using his own timber rather than buying it in. Thus, on 19 December 1734 he reckoned that, ‘By the computation of my carpenter, my new parkfence costs me in the workmanship 7s a rod, and if I was to buy the timber, it would cost 14s a rod more, so that in all it would cost £1-1s-0d a rod.’ Given the scale of this undertaking the savings would have been substantial. In just four months to December 1734, 79 oak trees had been marked, felled, and sorted according to suitability (for posts or pales). By 23 May 1735, well over a third of a mile of fencing had been completed in one section

³¹ Griffin, *Blood sport*, pp. 16-20, 62-3.

³² The game laws meant venison was never available on the open market. Griffin, *Blood sport*, pp. 43-4, 72; Hainsworth, *Stewards*, p. 122.

³³ While c. 100 acres were disparked c. 1650, Sir Norton Knatchbull extended the rabbit warren by some 28 acres. As a result, the rector of Mersham was deprived of a proportion of his tithes. The tensions that ensued are discussed in Knatchbull-Hugesson, *Kentish family*, p. 21.

³⁴ Sold by Robin Lott, gamekeeper. 30 September 1731. CKS U951 A12. The warren had a high reputation, and in the late eighteenth century supplied rabbit meat for the Canterbury market. Hasted, *History*, 7, pp. 592-4.

³⁵ Separate from the larger, breeding ponds, stewponds held fish ready for the table. See also Harvey, *Parkland*, pp. 44-6.

³⁶ 26 June 1734. CKS U951 E12.

³⁷ From c. 1760 well-managed woodlands were frequently more profitable than the rent achievable from an equivalent acreage of farmland. Beckett, *Aristocracy*, p. 337.

for, as Knatchbull was to note, ‘124 rods set up against the Common side of the Park fence’.³⁸ The labour costs for this alone would have exceeded £70, quite apart from the cost (in 1735) of a new pair of iron gates (specially ordered to match, exactly, those belonging to Knatchbull’s friend Mr Brockman) plus (in 1736) a set of six foot high iron rails to go on the walls ‘towards the Park’.³⁹

Aside from the park fencing, the estate woodlands produced surplus timber which was sold on. For example, on 10 December 1734, ‘23 oak trees were marked to be felled for the park fence, and all felled that day. At the same time, 35 ashes were marked to be felled by [purchaser] Hammond, [as] per agreement, being sold to him.’⁴⁰ Faggotts (firewood) were sometimes sold, and sometimes given away, as part of the terms of a lease. Prior to 1730, there was an existing agreement between Sir Edward Knatchbull (Sir Wyndham’s father) and Thomas Hancock, tenant of the Mill House and 24 acres in Mersham. At Sir Wyndham’s first ‘Tenants’ Day’, on Lady Day 1730, Hancock having paid his first half-year’s rent of £9, Knatchbull noted that he ‘had 300 faggots into the bargain as my Father promised him’; and this agreement still held good some 10 years later.⁴¹ Thus, in July 1740, Knatchbull noted ‘300 faggots given’ to Hancock, while another Mersham tenant James Hobday took ‘500 faggots [as] per Lease’.⁴²

We come now to the wider estate, details of which are set out in Table 2.1. Firstly, this comprised various houses, farms and land in and around Mersham and the uplands parish of Lenham. The two most substantial uplands holdings were both mixed farms; East Lenham Farm (c.420 acres) was let for £160 a year, and Quarrington Farm (c.120 acres) for £60 a year. The fortunes of both farming operations will be discussed in greater depth in chapter six. Secondly, land on Romney Marsh. In 1730, Sir Wyndham Knatchbull retained his predecessor’s ranking as the largest private landowner on the c.16,500 acres of Walland, with 1141 acres, let for £1252 a year. Overall, the estate achieved £1640 in annual rent, over three-quarters of which came from Knatchbull’s marshland interests worth, on average, £1 an acre. The only other land on the estate as valuable as this was the meadow (20 acres) on the Home Farm. By contrast, the substantially lower value of arable and pasture land is reflected in the annual rent for East Lenham Farm and Quarrington Farm. These, consisting of a combination of pasture, arable and woodland, were worth considerably less (7s-6d per acre and 10s per acre respectively).

At c. £1667 a year, the rent from the estate put Knatchbull comfortably within the income bracket of the wealthier greater gentry. Distinctions were, inevitably, blurred when it came to income levels and social status. However, the income of this more prosperous group would be something

³⁸ There were 320 rods to a mile. C. R. Chapman, *How heavy, how much and how long?*, p. 20; CKS U951 E12.

³⁹ 16 August 1735; 18 July 1736. CKS U951 E12.

⁴⁰ CKS U951 E12.

⁴¹ CKS U951 A12.

⁴² July 1740. CKS U951 E12.

of the order of £1000 per annum or more in the early- to mid-eighteenth century. In the main, income was generated by land although it could also include stocks, shares and/or remuneration from government office.⁴³ The baronet's resources were sufficient to allow him to split his time between the country and the capital, having first instructed the bailiff 'to send me word of any thing that is done wrong in my absence'.⁴⁴

Every year towards the end of October, and before leaving for London, it was something of a ritual to make an inventory of the wine cellars. On 24 October 1740, Knatchbull had in stock 40 bottles of wine of different varieties plus two bottles of his sister's cider. Of these, 35 bottles of wine and a bottle of brandy were set aside and 'left for the use of the family'.⁴⁵ Soon after arriving back at Mersham Hatch the following year, it was Knatchbull's habit to check how much was left. In June 1741 he returned to find the bottle of brandy as yet unopened, although there 'remained of the wine given out for use in my absence, 5 bottles of Mountain ...'.⁴⁶ 'Hatch Memoranda' is replete with similar entries, almost as if the wine stocks were the first to be checked on arrival back in Kent in the spring, and the last to be checked as, closing the journal for the last time, Knatchbull prepared to depart for the capital in the autumn.

'The London season' ran from October to the following May/June and was, increasingly, an essential part of aristocratic life in post-Restoration society, a time when the attractions of spending time in the capital were becoming greater than ever before. There were a number of reasons why this was so. Restoration London saw, for example, long and regular parliaments, and growing numbers of appointments to public office. The financial sector was another growth area. The capital was also an important marriage market. London then, was becoming ever-more *the* place to be seen, and a centre of conspicuous consumption for the aristocracy and their entourages. Indeed, in the promotion of one's social prestige, participation in the 'London season' was *de rigueur*.⁴⁷

In practice, Knatchbull spent more time in London than he did at Mersham Hatch. Despite thoroughly fulfilling his rural commitments, Landau has suggested that he may well have regarded London as something of a political bolt-hole. Back home, in an official role as justice

⁴³ Mingay, *Gentry*, p. 13.

⁴⁴ Bailiff's job description. CKS U951 F18/2. See above, p. 27.

⁴⁵ 24 October 1740. CKS U951 E12.

⁴⁶ 12 June 1741. CKS U951 E12. 'Mountain' was a variety of Malaga wine, made from grapes grown on the mountains.

⁴⁷ Hainsworth, *Stewards*, pp. 12-13; F. J. Fisher, 'The development of London as a centre of conspicuous consumption in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', *Trans. Roy. Hist. Soc.*, 30 (1948), pp. 37-50; Beckett, *Aristocracy*, pp. 363-8.

of the peace, Knatchbull was, coincidentally, the sole Whig. And surrounded on all sides by Tory colleagues this was not always a comfortable situation to be in.⁴⁸

Other than the £70 a year paid to rent a house in Golden Square, Knatchbull's London expenditure came to around £120 a month, a sum that was not overly-excessive compared with some. For example, Gloucestershire MP Sir Thomas Chester spent nearly £900 keeping his retinue temporarily housed in accommodation (also in Golden Square) between 9 January and 25 May 1735.⁴⁹ There is relatively little in Knatchbull's accounts to indicate much in the way of conspicuous consumption. Yet life in London was comfortable enough. Between October 1730 and July 1731 for example, in addition to some £9-12s-6d spent on tea and £1-13s on chocolate, purchases included a gold watch (£31-10s), three lottery tickets (£30) and a harpsichord (£27-16s-6d). For this, Knatchbull did not have to go far; a number of harpsichord and piano makers lived and worked in Golden Square at this time; and in April 1732 the house saw the addition of a clavichord (costing six guineas).⁵⁰ Indeed, musical entertainment figured quite highly in Knatchbull's London home. In January 1733, the baronet had paid nine guineas to hire 'a violin and tenor', while four months later, a Mr Rawlins received £2-12s-6d 'for playing on the Violin'.⁵¹

One economic advantage for Knatchbull was the proximity and relative ease of access from London to the Mersham estate. The capital was an expensive place to live - so much so that absentee landlords from as far away as Cheshire employed wagoners and packhorse carriers to transport a variety of produce from their Home Farms.⁵² Throughout the baronet's time in London, a variety of game would arrive weekly from Mersham Hatch of the level designed to meet the conspicuous consumption required to boost social and political influence. A particular advantage was the fact that the baronet could boast - in the deer park - of an indulgence of increasing rarity. Those fortunate enough to be invited to dine at Knatchbull's Golden Square residence might well be served venison, the ultimate delicacy. Indeed, the delivery from Mersham on 16 November 1743 included a doe, a pheasant, three poultry fowl and a hare.⁵³ It was accepted that 'through the skilful use of his venison, a gentleman [like Knatchbull] could hold the loyalty of his equals and inferiors and encourage the friendship of men more powerful than himself.'⁵⁴ An expensive luxury the park might have been, but the return for the baronet, not least in kudos at the dinner table, was worth every penny.

⁴⁸ N. Landau, *The justices of the peace* (1984), pp.31-8. The tension of two different lifestyles, with time split between the country and life in London is discussed in Thomas, *Natural world*, pp. 252-3; Beckett, *Aristocracy*, p. 369.

⁴⁹ Mingay, *English landed society*, p.157. See also Beckett, *Aristocracy*, pp. 366-7.

⁵⁰ F. H. W. Sheppard (ed.), *Survey of London*, 31, 32 (1963), pp. 138-45.

⁵¹ CKS U951 A12.

⁵² Hainsworth, *Stewards*, p. 250.

⁵³ CKS U951 F18/2.

⁵⁴ Hainsworth, *Stewards*, p. 122.

On returning to Kent for the summer, as the owner of a ‘running horse’, the baronet made an annual pilgrimage to the Canterbury races.⁵⁵ Horse racing was another important way to maintain, or promote, social prestige.⁵⁶ Aside from this, Knatchbull spent most of his time fulfilling various roles at the head of the local- and wider community. As such, his schedule comprised a range of duties that would, in one way or another, serve to reinforce the social hierarchy, ties of social deference, and infuse into the community an ‘ethos of service’.⁵⁷

Estate matters outside the bailiff’s remit were another priority for Knatchbull when at home. A case in point was wage rates for farm labour. As an employer, Knatchbull kept abreast of the going rates in the neighbourhood. In August, 1734, on asking a fellow landowner what his workmen were paid, the baronet was told,

he never gave to labouring men [more] than 12d a day in winter and 14d in summer, and that unless he could get that rate, he never employed [th]em ...[and] that 16d a day in summer was reckoned the top price. That he never allowed either labourers, or carpenters or any workmen employed about the house, small beer.⁵⁸

For the tradesmen employed by Knatchbull’s neighbour, these terms were not dissimilar to those reported elsewhere insofar as, ‘... on the great majority of days on which they were employed, building workers provided their own food and drink, and only received monetary payment for their labour’.⁵⁹

Beckett’s findings led him to the conclusion that, ‘On the whole, landowners appear to have been good employers’.⁶⁰ However, in this local context, we cannot be sure whether Knatchbull’s neighbour was typical of the general trend, or penny-pinching. Either way, Knatchbull was certainly more generous, and it seems that at Mersham Hatch, farm labourers and tradesmen had drinks thrown-in as a matter of course. For the baronet, this entailed keeping track of consumption, and ‘Hatch Memoranda’ is peppered with tallies of how much beer was in stock, with numbers of tradesmen currently working in the house noted alongside. In May 1735 for example, ‘there were 4 carpenters and 3 bricklayers about the house almost the whole time’ so

⁵⁵ The racehorse was sold for £25 in April 1744. CKS U951 A12.

⁵⁶ In July 1732, Knatchbull spent £5-2s-2d for ‘lodging at Canterbury races’, and (in July 1733) £8 in expenses. CKS U951 A12. For further discussion of horseracing as an aristocratic sport, see Beckett, *Aristocracy*, pp. 357-9.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-11, 337-8.

⁵⁸ ‘Small beer’ was a weak, inferior type of beer. Memorandum of a conversation on 23 August 1734. CKS U951 E12.

⁵⁹ D. Woodward, ‘Wage rates and living standards in pre-industrial England’, *Past and Present*, 91 (1981), p. 30.

⁶⁰ Beckett, *Aristocracy*, p. 339.

stocks were kept especially high.⁶¹ On another occasion, no less than 324 gallons of small beer were brewed in one go; thus, as Knatchbull was to note on 21 June 1737,

Also the first brewing of small beer being 6 Hogsheads, and one of the last drunk out, being in all 7, 6 of which were drunk out from the 20th April to this day, being as above, 4 weeks and 4 days. N.B. The 2 carpenters were almost constantly about the house in this time. N.B. Bricklayers about 1 week of it.⁶²

Some two months later, the tradesmen were still there, prompting the remark that, ‘Two carpenters about the house almost all the time, and 3 bricklayers near a fortnight’. Significantly, it was during this time that well over a gallon of beer was consumed daily.⁶³

Food and drink were also supplied to the farm labourers, even when they drove a hard bargain. For instance, in June 1743, and possibly due to a labour shortage, Knatchbull was forced to pay over the odds just to bring in the harvest. He complained, ‘Got in all my wheat – so beaten down that I was forced to pay by the day, the men 2s, women and boys 1s-6d. *Applepyes etc. as usual.*’⁶⁴ And as far as wage rates were concerned, the situation did not improve in the short term; for as a disgruntled Knatchbull was to report some three months later, ‘Finished my barley, and got in the rakings. Re. barley, *miserably beaten down: forced to pay* 4 men 4 days at 2s a day.’⁶⁵ Exasperated and out-of-pocket, Knatchbull nonetheless had no choice. With so much dependent on the weather, timing - and manpower – were crucial when it came to getting in the harvest, with dire consequences should things go awry.

On another occasion, unable to persuade any of his own workmen to undertake a job in the park, Knatchbull had to look further afield to find someone more willing. Thus, on 28 July 1736 it was ‘agreed with Robert Hooke of Smeeth [a neighbouring parish] to mow the Park at £4. Mem: None of my own Labourers cared to undertake it.’⁶⁶ A year later, Hooke again seemed happy to do the job for, as Knatchbull was to note, ‘It was agreed with Hooke to mow the Park brakes twice over for £3 a time, and if he has a hard bargain to allow him 10s more.’⁶⁷

Knatchbull was also appreciative of a job well done. In October 1731, he settled a bill for £12-14s-6d with one Nichols (a bricklayer) and was so pleased with his efforts that he gave him an extra five shillings ‘... in consideration of hard work at the Well ...’.⁶⁸ On the other hand, he had

⁶¹ 24 May 1735. CKS U951 E12.

⁶² 21 June 1737. CKS U951 E12.

⁶³ 10 August 1737. CKS U951 E12. It took five weeks and five days to use up a hogshead (54 gallons).

⁶⁴ CKS U951 F18/2.

⁶⁵ Italics mine. CKS U951 F18/2.

⁶⁶ CKS U951 E12.

⁶⁷ ‘Brakes’ = briers. 1 June 1737. CKS U951 E12.

⁶⁸ October 1731. CKS U951 A12.

no intention of paying over-the-odds unnecessarily. For example, in October, 1737 Knatchbull had the Mersham estate surveyed, for which he paid £17-14s-6d.⁶⁹ The following year, on discovering that ‘The Brooks measures no more than 13A-3R-14P, although it has always been paid for when mowed at 16 acres’, the baronet concluded that ‘This must be rectified another year; it not having been discovered this year till after paid for.’⁷⁰

Knatchbull was nobody’s fool, and it would have been hard to pull the wool over his eyes. A classic illustration is a conversation with one Massey of Godmersham to discuss terms for a sizeable brickmaking contract. Suspicious of the man (to the point where he thought someone should keep an eye on him if he got the job) Knatchbull recalled on 9 July 1737,

that in case I made use of him to burn bricks for me, he should [find] molds [templates], wheelbarrows, and everything else, and has no small beer. He to have 7s per 1000 lb digging and burning ... *twill also be proper to have someone present at the filling of the kiln, to see what number it will contain, and at the emptying it to see that none are left behind; this Massey being a very sharp fellow.*⁷¹

These comments can also be seen in the light of a wider historical context in which brickmakers in general had a poor reputation. As one contemporary concluded, ‘brickmakers are a bad, and thievish sort of men, so are not to be trusted with advance.’⁷² Maybe Knatchbull’s dislike was a knee-jerk reaction. However, a price for brickmaking set at seven shillings per thousand, and using Knatchbull’s own facilities for the ‘digging and burning’ would seem competitive bearing in mind that Massey’s rate was probably not much above cost price. Moreover, considering that if Knatchbull had thought of buying in bricks direct from an outside producer with his own kiln, he could have been looking at paying considerably more - around 11 shillings per thousand.⁷³ Perhaps, in this encounter at least, Knatchbull was over-cautious. Generally however, it would be reasonable to suppose that he was more than fair and, compared to some, generous.

Similar qualities marked the dealings of Knatchbull the landlord. Two examples stand out, concerning Mersham tenants who encountered problems during the so-called ‘agricultural depression’ of c. 1730-50, and whose fortunes during this difficult time will be more fully discussed in chapter six. The first, James Hobday, fell into difficulties from 1732-41. Indeed, throughout this time Hobday’s arrears slowly increased, and the majority he never quite managed

⁶⁹ October 1737. CKS U951 E12.

⁷⁰ 22 July 1738. CKS U951 E12.

⁷¹ Italics mine. Massey was competitive compared to one ‘Perkins’ who (on 16 September 1735) quoted on the basis that ‘he must have the earth brought to the kiln ... and be found in all utensils whatsoever, and materials, and be allowed a horse and barn to fetch the water in, and be allowed small beer whilst he is burning; and then must have 7s a thousand bricks, and 6s a load for burning lime.’ CKS U951 E12.

⁷² Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, p. 187.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 189, citing Linda Clarke, *Building capitalism* (1992), p. 138.

to pay off. Secondly, Thomas Hancock, who fell into arrears in 1735 and, like Hobday, encountered problems for several years. Although Knatchbull may have had no choice in the matter, given the general economic climate, nonetheless Hancock was, eventually, forgiven some of the debt.

These tenants were, perhaps, fortunate to have Knatchbull as their landlord, for not all were as forgiving, as they would have discovered (to their cost) had their farms belonged to Sir Marmaduke Constable of Everingham in Yorkshire. From a leading Catholic landowning family, Constable's landed estate was managed in his absence by a chaplain-steward, one John Bede Potts, a Benedictine priest. With a zero tolerance approach to arrears, Constable made it clear that allowing just half a year's rent in hand was 'time sufficient'. On learning (c.1730) that a widow was having problems paying her rent, Potts was ordered to 'quit her of her cottage, and all others who do not pay.'⁷⁴ Closer to home, tenants of Sir Jacob Bouverie's Kentish estate in Folkestone found him, at times, to be miserly, although compared to Constable he was rather more patient, insofar as (in 1716-7) arrears were allowed to accumulate for a year or two before Bouverie ordered the seizure of tenants' goods.⁷⁵

Knatchbull was cautious about prospective tenants who were an unknown quantity. This was part of the wider historical context in which it was taken-as-read that a prospective tenant could not hope to take on a holding without the landlord first having obtained a satisfactory character reference. It was a contemporary observation that, 'The English have the custom of showing the greatest trust in everyone possessing a character, that is to say, recommended by a gentleman; but they do not give a character lightly: whoever obtains one is careful not to lose it, for he cannot regain it.'⁷⁶ Rather than pursuing short-term financial gain *per se*, a responsible landlord would look to the long-term by making a careful choice of tenant in the first place. Most importantly, a tenant should possess enough capital resources to adequately stock a farm.⁷⁷ This explains why (in June 1741) when prospective tenants Messrs Farnell and Barling offered Knatchbull £185 per annum for a marsh holding, his reply was to 'promise them, if no one offered more, *and I heard a good account of them*, to let them have it ...'.⁷⁸ Similarly, in October 1740, the baronet noted that while he did not personally know 'one Goldup of Hasting[leigh who] came to offer for Quarington Farm', that he *was*, nevertheless, known to his friend, Mr. Brockman.⁷⁹ As a landlord, the baronet was magnanimous compared to Sir Jacob Bouverie. But both men were uncompromising when it came to prospective occupiers. In 1716 for example, the tenant of one of Bouverie's Kentish farms had died leaving his widow in occupation. Her eldest son (already

⁷⁴ P. Roebuck, 'Absentee landownership in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries: a neglected factor in English agrarian history', *AgHR* 21 (1973), p. 6.

⁷⁵ Mingay, 'Estate management', pp. 108-9.

⁷⁶ Quoted in L. Langford, *Englishness identified* (2000), p. 126.

⁷⁷ Mingay, *Gentry*, pp. 84-5; idem, 'Size of farms', pp. 473-4.

⁷⁸ 12 June 1740. CKS U951 E12.

⁷⁹ CKS U951 E12.

living and working on the farm) wanted to formally take over on expiry of the lease. Despite the steward being happy with this arrangement, Bouverie would not agree to it ‘without further assurance of his ability and diligence and of his general understanding for Husbandry, for ye Farme is undoubtedly a great pennyworth and I would not have it turned into Slothfull or negligent hands’ especially as it was to be let on a 21-year lease.⁸⁰

As one of the aristocratic elite and the head of the local community, Knatchbull fulfilled various paternalist responsibilities. Firstly, it was not uncommon for those of similar rank to act as a local banker-cum-trustee, lending money or conversely, holding deposits at interest. Hence, in January 1733 Knatchbull ‘Rec[eive]d ...this month £100 of my Gardener William Dane, which I am to keep for his use. This is kept separate from my other Accounts.’ The sum was invested on Dane’s behalf in South Seas annuities, together with £30 kept on behalf of Mrs. Anna Bennett of Salisbury, ‘and they are to receive interest in proportion.’⁸¹ Six months later, Knatchbull found himself in a rare but uncomfortable position, having run low on cash. A visit to Hoare, his London banker, prompted a memorandum that, ‘This month before I left London, I [with]drew all that remained of my money ... which was £1-1s-6d’.⁸² Knatchbull again ran into difficulties in May 1740 when, finding himself short of the cash needed to pay his sister the interest due on her inheritance, he ‘was obliged to sell out of the Stocks £100 belonging to Mrs Bennett, and £100 belonging to [one] Jane Wyat, to make up my sister’s money, which sums must be replaced for the Stocks at my expence.’⁸³

Secondly, charitable help. The casual caller at the gates of Mersham Hatch would find oats/corn for the taking in the ‘Strangers Binn’, routinely filled for that purpose. In respect of more formal charitable arrangements, the poorer residents of Mersham could consider themselves especially fortunate. Under the terms of Lady Jane Knatchbull’s will (c. 1700), a substantial bequest was set up specifically for their benefit.⁸⁴ Yielding some £74 a year, this was extremely generous considering that even in the 1830s, less than half of the 29,000 permanent charities listed in a Parliamentary report produced an annual income in excess of £5, and fewer than one in sixteen yielded more than £100.⁸⁵ Knatchbull’s charity provided schooling for Mersham’s poorer children, and was one of over 600 endowed free schools founded in England between 1700-30.⁸⁶ Lessons (held in a room adjoining the church) were taken by the parish clerk, who received a £10 stipend for his trouble.⁸⁷ Knatchbull, who kept the charity’s accounts, oversaw the practicalities,

⁸⁰ Quoted in Mingay, ‘Estate management’, p. 110.

⁸¹ Mingay, *English landed society*, p. 208. CKS U951 A12.

⁸² July 1733. CKS U951 A12.

⁸³ CKS U951 A12.

⁸⁴ The will made provision for the purchase of land which (in 1732) was rented for £80 a year to Sir Henry Furnesse. CKS U951 A14.

⁸⁵ Excluding London, Kent was among the top three endowed counties in respect of permanent charities. Mingay, *Gentry*, p. 141.

⁸⁶ D. Owen, *English philanthropy 1660-1960* (1996), pp. 17-27.

⁸⁷ Hasted, *History*, 7, p. 599.

keeping abreast of pupils as well as those on the waiting list. Hence, he noted (in August 1736) that the 'Boys taught by Mr. Greenland at present are, 2 of Knolles, 2 of Barret, Whiting, Gimmet, Dandy, Taberham. The 3 next are to be Bromley, Rate, and Castle.'⁸⁸ On 7 October 1737 Knatchbull 'Promised Wilds the Miller that one of his sons should come into the school', and the following October John Wilds was duly included in the class (of eight). Yet neither Knatchbull's responsibilities, nor the charity's, ended there. As a justice of the peace, he authorized the binding of apprenticeships while the charity, for its part, paid associated expenses.⁸⁹ In October 1737 therefore, it was 'Agreed with [one] Hague of Folkestone to bind Mat. Whiting's boy Henry to him from June 8th next ensuing for 7 years', while in October 1738, Knatchbull 'Promised to bind out Wrait the Weaver's son in the Spring [of 1739] to Giles a Carpenter at Lenham, at £10'.⁹⁰

In addition, income from the charity alleviated hardship, paying for numerous apothecaries' bills, as well as rent, food and clothing; and with much of this the baronet was personally involved. Take, for example, warm winter clothing. In November 1734 Knatchbull 'Gave out serge for poor people's gowns to ... Wraight [the weaver]; similarly, '31 yards of Dreadnought [were given] to Cheeseman for Poor Cloaths'. The making up of said garments took a full month to complete, after which Wraight and Cheeseman were paid from the charity's funds.⁹¹ There was also help with livestock - the cost of agistment, for example, or compensation for losses. Thus, in September 1740, in addition to a payment of ten shillings, Dame Castle received a further £2-16s-6d 'for keeping her cow'; while in October 1746, one Benjamin Green was given £0-10s-6d 'towards the loss of an Hog'.⁹² Knatchbull also used the charity to make interest-free loans. In November 1742, James Clark borrowed £14-9s-0d (which he repaid eight months later).

Having uncovered something of the character and values of Sir Wyndham Knatchbull as employer, landlord, and trustee of a charity, the extracts to follow reveal the tenor of the baronet's relationship with the local rector. Looking at the broader picture of gentry-clergy relations in eighteenth century England, many an incumbent would have the local squire as his patron. While this could strengthen their ties, this might not necessarily be in a healthy way. In some circumstances, such dependence might predispose a clergyman to be rather more accommodating to the patron's wishes than he might otherwise be.⁹³ But Dr Archer, Mersham's rector, owed his appointment (in 1726) to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and in his relationship with Knatchbull, was free to be his own man. In October 1737 he had arranged to see the baronet

⁸⁸ 26 August 1736. CKS U951 E12.

⁸⁹ Details of which can be found throughout the accounts. See CKS U951 A14.

⁹⁰ CKS U951 E12; U951 A14.

⁹¹ Serge was a type of woollen fabric, while dreadnought was a type of thick cloth suitable for inclement weather. CKS U951 E12.

⁹² CKS U951 A14.

⁹³ Mingay, *Gentry*, p. 138.

to discuss tithe payments.⁹⁴ Tithes were usually a bone of contention between gentry and clergy, although there was usually some way of arriving at an acceptable means of payment.⁹⁵ Indeed, it was the negotiation of ‘some new agreement’ that first prompted their meeting.⁹⁶

As for tithes payable to Dr Archer for land belonging to the Home Farm, Knatchbull ‘proposed to pay ... at 1s-6d the acre [for pasture] ... and 4s wheat and 2s-6d Lent Corn, and 1s-6d an acre for the ploughing land w[hen] it was mowed with seeds’. On hearing this, the rector suggested the first revised payment be made the following October. Their understanding was based on mutual trust for, as Knatchbull put it, ‘I might take his word as he would mine’. The rector then raised the question as to what ‘*all the Parish ... would judge reasonable to pay him [and that] he should be able at Mich[aelmas] next to conclude in what manner to agree with us all for the future.*’⁹⁷ Here, the underlying feeling is that as far as tithes were concerned, the clergyman was wrestling not only with the baronet as an individual, but also with Knatchbull as head of the local community. Knatchbull’s account of their meeting is telling insofar as he noted the things deliberately left unsaid. He recalled, ‘I said nothing to him of Easter Offerings, because I take it to be quite in my own choice whether to pay any, for no one in the Parish pays besides myself.’

A year later, payment had become due, so Knatchbull again saw the rector. Their meeting did not go well, with relations quickly strained. The baronet recalled, ‘I paid the Dr. his tithe in the manner I proposed last year viz at 1s-6d per acre the pasture, and at 4s the wheat and 2s-6d Lent corn; *except that he made me pay 2s per acre for the clover.*’⁹⁸ This was a substantial increase on the previously agreed figure of 1s-6d. Archer then broached the subject of Easter offerings, about which the baronet had, as we know, purposefully kept quiet. Clearly, the rector was plainly expecting to receive something by way of an offering, but was soon disappointed. Knatchbull informed him,

Easter offerings I refused to pay him, because it was not the custom for any other person in the parish to pay them. He said it had always been the custom for my family to pay them; and although they had not been paid whilst [one] Mr. Eve had the parsonage ... yet he could show [other] instances in [which they had been paid]. *I said that if he could make appear that they had been customary in the parish, and the rest of the parish thought it right to pay them, I should be ready to do as they did.* But as to paying them any longer myself singly, I refused to do it.

⁹⁴ Archer died in 1744. Hasted, *History* 7, p. 601.

⁹⁵ Money composition in lieu of payment in kind was commonplace.

⁹⁶ For further discussion on tithes see E. J. Evans, ‘Some reasons for the growth of English rural anti-clericalism, c.1750-c.1830’, in *Past and Present*, 66 (1975), pp. 84-109; id., *The contentious tithe* (1976), chs 1 and 2.

⁹⁷ Italics mine. 11 October 1737. CKS U951 E12.

⁹⁸ Italics mine. 19 October 1738. CKS U951 E12.

Clearly, the baronet was not going to climb down, citing both family and parish custom to strengthen his argument. Knatchbull also knew perfectly well that it was distinctly unlikely that ‘the rest of the parish [would think] it right to pay them’, thus removing the possibility of his having to be ‘ready to do as they did’. To this, Archer replied that

indeed he never had demanded [Easter offerings] of the parish but that he intended to demand them this year. He did not pretend to say that he could demand any particular sum. He looked on them as a compliment to the parson. But however, he thought he had a right to something.

We cannot gauge the tone in Archer’s response. His words could have been voiced as a sharp retort or, perhaps, in more humble fashion. However, as far as Knatchbull was concerned, Archer had gone back on his word by ‘making [him] pay 2s per acre for the clover’. No doubt he had this in mind when responding to the rector’s idea of having the Easter offering as a tip:-

I answered that he might [have a right to something] for ought I knew, in some parishes, but as to the sum which my family were used to pay, *it was certainly designed as a gratuity for being used favourably in their Tithes; and as that reason ceased with me, so I thought there was no occasion for paying it.*

By this stage, Knatchbull and the rector were even, the former having lost out on tithe payments, the latter with Easter offerings. In writing out Knatchbull’s receipt, the rector did not resist including ‘a memorandum that nothing was paid for Easter Offerings.’ The baronet then raised the subject of the use to which the ‘sacrament money’ might be put – to buy another collection dish, or to give the money to the poor. Archer was quick to stress that he kept ‘a punctual and very particular account of the money [collected and] which he was ready to show to me or any of the parish’; moreover, he went on to suggest, albeit defensively, that if, as Knatchbull recalled, ‘... they all agreed that it would be better to lay it out in charity, he would be ready to consult with us about it; and that he never should oppose himself against the inclinations of the whole parish in any matter.’ The baronet, obviously pleased, replied,

I said I was very glad he had given me so satisfactory an answer, *and that I should tell the parish what he said, and should be ready to agree with them if they all agreed to have their money laid out in a piece of Communion Plate.* However it was my own opinion that it would be more usefully laid out, if it was laid out in the Relief of poor families, and that it was offered at the sacraments with that only view and design.

[Archer] said moreover that he had always been ready to let the Overseers take any of it, when there had been occasion, for Charitable uses.⁹⁹

In respect of tithes payments, the tenor of the relationship between Knatchbull and the rector would have been replicated many times over in eighteenth century England, as gentry-clergy relations were often soured by similar disagreements. Nonetheless, the tensions did not prevent Knatchbull from admitting an error, if only to himself. Hence, a postscript, confessing, ‘I have omitted by mistake in reckoning the Tithes of my Wood to the Dr. ...’ an oversight that in due course, he might have thought to address.

This account also shows something of the way in which Knatchbull was perceived in relationship to the parish, collectively. Clearly, in the matter of tithes, the baronet, as a paternalistic spokesman-cum-intermediary, had their interests as well his own, at heart. Yet Knatchbull’s choice of words to the rector carried with it a sense that he was simply a parishioner like everyone else in the village. Equally however, with the status of the local squire, Knatchbull was a parishioner who, as *primus inter pares*, carried a certain weight of authority.

Knatchbull’s off-the-record account as a justice of the peace suggests, yet again, the lack of sympathy towards the clergy in the matter of tithes, and also of where his colleagues stood.¹⁰⁰ Following the issue of a warrant for refusal to pay small tithes, it transpired that the man concerned

being a Quaker, ... had no objection to the sum that was demanded, but only to the paying them at all. But as the order of Distress was to be made by 2 Justices, and Mr. Toke was not present who granted the Warrant together with me; the other Justices not being present at the complaint, *did not care to join in the order*. Mr. Sawbridge I think was present at the complaint, *but he declined meddling in the order*.¹⁰¹

Although not paid for their duties, justices wielded considerable power and were virtually independent, thus leaving the door wide open to operate out of self-interest, genuine concern for others, or anything in between.

⁹⁹ Italics mine. CKS U951 E12.

¹⁰⁰ Landau points out that Knatchbull’s account is one of a kind, largely because nearly all knowledge of eighteenth century Quarter- and petty sessions is drawn from formal records. Knatchbull’s account also revealed the morally dubious way in which fellow justice John Toke tried manipulation to increase his influence. This would never have come to light in the official records. Landau, *Justices*, pp. 31-8. See also Beckett, *Aristocracy*, pp. 377-80.

¹⁰¹ Italics mine. Petty sessions, 7 December 1734. CKS U951 O4.

Landau has argued that the activities of justices can be taken as ‘an unusually direct reflection of their motivation’. This would seem to be a fair conclusion - in which case there is every reason to suppose that Knatchbull’s account is a faithful portrayal of his character, motives and genuine paternal values. There are no grounds for thinking that the kind of paternalism he displayed bore any resemblance to Thompson’s perception, namely that ‘in practice, paternalism was as much theatre and gesture as effective responsibility [and] that so far from a warm, household, face-to-face relationship we can observe a studied technique of rule.’¹⁰² Indeed, it was Mingay’s conclusion that Knatchbull’s conduct as a justice was conscientious, fair and compassionate.¹⁰³ This is exemplified by the baronet’s account of an incident that took place within the context of the harsher side of settlement law, in which a parish could be quick to remove those for whom they would accept no responsibility.¹⁰⁴ It happened that

a poor woman had fallen ill of the smallpox at a house in the Parish of Ashford and had desired to be convey’d down to the Parish of Bethersden which she said she belong’d to. *The officers of Bethersden wou’d not receive her, but very inhumanly carry’d her back again with the smallpox out upon her to the House whence she was removed.* The woman died. Upon this [the] person where she lodged applied to the Justices to be paid the charges of nursing her in her illness. But they said, they cou’d make no order in this matter because it cou’d now no ways appear where the woman’s Settlement was, & therefore they cou’d not tell what parish to charge with it. *I said I thought the Officers of Bethersden might very properly be indicted for breach of duty; for that ‘twas not in their power to remove any person without an order.*¹⁰⁵

Knatchbull, as a justice, set great store on the swearing of oaths upon renewal of office, and not least his own. He was nothing if not punctilious about procedure. On 11 July 1738 he recalled that on

This day [I] took the Oath of Allegiance, & Supremacy, & Abjuration, & Sign’d them. Sign’d also the Declaration ag[ains]t Transubstantiation. Having first deliver’d my Certificate of having rec[eive]d the Sacrament sign’d by the Min[iste]r & Churchwarden of the Parish Church, & also by 2 Witnesses who saw me receive it, & ye Min[iste]r & Churchwarden sign it; & made oath thereof in Court.’¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Landau, *Justices*, pp. 1-2; E. P. Thompson, ‘Patrician society, plebeian culture’ in *J. social history*, 7 (1974), p. 397; id., ‘Eighteenth-century English society: class struggle without class?’ in *Social history*, 3 (1978), pp. 133-65.

¹⁰³ Mingay, *Gentry*, p. 129.

¹⁰⁴ R. Porter, *English society in the eighteenth century* (1990), p. 128.

¹⁰⁵ Italics mine. 2 August 1735. CKS U951 O4.

¹⁰⁶ 8 July 1738. CKS U951 O4.

In his official capacity as a justice, and for the purpose of ascertaining the truth about something, Knatchbull took oath-swearing very seriously indeed. For example, while dealing with an appeal to a Land Tax assessment, he noted that ‘...the Assessors were [not] sworn before examination, and I believe had never been sworn to their office.’ In this appeal, he had felt it significant enough to note (in respect of market rentals) that the appellant ‘*was ready to make Oath* [that] he had not made £150 [in rent] the last year ...’.¹⁰⁷ Yet again, he thought it significant that ‘The [Land Tax] Commissioners must be sworn in every year before they Act.’¹⁰⁸ As we will now see, the suspicion that a fellow justice, of all people, could be blatantly lying under oath would inevitably raise the baronet’s hackles. The incident concerned an ongoing wrangle between justice John Toke and the Overseers of the parish of Ashford which (on 6 August 1737) was brought before Ashford Quarter Sessions where Toke also served as a justice.¹⁰⁹ Toke – a staunch Tory - in ‘a clandestine manner, & as the Parishioners thought, illegal[ly]’ had been using his powers as a justice to manipulate the parish’s poor rate assessment for his own political ends.¹¹⁰ And this was not the first time; in 1735 he used similar tactics to enable Mersham’s highway surveyor to spend parish funds on the surveyor’s own private road.¹¹¹ Of the five justices in the Ashford division, Knatchbull was the only Whig and, as such, a lone voice in the midst of these political shenanigans. The baronet found Toke’s behaviour particularly distasteful, especially when, at Quarter Sessions on 11 July 1738, Toke had managed to ensure that the parish overseers paid Toke’s legal costs to enabling him to pursue *them* in a dubious legal case. Thus, Toke was acting as a justice in his own cause which, in effect, was illegal. The baronet was outraged. ‘A most monstrous piece of injustice’ he complained, ‘and nothing to be said in excuse of it ... [for] Toke [had] acted more like a Party than a Judge’. Knatchbull continued, ‘*He was press’d hard by the Recorder upon his oath of office ...*’¹¹² The scene inside Ashford Quarter Sessions was akin to a courtroom drama in which Toke was repeatedly reminded that he was under oath. And that was enough to call his integrity into question. This was particularly galling for Knatchbull who, earlier that very day, had gone through the rigmarole of taking and signing three separate oaths, taking (before witnesses) the sacrament (of Holy Communion), then getting signed certificates before swearing yet another oath in court - all of which were necessary before he could serve as a justice.¹¹³

Knatchbull’s disapproval of Toke had always been thinly disguised. In the 1733 election campaign, Toke was campaign manager for Tory candidate Sir Edward Dering. In a progress

¹⁰⁷ Italics mine. Entries dated 1 September 1739. CKS U951 O4.

¹⁰⁸ 7 July 1739. CKS U951 O4.

¹⁰⁹ Landau, *Justices*, pp. 34-7.

¹¹⁰ CKS U951 O4.

¹¹¹ Landau, *Justices*, p. 35.

¹¹² 11 July 1738. CKS U951 O4.

¹¹³ Italics mine. 11 July 1738. At an earlier hearing (6 August 1737) when the matter was initially brought up, Knatchbull’s view was that ‘Mr Toke had made a Poor sess in a clandestine manner, & as the Parishioners thought, illegal.’ CKS U951 O4. The case is discussed more fully in Landau, *Justices*, pp. 36-7.

report to his Whig ally the Duke of Dorset, Knatchbull retold an incident in Ashford, where, on the arrival of the Whig entourage,

The Ringers were not suffer'd to give us a peal, and Mr Toke was immediately sent for, who posted himself at a house just opposite to us, and brought some of the Freeholders with him to drink Sir Edward [Dering's] health; and, *according to his usual generosity, as I was inform'd next day, he made them all pay four shillings apiece for their reckoning.*¹¹⁴

Knatchbull was not alone in his distaste of Toke, whose browbeating tactics in the same campaign included a threat to revoke an alehouse licence if the innkeeper voted the wrong way.¹¹⁵ And this, at the drop of a hat, was quite within Toke's power to do, for, as Knatchbull was (subsequently) to note, 'It was declared to be a constant rule ... to suppress any alehouse as soon as it is complained of.'¹¹⁶ Yet again, Toke had no qualms about manipulating his powers as a justice, to the point of using threats to gain his own ends. In the wider political context, browbeating in this way was regarded as totally unacceptable.

Giving gifts (or 'treats') by contrast, was a perfectly acceptable way of influencing voters, while at the same time putting on a display of wealth fit to impress and reinforce ties of social deference.¹¹⁷ And what better way to do this than to serve venison. During the 1733 election campaign however, this tactic backfired, as Knatchbull, somewhat amused, was to inform the Duke of Dorset, 'Lord Winchelsea has been endeavouring to make great interest by the help of his Venison, but I am told there is a general complaint that he forgot to send sauce with it.'¹¹⁸ A delicacy venison might have been but not, apparently, without the gravy.

Knatchbull served in another official capacity, as a Walland Marsh Sewers Commissioner. In the 1730s-40s, the wider rural economy was in the doldrums, and so too was the micro-economic climate on the marsh. Furthermore, ongoing drainage problems were a major concern for the marsh administration. In 1734, in White Kemp Gut 'the vast quantity of Slub [wet and loose mud, sand and other sediment] ... ' had made conditions particularly difficult, aggravated, moreover, by 'several dry winters'.¹¹⁹ Elsewhere on Walland (in Juries Gut watering) a piece of

¹¹⁴ Knatchbull to the Duke of Dorset, 4 October 1733. CKS U269 C148/12 (65). This extract is also cited in Landau, *Justices*, pp. 37-8. See also Lansberry, F., 'Tempered despotism?': the government of the county', in Lansberry F. (ed.), *Government and politics in Kent, 1640-1914* (2001), pp. 57-8.

¹¹⁵ Thomas Curteis to the Duke of Dorset, 2 November 1733. CKS U269 C148/26. This incident is further discussed in Landau, *Justices*, p. 37.

¹¹⁶ Petty sessions, 7 September 1734. CKS U951 O4.

¹¹⁷ Beckett, *Aristocracy*, pp. 11, 442-3.

¹¹⁸ Knatchbull to the Duke of Dorset, 4 October 1733. CKS U269 C148/12 (65). See also Lansberry, 'Tempered despotism', p. 58.

¹¹⁹ General sessions meeting, 12 July 1734. CKS U951 E12.

wall was (by 1742) deemed to be ‘a dangerous place and growing every year worse and worse ...’.¹²⁰ Previous attempts to alleviate the situation had failed, ‘the groynes which had been pitched there having done no manner of service [while the making of] Boulder heads against the Pierhead ... would not cost less than £200.’ While these proposals were put on hold, it was found, on inspection, that more immediate action was called for; a piece of wall ‘was found to be so dangerous that the Commissioners there present did order [it] to be raised and the charge of it was computed at £100.’¹²¹ How best to tackle the practical difficulties was time-consuming; but so too, was the problem of finance. Tenants were duly scotched according to their occupied acreage, but materials and manpower did not come cheap. Yet the considerable debate and controversy surrounding extravagant expense claims were not noted in the official Minutes of General Sessions’ meetings. Knatchbull’s account, almost verbatim at times, affords an unprecedented insight into how the Commission attempted to economise. Some of the weaknesses of the marsh administration in matters of financial accountability will now be explored, together with the way in which issues were addressed (if they were at all). Yet again, it is reasonable to suppose that Knatchbull’s private memoranda were an accurate reflection of what he genuinely felt about the way in which the administration was run.

At the General Sessions meeting in June 1734, there was, in Knatchbull’s view, a ‘very reasonable’ complaint that Expenditors and other Officers ‘were in a manner paid twice over; because they were not only paid their salaries, but were likewise paid for their attendances in seeing the works performed which had been ordered; and for which attendance [it was] suppose[d] their salaries were their only proper payment. *But this objection was seconded by no Body to any purpose.*’ He continued, ‘I likewise mentioned the unreasonableness of paying 4s into the Commissioners pockets after they had been treated at the expense of the Level. And the Gentlemen there whom I spoke to were of the same opinion, *but nothing was offered publicly for the reforming it ...*’.¹²² While on the one hand, weaknesses were coming to light, this was met with a degree of inertia and apathy borne of self-interest, and nothing was actually done to tighten things up.

Three years later (in 1737) nothing seemed to have changed. However, this time, two Commissioners made ‘great objections ... to the moneys ... charged by the Expenditors ... because they had a salary for doing the work, and yet charged their work by the day besides, which was charging twice ... [Commissioner] Honeywood said it was always usual for the expenditors to be paid as they now charged. [Commissioner] Sawbridge was for beginning Reformation at the Head, and for the Commissioners to pay their Expenses with the 4s which was allowed them. Upon the whole it was answered that if the objection would find out persons who

¹²⁰ General sessions meeting, 9 June 1742. CKS U951 E12.

¹²¹ General sessions meeting, 9 June 1742. CKS U951 E12.

¹²² Italics mine. 7 June 1734. CKS U951 E12.

would do the work for less, they ought to be employed.’¹²³ At the same meeting, concern was expressed about claims for materials, especially where different prices were charged for the same product. It was noted that ‘In one of [Expenditor] Brattle’s bills the same iron spikes were charged at 6d in the pound by the same Smith who charged the same spikes in another Expenditor’s bill at 4d which was taken notice of.’¹²⁴

In 1738, Knatchbull was a lone voice in speaking up about inordinately high legal expenses, concluding that in one case, ‘several articles of the bill seemed very high’, such as

[Attorney] Lofty’s journeys to Canterbury charged at £1-11s-6d each.

His journey to me to Hatch from Romney at 15s.

Besides the witnesses charges at 5s per day, 6 days - £1-10s-0d each, their treats came to above £21.

[Clerk] Fowle’s attendance as a witness charged at £5-5s-0d.¹²⁵

He continued, ‘I took notice of this to the other Commissioners *but nothing was said*, though these articles appeared extraordinary.’ Perhaps Knatchbull took after his father, recalling that fellow Commissioner ‘Sir William Honeywood told me that [in an earlier law suit] my father would not employ ... Fowle’s father [the then clerk], but chose 2 attorneys that were nearer to London, because their charge for their journeys would be less. Perhaps, besides, he had no opinion of the man.’¹²⁶

By 1739 the Commission had woken up to the fact that these unreasonably high expenses claims were unsustainable, and on 13 June

A motion was ... made for the Books to be delivered to 3 of the Commissioners [so] that the particulars of the expenses in each watering might be drawn out together and laid before the next General Session, in order to have all the unnecessary expenses cut off. This motion was made upon looking over the Account of Elderton’s Innings *where £11 had been expended in work that cost no more than 17s.*

By 1740 the Commission was trying to make some radical cuts, having reduced, in one fell swoop, the annual charge of cleaning White Kemp Gut by one third, plus an officer’s salary from £5 to £1. Additionally, ‘an order [was] made for all the salaries, attendances and works done,

¹²³ 1 June 1737. CKS U951 E12.

¹²⁴ 1 June 1737. CKS U951 E12.

¹²⁵ 24 May 1738. CKS U951 E12.

¹²⁶ 24 May 1738. CKS U951 E12.

and scots received, to be laid before the Commission next year, by way of an estimate distinguished in different columns.¹²⁷

The Commission was soon to discover that the savings supposedly made in cleaning White Kemp Gut were not only a false economy, but were also responsible for aggravating existing problems. On 4 July 1741, two of Knatchbull's marsh tenants, Gamaliel Brattle and Henry Read told him 'that the man to whom the cleaning of the Outfall was committed at Mid[summer] 1740, at £20 per annum, does not take proper care of it'. Brattle and Read let it be known that the man charged with the job

Does not take in the Spring tides so often as he should: and that when the Fresh [water] is let out again, he does not take care to have men always ready to ho[e] away the slu[dge]; and that he has quite neglected to clean away the slu[dge] on the further part of the Channel, so that the Groins which have been pitched on our own side of the Channel in order to force the water to the other side are of no consequence.

With some irritation Knatchbull concluded that,

By this means the cleaning of the Indraught this last year has cost £97; whereas it never costed before above £60 at most, so that, whereas Brattle's Bill for cleaning the Outfall came before to about £38, *the Commissioners, by saving £18 of this, have exp[ende]d £37 more than usual in the Indraught.*¹²⁸

Neither were these expenses substantially reduced in the short term. On 9 June 1742 it was reported that 'the charges of cleaning the Indraught came to about £81, whereas last year they came to £97'. Knatchbull however at least had the satisfaction of knowing that marsh official Robert Loftie who, having previously claimed extravagant travel expenses, had just had his salary cut 'from £35-17s to £30 certain without any other fees.'¹²⁹

In his official duties, it has been shown that Knatchbull was a man of integrity, methodical, conscientious and, it seems, a good judge of character. Those who had dealings with him would have been left in no doubt as to where they stood. The character and values of Knatchbull as an employer and landlord demonstrate that he was both fair-minded and generous, sometimes cautious, and occasionally 'miserably beaten down'. The tensions in his relationship with the local clergy were, in essence, typical of the wider context of gentry-clergy relations at this time, especially with regard to tithe payments.

¹²⁷ Cleaning White Kemp Gutt had previously cost more than £30. 28 May 1740. CKS U951 E12.

¹²⁸ Italics mine. 4 July 1741. CKS U951 E12.

¹²⁹ 9 June 1742. CKS U951 E12.

The inheritance (in 1745) of the best part of a £60,000 fortune, left the baronet in an enviable position, well placed to add substantially to his estate. Additional landholdings should, ideally, be located as near to the country seat as possible. Notwithstanding the considerable capital cost, the ownership of land remained the hard currency that purchased social and economic power.¹³⁰

Table 2.2 sets out the purchases made from 1745. Before his death (in 1749), Knatchbull had made several acquisitions, ranging from 52 acres on Walland to a farm in Camberwell, Surrey. Thereafter, the trustees (who managed the estate during the minority of Knatchbull's only son and heir) made a string of local purchases. By 1757, when Sir Wyndham's son (and namesake), had come of age, the strategy adopted by the trustees had resulted in a further £1409 in annual rent being added to the estate. Hence, the young Sir Wyndham's future prospects for social and political prestige were considerably enhanced for, as his great-uncle, Lord Hardwicke (the Lord Chancellor) was to remark, 'He has a much better estate than ever was in his family before ...'.¹³¹

Table 2.2. The Knatchbull estate - new purchases from 1745.

Name	Location	Acres	Rent £ pa
Farm and lands	Postling		23.0
Farm and lands	Postling		125.0
Farm and lands	Postling		51.0
Farm and lands	Postling		110.0
Marshland	Walland	52.0	60.0
Marshland	Romney Marsh Level		302.5
Marshland	Romney Marsh Level	103.0	90.0
Marshland	Romney Marsh Level	224.5	151.0
Marshland	Romney Marsh Level		62.0
Marshland	Romney Marsh Level	88.0	67.5
Farm and Lands	Halden		85.0
South Stower Farm	Mersham/Aldington	160	67.0
Farm and Lands	Woodchurch		75.0
Farm and Lands	Camberwell, Surrey	108	140.0
Total			1409.0
Sources. CKS U951 C32; CKS U951 C67.			

In 1730, when the fifth baronet arrived at Mersham Hatch, the mansion was already dilapidated. As we have seen, bricklayers and carpenters were usually around the house, tackling remedial works of one sort or another. However, by the time Sir Wyndham succeeded to the estate, the house was unfit to live in. In 1761, Knatchbull's builder, one Cole of Ashford, pronounced the final verdict, declaring that the mansion was 'so old and faulty as well as insecure in all the floors that it w[ill] not answer to reparation.'¹³² The only practical solution was to start from scratch

¹³⁰ Mingay, *Gentry*, p. 10; id., *English landed society*, pp. 26-8.

¹³¹ Lord Hardwicke, the Lord Chancellor, to the Duke of Newcastle, cited in Knatchbull-Hugesson, *Kentish family*, p. 121.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 123.

and build a new one. This was feasible thanks to the windfall inheritance and the trustees' careful management of the proceeds.

In the wider context of early eighteenth century England and Europe, changing social and cultural trends were also influential in turning Sir Wyndham's attention to the idea of a new mansion. Fresh in the baronet's mind was his experience of the 'Grand Tour' of Europe from which, on succeeding to the estate, he had only recently returned. The 'Grand Tour' was, in itself, part of a much wider, early eighteenth century context for the aristocracy, namely a growth in foreign travel. This also led to a revived taste in Palladian architecture, for whom one Robert Adam was soon to become established as an architect. In 1758, he arrived back in England after four years studying architecture in Italy. On his return to London, at the age of 30, he set up his own practice.¹³³ It was at this time that the young Sir Wyndham Knatchbull, having himself only recently returned from his European travels, commissioned Adam to draw up plans for a Palladian style residence, and the result was the first complete house to be designed by the architect.¹³⁴

Unfortunately however, Sir Wyndham's time as sixth baronet was short-lived, for (in 1763) aged just 26, and childless, he died. Yet again, the failure of direct heirs in the Knatchbull family line meant that the estate passed to Sir Wyndham's paternal uncle, Sir Edward, who was, by then, 60 years old, and living in Wiltshire.

3. Sir Edward Knatchbull, seventh baronet

Until c. 1760, Sir Edward had spent much of his life in Ireland, with an estate inherited via Jane, daughter of Sir John Knatchbull (second baronet). In addition, he had (from 1727-60) served as the Member of Parliament for Armagh, after which (c. 1761) he returned to England, residing at the birthplace of his wife (Grace), in Wishford, Wiltshire.¹³⁵

Sir Edward's unexpected inheritance of the Kent estate in 1763 also brought with it a major shift in lifestyle for, as he was to explain, 'My circumstances now being greatly increased by the death of Sir Wyndham Knatchbull ... My income, if everything was to be let, before the Great Increase by Sir Wyndham's death, at a moderate computation, In England £200; in Ireland, £480 ... [total] £680.' By the end of 1763, Knatchbull had pocketed £2,819-12s-9d from the

¹³³ Mingay, *English landed society*, pp. 137-41; id., *Gentry*, p. 162; Stone and Fawtier Stone, *An open elite*, p. 240; Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, pp. 66-78; J. Black, *The British abroad; the Grand Tour in the eighteenth century* (2003), passim.

¹³⁴ D. King, *The complete works of Robert and James Adam*, p.113.

¹³⁵ Jane Knatchbull was twice-married, but had no children. Her first husband was Sir George Herbert, from whom she inherited the Irish estate. Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Kentish family*, pp. 121-2.

Kent estate. On average, the income from that time until his death (in 1789) stood at c. £3,000 per annum.¹³⁶

Knatchbull was left with the job of finishing building the new house. This consumed much of his financial resources. Indeed, in 1764, just one year after his arrival at Mersham-Hatch, the baronet, preoccupied with the scale and cost of the project, noted that, ‘... in this building it is my own bricks, lime, sand, wood for the kiln, my own teams draw all this and the straw to the brick kilns, which is a considerable saving, but then all this must be calculated to the expense of the building.’¹³⁷ Much of the timber used came from the estate, and between 1762-5, tens of thousands of bricks were made using two kilns, also located on the estate. By the end of 1766, building works had already eaten up £2,649-13s-8d, ‘which has considerably exceeded what it ought to be for, considering the great charge I am at in building, I cannot afford to spend more than £2,000 a year and hardly that, without running into inconveniences.’¹³⁸ And within a few months the baronet had already run into ‘inconveniences’ and in 1767 was forced to borrow £1,000.¹³⁹ Then in 1768 he mortgaged the Camberwell estate for £2,000, noting that ‘These sums I was obliged to raise by pay the expenses Attendant on the new House.’ Yet even this was not enough. Soon after he ‘was obliged to take up £500 more ... on the Camberwell security’, and before too long was saddled with a £3,500 mortgage on this farm.¹⁴⁰ In 1770 however he sold it for £4,600, so that in addition to paying off the mortgage, Knatchbull was at least able to put £1,100 into the bank.¹⁴¹ In 1776, Knatchbull had to sell a second holding, some 88 acres on Romney Marsh Level, and which raised £1500. After the house was finally completed, Knatchbull noted down on a slip of paper what the venture had cost him including the loss of rental income on the farms sold which, he remarked, ‘with what [I received] on all [the] Estate Sir Wyndham left, enabled me to go on, and finish it ... The House and furniture cost considerable more than £20,000.’¹⁴²

Sir Edward, like his brother the fifth baronet, kept meticulous rent accounts in respect of all the landholdings on the estate; and the fortunes of Knatchbull farms on the Weald, the uplands as well as on Walland, will be further explored later in this study. Sir Edward also devoted much of his time to running the Home Farm. As previously mentioned, his predecessor had, in 1742, taken on Robert Lott as bailiff.¹⁴³ Lott was still there some 28 years later, having stayed on after Sir Edward inherited the estate. Indeed, Lott carried on until his death in 1770. Such long-term

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 122.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

¹³⁹ At four per cent interest.

¹⁴⁰ Charged at four per cent interest. CKS U951 A43.

¹⁴¹ 28 September 28 1770. CKS U951 A42.

¹⁴² Noted on a slip of paper (N.D., but c. 1783) inside Knatchbull’s ‘Rent Book and Rec[eip]ts of all kinds ...’, 1783-88. CKS U951 A44.

¹⁴³ 20 October 1742. CKS U951 F18/2.

employment however was not unusual, as it was common for a bailiff to continue to work within the same family throughout his career.¹⁴⁴

After Lott's death Sir Edward assumed all practical responsibility for the running of the estate. Although rather basic, Lott's record-keeping was nevertheless passable, but there is a noticeable increase in attention to detail in the estate accounts from 1770, when Knatchbull took over. Indeed, of his elderly bailiff he later remarked that, 'I know not what he bought or sold or how Profit or Loss went, but I found it so and bore with it as he was a very old man.'¹⁴⁵ These farming accounts kept by Sir Edward are particularly detailed, and will, later in this thesis, uncover, for the first time, aspects of the farming economy of a substantial Kentish landed estate in the 1770s.

¹⁴⁴ Hainsworth, *Stewards*, p. 29. See also Beckett, 'Estate management', p. 72.

¹⁴⁵ Cited in Knatchbull-Hugesson, *Kentish family*, p. 131.

Chapter three. ‘A tax of dangerous consequence’? The Land Tax in historical context.¹

For this investigation, the quantitative evidence used to explore landholding structures has been drawn from the Land Tax assessments (LTAs), Tenterden overseers’ accounts, as well as the tax records of the marsh administration.² LTAs are employed for two main purposes. The first (using extensive parish samples) is to present snapshots of landownership and land occupation structures across the region, c. 1746-90. The use of the evidence in this way is, as we will see, exceptional, in terms of geographical scope as well as the early period involved. In addition, the LTAs will reveal, for the first time, something of the Wealden- and uplands interests of dual-regional farmers. Until now, our knowledge of this group of farmers has been restricted because the scot book data have shown only the size of their operations *on the marsh*.³ The fresh evidence presented here uncovers, for the marsh hinterland, the extent of the enterprises belonging to a selection of dual-regional farmers, expressed in terms of relative wealth assessed to the Land Tax (LTA £).

In both respects therefore, the use of the LTAs in what follows breaks new ground in historical analysis. There are however, well-known dangers in the use of the LTAs as a tool for historical research. The purpose of both this chapter and the next is to address these issues. First, the Land Tax evidence as a whole will be placed into a wider historical context, prior to the discussion (in chapter four) of the methodological problems specific to the LTA documents *per se*. Having completed this two-stage exercise, we will have established the extent to which the LTAs, for the purposes of this investigation, can be trusted.

This chapter then, comprises three sections. The first explores the Land Tax in its proper, broader historical context and will address some of the more general methodological problems of the Land Tax material.⁴ It will demonstrate how the LTAs for the marsh hinterland fit into the bigger, national picture, as well as setting the wider context for the methodology outlined in chapter four. It will be argued that despite endemic underassessment, LTAs within any given parish bore some resemblance to the relative values of agricultural land as well as market rents. By correlating a selection of LTAs with the marsh tax records as well as the parish rental totals returned in respect to the 1815 Property Act it will be also be established that LTAs for farms in different parishes can generally be compared across the study area with a relatively high degree of accuracy. It will be seen that an LTA owned and/or occupied by an individual taxpayer across any given area was a pretty good indicator of his relative position within the local tax-paying hierarchy. In what follows therefore, the assertion is that the Land Tax evidence employed herein

¹ Lord Fitzwilliam to Francis Guybon, 18 February 1697, quoted in Hainsworth, *Stewards*, p.118.

² Tenterden overseers accounts, 1726 and 1773. CKS P369 2/2; CKS P364 12/3.

³ Hipkin, ‘Landownership’, p. 72.

⁴ See G. E. Mingay, ‘The LTAs and the small landowner’, *EcHR* 17 (1964), p. 381; D. E. Ginter, *A measure of wealth: The English Land Tax in historical analysis* (1992); M. Turner and D. Mills (eds) *Land and property: the English Land Tax 1692-1832* (1986), *passim*.

fulfills the basic criteria needed to explore landholding structures not only on a parish-by-parish basis but also *between parishes* across the region.

Section two focuses on the historiography of the small landowner as disclosed in LTA-based research for Cambridge, Rutland, Lincolnshire, Kent and Sussex. A common thread runs through the findings, insofar as the mid-eighteenth century would seem to have been the low-point for the small landowner, both in terms of numbers and in the proportion of owner-occupied LTAs. The results also suggest a slight fall in numbers of owners between the early- and the late eighteenth century. Apart from Grover's work on south-east Kent, the lack of clarification regarding the methodology adopted was found to be a major shortcoming. Significantly however, we will see that the agricultural worth of landholdings was taken into account when originally assessed to the Land Tax. This will further reinforce the assertion that the LTAs used in this investigation are capable of revealing landholding structures in any given area with a good degree of accuracy.

Section three considers the usefulness of the qualitative evidence employed to complement the tax listings, by assessing Edward Hasted's *History and topography of the county of Kent*. It will be argued that notwithstanding a persistent historiographical tendency to detract from the author and the accuracy of his work, Hasted's *History* provides significant and broadly reliable data that has been used extensively to verify and complement the LTAs.

1. The Land Tax evidence in historical context: the legislation and the contemporary debate.

The Land Tax legislation of 1692/7 should be properly seen from the perspective of a contemporary (and long-running) debate on the politics of taxation.⁵ An ongoing problem for Parliament was the deficit arising from the gaps between the revenue expected from direct taxation and the amount that, in actuality, was received by the Treasury. Difficulties were aggravated in the wake of escalating military expenditure from the later seventeenth century. The ongoing deficit led (in 1692) to a new, nationwide valuation of realty upon which assessments to the Land Tax were based.⁶

⁵ 4 W & M, c.1 (1692); 9 & 10 Will. III. c.10 (1697). See also 1 W & M, sess 1, c.20 (1688).

⁶ For the historiography of the Land Tax legislation see J. V. Beckett, 'Land Tax or excise: the levying of taxation in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England' *EngHR* 100 (1985), pp. 285-308; id., 'Land Tax administration at the local level 1693-1798' in Turner and Mills (eds.), *Land and property*, pp. 161-79; M. J. Braddick, *The nerves of state: taxation and the financing of the English state, 1558-1714* (1996); J. Brewer, 'The English state and fiscal appropriation, 1688-1789', *Politics and society* 16 (1988), pp. 335-85; J. Brewer, *The sinews of power* (1989); C. Brooks, 'Public finance and political stability: the administration of the Land Tax, 1688-1720', *The Historical J.* 17 (1974), pp. 281-300; E. Cannan, *The history of local rates in England* (1912); C. D. Chandaman, *The English public revenue 1660-1688* (1975); S. Dowell, *A history of taxation and taxes in England* (London, 1884) vols 2 and 3; M. Jurkowski, C. L. Smith and D. Crook (1998) *Lay taxes in England and Wales 1188-1688* (1998); W. Kennedy, *English taxation, 1640-1799: an essay on policy and opinion* (1913); C. Russell, *The causes of the English civil war* (1990); W. R. Ward, *The English Land Tax in the eighteenth century* (1953).

It was generally accepted that with some taxes the north and west of the country made a fair contribution relative to the Home Counties. Yet this was not the case with land taxes. The contemporary economist and politician Charles Davenant reckoned that the north and west would need to contribute an extra 22 per cent in land taxation to be brought into line with London and the Home Counties, where ‘Tis notoriously known that a great many Persons ... pay a full Fifth part [20 per cent] of their estates ...’.⁷ The historian Edward Hasted concluded that in Kent, the introduction of the Land Tax was particularly onerous,

... for as the pretence for raising it was merely to oppose the designs of the French, and for carrying on the war against them at that time only, many loyal persons ... gave in the value of their estates ... at their real annual rent. Whereas others, more cautious, knowing that a tax when once imposed is seldom taken off again, gave in the value of their estates at an eighth, or a fourth, or a half of their annual rent; by which means the estates in the northern counties of this kingdom, whose inhabitants are noted for being wary ... are taxed at but an eighth, or a fourth part in proportion to this county; which is in general assessed to the Land Tax at two parts out of three of the real rents, though several parishes are assessed at the full sum for which they are let.⁸

Evidence to support Hasted’s claim can be found by reference to the Furnesse estate in south-east Kent, c. 1710, supporting information for which is set out in Appendix 4, Table 4.1. Data for 36 holdings include both LTAs and market rents, and show a close relationship between the two. On average, LTAs on these 36 holdings were around 71.5 per cent of their market rents.⁹

The data presented in Table 3.1 are a rough illustration, for the southern and eastern counties, of how many acres would be covered by each £1 of quota. For comparison, regional averages for the midlands, the south-west, Wales and the north of England are also shown. At 12 acres per £1 of quota, it is argued here that Kent was taxed according to its established position among the top-ranking English counties in terms of relative wealth and population; similarly, at 15 acres per £1 of quota, was Sussex.¹⁰

⁷ C. Davenant, *An essay upon ways and means of supplying the war*, (London, 1695), pp. 67, 77-103. See also Ward, *Land Tax*, pp. 8-10, 39; H. J. Habakkuk, ‘English landownership, 1680-1740’ *EcHR* 10 (1940), p. 9.

⁸ Hasted, *History* I, p. 303.

⁹ Only on one holding was the LTA less than 50 per cent of the market rental value.

¹⁰ As for assessment criteria, the traditional modes of assessment were such that in Cumberland and Westmorland for example, there was barely any relationship at all between quotas and market rental values. See J. V. Beckett, ‘Local custom and the ‘new taxation’ in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: the example of Cumberland, *Northern history*, 12 (1976), pp. 105-26; idem, ‘Westmorland’s ‘book of rates’, in *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland antiquarian and archaeological society*, 77 (1977), pp. 127-37.

Table 3.1. The Land Tax, 1707, south-east counties - acres per £ quota, with regional averages.

County	Acres per £	County	Acres per £
London, Mddx	1	Kent	12
Surrey	7	Suffolk	13
Herts	9	Norfolk	15
Bucks	10	Hunts	15
Berks	11	Sussex	15
Beds	11	Cambs	17
Essex	11	Wilts	17
Oxon	12	Southants	19
Region	Acres per £	Region	Acres per £
South-east	12	Wales	94
Midlands	20	North-east	63
South-west	20	North-west	213

Sources. A. Browning (ed.), *English historical documents* 8, 1660-1714 (1953), pp. 318-21.

These figures also reflect the inequitable distribution of the tax burden across the country, which became progressively lighter the greater the distance from the capital. Yet the pattern was not so unreasonable in the light of Davenant's observation that,

‘... the Northern and Western Counties, especially such as lye most distant, will affirm, that out of the same value in estates, they are not able to pay the same Pound rate, because their rents are not so well Paid; their returns, and Markets, are not so quick; and they taste not that benefit of the trade, and greatness of London, in the same degree as the Home Counties.’¹¹

In theory, seventeenth century direct taxation covered all forms of wealth, as stated in the wording of the relevant statutes. Nonetheless, the bulk of the revenue generated from the 1692 Act, in common with its seventeenth century predecessors, came from land/property. Although government salaries and stock-in-trade were also widely assessed, they made up only a small proportion of the overall LTA value.¹²

A county quota system was adopted in 1697. The quota amount, in tax revenue, that a county was required to raise was equivalent to the amount of Land Tax returned from that county in

¹¹ Davenant, *Ways and means*, p. 119.

¹² Chandaman argued that the New Subsidy of 1671 was ‘the only serious [government] attempt ... to reach real values’ in assessments of taxable wealth. Thus, to get an idea of what the big picture looked like in terms of the distribution of taxable wealth in England in the late seventeenth century, the 1671 valuation can be used as a yardstick. The total capital value of all forms of taxable wealth was estimated at £281.8 million. Some 85 per cent of this derived from land and property, nine per cent from stock-in-trade, four per cent from money, and two per cent from offices of profit. Chandaman, *English public revenue*, pp. 192-3. See also Ginter, *A measure of wealth*, pp. 3-4, 21.

1692, the year of the national revaluation of real estate. Knowing how much each county was to raise, it was then the responsibility of the county administration to distribute the quota among the parishes accordingly.¹³ After 1697, county quotas were fixed so that thereafter, any existing inequalities between counties were more or less set in stone. The quota system also resulted in an increasingly stereotyped charge as, over time, assessments grew increasingly out of step with actual market values. However, the timing and degree to which this occurred was regionally specific and varied according to changes in land use and productivity, population and urbanisation. For example, Habakkuk suggested that in Bedfordshire, market rents saw little change between 1690-1720.¹⁴ So too in Kent. Here, the evidence suggests that market rents did not alter that much between c.1700-30. On the Furnesse estate for example, as shown in Appendix 4, Table 4.1, rent levels were relatively stable over the same period. Thus, while assessments gradually became fossilised in the absence of any further nationwide revaluation post-1692, as far as Kent was concerned, it is reasonable to suppose that there was little (if any) change in the gap between LTAs and market rents by c.1730, the starting-point for this dissertation. If the data for the Furnesse estate were typical of other landed estates in the county, then Hasted's claim regarding the relationship between LTAs and market rents in Kent had some validity. Yet the same did not hold true in a broader national context. LTAs were not, generally, the equivalent of current market rental values. In theory, land was to be assessed to the Land Tax according to what it was 'now worth to be leased, if the same were truly and bona fide leased or demised at a rack rent, and according to the full true yearly value ...'.¹⁵ In practice, however, the 1692 revaluation was not an accurate reflection of the current going-rate in market rents, any more than previous revaluations had been. Why? Part of the explanation lies in the fact that ingrained within English landed society was a deep-seated reluctance for real or personal estate to be scrutinised in order that its true market value be openly known. Indeed, compared with his European counterparts an Englishman was reputedly 'most master of his valuation and the least bitten in purse'.¹⁶ Hence, for tax purposes, estates were generally underassessed, although quite how many factors were to be taken into consideration to arrive at a fair assessment, and the relative merits of each, was, in itself, a conundrum.¹⁷ One Cambridgeshire landowner, concerned that his landed estate would, effectively, be assessed according to its true market rent, went to inordinate lengths to avoid this eventuality, as we will now see.

¹³ M. Turner, 'The Land Tax, land and property: old debates and new horizons' in Turner and Mills (eds), *Land and property*, pp. 1-6.

¹⁴ J. H. Habakkuk, 'English landownership, 1680-1740', *ECHR* 10 (1940), pp. 9, 13.

¹⁵ 1 W & M sess 1, c.20. See Beckett, 'Book of rates', pp. 127-37; id., 'Local custom', pp. 105-26.

¹⁶ Francis Bacon, quoted in Braddick, *Nerves of state*, p.150.

¹⁷ In the context of the contemporary debate, a number of factors were supposed to be important in respect of assessments, including 'ability to pay'; the intrinsic value of a parcel of land versus rack-rent charged to the tenant; different types of tenure; what the 'spareable part' might be taken to mean and clerical estates versus lay holdings. See Cannan, *Local rates*, pp. 82-3, 105-6; Dalton, *Country justice*, pp. 170-1; H. Phelps Brown, *Egalitarianism and the generation of inequality* (1988), pp. 133-5; Hainsworth, *Stewards*, pp. 114-8. See also Anon, *The true way of taxing ... as was debated by the country-assessors of the Land-Tax* (1693); George Hooper, *The parsons case under the present Land Tax* (1689).

It happened that in 1697, Lord Fitzwilliam of Milton (near Peterborough) got wind of the fact that a visit from the Land Tax commissioners was imminent, to assess the value of his estate. As an absentee rentier, it fell to Fitzwilliam to issue (with some urgency) strict instructions to his estate steward, Francis Guybon, on how best to handle the situation. Fitzwilliam was especially concerned that Guybon should give nothing away as to the true worth of the estate. He was well aware that once a figure had been set, it would be a *fait accompli*. Fitzwilliam also anticipated that the assessment would be ‘very severe’; in other words, his estate would be valued at the going market rate. Fitzwilliam cautioned Guybon that

it behoves us not to own how much [rent] the tenants pay. Therefore, I am advised, if they send to you for a rental ... go to them but pretend some business made you forget it. If they ask what such and such a tenant pays, pretend your memory is bad, you cannot remember. Be sure not to name anything, for if you name less than the tenant pays, they will make me pay treble ... if they can contradict us. Be sure to remember nothing they ask you; pretend you are ancient and your memory much fails you ... we will own nothing for this may prove a tax of dangerous consequence hereafter.¹⁸

Guybon was urged to keep Fitzwilliam’s letter by him, and to read it ‘over and over again’.¹⁹ No wonder then, if there were owners like this to deal with, an assessor’s job would indeed be ‘a harsh and odious business, [that] goes against the haire: so that it will be found extremely difficult ...’.²⁰ Inevitably, endemic under-assessment provoked journalistic comment, such as Daniel Defoe’s complaint that ‘Should the king appoint a survey over the assessors, and indict all those who were found faulty, allowing a reward to any discoverer of an assessment made lower than the literal sense of the Act implies, what a register of frauds and connivances would be found out!’²¹

If then, on the one hand, Fitzwilliam’s ploy of feigned amnesia was the typical approach of the average landlord and, on the other hand, manifold ‘frauds and connivances’ were typical of the average assessor’s *modus operandi*, then the way in which taxation was managed at a local level in England would have closely resembled a pantomime.²² However, in actuality, incompetence and venality were probably relatively uncommon. Indeed, local administration of the Land Tax was incorporated into the fabric of everyday life just like other local taxes. Local management was not in the hands of full-time paid professionals. Nevertheless, some historians have judged

¹⁸ 18 February 1697. Lord Fitzwilliam to Francis Guybon. Quoted in Hainsworth, *Stewards*, pp. 117-8.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 117-8.

²⁰ Anon. *A proposal for an equal Land Tax humbly submitted to consideration* (1691), p. 5.

²¹ D. Defoe, *An essay upon projects* (1695), p. vii.

²² For discussion of tax evasion and venality see G. E. Mingay, ‘LTAs’, pp. 383-4, citing Ward, *English Land Tax*, p. 88.

that it was usually undertaken in a professional manner, conscientiously and with integrity.²³

Indeed - and significantly for what follows in this dissertation - Grover's investigation of the administration of assessed taxes in Kent from 1692 led him to conclude that 'little evidence of the abuses that were alleged to have occurred elsewhere have been found in Kent'.²⁴

At county level, Land Tax administration was undertaken by Commissioners, appointed from their own respective division or county. In practice, justices of the peace usually acted in respect of both the Land Tax and Window Tax.²⁵ At parish level, assessors were appointed from 'the most able and sufficient inhabitants' who were to 'inform themselves by all lawful ways and means of the full yearly value' of all land/property located therein.²⁶ Upon completion, certificates were handed in to the Commissioners. Sir Wyndham Knatchbull's diary is informative as to what would happen next. For instance, on 27 September 1734, at Ashford petty sessions (where he sat as a justice of the peace and Land Tax Commissioner) Knatchbull recalled that

'[The Assessments] having been signed [at] last [petty sessions], this was the day for Appeals ... These lists are sworn to by the said Officer who delivers 'em in, and are signed by a Justice; & are to be deliver'd into Court at the next Session by the Constable. *In the meantime a copy is to be affix'd to the Church door.*'²⁷

On the one hand, pinning a notice to the door of the church was routine enough. Yet the fact that this was also important enough to warrant a specific note in Knatchbull's justice's diary should alert us to its significance. This was something not to be glossed over, either by the powers-that-be, the local squire or, sitting way down the social hierarchy, Joe Bloggs. The idea was that the assessment notice would be on display, in public, at the place representing the heart of the local community. Posted on the church door, for all to see, it could be scrutinised by anyone who wished to satisfy himself that the LTA assigned to his holding was, unmistakably, an accurate reflection of tax liability relative to those of everyone else in the neighbourhood.²⁸

Proportionality was everything. In the interests of fair play, each person's assessment had to be pitched just right. If it was not, there was the right of appeal to redress a genuine grievance, given

²³ Brooks, 'Public finance', p. 282.

²⁴ Grover, 'Land Tax in east Kent', chapter 2, esp. p. 189.

²⁵ Landau, *Justices*, pp. 27, 219; Grover, 'Land Tax in east Kent', p. 145.

²⁶ 4 W & M, c.1 (1692), in J. Raithby (ed), *Statutes of the realm* 6: 1685-94 (London 1819). As to tax collection, Knatchbull noted that 'the general custom ... is to appoint the same persons Collectors of the Window Tax, as are Collectors of the Land Tax'. 2 August 1735. CKS U951 O4.

²⁷ Italics mine. CKS U951 O4. See also Ginter, *Measure of wealth*, p. 17.

²⁸ For further discussion on concepts associated with the parish see Wrightson, *English society*, pp. 41-5; D. M. Palliser, 'The parish in perspective' in S. J. Wright (ed.), *Parish church and people* (1988), pp. 6-25; N. Yates, R. Hume and P. Hastings (eds), *Religion and society in Kent 1640-1914* (1994), pp. 1-2. See also P. Langford, *Englishness identified*, pp. 148-57.

the general acceptance that '[what] angers men most, is to be taxed above their Neighbours'.²⁹ Thus, on 4 June 1737, Knatchbull and his fellow commissioners were faced with 'Several complain[ing] of being overrated in their Land Tax.' Under the quota system, the only way to deal with this was to determine whether others in the parish were under-rated.³⁰ If so, the solution was to increase the assessments of those who were under-rated in order to compensate for reducing the assessment of those over-rated. In this situation, and faced with a group of disgruntled taxpayers, Knatchbull turned to the assessors of the relevant parishes who '... were asked whether any were underrated. But it appeared they were all rated as near in the same proportion as could well be.' These were the outworkings of an administrative system which, despite its shortcomings, was designed to mitigate against injustices, real or imagined. We can be confident therefore that for the purposes of this investigation, the LTA assigned to a taxpayer in any given parish was fair and proportional in relation to those of everyone else. This serves to reinforce the validity of the assertion that the LTAs used here can disclose landholding structures on a parish-by-parish basis with a high degree of confidence.³¹

Can the same hold true of an analysis extending to two or more parishes? Thus far, received opinion has held that an LTA-based inter-parish analysis of landholding structures is not a viable option, due to the generally inequitable distribution of the Land Tax burden between parishes (a view albeit based on evidence confined largely to the Yorkshire LTAs).³² However, a somewhat different story unfolds for the region under study here, indicating that the LTAs *are* capable of uncovering, relatively accurately, landholding structures embracing multiple parishes. This will now be demonstrated by correlating LTA data for the year 1746 with, in the first instance, the marsh administration's tax records and secondly, with the 1815 Property Tax parish rental values. The marsh data will be considered first.

LTAs for 14 whole-marsh parishes were analysed, together with three more LTAs (in which the detached parts of eight additional parishes were grouped together). The documents covered a consolidated area of marshland, all located on the Level of Romney Marsh. They also included the names of owners as well as occupiers, both of which were clearly differentiated (an aspect of the early evidence that, as we will see in due course, will prove highly significant for the purpose of this investigation). Tenants' names were then cross-referenced with the names entered into a tax schedule specific to Romney Marsh Level, and drawn up by the marsh administration in the same year (1746) as the LTAs. This schedule comprised a list of 282 tenants occupying 23,345

²⁹ Sir William Petty, *A discourse of taxes and contributions* (1689), p. 14. Other factors influencing the number of appeals to the Land Tax were high rates of taxation, together with agricultural depression. See also Grover, 'Land Tax in east Kent', pp. 100-20, especially p. 115.

³⁰ With the quota system, all the LTAs in a parish should, in total, add up to its allocated contribution. Within this amount however, individual assessments could be decreased or increased, as long as the parish total remained the same.

³¹ For further discussion of inequitable tax burdens within parishes see Ginter, *Measure of wealth*, pp. 133-51.

³² Ginter, *Measure of wealth*, chs. 13 and 14.

acres of marshland.³³ Of these, the names of 182 tenants were linked with the LTA data. The results of this exercise, effectively covering 89 per cent of Romney Marsh Level, are set out in Appendix 1, Table 1.2, from which it can be seen that in all, 19,464 acres of marshland were cross-referenced with the LTAs, and assessed at £11,146. Also disclosed (from the LTAs) were the numbers of line entries per occupier surname, as well as the number of parishes in which land was held. Using the Pearson correlation coefficient formula, the result, illustrated in Appendix 1, Fig 1.1 shows - at 0.97 - a very strong positive association indeed between total occupied marshland acreage per surname and the corresponding LTAs.³⁴ This then, amply demonstrates the ability of the Land Tax evidence to reliably disclose inter-parish landholding structures on the marsh. We will now test the evidence with regard to the region as a whole, using LTAs embracing Wealden, uplands as well as a selection of marsh parishes.

As set out in Appendix 1, Table 1.3, LTA parish totals for some 53 parishes located across the region were compared with the corresponding parish rental totals returned in respect of the 1815 Property Tax. The Pearson correlation coefficient formula was again used, and the results are illustrated in Appendix 1, Fig 1.2. Yet again - at 0.83 - there is a very positive measure of association between the two sets of data. The outcome of this two-part exercise amply demonstrates that for this study area at least, the LTAs are sufficiently congruent for the purpose of producing a fairly reliable inter-parish analysis of landholding structures.

2. LTAs and the historiography of the small landowner.

Throughout the early modern period and beyond, the fortunes of the small landowner, held to be '*the pith and substance of the country*', has attracted much interest.³⁵ And never more so than in the later nineteenth century, when the causes and timing of a recent decline were the essence of an ongoing debate that is still alive today. In this regard, the LTAs were initially employed by Johnson, who was led to conclude that the critical, 'fatal' period for the owner-occupier occurred sometime between the close of the seventeenth century and the mid-eighteenth century.³⁶ To support his conclusion, Johnson cited remarks of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth century writers who had blamed enclosure for a sharp fall in numbers of small landowners. Tawney blamed the apparent demise of the small owner on the greed and exploitation of agrarian capitalism. This highly prejudiced view, despite its extremity, significantly influenced subsequent

³³ Tenants were taxed (according to occupied acreage) in return for the benefit received by way of flood prevention and freshwater drainage. See above, pp. 5-6.

³⁴ For discussion of the correlation coefficient and measuring the strength of the association in quantitative analysis, see C. H. Feinstein and M. Thomas, *Making history count* (2002), ch. 3; P. Hudson, *History by numbers* (2000), pp. 147-9.

³⁵ Taken from Nathaniel Newbury, *The yeoman's prerogative* (1652), Preface, cited by Campbell, *Yeoman*, p. 62.

³⁶ Johnson famously pioneered the use of LTAs. Early material for three Hampshire parishes (1772) and 25 Norfolk parishes (1753) were identified, plus (for 1753) some 40 parishes in Kent. The methodology used is unclear. A. H. Johnson, *The disappearance of the small landowner* (1909), pp. 132-6.

historiography.³⁷ Perspectives have changed somewhat since then. Yet, one hundred years on, much has remained open for discussion. For instance, one problematical area is the question of what, precisely, counts as a ‘small owner’.³⁸ Yet another conundrum, when it comes to farm size, is the question of how small is ‘small’.³⁹

One thing has, however, become clear. No longer are the owner-occupiers of the seventeenth- and eighteenth centuries viewed with the same nostalgia as a distinct freeholding class, a ‘special kind of being’.⁴⁰ Rather, it is appreciated that they were a rather more complex group, embracing a broad spectrum of wealth, social status and acreage held. While occupying their own land, it was not unusual for small owners to rent more land from other owners, so that holdings were often scattered, sometimes across several parishes. Moreover, ‘small’ owner-occupiers could simultaneously be substantial tenants or petty rentiers.⁴¹ Using the LTAs, this has been amply demonstrated in the findings of Holderness and Ginter for eighteenth century Lincolnshire and Yorkshire respectively.⁴² Furthermore, Grover has uncovered a broadly similar picture for south east Kent which (as will be seen in chapter five) is also mirrored in landownership and land occupation structures on Romney Marsh and its hinterland.⁴³ Indeed, over both time and space, the variety and fluidity in terms of the tenures held by those who owned at least some of the land they occupied is a recurring theme in much of what follows here.

³⁷ J. V. Beckett, ‘The pattern of landownership in England and Wales, 1660-1880’, *EcHR* 37 (1984), p. 5. See also E. Kerridge, *Agrarian problems of the sixteenth century and after* (1969), Introduction.

³⁸ Beckett’s working definition of a ‘small owner’ was ‘a copy[holder] or a freeholder with a small holding worked in the main as a family farm.’ Beckett, ‘The decline of the small landowner in eighteenth- and nineteenth century England: some regional considerations’, *AgHR* 30 (1982), p. 97, note 4. Synonymous with the ‘small landowner’ are terms such as ‘peasant’, ‘independent peasant-cultivator’, ‘owner-occupier’ or ‘yeoman’. The latter was seen, by Campbell, as synonymous with the small freeholder – see Campbell, *Yeoman*, p. 25. For further discussion on the problems arising from the meaning of terms such as ‘yeoman’ or ‘peasant’ as used by contemporaries, and their subsequent use by historians, see Beckett, ‘The peasant in England: a case of terminological confusion’, *AgHR* 32 (1984), pp.113-23; id., ‘The decline of the small landowner in England and Wales 1660-1900’ in F.M.L. Thompson (ed.), *Landowners, capitalists and entrepreneurs* (1994) pp. 89-92. See also L. Shaw-Taylor, ‘The rise of agrarian capitalism and the decline of family farming in England’, *EcHR* (2011), DOI:10.1111/j.1468-0289.2010.00585.x.

³⁹ Whereas eighteenth century writers reckoned that a ‘large farm’ was something over 300 acres, by c.1850, it was reckoned to be over 500 acres. Reports of the Board of Agriculture at the end of the eighteenth century indicate the predominance of small farms (100 acres or less) in 12 English counties, by c.1850, a ‘small’ farm was reckoned to be between 100-50 acres. Mingay, ‘Size of farms’, pp. 469-70; Beckett, ‘Decline’, p. 111.

⁴⁰ B.A. Holderness, ‘Rural society in south-east Lindsey, Lincolnshire, 1660-1840’ (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Nottingham, 1968), p. 344.

⁴¹ Ginter emphasises that it is ‘peculiarly inappropriate to count ‘small’ ‘owner-occupiers’ unless one does so in a manner which specifically takes into account the properties they leased.’ D. E. Ginter, ‘Measuring the decline of the small landowner’, in B. A. Holderness and M. Turner (eds), *Land, labour and agriculture, 1700-1920* (1991), p. 42. See also Mingay, ‘LTAs’, pp. 387-8.

⁴² Ginter found that of 483 townships in the North Riding of Yorkshire, an area where property was not greatly divided, there was a tendency for ‘small’ owner occupiers to be major tenants on the great estates. Holderness found that in the south-east Lindsey region of Lincolnshire, nearly all owner-occupiers were, at the same time, proprietors and tenants. Ginter, ‘Decline’, p. 42; Holderness, ‘Rural society’, p. 606; Mills, ‘Early LTAs explored (1)’, p. 201.

⁴³ R. J. Grover, ‘The Land Tax in east Kent: A study in landownership and occupation with special reference to the methodological implications of the Land Tax Assessments’, (unpublished M.Phil thesis, University of Kent, 1980), pp. 326-7.

Clearly then, in analysing the fortunes of the small landowner, ‘owner-occupied’ land should not be considered in isolation. In this respect, Grover emphasised the importance of a methodology capable of differentiating between the small owner who could be classed as an ‘independent peasant cultivator’ and the one for whom owner occupation was less important in the bigger scheme of things.⁴⁴ Indeed, only in this way can we gain a more accurate picture of the full extent and nature of landholding structures, or of trends over time, especially for owners who might otherwise be classed (perhaps misleadingly) as ‘small’. In this, the early Land Tax evidence has a potentially unique role to play but which, as yet, is a resource that remains largely untapped.⁴⁵

Historiographically, another example of the shift in the way in which owner occupiers as a group have been perceived concerns the timing and extent of structural change. Different periods have been seen as critical to decline, such as the sixteenth century (Tawney), the years c.1690 to c.1750 (Johnson), or years following the end of the Napoleonic wars (Rae).⁴⁶ There was considerable regional and local variation, and a snapshot taken at any one point in time would reveal a diverse picture. By the late eighteenth century for example, the small owner retained a strong position in parts of Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and the High Weald of Sussex.

Nonetheless, most studies for periods before the late-eighteenth century have been restricted by the occasional nature and narrow geographical coverage of surviving evidence such as estate- and rent accounts.⁴⁷ Between 1780-1832 however, the near-complete survival of the LTAs has made a significant contribution to our understanding of longer-term trends, for example the effects of enclosure and the rise in owner-occupation from the 1780s to the end of the Napoleonic wars.⁴⁸ The preservation of this later evidence allows us to more fully appreciate the diversity in landlord-tenant relations and the fact that more often than not, small landowners were not solely owner-occupiers *per se*, but also occupiers of land rented from other landlords.

⁴⁴ Grover divided owners and occupiers into three groups. Owners were classified according to whether they were solely rentiers, solely owner-occupiers or those with mixed tenure estates (i.e. partly owner-occupied but with additional LTA occupied as a tenant). Similarly, occupiers were grouped into those who were solely tenants with no LTA of their own, owner-occupiers pure-and-simple, and those with mixed tenure farms (i.e. owner-occupied with additional LTA occupied as a tenant). According to this criteria, ‘mixed tenure estates’ and ‘mixed tenure farms’ would be one and the same. Grover noted that this three-fold grouping had not been adopted in other LTA-based studies. Grover, ‘Land tax in east Kent’, pp. 326-7.

⁴⁵ Holderness, ‘Rural society’, p. 606.

⁴⁶ Beckett, ‘Pattern of landownership’, p. 5; F. M. L. Thompson, ‘The social distribution of landed property since the sixteenth century’, *EcHR* 19 (1966), p. 512; R. H. Tawney, *The agrarian problem in the sixteenth century* (1912), passim; Johnson, *Disappearance*, p.147; J. Rae, ‘Why have the yeomanry perished?’, *Contemporary Review*, 44 (1883), pp. 551-3. Beckett, ‘Decline’, p. 97; B. A. Holderness, ‘The English land market in the eighteenth century: the case of Lincolnshire’, *EcHR* 27 (1974), pp. 569-72; D. K. Worcester, ‘East Sussex landownership: the structure of rural society in an area of old enclosure 1733-87’ (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Cambridge, 1950), pp. 21-2, 27, 80.

⁴⁷ Beckett, ‘Pattern of landownership’, pp. 7, 18-9.

⁴⁸ Turner and Mills (eds), *Land and Property*, ch. one. This begins with a short history of the legislation (pp. 1-6), a historiographical debate on the fate of the small landowner and (pp. 6-13), the role that enclosure may have played in his decline, as well as an overview of the historiography. See also Beckett, ‘Decline’, p. 99; id., ‘The decline of the small landowner in eighteenth century and nineteenth century England: some regional considerations’, *AgHR* 30 (1982), pp. 97-111.

By contrast, for the early to mid-eighteenth century, the contribution of the LTAs to an understanding of the structure of landownership and the fortunes of the small owner has been minimal. To some extent this has been unavoidable because relatively few pre-1780 LTAs have survived.⁴⁹ Quite apart from their scarcity, there is another, and indeed major, obstacle to the suitability of this early evidence for the analysis of landownership; prior to 1780, only one name had to be assigned to a line entry itemizing an LTA. This so-called single-columned format recorded the taxpayer only, who may have been the owner – or the tenant.⁵⁰

The problem of determining who-was-who has been discussed by Mills in a study of 55 early LTAs for the county of Rutland for the year 1712.⁵¹ These documents were compiled in two different formats, the first of which, with one set of names, but including status ascriptions, was used in 44 LTAs. Mills suggested that this layout indicated that the taxpayers were the proprietors. The second format, albeit single-columned, nevertheless included two sets of names, suggesting that the tenants were the taxpayers. With only one set of names to go on, it was argued that the taxpayer should be taken to be the owner, unless there is evidence to indicate otherwise. Even so, much would depend on local circumstances or the individual arrangements between landlord and tenant. In the midlands and north, it was common for the tenant to pay, without a corresponding deduction in rent.⁵² This can probably be explained by the fact that here, the Land Tax burden was far lighter than in the Home Counties and therefore the tenant was more likely to foot the bill. By contrast, in the heavily assessed county of Kent, it was usual for tenants to be allowed the tax as a deduction against the rent. Nonetheless, tenants were, in practice, tax *payers* in the sense that they actually handed over the money to the collector, although subsequently refunded by the landlord. Furthermore, for the local administration, the priority was receipt of *payment* and whether it was the owner or tenant who handed over the money was immaterial. This serves to underline the importance of remembering that these were, first and foremost, documents prepared by the local administration, the contents designed to be clearly understood by all concerned, even if to us, they seem ambiguous. Bearing in mind the above considerations, the results of early LTA-based work completed thus far will now be outlined. Mills' results (for Cambridgeshire) will be summarised, continuing with the more extensive findings of Holderness (for Lincolnshire) and Grover (for Kent and Sussex).⁵³

⁴⁹ D. Mills, 'Survival of early LTAs', appendix, in Turner and Mills (eds.) *Land and property*, pp. 219-31; R. Davey, *East Sussex Land Tax 1785* (1991), ix.

⁵⁰ E. Davies, 'The small landowner', pp. 88-9.

⁵¹ Mills, 'Early LTAs (1)', p. 191-6.

⁵² Mingay, 'LTAs', pp. 82, 382.

⁵³ For Lincolnshire, see Holderness, 'Rural society', especially chapters 5 and 6; Mills, 'Early LTAs (1)', pp. 198-201. For Kent and Sussex see R. J. Grover, 'Early LTAs explored (2) Kent and Sussex' in Turner and Mills (eds.), *Land and Property*, pp. 204-18.

Mills' analysis covered the Cambridgeshire parishes of Comberton and Meldreth, both of which, while roughly the same size, nevertheless differed in their landownership structures.⁵⁴ Comberton had 28 owners in 1707 and 30 owners in 1829. Mills concluded that 'if the possibility of significant fluctuations between [the two dates] is ignored, the Comberton data support Johnson's assertion', namely, that the low point for the small landowner lay somewhere around c. 1700.⁵⁵ Meldreth, by contrast, had 68 owners in 1699, but only 50 in 1815, a fall of 26 per cent; here, all the owners had disappeared from the £10 or less LTA group, having been absorbed into the next group up (£10-20).⁵⁶ Again, given the absence of evidence for Meldreth between these two dates, we cannot be more precise as to the timing of this decline.

Holderness' research of rural society in 96 Lincolnshire parishes in the south-east Lindsey region covered some c. 200 years to the mid-nineteenth century.⁵⁷ It included an examination of the structure of landownership and landoccupation, drawn largely from LTA evidence. Holderness acknowledged some of the limitations of the material. For example, there were omissions insofar as not all the names of occupants of land on large estates were included; often, only the name of one (presumably the most important) tenant was entered. Double entries and nominal record linkage were also problematical areas. In addition he noted that the LTAs rarely distinguished between land owned, for example, by the Monson family and land held by them as beneficial lessees of the Bishop of Lincoln. He also recognised that LTAs, as 'artificial' figures, did not realistically reflect true market rents.⁵⁸ Yet despite evidential weaknesses, these Lincolnshire LTAs were capable of disclosing general trends over time in land occupation patterns.⁵⁹

Whilst some aspects of Holderness' methodology were explained, shortcomings remained.⁶⁰ A major drawback is that we are not given LTA totals for each parish included in Holderness' analysis. This precludes in-depth comparison of the Lincolnshire results with other findings, particularly with regard to owner-occupation. Furthermore, the absence of LTA totals for individual parishes means we are left with nominal values only. Holderness was also too trusting of those said to be owner-occupiers, some of whom may have been tenants of corporate bodies. These weaknesses are, however, mitigated by the fact that Holderness' work was completed before the so-called Land Tax debate (ignited by Mingay's seminal article on the usefulness of

⁵⁴ Comberton extended to 1954 acres, Meldreth, 2000 acres. Mills, 'Early LTAs (1)', pp. 196-8.

⁵⁵ Mills, 'Early LTAs (1)', p. 196.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

⁵⁷ In all, roughly 164,240 acres. Holderness, 'Rural society', pp. 65-6.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 320, 422, 452.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 425.

⁶⁰ In respect of assessed rents, Holderness used the size groups first adopted by Davies, but with figures expressed as an LTA rather than tax paid. This method is preferable because it allows direct comparison with estate and rental accounts for which market rents are given. It also avoids the possibility of error on account of the varying shilling in the pound rates charged from year to year. Holderness discounted entries for tithe and glebe, but the treatment of government salaries and stock-in-trade is unclear. Holderness, 'Rural society', p. 326; Davies, 'The small landowner', *passim*; Mills, 'Early LTAs (1)', p. 197.

the evidence as a source).⁶¹ With the benefit of hindsight, we now understand the importance of explaining not only the methodology but also the way in which the local LTA evidence fits into a broader, historical context.⁶²

Holderness explored long-term change in owner-occupancy in south-east Lindsey, utilizing, as a sample, early LTAs for seven contiguous parishes for the years 1710, 1747 and 1790.⁶³ The results show the year 1747 to be the low point in terms of numbers of owner occupiers as well as in the proportion of owner-occupied LTAs. Because aggregate rentals for each of the sample parishes are not given, we do not know the proportion of owner-occupied land to tenanted land. Neither do we know the numbers of owner-occupiers relative to numbers of rentiers. Nor do we know what percentage of the LTA parish total the solely owner-occupied LTAs represent. Nonetheless, the findings, such as they are, indicate that c. 1750 was the low point for owner-occupiers, a trend that was similarly reflected on the marsh in Hipkin's findings, as well as those on Walland/Denge, as will be shown later in this thesis.⁶⁴

Davies' investigations led him to believe that only with 'insignificant exceptions' did the pre-1780 LTAs distinguish between owners and tenants.⁶⁵ In this respect then, it may be that the Lincolnshire evidence was exceptional. Holderness found suitable early material to compare landownership structures for the years 1695 and 1790, across four contiguous marshland parishes in Candleshoe Wapentake. Significantly, all were larger parishes with a 'highly complex property structure'.⁶⁶ Holderness' findings show a slight rise in the total number of owners' estates (from 226 to 228) for both dates, with a three per cent increase in the proportion of LTAs belonging to the large owners (of £50-plus).⁶⁷ Across the south-east Lindsey region overall, there was no major change in numbers of owners for the late seventeenth century compared with the end of the eighteenth century. Holderness also made the general observation that there remained a large number of medium-sized rentier estates in 1790 compared with 1695, although lack of evidence made it impossible to detect change in between the two dates.⁶⁸

Holderness explored changes over time in numbers of owners using a sample of 10 marsh parishes, 1695-1790. The evidence was patchy, but suggested an overall decline in numbers of owners by c. 1750. Although inconclusive, these results tend towards Johnson's hypothesis noted above, namely the decline in numbers of owners had reached its lowest point by the mid-eighteenth century. In addition, Holderness used a sample of seven parishes in Candleshoe

⁶¹ Mingay, 'LTAs', *passim*.

⁶² Ginter, *A measure of wealth*, p. 18.

⁶³ Holderness, 'Rural society', p. 345.

⁶⁴ Hipkin, 'Landownership', pp. 74-5.

⁶⁵ Davies, 'The small landowner', p. 88.

⁶⁶ Holderness, 'Rural society', p. 323.

⁶⁷ With 226 estates in 1695 and 228 in 1790. Holderness' use of the term 'estate' has been taken to mean the aggregated LTA of an individual's landowning interests, whether they be wholly owner-occupied, rented out, or a combination of the two.

⁶⁸ Holderness, 'Rural society', pp. 324-5, 374-5.

Wapentake (all outside the marsh) for the period c.1750-90. This sample showed a slight increase in numbers of owners, from 36 (in 1747) to 40 (in 1790).⁶⁹

As for land occupation patterns, Holderness recognised the relatively imprecise nature of what the LTAs were capable of revealing. He was able to measure the accuracy of his findings by reference to tithe collection books and estate and rental accounts. All were considered trustworthy sources, despite their limitations both geographically and over time. Significantly, it was established that these sources did not contradict the broader picture painted by the LTAs. Rather, they verified the impression of a diminution in tenant numbers between 1695 and 1790, followed by an increase to c.1810.⁷⁰ Thus, imprecise as it was, the LTA material was quite capable of accurately measuring general trends over time in land occupation structures. There is, therefore, no reason to suppose they were any less reliable with respect to patterns of landownership or owner-occupation.

There is also a strong suggestion that in the early eighteenth century, LTAs of land in parts of Candleshoe Wapentake reflected to some degree at least, the differences in current agricultural land values, determined in part by soil type and land use. For example, the wolds parish of Partney consisted mainly of grasslands, reputedly every bit as good as the superior marsh grazing land found elsewhere in the south-east Lindsey region. Extending to c. 900 acres, it was assessed to the Land Tax at nearly ten shillings per acre.⁷¹ The more usual figure for the neighbouring wolds parishes was between two shillings and sixpence and five shillings per acre. This differential would seem to be about right, considering that the wolds parishes were mixed farming areas and commanded lower rents in comparison with good quality marshland.

Holderness gathered sufficient usable early LTA material to construct samples. The evidence, albeit patchy, did at least shed a glimmer of light on patterns of landownership and land occupation for the early- to mid-eighteenth century to compare with the years post-1780. Holderness' research was the earliest, in-depth work done in this respect, and as such, broke new ground. As intimated above however, a drawback of this work is the lack of a systematic explanation of the way in which methodological problems have been treated, the worst being the absence of a comprehensive list of LTA totals for each parish.

Mills undertook further work on the structure of landownership in the south-east Lindsey region.⁷² Using early LTAs for six parishes, changes in numbers of owners were explored for the years 1709 and 1780. One parish, Driby, was owned almost entirely by one individual throughout the period and hence saw no change in the landownership structure. The other five

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 326-8.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 424-43.

⁷¹ In the 1960s Partney was still regarded as a 'good grazing parish'. *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 47, 69.

⁷² With no discussion of methodology. Mills, 'Early LTAs (1)', pp. 198-201.

parishes had all been used at various points in Holderness' study, so that there was a degree of overlap. To analyse changes in numbers of owners between the two dates, Mills treated each parish as a stand-alone unit, although two (Wainfleet and Croft) were adjacent, having been used in Holderness' sample of four contiguous parishes to which we have referred above.

Mills found an overall c. 40 per cent drop in numbers of owners between 1709 and 1780, findings that in some respects resembled Holderness' results for 10 marshland parishes (for the years 1710 and 1790). Nonetheless, the overall decline shown in Mills' findings disguised considerable variety within each of the five parishes, although the general trend was a shift in LTAs, namely from the small/middling owners to the largest owners. Drawing on some of Holderness' earlier findings to add to his own, Mills also suggested that the decline in owner-occupancy might have occurred before 1750. The subsequent rise in owner-occupancy from 1790-1810 is also highlighted and it is argued that generally speaking this was due to 'changes in the strength of demand for land from practicing farmers' rather than 'aristocratic and gentry aggrandisement'.⁷³ Significantly, from c. 1760, the same influences – level of market demand and tenant initiative - will be seen at work later in this study and which, on Walland/Denge, gradually re-drew patterns of landownership.

Turning now to Kent and Sussex, Grover used early LTAs for eight parishes in the St. Augustine's Division in south-east Kent and seven parishes in Hastings Rape in east Sussex, to analyse landownership and land occupation structures, 1702/5 and 1780/1.⁷⁴ LTAs assigned to owners and occupiers were taken as an 'appropriate indicator of relative size', although Grover acknowledged that 'size' in terms of a farming operation was problematical if considered purely in terms of raw acreage. A 'large' farming enterprise in one area may be deemed 'small' somewhere else, depending on the type of operation and soil quality.⁷⁵ We noted above that in Lincolnshire, LTAs did, to some extent, reflect the current relative value of agricultural land. Similarly, David Martin found this to be the case for two parishes in Hastings Rape. Martin analysed LTAs for Udimore and Catsfield for the year 1714. He found that 'the average rateable value of agricultural land per acre varied considerably from parish to parish, Udimore for example being assessed at c. 9/- per acre and Catsfield at c. 3/6d per acre'. In general terms Martin's results correlate closely with the Ministry of Agriculture's land classification of 1964.⁷⁶ Hence, while LTAs did not bear a consistent relationship to acreage, it is clear that its agricultural worth was taken into account. Notwithstanding the historical debate surrounding the LTAs and 'acreage equivalents', measuring land by its agricultural worth is a far more meaningful exercise in gauging relative values in landownership and land occupation.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

⁷⁴ Grover, 'Early LTAs (2)', *passim*.

⁷⁵ Grover used the same size groups as those adopted by Davies. Grover, 'Early LTAs (2)', p. 208.

⁷⁶ See R. Davey (ed.), *East Sussex Land Tax 1785* (1991), p. xi, quoting D. Martin, *An Agricultural History of East Sussex* (1982, typescript summary: copy in ESRO), p. 4.

As for methodology, Grover acknowledged that the entirety of a farm's geographical spread could be obscured because he had treated the holdings in each parish as stand-alone units. He suggested however that the resulting bias was only slight.⁷⁷ Fig 3.1 shows that (in Kent) Stonar and Worth are adjacent, as are Womenswold and Adisham. Stonar was atypical insofar as it was a 'closed' parish with a single proprietor-occupier in 1705 and in 1780. The remaining seven Kent parishes were all 'open'. Effectively then, each parish was surrounded by a number of other parishes, excluded from the analysis, but where an occupier could also have had an interest, as part of an integrated farming enterprise. Of the seven Sussex parishes, four (Ninfield, Whatlington, Ore and Pett) were situated well apart from one another. The remaining three (Iden, Playden and East Guldeford) were contiguous, making up a consolidated area of considerable size. It is possible then, that a proprietor or occupier in Playden for example, would also have interests in Iden and/or East Guldeford, that were part of one farming enterprise. Indeed, for the years 1746/8, an analysis of the LTAs for Iden, Playden and East Guldeford has disclosed 72 occupier surnames in all. Of these, ten surnames (roughly 15 per cent) occupied land in more than one parish.

Grover's tabulated results for the 15-parish sample are summarised in Table 3.2. In respect of numbers of owners, there was an overall decline of three per cent between 1702/5 and 1780/1. There were however, considerable variations within the size groups, in both the direction and the rate of change.⁷⁸ For example, by 1780/1, there had been a three per cent increase in the proportion of 'small' owners (less than £10) as well as the largest owners (£40-plus). Medium-sized owners (£10-39) by contrast, saw a five per cent fall. As for the proportion of LTAs belonging to each group, small owners retained all but 0.1 per cent of their share, while the proportion of LTAs in the hands of medium-sized owners fell by four per cent. Large owners had increased their share of LTAs by five per cent.

Table 3.2. The structure of landownership and land occupation in south-east Kent and Sussex - 15 parish sample, 1702/5 and 1780/1

Nos. owners	1702/5				1780/1			
	Nos.	%	£	%	Nos.	%	£	%
Large £40+	75	19.4	71.1		81	21.7	76.2	
Medium £10-39	114	29.4	21.5		91	24.3	16.8	
Small £9 or less	198	51.2	7.3		202	54.0	7.2	
Total	387	100.0	99.9		374	100.0	100.2	
Nos. occupiers	1702/5				1780/1			
	Nos.	%	£	%	Nos.	%	£	%
Large £40+	80	18.5	65.2		90	23.0	74.3	
Medium £10-39	138	31.8	27.0		99	25.3	19.3	
Small £9 or less	215	49.6	7.8		202	51.7	6.3	
Total	433	99.9	100.0		391	100.0	100.2	

Source. Grover, 'Early LTAs (2)', pp. 209-12.

⁷⁷ Grover, 'Early LTAs (2)', p. 208.

⁷⁸ Grover used the same LTA size groups as those first adopted by Davies. See Grover, 'Early LTAs (2)', pp. 208-9.



Fig. 3.1. The structure of landownership and land occupation in south-east Kent and Sussex, 1702/5 and 1780/1 – 15 parish sample.
 Source. Grover, 'Early LTAs (2)', pp. 209-12.

Trends in numbers of occupiers were more marked, with a 10 per cent fall by 1780/1. There was a similar, uneven distribution in the rate of change in the proportion of occupiers by size group as there had been with the results for owners. The proportion of small occupiers increased by 2.1 per cent, and large occupiers by 4.5 per cent, whereas the middling group saw a 5.5 per cent decline. Changes in the proportion of occupied LTAs were more noticeable, with a substantial 9.1 per cent increase for large occupiers, but with a fall of 7.7 per cent and 1.5 per cent for middling- and small occupiers respectively.

Grover observed a 13 per cent increase in numbers of owner-occupiers over the period, with a 90 per cent increase (from 13 per cent to 24 per cent) in the proportion of LTAs that were owner-occupied. In 1702/5, while around two-thirds of all owners were pure rentiers, 33 per cent of owners farmed direct some (if not all) of their own land. By 1780/1 this had risen by five per cent to 38 per cent. Similarly, in 1702/5, 29 per cent of all occupiers owner-occupied at least some of the land they farmed. By 1780/1, 36 per cent of all occupiers were farming direct some (if not all) of the land they farmed – a rise of seven per cent. It was Grover's assertion that this growth in owner-occupation 'had little to do with the survival of small cultivators'.⁷⁹ Rather it was held to be entirely due to owners farming some of their land direct rather than renting it out, and to an increase in the number of farms consisting of LTAs that were partly owner-occupied, and partly tenanted.

Grover's findings point to the vulnerability of the middling-range of owners and occupiers, as well as a degree of polarization at either end of the LTA scale in terms of numbers and percentage of LTAs. These results are similar to those of Mills for the Cambridgeshire parish of Meldreth as well as for some of Holderness' findings for Lincolnshire.⁸⁰ Between them, these findings (published in 1986) make up the entirety of the work completed to date on the early LTAs.

3. The value of Edward Hasted's *History and topographical survey of the county of Kent* as a historical source.⁸¹

The work of eighteenth century historian and antiquarian Edward Hasted has been used extensively in the groundwork for this dissertation, as will become apparent under the discussion of methodology in chapter four. Can it be trusted? And if so, why? These matters will now be considered.

Hasted's work took more than 40 years to complete and, despite a litany of problems (including eight years in a debtors' prison) the first edition (in four volumes) was published between 1778

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 214-7.

⁸¹ Hasted was born in 1732 and died in 1812.

and 1799. A greatly revised and corrected 12-volume second edition appeared between 1797 and 1801.⁸² It is a tribute to Hasted that the *History* is still seen as a standard authority on the history of the county of Kent and, more often than not, the researcher's first port of call. Nevertheless, there has been a persistent thread to belittle the author running through the historiography.⁸³ In character, he was deemed by one contemporary as 'imprudent and eccentric'. In scholarship, the latter part of the *History* was condemned as 'slovenly', 'hasty', 'careless' and 'reckless' in its compilation.⁸⁴ Still another (later) author pronounced Hasted as 'generally wrong'.⁸⁵ Although subsequently proved tenuous, one relatively recent theory called into question the authenticity of Hasted's authorship for parts of the second edition. This erroneous assumption (presented as fact) found its way into the 2004 edition of the Dictionary of National Biography.⁸⁶

How far then can Hasted be taken on trust, especially for the minutiae of detail surrounding landownership that occupies so much of its content? To assess the suitability of the *History* for present purposes then, we will now consider this question and, by looking at aspects of Hasted's life and work. It will be shown that the *History* is a proven, trustworthy source to verify and strengthen both the LTA evidence and that of the marsh records.

Born into the lesser Kentish landed gentry, Hasted followed education at Eton with two years' legal training at Lincoln's Inn, and was soon to be involved in public duties, serving variously on a Turnpike Trust, a Sewers Commission, and then as a justice of the peace. By 1759, he was an acting magistrate and for a time served as a Deputy Lord Lieutenant of the county.⁸⁷ He also became a Fellow of the Royal Society as well as of the Society of Antiquarians.

Hasted, then, was well-placed to pursue the vision of a typical antiquarian, namely to compile a history of his home county. Kinship and business networks at the heart of landed society

⁸² Everitt, 'Introduction' to Hasted, *History*.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1, p.v. See also N. Yates, 'Kent' in C. R. J. Currie and C. P. Lewis (eds.), *English county histories – a guide* (1994), pp. 208-10. Yates acknowledges that generally, there is a high degree of accuracy in Hasted's work and that despite its limitations and omissions, it contains much of value. Nonetheless, caustic comments from the *Autobiography* of fellow antiquarian and contemporary Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges have endured, appearing in the 1891 edition of the Dictionary of National Biography, and again (but to a lesser extent) in the completely revised 2004 edition. In the intervening period, existing entries to the Dictionary remained unaltered, the only additions being supplements to do with individuals not previously included. Thus, for more than a century the content in the entry for Hasted has not changed, with very little else available to consult in the way of secondary literature. Furthermore, it was not until the early 1980s that John Boyle uncovered fresh Hasted-related evidence and only in 2004 that Burgoyne Black's definitive work on the author's life and work was published.

⁸⁴ Quoting Brydges, and included in *DNB 1891*, p.110 (but omitted from *DNB 2004*); *The gentleman's magazine*, August 1812 (after Hasted's obituary appeared) and cited in Boyle, *Quest*, pp. 3-4.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5, citing Anon., 'Family chronicle of Richard Fogge, of Danes Court, in Tilmanstone. From a transcript in the Faussett MSS. With a pedigree of the Fogge family' in *Arch Cant.* 5, (1863), pp. 112-32. From this it can be seen that Boyle's citation is actually taken from a brief (and extremely obscure) footnote on p. 121, and which would have been more appropriate to ignore.

⁸⁶ This has to do with the unknown 'editors' alleged responsibility for improvements to the second edition, an idea that Burgoyne Black dismissed as quite erroneous.

⁸⁷ Burgoyne Black, *Scholar*, pp. 155-65.

provided vital points of contact, as did the clergy, several of whom were his close friends.⁸⁸ However, in matters of landholding, the questionnaire was the established means of information-gathering at the author's disposal and, for the purpose of this thesis, one of particular significance. Hasted drew up a list of attorneys in the county, to whom the questionnaires were duly dispatched. As attorneys tended to act as agents for landlords in estate matters, Hasted had tapped into a rich vein yielding much about the transfer of land and property through generations of some of the more prominent Kentish landowning families. As a justice of the peace, he was well known, the information requested would have been well within an attorney's ability to provide - and not to have replied would have been regarded as 'bad form', both professionally and socially. The majority of attorneys did respond, and the information supplied was subsequently edited and included in the text.⁸⁹

In format the *History* is presented according to the administrative structure of the county. This is also illustrated in Appendix 1, map 1, showing the Lathes, Divisions and Liberties in eighteenth century Kent and Sussex.⁹⁰ As a justice of the peace, Hasted was up-to-date with the latest boundary changes within the infrastructure, and fully conversant with the workings of the county's administrative machinery. His knowledge in these areas has been tried, tested, and proved accurate. His critics on the other hand have generally been proved wrong.⁹¹

Secondly, within this format, the *History* deals systematically with each parish in turn according to geographical location. The narrative is replete with poignant remarks, penned as a result of the author's personal visits to every parish. Thus, quite apart from the emphasis given to genealogy, land and property transfers, or church incumbents, the *History* affords a unique first-hand insight into matters as various as the geographical distribution of houses within a parish, the extent of woodlands, ease of communications, soil quality, or the number of parishioners in receipt of poor relief.

A reviewer of the *History* in *The gentleman's magazine* admitted that personally, he had 'not much taste for the history of a county's mere landholders or its mere squires ...'; as for Hasted, the reviewer concluded deprecatorily that he 'wanted all the higher qualities of an Historian: the manners and the arts he had little perception of ...'.⁹² But such things were outside Hasted's

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, ch. 9.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 193-5.

⁹⁰ That is to say, according to the Hundreds, Boroughs and Divisions within each Lathe.

⁹¹ For boundary changes, a case in point concerned the Hundreds of Calehill, Chart and Longbridge, Felborough and Wye, once part of the Lathe of Scray, but subsequently '... added to the lath of Shipway, part of which they have been for a long time accounted'. Hasted, *History* 7, p. 5. Checks have shown that elsewhere, these particular Hundreds have been erroneously classed as part of the Lathe of Scray. D. Harrington (ed.) *Kent hearth tax* (2000), map facing p. xxxiii; Page, (ed.), *VCH Kent*, 3, pp. 358-70. In addition, work on the reconstruction of the ancient administrative structures of Kent has further verified Hasted's accuracy and attention to detail. Everitt, Introduction to Hasted, *History*, I, p. xlvi; xix; id., *Continuity and colonization*, p. xviii.

⁹² August 1812, after Hasted's obituary appeared. Cited in Boyle, *Quest*, pp. 3-4.

interests. Neither were they part of the county history *genre* of that time. Stylistically, his writing was dismissed as a ‘dull narrative ... little more than a dull deduction of the Proprietors of Manors in a kind of language which forms nothing like a style, but savours most of the technicalities of an attorney’s office ...’.⁹³ Again, given Hasted’s agenda and the sources used this is hardly surprising. Moreover, the author’s preference for ‘the technicalities of an attorney’s office’ are a bonus for present purposes. The wealth of information ladled from this source – particularly with regard to the transfer of land or property from one individual to another has, without exception, proved to be accurate when compared with the LTAs and all other evidence mustered as part of the research undertaken here. It has also been informative as to the extent of glebeland acreage, as well as of instances where land, left as part of a will to a poor charity, has provided rental income, given that land owned by poor charities was exempt from the Land Tax, and would therefore not be included in an LTA. Importantly for the purpose of this investigation, Hasted’s attention to detail by including data from the questionnaires has, in the first place, broadly verified the accuracy of the marsh records with regard to many substantial owners. Significantly however, it has also revealed, for the eighteenth century, the true extent of corporately-owned land on Romney Marsh. Specifically, *in terms of acreage*, it has shown that corporately-owned acreage has been greatly underestimated. Consequently, by cross-referencing the marsh records with the *History*, the marsh landscape in respect of institutionally- versus privately owned acreage has been considerably altered. Moreover, not only did Hasted identify marshland owned by large institutional bodies, lessees’ names and the type of lease granted were generally also included. Thus, hitherto unexplored aspects of landownership and land occupation structures on Walland, c.1730-90 can now be considered, and will form much of chapter seven.

Hasted’s diligence in including information from the questionnaires has also substantially enhanced and strengthened the process of nominal record linkage. This process is fundamental to the methodology of the LTA analysis, and will be given due attention in chapter four.

Furthermore, the quality of the content with regard to names of owners and their kinship networks has made it possible to link scattered and ostensibly un-related archive material, thus making connections between people whose relationships would otherwise have remained unknown. This is amply demonstrated by an entry in the Walland Marsh tax schedule for 1738, for 241 acres owned by one Sir George Rooke and leased to Wealden farmer William Pattenson of Biddenden. The information in the *History* helped to link this holding with a series of letters between attorney Josias Pattenson and his kinsman William, as well as the latter’s correspondence with one Catherine Moore, daughter of Sir Thomas Knatchbull and her second husband the Rev Henry Moore. Without the benefit of Hasted’s supporting evidence, the connections between these people, and the significance of the correspondence that passed between them, would not have been appreciated. The events surrounding this 241 acre farm in the 1770s will be the subject of a case study in chapter eight.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Finally, as Thirsk has suggested, Hasted's preoccupation with landed families has potential for further research, insofar as the names of the principal landowners in a parish can act as a key to unlocking more about the structure and development of a local community.⁹⁴

In conclusion, section one of this chapter placed the Land Tax evidence into a wider historical context. It has shown that Kent was taxed in line with its position as one of England's larger and more populous counties. It is reasonable to suppose that the same applied to Sussex. In addition, it is argued that LTAs used in this thesis are likely to be a reasonable reflection of the relative agricultural value of land. Broadly, LTAs are also likely to accurately reflect hierarchies of landed wealth within parishes. Even more significantly, it has been argued that the evidence has proved itself more than capable of disclosing landholding patterns *between parishes*, right across the study area. In sum, the weight of evidence comes down unequivocally in favour of the assertion that the Land Tax evidence for the marsh hinterland is more than capable of uncovering its landownership and land occupation structures, whether on a parish-by-parish basis, or across a number of parishes.

Section two highlighted the paucity of suitable early LTA evidence with which to study landownership and land occupation structures in the early eighteenth century. Findings thus far have been relatively limited in geographical scope and chronology. Nonetheless, results have revealed a diverse picture in terms of long-term fluctuations in landownership and land occupation patterns. Importantly however, by cross-referencing the Land Tax material with qualitative material, Holderness has shown that the Lincolnshire LTAs were more than capable of uncovering, with reasonable accuracy, long-term trends in land occupation. The greatest weakness in Holderness' work was the lack of a detailed methodology and an absence of LTA parish totals. Grover's findings for Kent and Sussex revealed similar fortunes in the development of landholding structures and highlighted the potential of further LTA-based research, and in particular, to discover more about landownership structures and changes over time, between the early eighteenth century and c. 1780.⁹⁵

Finally, in section three, it has been argued that the supplementary evidence contained in Hasted's *History* is trustworthy and for that reason it been used extensively to underpin the methodology for the Land Tax evidence. Moreover, it has proved of special significance for the process of nominal record linkage, which forms a key element in the methodology that now follows in chapter four.

⁹⁴ Thirsk, 'Hasted as historian', p. 8.

⁹⁵ Grover, 'Early LTAs (2)', p. 217.

Chapter four. ‘Insignificant exceptions?’ The early Land Tax assessments for Kent and Sussex.¹

We have noted in chapter three that relatively few early LTAs have survived; and of those that have, fewer still can reveal much about the landownership structure of early-eighteenth century England. Not so the early material employed for this investigation, which is exceptional in the following three respects.

First, the particularly high standard. The vast majority of the early LTAs were double-columned, distinguishing landlord from tenant.² The remaining LTAs, albeit single-columned, nevertheless included landlord and tenant names. Holderness found that in the Lincolnshire LTAs, a double-columned format was used in parishes with a ‘highly complex property structure’.³ The unusually high attention to detail in both the single- and double-columned Kent/Sussex material reflects similar patterns. Freehold tenure and partible inheritance were intrinsic to Kentish rural society where, as early as the sixteenth century, it was recognised that ‘every man is a freeholder, and hath some part of his own to live upon.’⁴ Moreover, Kent had seen the early development of an advanced civil administration and with it, a record-keeping ethos. This also probably influenced the way in which many tax listings were compiled.⁵

Second, the unprecedented geographical scale. As shown in map 2, this study embraces some 73 parishes, covering a consolidated area in excess of c. 240,000 acres. Of this, some 61 parishes are used for the statistical analysis in chapter five. Third, the chronology. Covering the years c.1746 and 1756/9 these early LTAs are all the more significant considering that nationally, the surviving material covers mainly the early- or later parts of the 1692 to 1779 timespan. Evidence for the mid-eighteenth century is particularly sparse.⁶

Nonetheless, pitfalls remain. Essentially, the difficulties of undertaking an LTA-based analysis are twofold. First, there are the more general methodological problems of the Land Tax evidence *per se*, viewed from a wider historical context. These were addressed in chapter three, in which it was demonstrated that the LTAs for Kent and Sussex broadly meet the criteria needed to pass muster for an analysis of landownership and land occupation structures. Specifically, it was shown that in the early eighteenth century and despite endemic underassessment, LTAs bore at least a passing resemblance to current agricultural land values. It was also argued that an LTA

¹ Davies, ‘The small landowner’, p.88.

² The terms ‘landlord’ and ‘tenant’ were the most commonly used LTA column headings, although ‘owner’, ‘proprietor’ and ‘occupier’ also cropped up. LTAs for 11 Sussex parishes were single-columned but nevertheless included two sets of names. Even where one set of names was recorded, assessors often made a point of highlighting owner-occupied land/property.

³ Holderness, ‘Rural society’, p.323.

⁴ William Lambard, quoted by Chalklin, *Kent*, p. 231.

⁵ Brooks, ‘Public finance’, pp.281-2, note 4; Landau, *Justices*, p. 239.

⁶ Mills, ‘Early LTAs (1)’, p. 189 and ‘Appendix: Survival of early LTAs’, in Turner and Mills (eds), *Land and property*, pp. 219-31.

owned and/or occupied by an individual in any given area was a reasonable reflection of his relative position in terms of taxable wealth in that locality. Additionally, the correlation of LTA data with the marsh records as well as the parish rental totals returned from the 1815 Property Act have demonstrated that the LTAs used here are sufficiently reliable to analyse landholding structures, not only on a parish-by-parish basis, but also *between* parishes.

The second pitfall is specific to the LTA documents and concerns how best to interpret their structure and content. Mingay concluded that in general,

interpretation ...is fraught with difficulties more serious than is generally realized, and that in consequence anything but the most broad and general conclusion may be quite invalid. It is indisputable that the [LTAs] remain a valuable source for agrarian history, but as a source they cannot ... bear the weight of detailed interpretation which has been placed on them.⁷

Following publication (in 1964) of this seminal article, the evidence has nevertheless been harnessed to good effect. For example, we saw in chapter three the way in which (albeit in relatively small pockets of England) the early LTAs have been used to study landownership and land occupation structures. More recent work using the post-1780 evidence has also been fruitful in a number of rural, urban and industrial contexts.⁸ The methodological pitfalls have also been taken into account in much of the more recent secondary literature.

Then into the historiography along came Ginter.⁹ His expressed intention for the future of LTA-based research was to 'attempt to lift the veil of gloom and usher in a brighter and more promising day'.¹⁰ However, much of the exhaustive, overly negative critique that followed had quite the opposite effect for some readers. Indeed, just three sentences into the Preface and already the pessimism is palpable. 'These nasty little documents' Ginter concluded, 'which at the outset seemed so simple, proved treacherous.'¹¹ And so on. That said, many of Ginter's points

⁷ Mingay, 'LTAs and the small landowner', p. 381.

⁸ See Turner and Mills (eds.) *Land and Property* for the following:-

S. Banks, 'Parish landownership and the LTAs in West Norfolk: a comparison with the tithe surveys', pp.39-52; M. Turner, 'Parish landownership and the LTAs in 12 Buckinghamshire parishes: a comparison with enclosure awards', pp.53-61; J. Broad, 'The Land Tax and the study of village communities', pp. 62-70; J. E. Crowther, 'Enclosure, topography and landownership in E. Yorkshire', pp. 71-90; M. Noble, 'The LTAs in the study of the physical development of country towns', pp. 93-117; A. Henstock, 'House repopulation from the LTAs in a Derbyshire market town, 1780-1825', pp. 118-35; R. Unwin, 'An industrial dimension to Land Tax studies: the Barnsley coalfield, 1690-1830', pp. 136-57.

⁹ Ginter, *Measure of wealth*, Preface, xxxv, p. 3; Ginter's field of research was narrow, concentrating on late eighteenth- and early nineteenth century Yorkshire. At the time of publication (1992) no comparable work had been undertaken for the early LTAs. For reviews of this book see B. A. Holderness, *Albion*, 25 (1993), pp. 322-3; A. M. Urdank, *American Hist. Rev.*, 98 (1993), pp. 1249-50; M. E. Turner, *J. Hist. Geog.*, 19 (1993), pp. 79-80; N. Rogers, *Canadian J. Hist* (Dec 1994) e-text article; S. Anderson, *J. Mod. Hist.*, 67 (1995), pp. 415-7.

¹⁰ Ginter, *Measure of wealth*, p. 10.

¹¹ Ginter, *Measure of wealth*, preface, xxv, pp. 265-92.

were valid, but only where they appertained to the Yorkshire LTAs upon which the bulk of his work was based. Indeed, the Yorkshire evidence proved to be particularly hazardous with lines of enquiry seemingly blocked at every turn by yet another methodological obstacle. Whilst recognising the very real problems associated with the LTAs, this chapter will show they are not necessarily endemic, nor are they of the black-hole proportions that Ginter might have us believe.

To this end, this chapter comprises two sections. Section one, dealing with assessments and payments, highlights the nature, scale, and treatment of problematical areas encountered in the historiography. Similarly, the nature and scale of the difficulties found in the Kent and Sussex material will be outlined, and their treatment explained. Beginning with Roman Catholic double assessment, the discussion continues with government salaries and stock-in-trade. The treatment of bricks and mortar, manorial rents, tithes, owner-occupation, as well as ambiguous entries, exemptions and omissions will then be outlined. It will be demonstrated that whereas these aspects have sometimes caused significant difficulties in LTA-based research elsewhere, this has not been the case in the evidence used here. As well as outlining the methodology, any residual problems will be acknowledged and borne in mind.

Another obstacle to an inter-parish analysis of landownership and land occupation structures is working out who was who. Section two then, considers the problem of nominal record linkage. Specifically, it addresses the question as to whether the line entries for Joe Bloggs in parish A and the Joe Bloggs in parish B refer to the same person or two different people. In other regional contexts this can be a serious and sometimes insurmountable obstacle. In this regional context however, it will be shown that the accurate working assumption is that line entries for the so-named Joe Bloggs in parish A *and* parish B referred to the same person.

1. Assessments and payments.

More often than not, the difference between an assessment and a 'payment' recorded in an LTA is clear. Nonetheless, caution is needed. For example, the amount entered as a 'payment' could vary depending on the pound rate levied or whether collection was made annually, half-yearly or quarterly. Hence, unless a figure is easily recognisable as an LTA rather than the amount payable, an assessment may not necessarily be calculated any other way.¹² However, the vast majority of the LTAs used here specifically itemized rental values. In the few instances in which payments were solely relied upon, the nature of the payment (annual, half-yearly or quarterly) was clearly indicated in the document. Thus, calculating the LTA was generally straightforward.

¹² Ginter, *Measure of wealth*, p.14; Turner, 'The Land Tax ... old debates and new horizons', p.1.

(i) Roman Catholic double assessment.

Payments in respect of Roman Catholic double assessment can be problematical. This penalty meant that Catholics paid the Land Tax at double the going rate. It was (in theory at least) levied on the assessed rental of land belonging to a Catholic, the *valuation* of which had been treated in the same way as that of his Protestant neighbour's.¹³ Problems in methodology can arise if, in calculating an LTA from a payment figure, there is nothing to indicate that the payment was based on a pound rate which had been *doubled* to take account of the penalty. Ginter found few other methodological problems as 'perplexing or ... statistically important'.¹⁴ However, Yorkshire, upon which much of Ginter's work was based, was overwhelmingly Catholic by persuasion, and therefore one could expect that the question of Roman Catholic double assessment might be problematical. By contrast, recusants were nothing more than a tiny, dispersed minority in eighteenth century Kent and Sussex, as they were throughout the south-east of England.¹⁵ Indeed, the Catholic population of late seventeenth century Kent was so small, that in Dover (the town with the biggest concentration) it made up no more than one per cent of the adult community. Furthermore, this small percentage was made up of French or Spanish merchants, rather than the indigenous population. In the early LTAs used here, Catholic ownership is clearly signalled by noting a double payment. However, with just a handful of Roman Catholic owners identified in the material, double assessment presents none of the problems encountered elsewhere.¹⁶

(ii) Government salaries.

To all intents and purposes, the Land Tax quickly became a tax on realty. Government salaries were, nevertheless, often assessed.¹⁷ For the purpose of an analysis of land/property, they should, ideally, be differentiated. Nationally however, their overall value made up only a tiny proportion of the country's taxable wealth.¹⁸ For the region under study, LTAs for some 10 parishes included assessments on the salaries of

¹³ Grover, 'Early LTAs (2)', pp. 207-8.

¹⁴ Ginter, *Measure of wealth*, p. 52. West Derby Hundred was also strongly Catholic. Furthermore, double assessment of Catholic realty was not consistently adhered to, either over time or between parishes. G. J. Wilson, 'The Land Tax and West Derby Hundred 1780-1831' in *Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 129 (1980), pp. 63-91; Beckett, 'Land Tax administration', p. 166.

¹⁵ The Catholic population was likely to have been 'coagulated in local groups at the centre of which [was usually] a gentleman's household.' J. Bossy, *English Catholic community* (1975), p. 175. See also N. Yates, R. Hume, and P. Hastings, *Religion and society in Kent, 1640-1914* (1994), pp. 14-5; Chalklin, *Kent*, p. 229.

¹⁶ Edward Caryll Esq (Icklesham, Ore), Philip Darell Esq (Little Chart), Sir Edward Hales Bart (Appledore, Woodchurch), Miss Maxted (Woodchurch).

¹⁷ Only one instance has been reported in the secondary literature where government salaries were mentioned in one year but not subsequently, and no instances of this sort were found in the LTAs for the region here. See P. Langford, *Public life and the propertied Englishman* (1991), pp. 342-3. See also Ginter, *Measure of wealth*, pp. 22-9.

¹⁸ See above, p. 55, footnote 12.

employees of the department of excise and/or board of customs. For example, three government officers based in Winchelsea in 1785 were assessed at £60 each. Although these amounts were high, it was accepted practice that employees were not personally liable. This is contrary to Ginter's mistaken notion that in the late eighteenth century, officers were alone in '*experiencing severe burdens under the land tax* [which] may well have been assessed on the full salaries (though not the fees) of such officers at the statutory rate ...'.¹⁹ In actuality, the tax due was regarded as a charge paid by the government. Hence, 'Salary paid by the Crown' was noted alongside the Winchelsea entries.

Expressed as a percentage of LTA parish totals, government salaries ranged from one per cent in Biddenden (1759/90) to 16 per cent in Dymchurch (1795). The latter can be accounted for by the employment of three riding officers, deployed to combat smuggling along that part of the Kent coast.²⁰ All LTAs to government salaries have been omitted from the analysis and the sum total figures for the parishes concerned adjusted accordingly.

(iii) Stock-in-trade.

Assessments to stock-in-trade in the early LTAs were found in just four Wealden parishes. In Sandhurst/part Newenden and Cranbrook, these entries were generally assessed at £2 or less.²¹ LTAs to stock-in-trade in Brede were by far the most substantial and probably all related to iron manufacture.²² Nonetheless, at just £32, Brede's assessments to stock came to barely more than two per cent of the parish's LTA total. As noted in chapter one, the Wealden iron industry had seen a steady decline over the course of the eighteenth century and, as ironmasters died or furnaces shut down, assessments to stock-in-trade no longer applied. This no doubt explains their absence in the LTA for Brede in 1790.

¹⁹ Italics mine. Ginter, *Measure of wealth*, p. 23. See also Kennedy, *English taxation*, pp. 49-50.

²⁰ Typically, a riding officer was assessed to the Land Tax at £40, a supervisor of excise at £84. In 1700, two-thirds of all riding officers in England and Wales were stationed in Kent. Grover, 'Land Tax in east Kent', p. 204.

²¹ The LTA for Sandhurst/part Newenden included (in 1756) three assessments to stock-in-trade (totalling £3-15s-0d). Cranbrook's Town Borough included assessments to stock for 22 tradespeople. Despite the ongoing decline suffered by the Wealden textile industry from the late seventeenth century, Cranbrook was, c. 1750, still a cloth manufacturing town. In all likelihood these entries were textile-related. Whereas the book (retail) value of stock belonging to each of the 25 tradespeople in these three parishes was, on average, £24-10s apiece, the retail value of Brede's three assessments to stock was reckoned to be worth £650. Of this, £500 belonged to prominent Wealden ironmaster William Harrison Esq., owner of Brede furnace. For LTA purposes, £650-worth of stock was assessed at just £32 (something around 15 shillings per £20 of stock).

²² The LTAs for Hastings Rape c.1702 record 10 furnaces and forges. Grover, 'Early LTAs (2)', p. 207.

For analysis, all line entries referring to stock-in-trade have been omitted and (as with government salaries) LTA totals for the parishes concerned adjusted accordingly.²³ It should be borne in mind that the town of Ashford, as the most prominent commercial centre on the Kent uplands, would have included a proportion of tradespeople among its inhabitants. Yet there were no specific references to stock-in-trade in the LTAs for the town, either in 1746 or 1790.

(iv) Bricks and mortar – houses and commercial premises

Generally speaking, the value of both land and buildings would be rolled up into an LTA, and it would be expecting too much of the Land Tax evidence to unscramble the value of land from built property. Moreover, in a rural setting, agricultural buildings were part-and-parcel of a farm's overall value. Nonetheless, there are occasions when it may be appropriate to differentiate between land and built property if possible. For example, in Gray's study of yeoman farming in Oxfordshire, the LTAs for boroughs and sizeable market towns were excluded as they related mainly to houses and commercial premises.²⁴ However, this approach has not been adopted here. Indeed, Ashford, the most prominent township in the marsh hinterland, is included in the analysis. Significantly for the marsh-uplands agrarian economy, Ashford was also home to a number of individuals who owned and/or occupied marshland acreage. Hence, the inclusion of the LTAs for the town would be important in order to ascertain the scale (in LTA terms) of the uplands enterprises of these people relative to their marshland interests.

The early material shows the extent to which business premises were specifically mentioned.²⁵ Whilst we cannot be sure that this was a reasonably accurate reflection of the true picture, premises such as mills, shops and storage facilities were noted in some 20 parishes. The LTAs to these premises were generally relatively low.²⁶ Around 35 per cent were owner-occupied, and many probably including living accommodation. In respect of the latter, the evidence included a smattering of entries referring specifically to dwelling houses and cottages. The LTAs for Barham (1745) and Brede (1747) were unusually detailed in this respect. Some 38 and 26 'stand-alone' houses were identified in Barham and Brede respectively. Of these, 87 per cent (Barham) and 84 per cent (Brede) were assessed at £2 or less. If these findings are typical for the region, they suggest that LTAs in respect of the majority of dwellings stood at around the £2 mark. Given the region's rurality and low population density, the overall assessed value of residential

²³ Note that for database purposes, the omission of LTAs to government salaries and stock-in-trade meant that LTA totals for the relevant parishes were, automatically, adjusted. See also Ginter, *Measure of wealth*, pp. 19, 288, 682 note 2.

²⁴ H. L. Gray, 'Yeoman farming in Oxfordshire from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth', *Quarterly J. Economics*, 24 (1910), p. 299. See also Turner, 'The Land Tax ... old debates and new horizons', p. 23; Noble, *Country towns*, p. 93.

²⁵ The material c. 1790 is less informative, although three of the four shop premises noted in Brede in 1747 appear again in 1790, as does a mill in Barham.

²⁶ With the exception of a malthouse in Barham assessed at £17 and Brede furnace, assessed at £42. The furnace (namely the building itself) was itemised separately from the stock-in-trade associated with it.

bricks-and-mortar would have been modest. All line entries itemising residential property as well as business/commercial premises have been included.

(v) Manorial rents

Some 13 parishes included assessments to manorial rents. These comprised the residual fees from quit rents. A single line entry could represent multiple dues which, in themselves, were of nominal value only. The LTAs on these multiple sums were very low indeed (less than £3 on average).²⁷ The economic insignificance of quit rents from the owner's perspective is illustrated by Sir Edward Knatchbull's experience as lord of the manor of East Lenham. After deductions for receiver's fees and the costs of court keeping, the net income received for six years' worth of quit rents (to Michaelmas 1764) came to a grand total of £8-6s. This then took another 18 months before finding its way into Knatchbull's pocket. Thus, on 20 May 1766, concluding that this was more bother than it was worth, Knatchbull decided that 'This Court for the future is to be kept, only once every 6 years. Many rents having been left, and it will not bear the expense oftner.'²⁸ All assessments to manorial dues have been omitted from the analysis, and LTA parish totals adjusted accordingly.

(vi) Tithes

Until the sixteenth century, all tithes were church-owned. Following the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536, around one third were impropriated and passed into private ownership. While income from the latter was pocketed by the owner, church-owned tithes were heavily relied upon to provide income for parish clergy. Tithes were of two kinds.²⁹ The most lucrative, the great tithe, was payable to the rector. The small tithe, representing a portion of the revenue of the benefice, was due to the vicar. Over England as a whole and where identifiable in the LTAs, church-owned tithes on average accounted for around 10 per cent of the total LTA for a parish.³⁰ Impropriated tithes were treated as private property, and could be re-sold, leased or sub-let. Consequently they can be harder to trace in the LTAs.

In the light of this wider historical context, tithes have presented historians with a thorny problem in LTA-based research. The decision to include or omit them from an agrarian analysis is a difficult one, with pros and cons either way.³¹ Ginter found that in late eighteenth century Yorkshire, tithes were not necessarily consistently taxed, and even where they were, assessors were said to be 'at the very least ... highly inconsistent' in their efforts to ensure tithes were

²⁷ The exceptions were Ashford (£20), Great Chart (£17) and Rolvenden (£12).

²⁸ CKS U951 A42.

²⁹ R. J. P. Kain and H. C. Prince, *The tithe surveys of England and Wales*, pp. 6-27; Chalklin, *Kent*, pp. 218-22; Evans, *Contentious tithe* (1976), pp. 6-12.

³⁰ Ginter, *Measure of wealth*, pp. 18-9.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 288.

recorded as such.³² Nonetheless, Ginter included LTAs in respect of tithes on the basis that they were an expression of relative taxable wealth from real property.³³ Grover by contrast, whilst recognising this, nevertheless excluded them from his analysis of landownership structures in Kent.³⁴

In the evidence used here, church-owned tithes could usually be traced. In addition, impropriated tithes were sometimes specifically termed ‘parsonage’ and therefore relatively easily differentiated from LTAs relating to land/property.³⁵ Qualitative evidence also helped to uncover a diverse picture as to church-owned as well as impropriated tithes across the region. Where tithes have been identified they have been excluded from the analysis.³⁶ However, they can only be excluded where they *have* been identified; and therein lies a residual problem, albeit a relatively small one. In LTAs for five parishes, tithes’ assessments could be traced for one year but not for another.³⁷ An additional problem was unravelling ostensibly church-owned land from land owned by churchmen who (quite apart from their status as members of the clergy) were also wealthy landowners in their own right. Yet again, reference to qualitative material clarified the position by verifying the names of incumbents in every parish covered by the analysis. It also helped to identify churchmen who were also, independently, private landowners.

(vii) Owner-occupation.

We noted earlier that the early, somewhat rigid historiographic perceptions as to what constituted the so-called ‘owner-occupier’ have evolved considerably.³⁸ As a group, owner-occupiers were intrinsically far more diverse than previously appreciated. For clarification, and by way of anticipation as to much of what follows herein, the meaning of the term ‘owner-occupier’ will now be considered and defined.

In one sense, the term ‘owner-occupier’ is self-explanatory insofar as such an individual held, as a freeholder, the land that he farmed. The interests of some owner-occupiers were confined to

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 658, note 9.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 288. Ginter preferred the term ‘township’ to ‘parish’ - preface, xxvi.

³⁴ Grover, ‘Land Tax in east Kent’, pp. 214-5. Tithes were also excluded from Gray’s work on yeoman farming in Oxfordshire. Gray, ‘Yeoman farming’, pp. 300-1.

³⁵ Whereas an estimated one third of tithes were impropriated over the country as a whole, nearly 60 per cent of the tithes in Kent’s 252 parishes were privately owned. Evans, *Contentious tithe*, pp. 8-9.

³⁶ Qualitative evidence has also clarified the picture with regard to glebeland. Generally, no more than c. 30 acres of glebeland were attached to any one of the benefices in the region under study. LTAs usually rolled up tithes and glebe into one. Glebeland has, therefore, been excluded from the analysis.

³⁷ Line entries and assessments to tithes, where identified, have been deducted from LTA parish totals for the year concerned. Where they cannot be traced in subsequent (or preceding) years, parish totals have not been altered by way of deducting an estimated/presumed total for a tithes’ assessment. Parishes in which tithes were identified in one year but not another were as follows:- East Guldeford (£52 c. 1790, none identified in 1748); Hinxhill (£10 in 1746, none identified c. 1790); Lower Hardres (£30 c. 1790, none identified c. 1746); Woodchurch (£144 in 1756, none identified in 1790; Wye (£54 in 1746; none identified c. 1790).

³⁸ See above, pp. 60-1.

farming solely the land that belonged to them. However, an owner-occupier's farming interests were usually broader (and sometimes much broader) than this. For example, while it was not unusual for an owner-occupier to rank way down the landownership scale in any given locality, he could, simultaneously be at, or near to the top of the land occupation rankings as a substantial tenant of one or more landlords. For present purposes then, an 'owner-occupier' refers to an individual who farmed direct land belonging to him. However, this would not necessarily cover the full spectrum of his landholding interests. Thus, an owner-occupier of say, a £10 LTA might simultaneously be farming an additional £50 LTA as a tenant. Hence, the importance of reiterating the point that within the wider, regional landscape of landholding structures, owner-occupied land *per se* cannot properly be considered in isolation.

As far as the interpretation of the Land Tax evidence is concerned, determining whether land/property was owner-occupied has sometimes proved problematical, given that the meaning of 'Ditto' and 'the same' might be ambiguous, even in double-columned LTAs.³⁹ However, the evidence used here was more clear-cut. Usually, 'Pse', 'Himself' or 'His own' were the preferred terms. Thus, an owner-occupied LTA was more easily identified. However, reference to Hasted's *History* revealed instances in five parishes where so-called owner-occupiers were, in actuality, found to be tenants of corporate bodies.⁴⁰ Once the database was revised accordingly, the value of an owner-occupied LTA was reduced in the five parishes concerned by, on average, 11.5 per cent.

One further point about owner-occupation. In the context of the small landowner, it may be preferable, where possible, to differentiate between owner-occupied woodland and remaining owner-occupied land, considering that the former was usually owned by the (often absentee) aristocracy, an altogether different scenario from land farmed by the small 'hands-on' owner-occupier. In recognising this, Gray discounted LTAs of owner-occupied woodland from his consideration of the 'yeoman' farmer.⁴¹ Grover's findings, by contrast, classed woodland as arable land, and included it in calculations of owner-occupied LTAs.⁴² The early Land Tax evidence for the region has clearly signalled many instances of assessments to woodland. However, the later material (c.1790) was, at times, less detailed in this respect. Owner-occupied woodland has, therefore, not been differentiated from other owner-occupied LTAs. However, Appendix 1 Table 1.4 illustrates, for each parish, the extent to which woodland was specifically identified in the LTAs.

³⁹ Grover, 'Land Tax in east Kent', p. 195. See also Ginter, *Measure of wealth*, pp. 17-8.

⁴⁰ Burmarsh, Godmersham, Mersham and Orgarwick (1746); Ruckinge (1790).

⁴¹ Gray, 'Yeoman farming', p.301.

⁴² Grover, 'Land Tax in east Kent', p. 213.

(viii) Ambiguous entries, exemptions and omissions

The problems associated with ambiguous entries such as ‘Himself and others’, as well as exemptions and omissions have also been highlighted in the historiography and, by their very nature, are hard to quantify.⁴³ Fortunately, for the period under consideration here, ambiguous entries, such as ‘Himself and tenants’ are few and far between and have little overall impact.⁴⁴

The sites of free schools were exempt from the Land Tax and did not appear in the LTAs. This is illustrated by the 32 acres of land on Romney Marsh Level held in trust (by the Knatchbolls) for the Master of Ashford School.⁴⁵ Moreover, charitable bequests of land to the local community were, as a condition of gift, exempt from the Land Tax.⁴⁶

Kent and Sussex were among the counties most heavily assessed to the Land Tax. It is plausible to suppose therefore, that the vast majority of the landowning population were liable to the tax, and included in the duplicates. Hence, coverage is considered to be more than adequate for present purposes. Indeed, the properties likely to be omitted would be those such as the farmworkers’ cottages on Knatchbull’s Home Farm estate in Mersham. Taking into consideration a yardstick of £2 (suggested above) to account for living accommodation, LTAs to these dwellings would have been minimal. Furthermore, cottages like those on the Home Farm would have been subsumed under the estate as a whole.

2. ‘Who’s who?’ – nominal record linkage.

In LTA-based research, it was not until 1980 (when Grover’s findings were reported) that the subject of nominal record linkage was discussed at length in the historiography.⁴⁷ The main problem in ascertaining who was who concerns duplicate name entries. Of these, there are two kinds of duplicate entries, namely ‘strict match’ (identical forename and surname) and ‘surname

⁴³ Ginter, *Measure of wealth*, pp. 33-44; Wilson, ‘West Derby Hundred’, p. 80; Noble, ‘Country towns’, p. 100.

⁴⁴ The exceptions included Godmersham for the year 1791. Hasted noted that ‘the greatest part’ of this parish belonged to Thomas Knight Esq of Godmersham Park. Some 68 per cent of the parish’s LTA total belonged to him. Of this however, a single line entry disclosed that £222 (more than half of Knight’s total LTA in the parish) was occupied by an unknown number of tenants. In townships, only one line entry for £4 in Rye (1723) and two line entries totalling £5 in Cranbrook (1759) referred to multiple occupation. Moreover, Ashford could boast only two line entries, for an unknown number of houses with a combined LTA amounting to £24, all of which, albeit tenanted, were owned by one person. Conversely, the LTA for the (whole-marsh) Upper Half Hundred of Aloesbridge (1791) included five separate instances where an aggregated LTA figure applied to one landlord, but whose land was leased to several tenants. This was the only LTA for the region found to have been set out in this way and was dealt with by assigning an estimated LTA to each of the tenants concerned.

⁴⁵ 1 W & M, c.20 (1688), XXI.

⁴⁶ Broad, ‘Village communities’, p. 62.

⁴⁷ Grover, ‘Land Tax in east Kent’, ch. 4.

only match'.⁴⁸ Ginter concluded, unequivocally, that nominal record linkage *between* parishes 'should never be undertaken, except very cautiously in the case of the greatest landowners'.⁴⁹ He did however, concede that with care, LTAs could be used to analyse the structure of land occupation within a single parish, although inter-parish analysis was precluded on the grounds that status ascriptions were usually not given in the entries for the vast majority of large occupiers. Ginter based these conclusions on his findings for Yorkshire, where a high incidence of duplicate name entries was discovered. This rendered it unsafe (or so Ginter thought) to assume that duplicate 'strict match' name entries in more than one parish could refer to one person rather than two different people. Yet this sweeping conclusion is not necessarily valid across the board, for much would depend on the surname structure existing in the area chosen for study. This present exercise throws caution to the wind (if only in Ginter's book) by arguing that the names of owners and occupiers *can* be correlated, not only between two adjoining parishes, but across a much wider area. Indeed, the working assumption here is that the man named as Joe Bloggs in parish A *was* the same person as the so-named Joe Bloggs in parish B. Furthermore, it will be shown that bearing in mind the surname structure of the region, the scope for error is so narrow that it is more misleading to suppose that duplicate 'strict match' name entries refer to more than one person. Indeed, it is argued that if an identical name is entered in more than one document in a group selected for aggregate analysis, then all such entries denote one person who occupied land that was split geographically between one or more parishes. To underpin this argument, we will look at the way in which the marsh administration tackled nominal record linkage in the compilation of their own tax listings. It will be seen that additional identifiers were used to differentiate between those who shared the same forename and surname. It will also be argued that for nominal record linkage purposes, the same assumptions can reliably be made in respect of the way in which the LTAs were compiled. Consideration will also be given to the surname structure of the region as well as the role of qualitative evidence. In sum, it will be demonstrated that identifying who was who is achievable with a high degree of confidence.

Marsh taxation depended on meticulous record-keeping, so that all occupiers were 'duly and equitably scotted and charged' for the maintenance of freshwater drainage and flood prevention.⁵⁰ With the former, water scots paid for the upkeep of the internal network of waterings. As shown in Table 4.1, there were, in all, 22 of these administrative sub-divisions across the c. 43,000 acres of Romney Marsh. Occupiers were liable according to the watering in which their land lay. Just over half of the total acreage of the marsh was taken up by the c. 23,500 acres of Romney Marsh Level, for which, in 1746, a 'Schedule and Account of Moneys due ...' was drawn up.⁵¹ This

⁴⁸ Hipkin, 'Tenant farming', p. 658; S. Cameron and S. Richardson, *Using computers in history* (2005), pp. 103-5; Ginter, *Measure of wealth*, p. 659 note 1, p. 692, note 28; Grover, 'Land Tax in east Kent', pp. 268-9.

⁴⁹ Italics mine. Ginter, *Measure of wealth*, pp. 269, 659 note 1 and p. 692 note 28.

⁵⁰ EKAC S/Rm/FSz 10, unfoliated, preface, cited in Hipkin, 'Landownership', p. 69, and see also p. 73; id., 'Tenant farming', pp. 650-1.

⁵¹ EKAC S/Rm/FS10.

recorded the total acreage held by each of its 282 occupiers. Between them, these occupiers shared a pool of 218 surnames. Of these, only 64 surnames were shared by more than one occupier.⁵² For the task of compiling the schedule, the clerk would need to carefully refer to the records of the water-scot books, containing the names of all who occupied land in each of the 15 waterings that lay on the Level. While completing this exercise, and as a matter of course, the clerk would have been mindful of the following things in respect of each occupier's tax liability.

Table 4.1: Romney Marsh Region 1768 - acreage by watering.

Location	Watering	Acres
Walland	Baldwin	634
	Bedlingshope	1284
	Cheyne Gutt	988
	Eldertons Innings	953.25
	Jurys Gutt	3057.75
	Wainway	1764
	White Kemp	7808.5
	Total - Walland	
Total - Denge		2912
The Level	Abbatridge	1029.5
	Brenzett	3514
	Sedbrook	1997
	Springbrook	2114
	Jefferstone	2132.5
	Paternosterford	615.5
	Sheaty	2226
	Yoakes	1126.5
	Wallingham	594.5
	Bilsington	1094
	Eastbridge	1524.5
	Hoorness	3575
	Hurst	509
	Wallsfoot	569.5
	Willop	1352.5
Total – the Level		23974.0
Romney Marsh Region (all)		43375.5

Source: EKAC S/Rm FSz 10.

I am grateful to Dr. S. Hipkin for supplying the transcript of this document.

On paper, each watering was a stand-alone administrative unit for the purpose of an occupier's acreage held therein. In practice however, his landholding interests could be spread across two or more waterings, in a number of parcels. Indeed, more often than not the interests of substantial farmers were scattered right across the marsh for, as Daniel Jones observed in the late-eighteenth century, graziers 'hire[d] their land of different owners in any parcels, and at any distance, neither

⁵² In 1746, the scot books for all 22 waterings on Romney Marsh Level, plus Walland/Denge, included, in all, 522 line entries relating to 414 individuals sharing a pool of 308 surnames.

the compactness of their business, nor the distance being any object with them.’⁵³ It was not unusual then for an occupier’s name to be entered in the record books of several waterings. His name might also be entered into just one of these books several times if a tenant occupied land of more than one landlord in any one watering. There was no room for error within the marsh system and considerable care was taken to give the fullest possible designation of names. Thus, forenames were routinely included. Furthermore, a substantial proportion of occupiers were not locals, and could be domiciled up to 20 miles from the marsh. Hence, for this group of farmers, the parish of residence was noted as an additional identifier.⁵⁴ Common sense dictated that where it was necessary to make a distinction between fathers and sons, the ascriptions ‘Junior’ or ‘Senior’ were added. Occasionally, clarification was needed within the same kinship group, in which case the parish of residence was used.⁵⁵

The attention to detail in the marsh records has borne lasting fruit insofar as it has aided a comprehensive analysis of landholding structures.⁵⁶ Elsewhere however, nominal record linkage has presented historians with a knotty problem. Thus far, the most wide-ranging research has been the family reconstitution work of the Cambridge Group, begun in the 1960s. Hoping to dispense with the need for traditional, highly labour-intensive methods of data processing, the group sought to devise software capable of analysing material drawn from parish records. Eventually, a fully automatic system was largely achieved.⁵⁷ It is nonetheless accepted that complete certainty can be elusive despite sophisticated software programmes. Take, for example, the phonetic coding system *Soundex*. This has been used extensively to classify and index surnames in medical records’ systems. Yet in some historical contexts there have been mixed results. Although successfully employed by some historians, others reported significant drawbacks.⁵⁸ Hence, while (ideally) strict criteria are preferable for nominal data processing,

⁵³ Jones, ‘Sheep farming’, p. 6.

⁵⁴ For further discussion see Hipkin, ‘Tenant farming’, pp. 652-5; id., ‘Landownership’, p. 83.

⁵⁵ In 1738 for example, four members of the Wightwick kinship group occupied land on Walland. Two (both named George) were noted as domiciled in Tenterden and Hinxhill respectively while the other two (both named Humphry) came from Tenterden and Old/New Romney respectively. EKAC S/W/S11. Ascriptions of status or title, such as ‘Mr’, ‘Esq’, or ‘Gent’, whilst often included by marsh officials, were not essential as additional identifiers. The frequency with which ‘Mr’ appeared in the schedules from 1738-91 was tested. This disclosed nothing more than a clerk’s personal preference to include it or not. Furthermore, from 1738-91 there was a general falling-off in the use of this ascription. In respect of the LTAs, the frequency with which ‘Mr’ was included was considered for some 52 parishes, c.1746 and c.1790. Again, its inclusion or omission from occupier entries appeared to be little more than an assessor’s personal style of record-keeping. It has also been suggested that by the eighteenth century, the title ‘Mr’ may have become increasingly ambiguous as an ascription befitting the local elite. D. Postles, ‘The politics of address in early-modern England’, *J. Hist. Sociology*, 18 (2005), pp. 100, 106. See also French and Hoyle, *English rural society* (2007), p. 32.

⁵⁶ Hipkin, ‘Structure of land occupation’, passim; id., ‘Tenant farming’, passim; id., ‘Landownership’, passim.

⁵⁷ E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *Nominal record linkage by computer and the logic of family reconstitution* (1973), pp. 64-101; id., ‘News from the Cambridge group for the history of population and social structure: automatic record linking for family recognition’, *Local population studies*, 40 (1988), pp. 10-16.

⁵⁸ Grover used *Soundex* to deal with variant spellings. Wrigley and Schofield found however that it wrongly assigned 35 per cent of names. Grover, ‘Land Tax in east Kent’, p. 301. In the analysis of eighteenth century poll books, *Soundex* was found to eliminate nearly all spellings problems – see J. A.

flexibility is also called for, as qualitative material and value judgements can greatly complement computer software in achieving the closest fit.⁵⁹

The treatment of both variant spellings and duplicate name entries in this present context has proved relatively straightforward. For this we can thank not only the sizeable surname pool that characterised Romney Marsh and its hinterland but also the exceptional qualitative material available. Hasted's *History* has helped to uncover kinship networks and landownership patterns among substantial owners. Use has also been made of the Kent Archaeological Society's transcriptions of monumental inscriptions (KASMI) taken from some 37 parishes. Notwithstanding that the evidence disclosed therein is biased in favour of the region's more substantial inhabitants, it has provided qualitative data as to year of birth, age at death, domicile, occupation, paternal/maternal generational lines as well as wider kinship networks.⁶⁰ All have helped to determine whether duplicate name entries across time and/or space, refer to one (or more than one) person. For example, over a period of time, the LTAs and/or marsh records have sometimes shown that a landholding was, ostensibly, owned by a succession of unrelated people. In actuality, ownership was 'uninterrupted', with different surnames explained by inheritance, marriage, or the succession to a title.⁶¹ By contrast, c. 1746 several line entries in both the marsh records and LTAs for an uplands parish refer to a number of parcels of land each of which, at first sight, appeared to belong to different people – and similarly, c. 1790, in respect of these same units. It was verified (via Hasted and KASMI transcripts) that these entries all referred to one man, the Reverend Thomas Cobb, an incumbent in four parishes who died in 1794 aged 92.⁶² Some of these landholdings Cobb occupied as a church incumbent, others in a private capacity.

These examples, together with others, show that qualitative evidence can clarify the picture as to who owned what, where and when. It also lends support to the argument that 'strict match' duplicate name entries referred, more often than not, to the same person – someone with, say, property interests over an extensive area or someone who (like Cobb) was particularly long-lived. Indeed, a substantial proportion of the names appearing in the KASMI transcripts survived well

Phillips, *Electoral behaviour in unreformed England: plumpers, splitters and straights* (1982), pp. 314-5. See also B. Tyrwhitt-Drake, 'Soundex – one way of looking for surname variants', e-text article, first published in *Computers in genealogy* 6 (1998); P. Christian, 'Soundex – can it be improved?', e-text article, first published in *Computers in genealogy* 6 (1998); www.essex.ac.uk/AMS/articles/Soundex.html; Grover, *A measure of wealth*, pp.14-8, 269, 274.

⁵⁹ The place of judgement decisions is discussed in P. Adman, S. W. Baskerville, K. F. Beedham, 'Computer-assisted record linkage: or how best to optimize links without generating errors', *History and computing* 4 (1994), pp. 2-15. See also R. Schofield, 'Automatic family reconstitution', *Historical methods* 1992, p. 75; E. A. Wrigley (ed.), *Identifying people in the past* (1973), pp. 2, 7; H. B. Newcombe, *Handbook of record linkage: methods for health and statistical studies, administration and business* (1988), pp. 7-8.

⁶⁰ This study is, in the main, confined to the paternal line, although it is recognised that this covers only part of the picture. See also Hipkin, 'Tenant farming', p. 660; Ginter, *Measure of wealth*, pp. 273-4.

⁶¹ For example, it was found that the surnames Tufton, Sackville, Thanet, Playdell-Bouverie and Folkestone referred to different generations of the same family.

⁶² Cobb was also part of a kinship group occupying land on the marsh for much of the eighteenth century. LTA entries referred to him variously as 'Lydd Vicar', 'Mr Cobb', 'Thomas Cobb', 'Cobb' and 'Rev Cobb'.

into their seventies, eighties or even nineties. Conversely, KASMI transcripts have shown that one name, appearing repeatedly over time might, in actuality, refer to two or more generations in a kinship group. Corroborating evidence can thus help minimise the most common errors, namely ‘false positives’ and ‘false negatives’.⁶³ As for the database, provision was made to incorporate any relevant qualitative material and to revise entries accordingly.⁶⁴

Despite the geographical scope and timespan covered in the analysis, ‘strict match’ duplicate name entries were relatively few and far between. This can be explained, in part, by the large number of surnames present, a substantial proportion of which were uncommon for the region overall.⁶⁵ To illustrate: an extensive random sample of 600 occupier surnames was taken, representing just under half of the 1250 surnames identified across the region c.1746. The frequency distribution of this sample, by parish, is shown in Figure 4.1. This illustrates that 536 surnames (89 per cent) were relatively uncommon, insofar as they could be found in a maximum of four parishes.⁶⁶ Furthermore, it was found that of those occupiers whose surnames appeared in one parish only, an overwhelming 90 per cent had a frequency of one; in other words, they were the only occupiers with that surname. The remaining surnames, accounting for just 10 per cent in this group, generally referred to a surname shared by just two occupiers who were distinguished by additional (forename) identifiers.

Of the 82 surnames representing occupiers with land in two parishes, 30 surnames (37 per cent) had a frequency of one.⁶⁷ Accurate linkages were made for the vast majority of those holding the 52 remaining surnames in this group, as additional identifiers (again, usually forenames) were included. The same held true in the next two groups, with surnames extending over three- and four parishes respectively, so that linkages could be made with a reasonable degree of certainty in most cases.

⁶³ ‘False positives’ are nominal data wrongly matched together as the same person, thus leading to fewer occupiers in the statistics and an upward bias in the average LTA per occupier. ‘False negatives’ are records belonging to the same person but which have not been brought together, thus producing a false number of additional occupiers, with a downward bias in the average LTA per occupier. Grover, ‘Land Tax in east Kent’, pp. 272, 315-6.

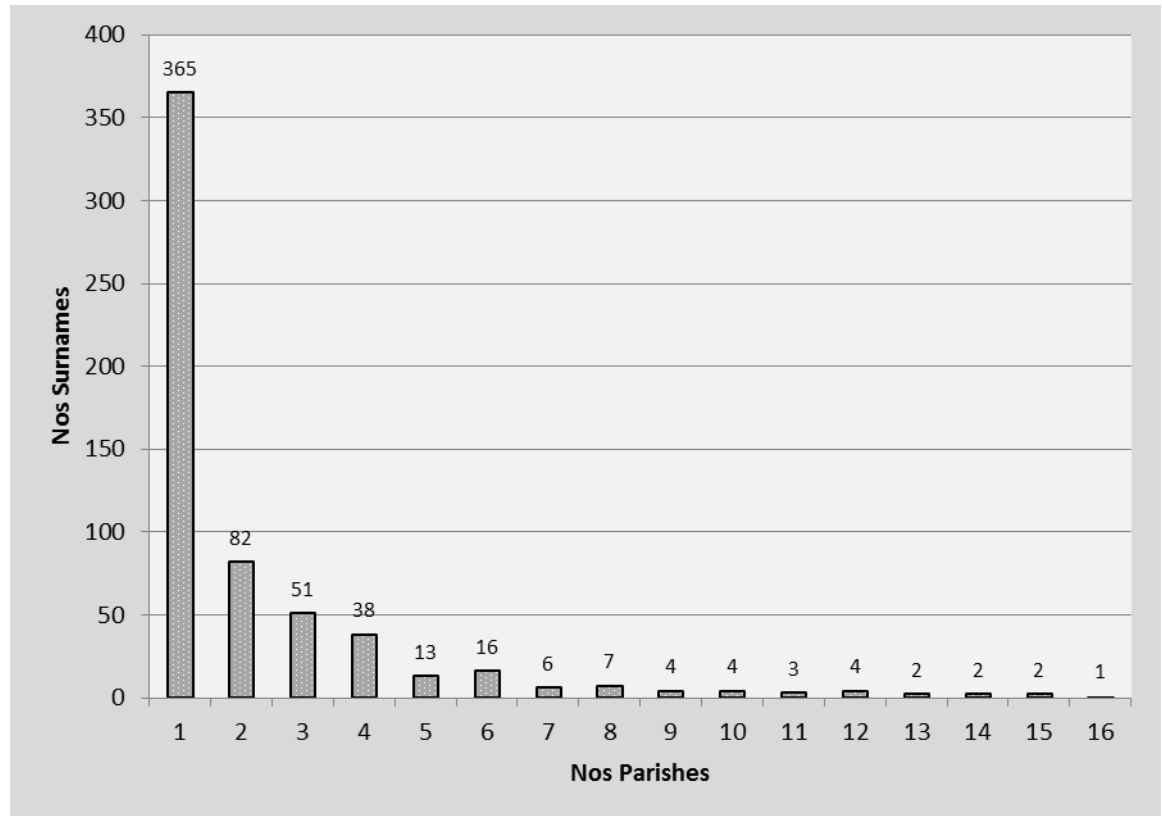
⁶⁴ The relational database programme *Access* was used. Fields were set up for both landlord and tenant, into which were entered surname and (if applicable) forename and status ascription as originally recorded in the documents. Additional fields were set up to revise spellings and add in qualitative evidence as necessary.

⁶⁵ However, relatively rare surnames at regional- or even at county level might be common at a national level. Grover, ‘Land Tax in east Kent’, pp. 281-6, 297. In mid-nineteenth century England, the 10 most common surnames accounted for 5.15 per cent of the population, whereas in early-nineteenth century Wales they accounted for 55.85 per cent. The latter hid an even more dramatic picture with respect to the geographical distribution of surnames; in one locality in Caernarfonshire, the top 10 most common surnames covered more than 90 per cent of the population. S. Rowlands and J. Rowlands, *Second stages in researching Welsh ancestry* (1999), p. 162. See also K. Schurer, ‘Surnames and the search for regions’, e-text article, *Local Population Studies* (2004), pp. 4-5.

⁶⁶ These findings are broadly similar to Grover’s. Grover, ‘Land Tax in east Kent’, p. 294 and Appendix B1.

⁶⁷ Furthermore, 32 out of the 82 surnames present across two parishes were found in contiguous parishes.

Figure 4.1: The Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex c.1746 - surname sample showing frequency distribution by parish



At the other end of the surnames' scale lay the remaining 10 per cent, comprising occupiers whose interests extended over a much wider area of five or more parishes. However, qualitative evidence suggested that those in this group were likely to have kinship links with one another. Moreover, forename identifiers were included for the vast majority, thus reducing the risk of making erroneous inter-parish linkages for occupiers.

Clearly then, the size of surname pool makes a significant difference to the number of duplicate name entries. A large surname pool should reduce the margins of error. For these reasons then, as Grover demonstrated, some consideration of the range of surnames present should be the starting-point for any Land Tax-based study of landownership and land occupation structures.⁶⁸ Ginter found that the Yorkshire LTAs had a 'very high' incidence of duplicate name entries although (uncharacteristically for him) there was no further elaboration on this point. Thus we are left largely in the dark as to surname structures in those areas of Yorkshire upon which his research was based, although it is possible that the region contained a considerably smaller surname pool.⁶⁹

Variant spellings were found to be less of a problem than encountered elsewhere, using sources from earlier periods. Wrigley and Schofield's work on the Colyton parish register for the mid-

⁶⁸ Grover, 'Land Tax in east Kent', p. 324.

⁶⁹ Ginter, *Measure of wealth*, p. 16. See also Schurer, 'Surnames', pp. 5-6.

sixteenth- to the mid-seventeenth century produced 4.04 spellings per surname.⁷⁰ Grover's work (using the 1705 Marriage Duties Act) for the St. Augustine East Division of Kent revealed a ratio of 1.64 variant spellings per surname.⁷¹ For Romney Marsh and the surrounding region c. 1746, the ratio was even less. Here, some 1345 surname spellings were identified.⁷² Only seven per cent (some 80 surnames) had variant spellings, and of these, the vast majority (68) had only one variant. The final total, after revision, was 1250 surnames - a ratio of just 1.076. Attention was given to the fact that names were sometimes written phonetically and this, together with the data-sorting facilities of the database, dealt with the majority of spellings' variants.⁷³ The early LTAs specifically listing owners have also helped to verify entries that could, potentially, refer to the same person, by tracing landlord-tenant links. Just as (on paper at least) the structure of landownership and land occupation on the marsh was artificially fragmented by the way in which scots were levied by watering, the same held true for the LTAs in the wider region. Moreover, the database could not cover all eventualities in the process of data-sorting. For instance, the length of the common boundary between parishes was also a factor in assessing the potential accuracy of linkages between parishes. Hence, looking at a map could be the deciding factor.

In conclusion then, for nominal record linkage purposes, the impact of the scale of this study has been considerable, given the spatial and chronological coverage. To illustrate: for c.1746, some 4809 line entries were entered onto the database for computer- and manual processing.⁷⁴ Yet, as we have seen, the incidence of duplicate name entries in the random sample was relatively low. It has been demonstrated that in large part, this was down to the linguistic context of the region: the surname pool was so wide-ranging compared with regions elsewhere that an assessor's task was bound to be relatively straightforward in this respect. Another factor was the attention to detail in the marsh evidence and (to a lesser extent) in many of the LTAs. Furthermore, land occupation structures were fluid; and they were also artificially fragmented by the way in which they appeared in tax listings such as the LTAs.⁷⁵ With the Land Tax for example, 'every person who shall be rated or assessed for or in respect of any messuages ... [or] lands ... *shall be rated and assessed in the place where [they] respectively do lie, and not elsewhere ...*'.⁷⁶ Thus, where a farm crossed over one parish into another, the occupier's name would appear in more than one LTA.

⁷⁰ Cited in Grover, 'Land Tax in east Kent', p. 300, notes 1 and 2.

⁷¹ By a visual comparison, Grover identified 1439 variant spellings for 877 surnames. Grover, 'Land Tax in east Kent', p. 299.

⁷² Excluding occupiers whose names were unknown and church incumbents.

⁷³ A tendency for some surname spellings to change over time was also taken into account. There were, for example, several entries under 'Ashbye', in the area around Bethersden and Little Chart (c. 1746) and also on Romney Marsh. By c. 1790 however, although clearly referring to direct descendants, these had now become 'Ashbee' and 'Ashby'. For analysis, 'Ashbye' was used throughout.

⁷⁴ Each representing an LTA (or acreage, if taken from the marsh records).

⁷⁵ The fluidity of property dealings in Kent, as elsewhere, bear witness to this. See Joan Kent, 'The rural 'middling sort' in early modern England, c.1640-1740: some economic, political and socio-cultural characteristics' in *Rural History* 10 (1999), p. 22; Chalklin, *Kent*, pp. 50-2.

⁷⁶ Italics mine. 1 W & M, sess 1, c. 20 [1688].

Lastly, a consideration that is hard to quantify. In the practicalities of everyday life, contemporaries were not so rigid or insular as to think solely in terms of their parish of residence. Socio-economic interaction was flexible and outward-looking. Thus, a 'local neighbourhood', could, for example, comprise a cluster of, say, three or four parishes.⁷⁷ Here one could find a kaleidoscopic dispersion of units of land that collectively, made up the farming enterprises of that locality. Assessors and collectors, as part of the local elite would, most likely, have known who was who in terms of liability to local taxes, not only in their own parish, but in the wider neighbourhood. Common sense would dictate that their record-keeping should not confuse. It follows therefore that unless otherwise indicated in the original document, 'strict match' duplicate name entries in contiguous parishes should always be treated as the same person. Where a wide geographical area (or a long timespan) is involved, qualitative evidence can bring clarification. Furthermore, 'surname match only' duplicate name entries are assumed to be of the same kinship group, unless there is evidence to the contrary.

Conclusion

This chapter has set out a methodology for the LTAs used in the analysis in chapter five. It has been demonstrated that broadly, the methodological difficulties encountered elsewhere have proved relatively insignificant in this regional context. Roman Catholic double assessment, statistically important elsewhere, proved inconsequential here. The incidence of government salaries and stock-in-trade have been outlined, relevant entries omitted and LTA parish totals adjusted accordingly. LTAs applicable to living accommodation were found to be modest. With the benefit of qualitative material, the structure of ecclesiastical land and property in the region has, in large part, been verified and clarified. Uncertainties remain however, chiefly in those instances where it has not been possible to pinpoint all assessments to tithes. This residual problem should be borne in mind, although all known entries for tithes (church-owned and impropriated) have been omitted and LTA parish totals adjusted accordingly. The double-columned format of the majority of the early LTAs has made possible, for the first time, the investigation of owner-occupation across the region for the mid-eighteenth century. The incidence of ambiguous entries, exemptions and omissions has been considered, none of which were considered problematical.

The quality of supporting material, especially Hasted's *History* (together with the KASMI transcripts) have proved highly advantageous for nominal record linkage purposes. These, coupled with an extensive surname pool and an unusually high standard of record-keeping, have yielded enough congruent information to enable links to be made between parishes for landownership and land occupation structures. Unless proved otherwise, duplicate name entries

⁷⁷ Palliser, Introduction, 'The parish in perspective', in S. J. Wright (ed.), *Parish church and people*, p. 6. See also Wrightson, *English society, 1580-1640*, p. 41; Schurer, 'Surnames', p. 2; Dobson, 'Population, disease and mortality', p. 85.

in contiguous parishes are taken to refer to the same person. Further, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, matching surnames were assumed to be part of the same kinship group.

It is clear then, that the early LTAs used in this investigation support Mills' assertion that 'they are one of the very few means of obtaining something approaching a comprehensive assessment of great and small landowners alike'.⁷⁸ To this end – and on an unusually large geographical scale previously unseen and for an exceptionally early period - landownership and land occupation structures for the region will now be explored.

⁷⁸ Mills, 'Early LTAs (1)', p. 196.

Chapter five. The structure of landownership and land occupation in the Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c. 1746-90.

In uncovering landholding structures for the region, the aim of this chapter is twofold. The first is to provide the wider context for chapters six to nine, in which landlord-tenant relations on the marsh and the marsh hinterland are a central theme. Indeed, a number of individuals and kinship groups, key to the later part of this study, will first be mentioned in the analysis to follow. At the same time, the fresh evidence presented here will substantially augment the early LTA-based work completed thus far. In this respect, the findings of Holderness, Mills and Grover, albeit restricted to four counties, have demonstrated the usefulness of suitable material to disclose early eighteenth century landholding structures (and changes over time). To anticipate what follows therefore, their results, outlined in chapter three, will now be summarized.

Mills analysed changes over time in patterns of landownership in two Cambridgeshire parishes which, although roughly the same size, had differing landownership patterns. In one parish numbers of owners declined; in the second, they increased. In the South Lindsey region of Lincolnshire, Holderness found little change in the landownership structure, although these overall results disguised a slightly more diverse picture, depending on the samples used. The evidence suggested that a decline in owner-occupation occurred before c. 1750. Holderness noted that rentier estates were as predominant at the end of the eighteenth century as they had been c. 1700. There was a slight fall in numbers of occupiers to 1790. Mills' results for five Lincolnshire parishes revealed a substantial c. 40 per cent decline in numbers of owners, as well as a shift in LTAs from middling- to large owners. Again, c. 1750 was thought to be the low point for owner-occupation. Grover's work on 15 Kent and Sussex parishes showed an overall three per cent decline in numbers of owners, and a 10 per cent decline in numbers of occupiers. As with the findings for Lincolnshire, there was considerable variation within size groups, although the vulnerability of middling owners and occupiers was noticeable. An increase of 13 per cent in numbers of owner-occupiers was also observed, accompanied by a huge (90 per cent) rise in the proportion of owner-occupied LTAs.

For Grover, it was clear that these results served to underline the need for more LTA-based work if landownership structures across the country were to be further uncovered. This is a matter about which, for early eighteenth century England, we still know surprisingly little. Grover emphasized the importance of early LTA-based research to reveal changes over time in landownership structures between the early eighteenth century and c. 1780. This, it was anticipated, would serve to increase our awareness of the effects of the economic depression c. 1730-50, as well as ascertaining 'the consistency of such effects across the country at large.'¹ For taxation purposes, the LTAs employed here came under three administrative divisions, namely

¹ Grover, 'Early LTAs (2)', p. 217.

(in Kent) the Lathe of Scray and the Lathe of Shepway and (in eastern Sussex) Hastings Rape. These are illustrated in Appendix 1, Map 1. The bulk of Grover's work covered the St. Augustine Division in Kent (also shown in Appendix 1 Map 1). It can be seen that the geographical scope of the fresh evidence presented here will add substantially to these earlier results.² Furthermore, for parishes lying on Romney Marsh Level, for which the marsh records list occupiers but not owners, the LTAs are the only means of discovering the structure of landownership on this part of the marsh, prior to 1768. With these objectives in view, the scope and format of the analysis will now be outlined.

We have already made reference to Map 2 which sets out the parishes that, for the purpose of this dissertation, form the Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex. Map 2 also shows the years covered in the LTA evidence, which (for 1756/9 and 1790/1) are outlined in green, and (for c. 1746 and c. 1790) are outlined in red. Of these, some 61 parishes have been selected for the statistical analysis, and these are illustrated in Map 5.1. Supporting information, according to parish, can be found in Appendix 1, Tables 1.1 to 1.9. As can be seen in Appendix 1, Table 1.4, the parishes selected have been placed into two groups. For the years c. 1746 and c. 1790, some 52 Kent and Sussex parishes comprise group A. These are a mixture of parishes located across the region, either on the marsh, the marsh-edge, the Weald or the Kent uplands. For the years 1756/9 and 1790/1, nine more parishes, all in the Weald of Kent, comprise group B. Also included in Appendix Table 1.4 are estimated acreages, together with specific dates relevant to the LTA documents from which data have been taken. Appendix 1, Table 1.5 sets out LTA parish totals used in the analysis, while Appendix 1, Table 1.6 includes LTAs in respect of woodland. Appendix 1, Tables 1.7, 1.8 and 1.9 set out numbers of owners, the percentage of owner-occupied LTAs, and numbers of occupiers respectively.

A caveat attends the information presented in these Appendix Tables, insofar as the analysis of landholding structures on a parish-by-parish basis is not ideal, given the danger of duplication of numbers of owners and occupiers in those instances where landholdings spilled over into more than one parish. A significant advantage of the fresh evidence presented here lies in the fact that the vast majority of parishes, taken together, make up one large consolidated tract of land. Thus, for present purposes, landholding structures will be explored on a regional level, the most accurate way of uncovering the true picture as to the full geographical spread of the interests of any one owner, occupier or kinship group.

To this end, the investigation will be based on the data set out in Tables 5.1(a) to 5.3(d). Broadly speaking, these Tables comprise snapshots of the region, c. 1746, 1756/9 and c. 1790. Three aspects are explored, namely landownership (Tables 5.1(a) to 5.1(d)), followed by owner-

² There is a degree of overlap in respect of Sussex parishes, as this analysis includes all those selected by Grover, apart from Ninfield.

occupation (Tables 5.2(a) to 5.2(d)) and thirdly, land occupation (Tables 5.3(a) to 5.3(d)).³ Tables (a) and (b) in each series set out data for the region overall, broken down into parish groups A and B. In addition, Tables (c) and (d) in each series are made up of smaller block samples, all taken from group A (the 52 Kent and Sussex parishes) and re-grouped into block samples according to their regional location (namely, on the marsh, marsh-edge, Weald or uplands). As shown in Map 5.2, the parishes in each block are contiguous. Again then, consolidated blocks of land rather than scattered areas can be analysed. The purpose of these block samples is to note differences or changes over time in landholding structures that may be related to topography or geographical location within the region.

What can these findings tell us about landholding patterns in the mid-eighteenth century, not only for the marsh and marsh hinterland, but also relative to the earlier, LTA-based work summarized above? The picture was diverse. In respect of landownership, Kent was distinguished as a county of small freeholders, with ‘property in land ... very much divided’.⁴ The latter is evident from the data in Table 5.1(a), demonstrating that small owners (of £9 or less) made up roughly half of all owners in the region. Equally striking is the predominance, in LTA terms, of large landowners (£40-plus). In exploring trends over time in landownership structures, the results will broadly reflect the findings of Holderness, Mills and Grover, and will show that by c. 1790, there had been an overall fall in numbers of owners across the region. Nonetheless, within the region, there were differences in landholding patterns and trends over time. There was some variation between group A parishes and the wholly Wealden parishes of group B. There were also fluctuations within size groups, as well as varying fortunes for owners depending on where their interests lay, either on Romney Marsh Level, the marsh-edge, or in the Weald and uplands.

As for owner-occupation, this saw an increase across the region which, in general, mirrored yet again the findings for Lincolnshire, as well as building upon Grover’s results for south-east Kent. Hipkin’s findings for Romney Marsh, plus the investigation in chapter seven of this study (looking at trends over time in owner-occupation on Walland/Denge) strongly support the assertion that the increase in owner-occupation was a result of the rising market demand and increasing competition that characterized the marsh economy from c. 1760.⁵ However, without the benefit of additional, qualitative material, the evidence disclosed in this LTA-based analysis, albeit exceptional, is nevertheless restricted as to how much it can reveal. Until further in-depth research uncovers a vastly more detailed picture as to the nature of the eighteenth century land market on the marsh hinterland, much will remain open to speculation. However, given that market conditions were broadly similar across both the marsh and its hinterland, it is plausible to suppose that the same market forces drove the rise in owner-occupation across the wider region.

³ Owner-occupiers farmed direct at least some of the land they occupied. Although some were solely owner occupiers, many rented additional land of one or more landlords.

⁴ Boys, *Kent*, p. 27.

⁵ Hipkin, ‘Landownership’, p. 71.

The findings nevertheless indicate, *within* the region, some diversity in the structure of owner-occupation. There were fluctuations between groups A and B, as well as fluctuations within size groups. These become apparent when reference is made to the more detailed information set out in Tables (b) and (d) in each series. Perhaps the most striking feature concerns the whole-marsh block sample, where the shift towards farming direct within the small- to middling size group was substantially higher than anywhere else. It is significant that all the parishes in this block sample are located on the Level of Romney Marsh. There were historical differences in the make-up of the Level compared with Walland/Denge.⁶ It is likely that to some extent, these intrinsic differences contributed to the disparities in landholding patterns between Romney Marsh Level and Walland/Denge, aspects of which will become evident later in this chapter as well as in chapter eight.

Land occupation patterns across the region also broadly reflected those uncovered by Holderness and Grover, insofar as there was an overall fall in numbers of occupiers. The results, using the LTAs for sample parishes on Romney Marsh Level, compare favourably with those drawn from the marsh records. The latter were highly accurate, and the fact that the LTAs broadly reflect their findings is yet more proof of their trustworthiness as a historical source.

Each of the sections to follow will conclude by comparing the LTA-based results for the region with those for Walland/Denge, drawn from the marsh records. Detailed, tabulated findings for Walland/Denge are included in chapters seven and eight. A selection of these results are summarized in Tables 5.5(a), 5.5(b) and 5.5(c), outlining patterns of landownership, owner-occupation and land occupation respectively. Three size groups (according to acreage) have been adopted. These are comparable (albeit *very* roughly) with the LTA size groupings in Tables 5.1(a), 5.1(c), 5.2(a), 5.2(c) and 5.3(a) and 5.3(c). These findings suggest that patterns and trends over time on the marsh hinterland were similar to those on Walland/Denge. The results for the block sample of whole-marsh parishes also suggest that landholding patterns on Romney Marsh Level bucked the trend, not only in relation to the marsh hinterland, but also in relation to Walland/Denge, lying adjacent.

For comparison purposes, a series of Figures will also illustrate the LTA-based results for group A parishes as a whole, the block samples, and those outlined above for Walland/Denge. These Figures comprise the data for Walland/Denge (set out in Tables 5.5(a), 5.5(b) and 5.5(c)), with the results for group A parishes (set out in Tables 5.1(a), 5.2(a) and 5.3(a), plus the results for the block samples (set out in Tables 5.1(c), 5.2(c) and 5.3(c)). These are presented as Figs 5.1(a) and 5.1(b), covering landownership, Figs 5.2(a) and 5.2(b) covering owner-occupation, and Figs 5.3(a) and 5.3(b), covering land occupation. Each series of Figures illustrate, by size group, the

⁶ See S. Rippon, 'Romney Marsh: evolution of the historic landscape and its wider significance' in Long, Hipkin and Clarke (eds.), *Romney Marsh: coastal and landscape change*, pp. 84-100; Eddison, *Survival*, chapter 5, esp. p. 65.

percentage of numbers of owners, owner-occupiers and occupiers respectively, together with the percentage value (LTA or acreage) held by each.

Finally, mention will be made as to changes over time in the percentage of owner-occupied LTAs across the region, compared with the percentage belonging to rentiers. It will be seen that in parish groups A and B, roughly 20 per cent of LTAs were owner-occupied in the mid-eighteenth century. By c. 1790 however, there had been a noticeable move away from LTAs owned by pure rentiers, and a commensurate increase (of 10 per cent) in the proportion of LTAs being farmed direct.

1. The structure of landownership.

Table 5.1(a) illustrates that over the region as a whole, there was a drop of just under five per cent in numbers of landowners between c.1746-90. Lord Thanet (assessed at £1203) and Sir Edward Dering (£1157) were the two top-ranking landowners in the region in the mid-eighteenth century, positions they retained c. 1790. The evidence suggests a good degree of stability among the most substantial owners (£300-plus) from c. 1746-90. For instance, the names Curteis and Blackmore, among the most prosperous of Tenterden's inhabitants, figured among the region's top 10 kinship groups throughout the period. Both families were substantial rentiers, owner-occupiers and indeed tenants, and reference will be made to their marsh interests in chapters seven and eight.

Tables 5.1(a) and 5.1(b) draw attention to variations in landownership structures between the mix of marsh, marsh-edge, Wealden and uplands parishes of group A, and the wholly Wealden parishes of group B. These will now be outlined.

Group A parishes witnessed a four per cent drop in numbers of landowners. The smallest size group (£9 or less) saw virtually no change. In c. 1746 they made up just over half of all owners across all 52 parishes but, between them, shared 7.6 per cent of the LTA total. By c. 1790 there was a very slight percentage increase in numbers of small owners, but a 0.2 per cent drop in the proportion of LTA belonging to them. Circa 1746, medium-sized owners (£10-39) made up roughly a third of all owners, with a 25 per cent share of the LTA total. By c. 1790 and again, like small owners, they saw a very slight percentage increase in numbers but with a correspondingly slight fall in their share of the LTA total. By c. 1790, by making up some 15.3 per cent of all owners, large owners (£40-plus) had seen a one per cent drop. Circa 1746, some 67.0 per cent of LTAs belonged to large owners which, by c. 1790, had increased slightly. These figures disguise a bigger shift within this size group. As Table 5.1(b) demonstrates, the £40-99 band saw a drop in their proportion of LTA, while the largest owners (£100-plus) increased their share by 5.5 per cent. As intimated above, more research is needed if any of the

finer details that lay behind these changes are to be uncovered. However, for the marsh-edge block, qualitative evidence used in tandem with the LTAs suggest some of the dynamics at work that would go some way to explain the shift towards the largest owners, and this will now be considered.

Between c. 1746-90, the Curteis kinship group doubled their share in LTAs (from £426 to £836) in Iden, Playden and East Guldeford combined. This, effectively gave them a 25 per cent share of the total LTA in respect of the marsh-edge sample, data for which are set out in Tables 5.1(c) and 5.1(d). This was achieved in three ways; by land acquired (by Richard Curteis) via a marriage settlement, as well as a number of substantial purchases made by Jeremiah Curteis.⁷ There is also evidence to suggest that Jeremiah Curteis inherited (in East Guldeford) additional LTAs. Some of this had come from the £40-99 size group. However, these newly acquired LTAs now belonged to an owner who was, c. 1746, already established in the £100-plus size band. Consequently, for the purposes of the database analysis, this portion of LTA could no longer be grouped with the £40-99 size band. This may also go part-way to explain an overall drop of 25 per cent in numbers of owners in this marsh-edge sample, the highest reduction out of the four samples set out in Tables 5.1(c) and 5.1(d). There was also a particularly high proportion of LTA belonging to large owners in the marsh-edge block – running at nearly 80 per cent of the LTA total c. 1746, rising to 82.4 per cent by c. 1790. This was a much higher percentage than the whole-marsh block, in which c. 61 per cent of the LTA total belonged to large owners c. 1746, a position that, by c. 1790, had changed little. The proportion of LTA in the hands of large owners in the uplands- and Wealden samples was markedly less than on the marsh-edge, even though, by c. 1790, both had seen increases. On the uplands block, large owners had a 47.7 per cent share of the LTA total c. 1746, rising to 58.3 per cent by c. 1790. In the Weald, their share was 43.8 per cent in 1756/9, rising to 56.6 per cent by 1790/1.

By c. 1790, in terms of numbers of owners, the nine Wealden parishes comprising group B had seen a slightly higher fall (five per cent) than group A. In 1756/9, small- and medium-sized owners, between them, made up just over 85 per cent of owners in group B. Of this, 43.8 per cent were small owners. By 1790/1, this size group had grown by nearly seven per cent. Most of this increase took place within the £4 or less size band, as set out in Table 5.1(d). In 1756/9, medium-sized owners (£10-39) comprised 41.3 per cent of all owners in group B, with a c. 32.0 per cent share of the LTA total. Numbers of owners in this size group declined by 7.2 per cent, with a 6.2 per cent fall in their share of LTAs. Medium-sized owners then, were the ones to lose out in the Weald. There was a consolidation in numbers of large owners, who saw their LTAs increase by six per cent, to 65.7 per cent. Table 5.1(b) shows that the biggest shift in this group was among the largest owners (£100-plus). They were fewer in number, but with an increased share of LTA. Hidden within these figures is a noticeable shift towards the largest owners in the

⁷ Iden and Playden tenement analysis.

Wealden parish sample, as demonstrated in Table 5.1(d). In these parishes, the £100-plus size band increased their share of LTA in their group by more than a third, from 16.2 per cent to 26.2 per cent. Again however, further research is needed if we are to discover more about the influences that lay behind these trends.

The increase among large owners is also particularly noticeable in the uplands parish sample, as set out in Tables 5.1(c) and 5.1(d). Here, both numbers and percentage of LTA increased, by 4.6 per cent and 10.6 per cent respectively. On the whole-marsh sample by contrast, there was a slight drop in percentage of numbers of large owners, although their share of LTA stayed more or less the same, at c. 61 per cent of the total. This, as noted above, was considerably less than the 82.0 per cent share belonging to large owners in the marsh-edge sample. There was very little change among middling owners in the whole-marsh sample, while small owners saw a slight rise in numbers but a very slight drop in their share of LTA (to 4.5 per cent of the total).

Comparing these results with those on Walland/Denge, Table 5.5(a) shows that by 1791, numbers of owners had fallen by 16.5 per cent - a much greater drop than anywhere else in the region. As illustrated in Figs. 5.1(a) and 5.1(b), Walland/Denge experienced a shift towards large owners comparable with the marsh hinterland. However, there was greater degree of fluctuation within size groups on Walland/Denge. By 1791, just over 70 per cent of total acreage belonged to large owners (a 10 per cent rise), which came at the expense of the medium- and small size groups. These results mark a slight contrast with trends reported on the Level.

2. The structure of owner-occupation.

Between c. 1746-90, there was an overall rise of 15 per cent in numbers of owner-occupiers across the region. From Table 5.2(a) it can be seen that groups A and B both saw an increase of roughly one-third in the proportion of owner-occupied LTA. Nonetheless, there were differences in other respects between the two groups, and these will now be explored.

Numbers of owner occupiers in group A rose by nine per cent by c. 1790. The proportion of owner-occupied LTAs increased by nearly 32 per cent, from £8624.5 to £12,614. The biggest rise was among large owner-occupiers, whose numbers increased by four per cent. In addition, by c. 1790, more than half of all the owner-occupied LTA in group A was in the hands of large owner-occupiers. Table 5.2(b) shows that the biggest increase occurred in the £50-99 size band, in which the proportion of LTA nearly doubled, to 23 per cent.

Numbers of medium-sized owner-occupiers increased by four per cent by c. 1790. Despite a slight drop in their share of owner-occupied LTA, this group nevertheless retained nearly one third of all owner-occupied LTA c. 1790. These figures disguise the fact that owner-occupiers at

the higher end of this group (£25-39) doubled their share of LTA, as shown in Table 5.2(b). By contrast, numbers of small owner-occupiers fell by eight per cent by c. 1790, with a five per cent drop in their share of LTA.

The rise in owner-occupation was more marked in the Wealden parishes of group B, where numbers of owner-occupiers increased by 21 per cent. The proportion of owner-occupied LTA rose by more than 34.0 per cent (from £3258 to £4946). However, small and medium-sized owner-occupiers both lost out in terms of LTAs, by five per cent and nearly 11 per cent respectively. Large owner-occupiers by contrast, gained considerably; their numbers rose by around a third, while their share of the LTA total had gone up by half as much again (to 45.6 per cent).

The block samples, set out in Tables 5.2(c) and 5.2(d), highlight variations in the form that owner-occupation took, and trends over time. These differences cannot be detected from the more general data in Tables 5.2(a) and 5.2(b). For example, the whole-marsh block sample stands out insofar as the shift towards owner-occupation was much greater. Between c. 1746 and c. 1790, numbers of owner-occupiers doubled (from 63 to 112), as had their share of LTA. Furthermore, numbers of small owner-occupiers increased, along with the amount of LTA farmed direct. Medium-sized owner-occupiers (£10-39) also saw a virtual doubling in numbers (from 31 to 59). In addition, their owner-occupied LTA, by going up from £539 to £1239, more than doubled. This size group not only owner-occupied well over half of all the owner-occupied LTA in the whole-marsh sample, but they also had the highest proportion of LTA in their size group in the other three samples, namely on the marsh-edge, uplands and Weald. By contrast, large owner-occupiers lost ground, insofar as their share of LTA dropped by 10 per cent to 36 per cent.

Patterns of owner-occupation in the remaining three block samples portray a somewhat different picture to the whole-marsh sample, as illustrated in Figs. 5.2(a) and 5.2(b). On the marsh-edge, there was a shift towards large owner-occupiers. The number of small owner-occupiers fell, as did their share of LTA. Middling owner-occupiers also witnessed a fall in owner-occupied LTA of just over five per cent. The number of large owner-occupiers increased from six to 11 while the amount of LTA nearly doubled, from £686 (c. 1746) to £1239 (c. 1790).

A similar pattern characterized the uplands, where large owner-occupiers saw a substantial increase in both numbers and share of LTA. This was counterbalanced by the considerable fall in middling owner-occupiers, whose numbers dropped by a third, while their share of LTA fell from 51.1 per cent to 30 per cent. Likewise, small owner-occupiers, whose share fell by roughly one-third.

In the Wealden block, there was a slight rise for small owner-occupiers, both in numbers and in LTA. The middling group saw a slight drop in LTA, although their overall share in 1790/1, at 42.3 per cent, was nevertheless considerably higher than their counterparts in the marsh-edge and uplands samples. (Only in the whole-marsh sample was it exceeded.) Large owner-occupiers made substantial gains. In 1756/9, one William Pattenson of Biddenden held the position of top-ranking owner-occupier, whose fortunes as a dual-regional farmer during the agricultural depression, c. 1730-50, will be outlined in chapter seven. The fortunes of his son (also William) in respect of a substantial marsh-holding in the early 1770s will also be explored (in chapter eight).

Table 5.5(b) illustrates the trends in owner-occupation on Walland/Denge. Here, the shift towards large owner-occupiers was broadly similar to the marsh hinterland, as shown in Figs. 5.2(a) and 5.2(b). Again however, there were sharper fluctuations within the size groups, with a one-third increase in acreage farmed direct by large owner-occupiers, and correspondingly large reductions for the medium- and small size groups. Yet again, the results for Walland/Denge are in marked contrast to those noted above, for Romney Marsh Level.

3. The structure of land occupation.

Table 5.3(a) shows that c. 1746-90, there was little overall change in the land occupation structure across the region, although the medium size group lost ground to large occupiers, who increased their share of the LTA total. Group A parishes saw only a slight reduction in numbers, and there was no appreciable overall shift in the balance between size groups or their share of LTA. There was however, slightly more change in the Wealden parishes in group B. Here, numbers fell by seven per cent. Just over half of all occupiers were small. Between them, they occupied just under 11 per cent of the sample's total LTA in 1756/9; by 1790/1 this had fallen to just under 10 per cent. In 1756/9, a third of all occupiers were in the medium-sized group. By 1790/1 their share of LTA had dropped by six per cent to 30 per cent. Large occupiers, on the other hand, increased their share by seven per cent, to just over 60 per cent.

Table 5.3(c) and Figs 5.3(a) and 5.3(b) show that on the marsh-edge, numbers of occupiers dropped by seven per cent. Small occupiers lost seven per cent in terms of numbers and LTAs. There was a slight rise in the proportion of LTA occupied by middling- to large occupiers. Table 5.3(d) illustrates that the largest occupiers (£100-plus) saw a gain of nearly seven per cent, while the £40-49 band doubled in numbers and in the proportion of LTA occupied.

Again, Table 5.3(c) shows a drop in numbers; on the uplands, they fell by eight per cent. In contrast to the marsh-edge however, there was little change for small tenants. The proportion of

LTA farmed by the middling group fell by c. 30 per cent. The shift towards large occupiers was substantial; this group saw a one-third increase in their share of occupied LTA.

Broadly similar trends characterized the Wealden sample, insofar as overall numbers fell by 8.5 per cent, with a shift towards large occupiers. Small tenants saw a small decline in numbers and LTAs, as did the middling group. By 1790/1, the number of large tenants had increased by five per cent, and their LTA share rose by 13 per cent, to 55 per cent.

Yet again, the whole-marsh sample bucked the trend, insofar as numbers of occupiers rose from 215 to 298, an increase of nearly a third. By c. 1790, the number of small tenants more than doubled, although the proportion of LTA occupied by this size group increased only slightly. These results correlate broadly with those for Romney Marsh Level, in which Hipkin demonstrated an overall increase in numbers of occupiers, from 282 in 1746, to 315 in 1790.⁸ The proportion of LTA occupied by the medium-size group rose by 11.5 per cent. There was stability in numbers for large occupiers (£40-plus) although by c. 1790, the proportion of LTA occupied by this group fell by nearly 13 per cent.

Table 5.5(c) shows that on Walland/Denge, there was (by 1791) a fall in numbers of occupiers, and a shift towards the large size group at the expense of middling- and small occupiers. As illustrated in Figs 5.3(a) and 5.3(b), these trends broadly resembled those in the Weald, the uplands, and the marsh-edge. Yet again, patterns of land occupation on Romney Marsh Level stand out from the rest, in splendid isolation.

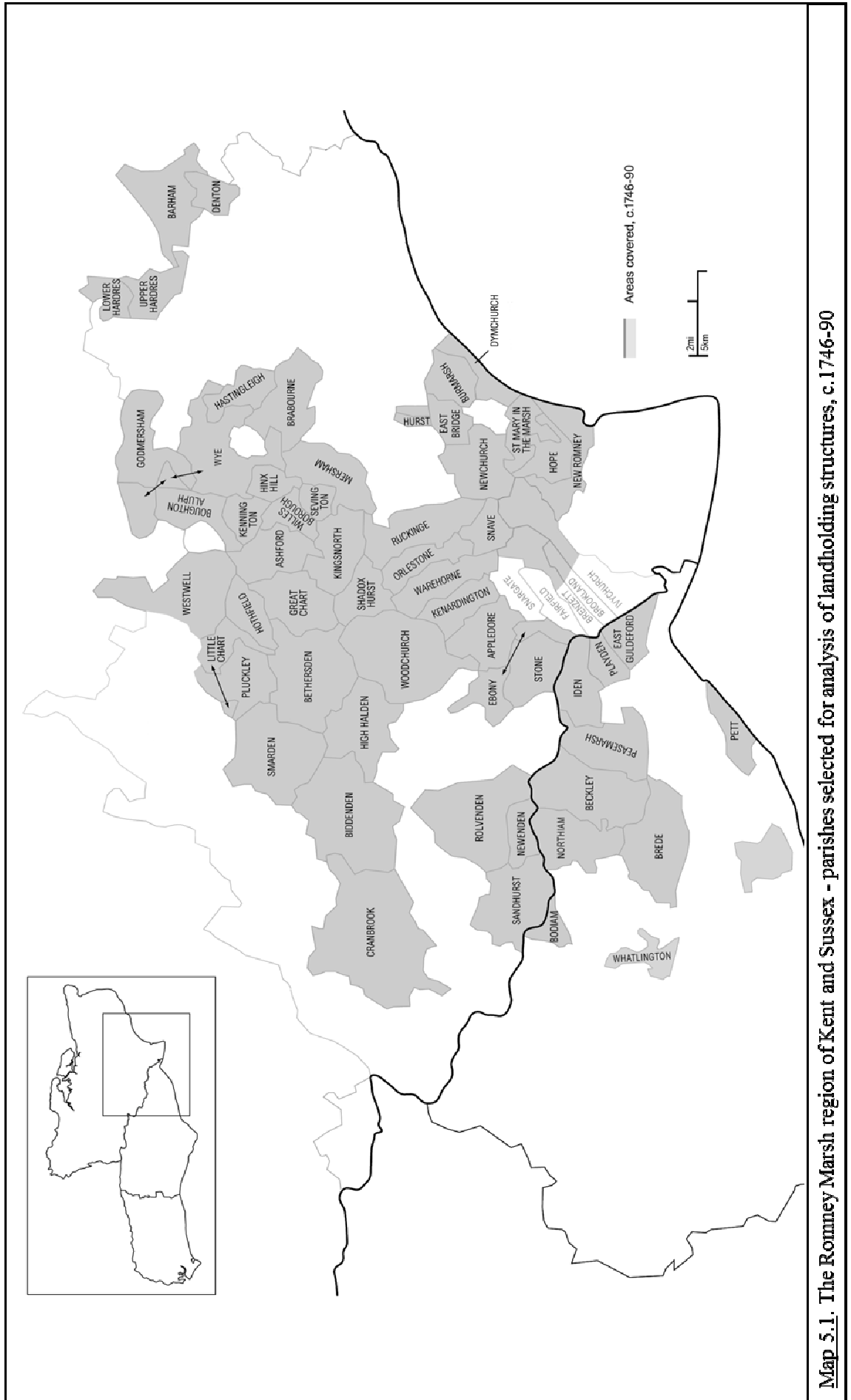
We turn now to changes over time in the proportion of owner-occupied LTA, relative to that belonging to rentiers (and occupied by tenants). Rentiers were of two kinds - rentiers pure-and-simple, and so-called semi-rentiers. Although the former group predominated, more work is needed to further pinpoint distinctions between the two, and changes over time in the proportion of LTA belonging to semi-rentiers who, in addition to renting out some of their land, were also owner-occupiers and/or tenants. This exercise, for acreage, has been carried out for the Walland/Denge material, and has shown that (in 1738) only a very small amount of acreage belonged to semi-rentiers. And by 1791, this had declined still further.⁹ Table 5.4 illustrates that c. 1746, over the region as a whole, the proportion of LTA occupied by tenants compared to owner-occupied LTA stood at a ratio of roughly 8:2. By c. 1790, and with a ratio of 7:3, there had been a tangible shift towards owner-occupied LTA. Table 5.4 reveals a difference in the

⁸ Hipkin, 'Landownership', p. 78.

⁹ In chapter seven, Table 7.5(a) shows that in 1738, the landownership structure on Walland/Denge comprised only a very small proportion of privately-owned land let out by semi-rentiers (513.5 acres). Some 2181.25 acres were owner-occupied, while the remaining 13,651 acres - 83.5 per cent - belonged to pure rentiers. Table 7.5(b) demonstrates that by 1791, the proportion of acreage belonging to pure rentiers had dropped to 72.5 per cent, owner-occupation had gone up to 4153.25 acres, and only 208 acres were let out by semi-rentiers.

balance between group A parishes and group B parishes. It also reveals that c. 1746, in group A parishes, the proportion of LTA let to tenants versus owner-occupied LTA was running at a ratio of 8:2. By c. 1790 however, some 30.4 per cent of LTA was being farmed direct. In the Wealden parishes comprising group B, for the years 1756/9, the proportion of owner-occupied LTA (at just over 18 per cent) was slightly lower. By 1790/1 this had shown a slightly higher increase than in group A.

The fresh evidence presented here undoubtedly breaks new ground by uncovering, for the first time, landholding structures for an exceptionally large geographical area and for an exceptionally early period. Yet it also raises questions that are beyond the capabilities of the LTAs to answer, through no inherent weakness in the evidence itself. Just as the findings of Holderness, Mills and Grover highlighted the need for further research, so do the results here. This is especially the case in respect of the rise in owner-occupation, as well as the interplay of landlord and tenant in a rising market which, taken together, gradually re-drew the map in terms of landholding structures in the eighteenth century. As will be seen in the chapters to follow, the evidence disclosed in high quality estate- and rental material, correspondence, farming diaries and Knatchbull's own first-hand account will, it is hoped, greatly aid our understanding in these matters, if only in one corner of the region under study.



Map 5.1. The Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex - parishes selected for analysis of landholding structures, c.1746-90

Table 5.1(a). The structure of landownership in the Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c. 1746-90.

A. 52 Kent and Sussex parishes								
	c. 1746				c. 1790			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
Large - £40 +	257	16.3	27,694.0	67.4	229	15.3	28,239	68.1
Medium - £10-39	514	32.6	10,287.0	25.0	503	33.2	10,212	24.5
Small - £9 or less	805	51.1	3097.5	7.6	778	51.5	3070	7.4
Total	1576	100.0	41,078.5	100.0	1510	100.0	41,521	100.0
B. Kent Wealden parishes								
	c. 1746				c. 1790			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
Large - £40 +	106	14.9	10,729	59.6	104	15.3	11,501	65.7
Medium - £10-39	293	41.3	5809	32.3	232	34.1	4657	26.1
Small - £9 or less	311	43.8	1455	8.1	341	50.6	1451	8.2
Total	710	100.0	17,993	100.0	677	100.0	17,609	100.0

Sources: CKS Q/CTL; CKS Q/RPL; ESRO ELT; ESRO LT.

Note. Group A - 52 Kent and Sussex parishes, c. 1746-90: Aldington, Newington and Hurst; Ashford; Barham; Beckley; Bethersden; Bodiam; Boughton Aluph; Brede; Brenzett; Burmarsh; Denton; Dymchurch; East Brabourne Borough; East Guldeford; Eastbridge; Ebony; Godmersham; Great Chart; Hastingleigh Borough; Hinxhill; Hope; Hothfield; Iden; Ivychurch, Appledore and Brookland; Kennington; Kingsnorth; Little Chart; Lower Hardres; Lympne and West Hythe; New Romney; Newchurch; Northiam; Ore; Orlestone; Peasmarsh; Pett; Playden; Pluckley Borough; Rolvenden; Ruckinge; Sevington; Smarden; Snave; St. Maries; Stone-in-Oxney; Upper Hardres; Warehorne and Orlestone; Warehorne and Shadoxhurst; West Brabourne Borough; Westwell; Whatlington; Willesborough; Wye.

Group B - Kent Wealden parishes, 1756/9 and 1790/1: Appledore (part); Biddenden; Cranbrook; Halden; Kenardington and Shadoxhurst; Newenden; Rolvenden; Sandhurst; Woodchurch.

Table 5.1(b). The structure of landownership in the Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c.1746-90.

A. 52 Kent and Sussex parishes								
LTA size group	c. 1746				c. 1790			
	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
£100-plus	75	4.8	16,547	40.3	74	4.9	19,007	45.8
£50-99	122	7.7	8514	20.7	101	6.9	6842	16.5
£40-49	60	3.8	2633	6.4	54	3.5	2390	5.8
£25-39	151	9.6	4654	11.3	152	10.0	4699	11.3
£20-24	84	5.3	1840	4.5	70	4.6	1556	3.7
£10-19	279	17.7	3793	9.2	281	18.6	3957	9.5
£5-9	288	18.3	1940	4.7	289	19.1	1955	4.7
£4 and under	517	32.8	1157.5	2.9	489	32.4	1115	2.7
Total	1576	100.0	41,078.5	100.0	1510	100.0	41,521	100.0

B. Kent Wealden parishes								
LTA size group	1756/9				1790/1			
	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
£100-plus	32	4.5	6522	36.2	26	3.8	7021	39.8
£50-99	44	6.2	2882	16.0	46	6.8	3129	17.7
£40-49	30	4.2	1325	7.4	32	4.7	1351	7.6
£25-39	85	12.0	2550	14.2	58	8.5	1831	10.3
£20-24	38	5.3	829	4.6	43	6.3	943	5.3
£10-19	170	24.0	2430	13.5	131	19.3	1883	10.6
£5-9	153	21.5	1077	6.0	146	21.8	988	5.6
£4 and under	158	22.3	378	2.1	195	28.8	463	2.6
Total	710	100.0	17,993	100.0	677	100.0	17,609	100.0

Table 5.1(c). The structure of landownership in the Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c. 1746-90 - sample parishes.

Sample parishes								
	c. 1746				c. 1790			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
Whole-marsh								
£40 +	77	22.9	6059	61.4	63	19.4	6101	61.6
£10 to £39	164	49.0	3335	33.8	162	50.1	3364	33.9
£9 or less	94	28.1	478	4.8	99	30.5	453	4.5
Total	335	100.0	9872	100.0	324	100.0	9918	100.0
Marsh-edge								
£40 +	28	33.0	2662	79.6	24	37.5	2802	82.4
£10 to £39	22	25.9	549	16.5	23	35.9	541	16
£9 or less	35	41.1	131	3.9	17	26.6	52	1.6
Total	85	100.0	3342	100.0	64	100.0	3395	100.0
Uplands								
£40 +	14	11.0	863	47.7	19	15.6	1067	58.3
£10 to £39	36	27.5	662	36.6	23	18.6	459	25.0
£9 or less	80	61.5	285	15.7	81	65.8	305	16.7
Total	130	100.0	1810	100.0	123	100.0	1831	100.0
Sample parishes								
	1756/9				1790/1			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
Wealden								
£40 +	45	13.0	3248	43.8	56	17.3	4398	56.6
£10 to £39	173	50.0	3506	47.2	132	40.7	2714	35.0
£9 or less	128	37.0	661	9.0	137	41.9	647	8.4
Total	346	100.0	7415	100.0	325	99.9	7759	100.0

Sources: CKS Q/CTL; CKS Q/RPL; ESRO ELT; ESRO LT.

Note. Sample parishes. Whole-marsh (all on Romney Marsh Level) - Aldington, Newington and Hurst; Brenzett; Burmarsh; Dymchurch; Eastbridge; Hope; Ivychurch Appledore and Brookland; New Romney; Newchurch; Ruckinge; Snave; St. Maries; Warehorne and Orlestone.

Marsh-edge - Iden, Playden, East Guldeford. Uplands - Hinxhill, Kennington, Sevington, Willesborough. Wealden - Biddenden, Halden, Woodchurch.

Table 5.1(d). The structure of landownership in the Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c.1746-90 - sample parishes.

Whole-marsh	c. 1746				c. 1790			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
£100-plus	14	4.2	2468	25.0	17	5.2	3508	35.4
£50-99	38	11.3	2493	25.3	26	8.0	1715	17.3
£40-49	25	7.4	1098	11.1	20	6.2	878	8.9
£25-39	50	15.0	1559	15.8	54	16.7	1689	17.0
£20-24	23	6.9	503	5.1	24	7.4	534	5.4
£10-19	91	27.1	1273	12.9	84	26.0	1141	11.5
£5-9	54	16.1	373	3.8	48	14.8	333	3.3
£4 and under	40	12.0	105	1.0	51	15.7	120	1.2
Total	335	100.0	9872	100.0	324	100.0	9918	100.0

Marsh-edge	c. 1746				c. 1790			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
£100-plus	12	14.1	1659	49.6	11	17.2	2040	60.0
£50-99	14	16.5	918	27.5	9	14.0	587	17.3
£40-49	2	2.4	85	2.5	4	6.3	175	5.1
£25-39	10	11.8	334	10.0	9	14.0	296	8.7
£20-24	5	5.9	118	3.5	4	6.3	87	2.6
£10-19	7	8.2	97	3.0	10	15.6	158	4.7
£5-9	12	14.1	79	2.4	4	6.3	21	0.6
£4 and under	23	27.0	52	1.5	13	20.3	31	1.0
Total	85	100.0	3342	100.0	64	100.0	3395	100.0

Uplands	c. 1746				c. 1790			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
£100-plus	1	1.0	113	6.2	1	1	109	6.0
£50-99	7	5.4	487	27.0	9	7.3	553	30.2
£40-49	6	4.6	263	14.5	9	7.3	405	22.1
£25-39	8	6.0	249	13.8	7	5.7	204	11.1
£20-24	4	3.0	85	4.7	4	3.2	88	4.8
£10-19	24	18.5	328	18.1	12	9.7	167	9.1
£5-9	24	18.5	164	9.0	26	21.1	183	10.0
£4 and under	56	43.0	121	6.7	55	44.7	122	6.7
Total	130	100.0	1810	100.0	123	100.0	1831	100.0

Wealden	1756/9				1790/1			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
£100-plus	9	2.6	1204	16.2	12	3.7	2036	26.2
£50-99	16	4.6	1168	15.8	22	6.8	1402	18.0
£40-49	20	5.8	876	11.8	22	6.8	960	12.4
£25-39	53	15.3	1590	21.4	40	12.3	1219	15.7
£20-24	24	7.0	526	7.0	17	5.3	368	4.8
£10-19	96	27.7	1390	18.8	75	23.1	1127	14.5
£5-9	71	20.5	514	7.0	72	22.2	492	6.4
£4 and under	57	16.5	147	2.0	65	19.7	155	2.0
Total	346	100.0	7415	100.0	325	99.9	7759	100.0

Table 5.2(a). The structure of owner-occupation in the Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c. 1746-90.

A. 52 Kent and Sussex parishes								
LTA size group	c. 1746				c. 1790			
	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
Large - £40 +	46	7.2	4298.0	49.9	78	11.1	7072	56.1
Medium - £10-39	158	24.8	2811.0	32.6	199	28.6	3955	31.3
Small - £9 or less	433	68.0	1515.5	17.5	422	60.3	1587	12.6
Total	637	100.0	8624.5	99.9	699	100.0	12,614	100.0

B. Kent Wealden parishes								
LTA size group	1756/9				1790/1			
	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
Large - £40 +	15	5.8	977	30.0	31	9.5	2253	45.6
Medium - £10-39	82	31.5	1626	50.0	102	31.0	1936	39.1
Small - £9 or less	163	62.7	655	20.0	196	59.5	757	15.3
Total	260	100.0	3258	100.0	329	100.0	4946	100.0

Sources: CKS Q/CTL; CKS Q/RPL; ESRO ELT; ESRO LT.

Note. Group A - 52 Kent and Sussex parishes, c. 1746-90: Aldington, Newington and Hurst; Ashford; Barham; Beckley; Bethersden; Bodiam; Boughton Aluph; Brede; Brenzett; Burmarsh; Denton; Dymchurch; East Brabourne Borough; East Guldeford; Eastbridge; Ebony; Godmersham; Great Chart; Hastingleigh Borough; Hinxhill; Hope; Hothfield; Iden; Ivychurch, Appledore and Brookland; Kennington; Kingsnorth; Little Chart; Lower Hardres; Lympne and West Hythe; New Romney; Newchurch; Northiam; Ore; Orlestone; Peasmarsh; Pett; Playden; Pluckley Borough; Rolvenden; Ruckinge; Sevington; Smarden; Snave; St. Maries; Stone-in-Oxney; Upper Hardres; Warehorne and Orlestone; Warehorne and Shadoxhurst; West Brabourne Borough; Westwell; Whatlington; Willesborough; Wye.

Group B - Kent Wealden parishes, 1756/9 and 1790/1: Appledore (part); Biddenden; Cranbrook; Halden; Kenardington and Shadoxhurst; Newenden; Rolvenden; Sandhurst; Woodchurch.

Table 5.2(b). The structure of owner-occupation in the Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c.1746-90.

A. 52 Kent and Sussex parishes								
LTA size group	c. 1746				c. 1790			
	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
£100-plus	13	2.0	2446.0	28.4	15	2.1	3251.0	25.8
£50-99	16	2.5	1104.0	12.8	42	6.0	2903.0	23.0
£40-49	17	2.7	748.0	8.7	21	3.0	918.0	7.3
£25-39	29	4.5	921.0	10.7	58	8.3	1806.0	14.3
£20-24	21	3.3	458.0	5.3	24	3.5	533.0	4.2
£10-19	108	17.0	1432.0	16.6	117	16.8	1616.0	12.8
£5-9	137	21.5	906.0	10.5	152	21.8	1005.0	8.0
£4 and under	296	46.5	609.5	7.0	270	38.5	582.0	4.6
Total	637	100.0	8624.5	100.0	699	100.0	12,614.0	100.0

B. Kent Wealden parishes								
LTA size group	1756/9				1790/1			
	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
£100-plus	2	1	315	9.7	3	1	462	9.3
£50-99	7	2.6	389	12.0	20	6	1446	29.2
£40-49	6	2.3	273	8.4	8	2.4	345	7.0
£25-39	26	10.0	775	23.8	26	8.0	777	15.7
£20-24	12	4.6	262	8.0	13	4.0	281	5.7
£10-19	44	16.9	589	18.0	63	19.1	878	17.7
£5-9	58	22.3	407	12.5	70	21.2	454	9.2
£4 and under	105	40.3	248	7.6	126	38.3	303	6.2
Total	260	100.0	3258	100.0	329	100.0	4946	100.0

Table 5.2(c). The structure of owner-occupation in the Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c. 1746-90 - sample parishes.

Sample parishes								
	c. 1746				c. 1790			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
Whole-marsh								
£40 +	8	12.7	554	46.1	15	13.5	796	36.0
£10 to £39	31	49.2	539	45.0	59	52.5	1239	56.2
£9 or less	24	38.1	107	8.9	38	34.0	174	7.8
Total	63	100.0	1200	100.0	112	100.0	2209	100.0
Marsh-edge								
£40 +	6	18.6	686	68.9	11	29.6	1239	77.2
£10 to £39	11	34.5	254	25.4	13	35.2	320	19.9
£9 or less	15	46.9	57	5.7	13	35.2	47	2.9
Total	32	100.0	997	100.0	37	100.0	1606	100.0
Uplands								
£40 +	1	2.5	60	18.5	5	13.9	226	50.3
£10 to £39	9	22.0	165	51.1	6	16.7	136	30.4
£9 or less	31	75.5	98	30.4	25	69.4	86	19.3
Total	41	100.0	323	100.0	36	100.0	448	100.0
Sample parishes								
	1756/9				1790/1			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
Wealden								
£40 +	4	4.0	241	17.5	10	8.2	844	43.1
£10 to £39	41	41.0	873	63.5	44	36.0	826	42.3
£9 or less	55	55.0	259	19.0	68	55.8	288	14.6
Total	100	100.0	1373	100.0	122	100.0	1958	100.0

Sources: CKS Q/CTL; CKS Q/RPL; ESRO ELT; ESRO LT.

Note. Sample parishes. Whole-marsh (all on Romney Marsh Level) - Aldington, Newington and Hurst; Brenzett; Burmarsh; Dymchurch; Eastbridge; Hope; Ivychurch Appledore and Brookland; New Romney; Newchurch; Ruckinge; Snave; St. Maries; Warehorne and Orlestone.

Marsh-edge - Iden, Playden, East Guldeford. Uplands - Hinxhill, Kennington, Sevington, Willesborough. Wealden - Biddenden, Halden, Woodchurch.

Table 5.2(d). The structure of owner-occupation in the Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c.1746-90 - sample parishes.

Whole-marsh	c. 1746				c. 1790			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
£100-plus	1	1.6	149	12.4	-	-	-	-
£50-99	3	4.8	231	19.2	5	4.5	362	16.4
£40-49	4	6.3	174	14.5	10	9.0	434	19.6
£25-39	4	6.3	125	10.4	22	19.6	706	32.1
£20-24	6	9.6	131	11.0	5	4.4	111	5.0
£10-19	21	33.3	283	23.6	32	28.5	422	19.1
£5-9	13	20.6	86	7.1	19	17.0	133	6.0
£4 and under	11	17.5	21	1.8	19	17.0	41	1.8
Total	63	100.0	1200	100.0	112	100.0	2209	100.0

Marsh-edge	c. 1746				c. 1790			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
£100-plus	3	9.3	472	47.4	3	8.1	766	47.7
£50-99	3	9.3	214	21.5	4	10.8	298	18.6
£40-49	-	-	-	-	4	10.8	175	10.9
£25-39	4	12.6	118	11.8	7	18.9	222	13.8
£20-24	5	15.6	114	11.4	1	2.7	21	1.3
£10-19	2	6.3	22	2.2	5	13.6	77	4.8
£5-9	5	15.6	31	3.1	3	8.1	20	1.2
£4 and under	10	31.3	26	2.6	10	27.0	27	1.7
Total	32	100.0	997	100.0	37	100.0	1606	100.0

Uplands	c. 1746				c. 1790			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
£100-plus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
£50-99	1	2.5	60	18.5	1	2.8	50	11.1
£40-49	-	-	-	-	4	11.1	176	39.2
£25-39	2	4.9	58	18.0	3	8.3	90	20.0
£20-24	1	2.5	21	6.5	1	2.8	22	5.0
£10-19	6	14.6	86	26.6	2	5.6	24	5.4
£5-9	7	17.0	50	15.4	7	19.4	49	11.0
£4 and under	24	58.5	48	15.0	18	50.0	37	8.3
Total	41	100.0	323	100.0	36	100.0	448	100.0

Wealden	1756/9				1790/1			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
£100-plus	1	1.0	105	7.6	1	0.8	233	11.8
£50-99	-	-	-	-	7	5.8	518	26.5
£40-49	3	3.0	136	9.9	2	1.6	93	4.8
£25-39	18	18.0	514	37.4	12	9.8	329	16.8
£20-24	6	6.0	128	9.3	5	4.0	107	5.5
£10-19	17	17.0	231	16.8	27	22.2	390	20.0
£5-9	25	25.0	182	13.2	30	24.7	193	9.8
£4 and under	30	30.0	77	5.6	38	31.1	95	4.8
Total	100	100.0	1373	100.0	122	100.0	1958	100.0

Table 5.3(a). The structure of land occupation in the Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c. 1746-90.

A. 52 Kent and Sussex parishes								
	<i>c. 1746</i>				<i>c. 1790</i>			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
Large - £40 +	273	14.1	25,913.0	63.2	296	15.6	26,684	64.3
Medium - £10-39	557	29.0	11,216.5	27.2	535	28.1	11,063	26.7
Small - £9 or less	1088	56.8	3949.0	9.6	1070	56.3	3774	9.0
Total	1918	99.9	41,078.5	100.0	1901	100.0	41,521	100.0
B. Kent Wealden parishes								
	1756/9				1790/1			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
Large - £40 +	139	14.8	9550	53.0	149	16.9	10,605	60.2
Medium - £10-39	314	33.3	6492	36.2	267	30.4	5273	30.0
Small - £9 or less	491	51.9	1951	10.8	464	52.7	1731	9.8
Total	944	100.0	17,993	100.0	880	100.0	17,609	100.0

Sources: CKS Q/CTL; CKS Q/RPL; ESRO ELT; ESRO LT.

Note. Group A - 52 Kent and Sussex parishes, c. 1746-90: Aldington, Newington and Hurst; Ashford; Barham; Beckley; Bethersden; Bodiam; Boughton Aluph; Brede; Brenzett; Burmarsh; Denton; Dymchurch; East Brabourne Borough; East Guldeford; Eastbridge; Ebony; Godmersham; Great Chart; Hastingleigh Borough; Hinxhill; Hope; Hothfield; Iden; Ivychurch, Appledore and Brookland; Kennington; Kingsnorth; Little Chart; Lower Hardres; Lympne and West Hythe; New Romney; Newchurch; Northiam; Ore; Orlestone; Peasmarsh; Pett; Playden; Pluckley Borough; Rolvenden; Ruckinge; Sevington; Smarden; Snave; St. Maries; Stone-in-Oxney; Upper Hardres; Warehorne and Orlestone; Warehorne and Shadoxhurst; West Brabourne Borough; Westwell; Whatlington; Willesborough; Wye.

Group B - Kent Wealden parishes, 1756/9 and 1790/1: Appledore (part); Biddenden; Cranbrook; Halden; Kenardington and Shadoxhurst; Newenden; Rolvenden; Sandhurst; Woodchurch.

Table 5.3(b). The structure of land occupation in the Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c.1746-90.

A. 52 Kent and Sussex parishes								
	c. 1746				c. 1790			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
£100-plus	88	4.6	14,717.0	35.9	86	4.5	13,812	33.3
£50-99	124	6.4	8489.0	20.7	139	7.3	9769	23.5
£40-49	61	3.1	2707.0	6.6	71	3.8	3103	7.5
£25-39	167	8.7	5241.0	12.7	171	9.0	5375	13.0
£20-24	91	4.7	1988.0	4.8	85	4.4	1865	4.5
£10-19	299	15.6	3987.5	9.7	279	14.7	3823	9.2
£5-9	347	18.1	2336.0	5.7	331	17.4	2176	5.2
£4 and under	741	38.7	1613.0	3.9	739	38.9	1598	3.8
Total	1918	99.9	41,078.5	100.0	1901	100.0	41,521	100.0

B. Kent Wealden parishes								
	1756/9				1790/1			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
£100-plus	23	2.5	2888	16.0	19	2.1	2692	15.3
£50-99	76	8.0	4912	27.3	88	10.0	6087	34.6
£40-49	40	4.3	1750	9.7	42	4.8	1826	10.3
£25-39	98	10.4	3050	17.0	70	8.0	2162	12.3
£20-24	43	4.6	951	5.3	44	5.0	949	5.4
£10-19	173	18.3	2491	13.9	153	17.4	2162	12.3
£5-9	180	19.0	1225	6.8	152	17.2	1007	5.7
£4 and under	311	32.9	726	4.0	312	35.5	724	4.1
Total	944	100.0	17,993	100.0	880	100.0	17,609	100.0

Table 5.3(c). The structure of land occupation in the Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c. 1746-90 - sample parishes.

Sample parishes								
	c. 1746				c. 1790			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
Whole-marsh								
£40 +	76	35.3	7772	78.7	77	25.8	6538	66.0
£10 to £39	93	43.3	1874	19.0	135	45.3	3028	30.5
£9 or less	46	21.4	226	2.3	86	28.9	352	3.5
Total	215	100.0	9872	100.0	298	100.0	9918	100.0
Marsh-edge								
£40 +	27	33.7	2698	80.7	26	34.7	2763	81.4
£10 to £39	24	30.0	532	15.9	25	33.3	547	16.1
£9 or less	29	36.3	112	3.4	24	32.0	85	2.5
Total	80	100.0	3342	100.0	75	100.0	3395	100.0
Uplands								
£40 +	11	7.2	559	30.9	16	11.2	954	52.2
£10 to £39	43	27.7	906	50.0	25	17.5	545	29.8
£9 or less	100	65.0	345	19.1	102	71.3	332	18.0
Total	154	99.9	1810	100.0	143	100.0	1831	100.0
Sample parishes								
	1756/9				1790/1			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
Wealden								
£40 +	50	12.5	3109	41.9	64	17.5	4265	54.9
£10 to £39	174	43.6	3572	48.2	138	37.8	2821	36.3
£9 or less	175	43.9	734	9.9	163	44.7	673	8.8
Total	399	100.0	7415	100.0	365	100.0	7759	100.0

Sources: CKS Q/CTL; CKS Q/RPL; ESRO ELT; ESRO LT.

Note. Sample parishes. Whole-marsh (all on Romney Marsh Level) - Aldington, Newington and Hurst; Brenzett; Burmarsh; Dymchurch; Eastbridge; Hope; Ivychurch Appledore and Brookland; New Romney; Newchurch; Ruckinge; Snave; St. Maries; Warehorne and Orlestone.

Marsh-edge - Iden, Playden, East Guldeford. Uplands - Hinxhill, Kennington, Sevington, Willesborough. Wealden - Biddenden, Halden, Woodchurch.

Table 5.3(d). The structure of land occupation in the Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c.1746-90 - sample parishes.

Whole-marsh	c. 1746				c. 1790			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
£100-plus	33	15.3	5083	51.5	20	6.7	3121	31.5
£50-99	29	13.5	2075	21.0	37	12.4	2545	25.7
£40-49	14	6.5	614	6.2	20	6.7	872	8.8
£25-39	32	14.9	976	9.9	56	18.8	1756	17.7
£20-24	8	3.7	168	1.7	22	7.4	484	4.9
£10-19	53	24.7	730	7.4	57	19.1	788	7.9
£5-9	25	11.6	174	1.8	34	11.4	241	2.4
£4 and under	21	9.8	52	0.5	52	17.5	111	1.1
Total	215	100.0	9872	100.0	298	100.0	9918	100.0

Marsh-edge	c. 1746				c. 1790			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
£100-plus	11	13.7	1618	48.4	11	14.7	1871	55.1
£50-99	14	17.5	997	29.8	11	14.7	717	21.1
£40-49	2	2.5	83	2.5	4	5.3	175	5.2
£25-39	8	10.0	246	7.4	10	13.3	311	9.2
£20-24	6	7.5	138	4.1	2	2.7	45	1.3
£10-19	10	12.5	148	4.4	13	17.3	191	5.6
£5-9	10	12.5	65	2.0	8	10.7	48	1.4
£4 and under	19	23.8	47	1.4	16	21.3	37	1.1
Total	80	100.0	3342	100.0	75	100.0	3395	100.0

Uplands	c. 1746				c. 1790			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
£100-plus	-	-	-	-	2	1.4	214	11.7
£50-99	5	3.2	294	16.3	7	4.9	447	24.5
£40-49	6	4.0	265	14.6	7	4.9	293	16.0
£25-39	16	10.5	492	27.0	11	7.7	329	18.0
£20-24	5	3.2	106	6.0	4	2.8	83	4.5
£10-19	22	14.0	308	17.0	10	7.0	133	7.3
£5-9	26	17.0	177	9.8	22	15.3	151	8.2
£4 and under	74	48.0	168	9.3	80	56.0	181	9.8
Total	154	99.9	1810	100.0	143	100.0	1831	100.0

Wealden	1756/9				1790/1			
LTA size group	Nos	%	£	%	Nos	%	£	%
£100-plus	4	1.0	528	7.1	6	1.6	917	11.8
£50-99	28	7.0	1796	24.2	37	10.1	2437	31.4
£40-49	18	4.5	785	10.6	21	5.8	911	11.7
£25-39	52	13.0	1651	22.3	42	11.5	1291	16.6
£20-24	20	5.0	447	6.0	14	3.8	303	3.9
£10-19	102	25.6	1474	19.9	82	22.5	1227	15.8
£5-9	67	16.8	474	6.4	65	17.8	438	5.6
£4 and under	108	27.1	260	3.5	98	26.9	235	3.2
Total	399	100.0	7415	100.0	365	100.0	7759	100.0

Table 5.4. The structure of landownership and land occupation in the Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c. 1746-90 - owner-occupied LTAs and tenanted LTAs.

A. 52 Kent and Sussex parishes				
	<i>c. 1746</i>		<i>c. 1790</i>	
	£	%	£	%
Owner-occupied	8624.5	21.0	12,614	30.4
Tenanted	32,454.0	79.0	28,907	69.6
Total	41,078.5	100.0	41,521	100.0
B. Kent Wealden parishes				
	1756/9		1790	
	£	%	£	%
Owner-occupied	3258	18.1	4946	28.0
Tenanted	14,735	81.9	12,663	72.0
Total	17,993	100.0	17,609	100.0

Table 5.5(a) The structure of private landownership on Walland/Denge, 1738 and 1791.

Private owners	1738				1791			
	Nos	%	Acres	%	Nos	%	Acres	%
>100 acres	46	20.0	9901.5	60.6	45	23.6	11167.25	70.4
20-<100 acres	118	51.4	5838.0	35.7	88	46.0	4311.5	27.1
<20 acres	65	28.6	606.25	3.7	58	30.4	391.75	2.5
Total privately owned	229	100.0	16345.75	100.0	191	100.0	15870.5	100.0
Mean acreage per private owner			71.5				80.1	
Owner-occupied land			2181.25	13.4			4153.25	26.1
Ownership unknown			73.0				0.0	
Corporately owned land			3315.5	16.9			3442.0	17.8
Total taxed acreage			19661.25				19312.5	

Sources. EKAC S/W SI1; S/W SI6; S/D SI1; S/D SI6. Note. Mean acreage per private owner and owner-occupied land are expressed as a percentage of privately-owned acreage.

Table 5.5(b). The structure of owner-occupation on Walland/Denge, 1738 and 1791.

Private owners	1738				1791			
	Nos	%	Acres	%	Nos	%	Acres	%
>100 acres	4	6.7	549.0	25.0	15	19.5	2416.0	58.2
50-<100 acres	10	16.7	739.5	34.0	16	20.7	1091.0	26.3
<50 acres	46	76.6	892.75	41.0	46	59.8	646.25	15.5
Total	60	100.0	2181.25	100.0	77	100.0	4153.25	100.0
Total, privately-owned acreage			16,345.75	13.4				
Total taxed acreage			19,661.25	11.0			19312.5	21.5

Sources. EKAC S/W SI1; S/W SI6; S/D SI1; S/D SI6. Note. Total taxed acreage in (a) 1738 = total of corporately-owned land (3315.5 acres); ownership unknown (73.0 acres) and privately-owned acreage (16,345.75 acres), and in (b) 1791 = total of corporately-owned land (3442.0 acres) and privately-owned land (15,870.5 acres).

Table 5.5(c) The structure of land occupation on Walland/Denge, 1738 and 1791.

Private owners	1738				1791			
	Nos	%	Acres	%	Nos	%	Acres	%
>100 acres	56	29.2	14,747.75	75.0	59	36.7	15,757.25	81.5
20-<100 acres	83	43.2	4473.0	22.8	63	39.1	3270.5	17.0
<20 acres	53	27.6	440.5	2.2	39	24.2	284.75	1.5
Total	192	100.0	19661.25	100.0	161	100.0	19312.5	100.0
Mean acreage per occupier			102.4				120.0	
Owner-occupiers	60	31.2			77	47.8		

Sources. EKAC S/W SI1; S/W SI6; S/D SI1; S/D SI6.

Fig 5.1(a) The Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c. 1738-91
 - number of owners (%).

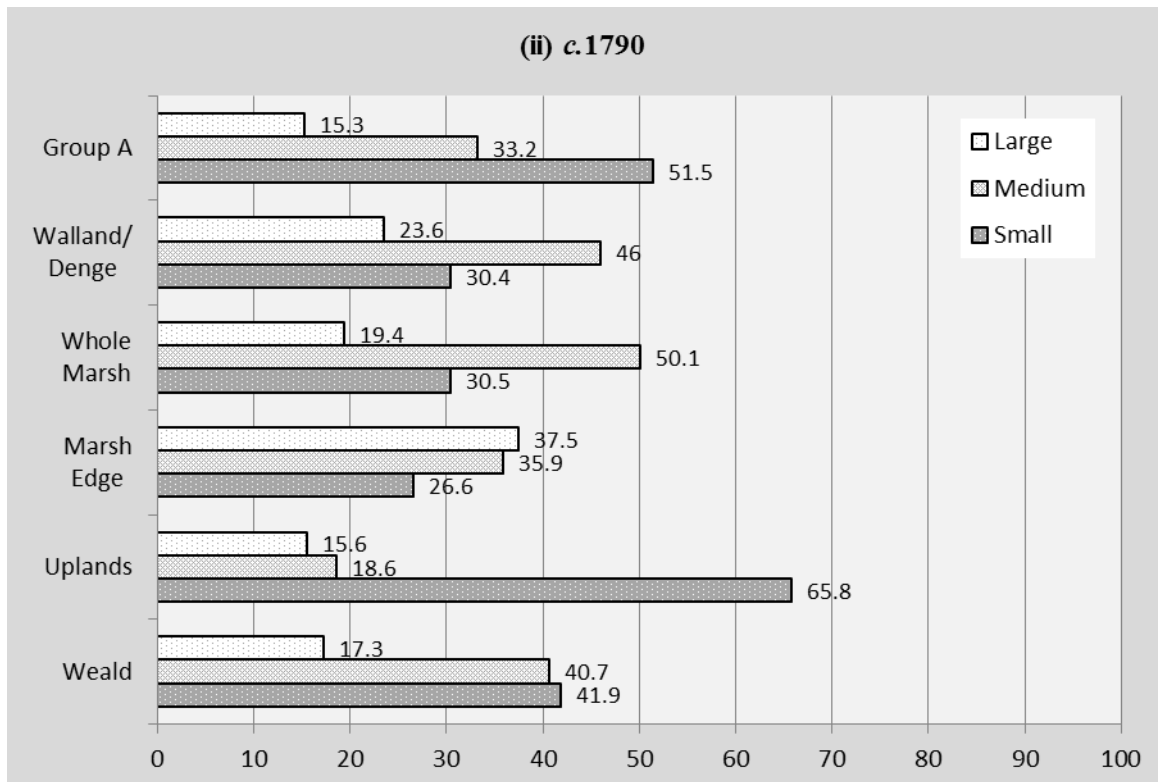
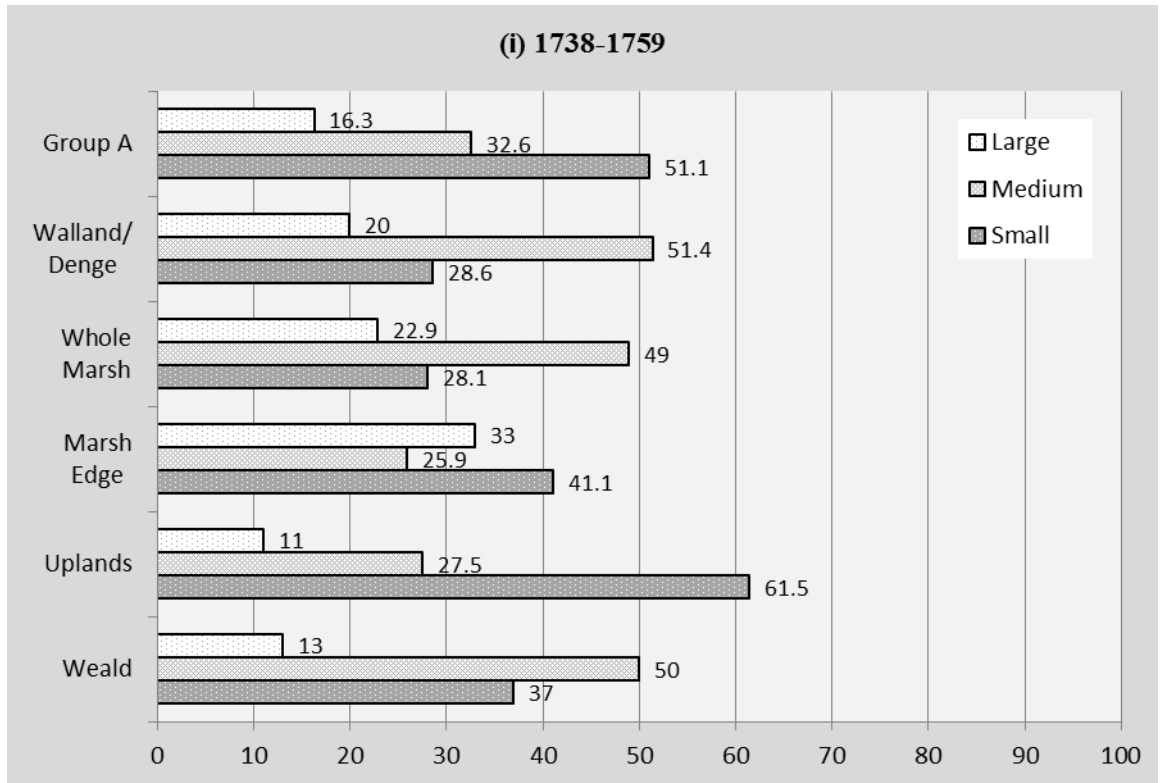


Fig 5.1(b) The Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c. 1738-91
 - landownership by value (%).

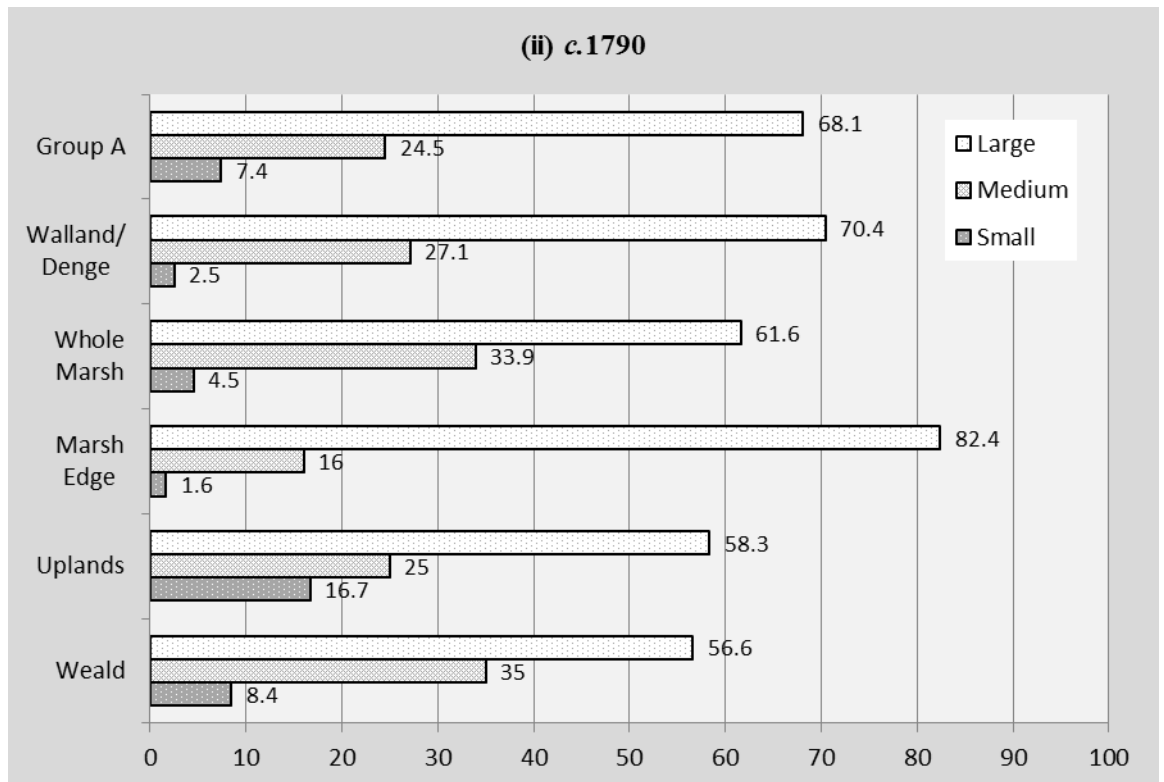
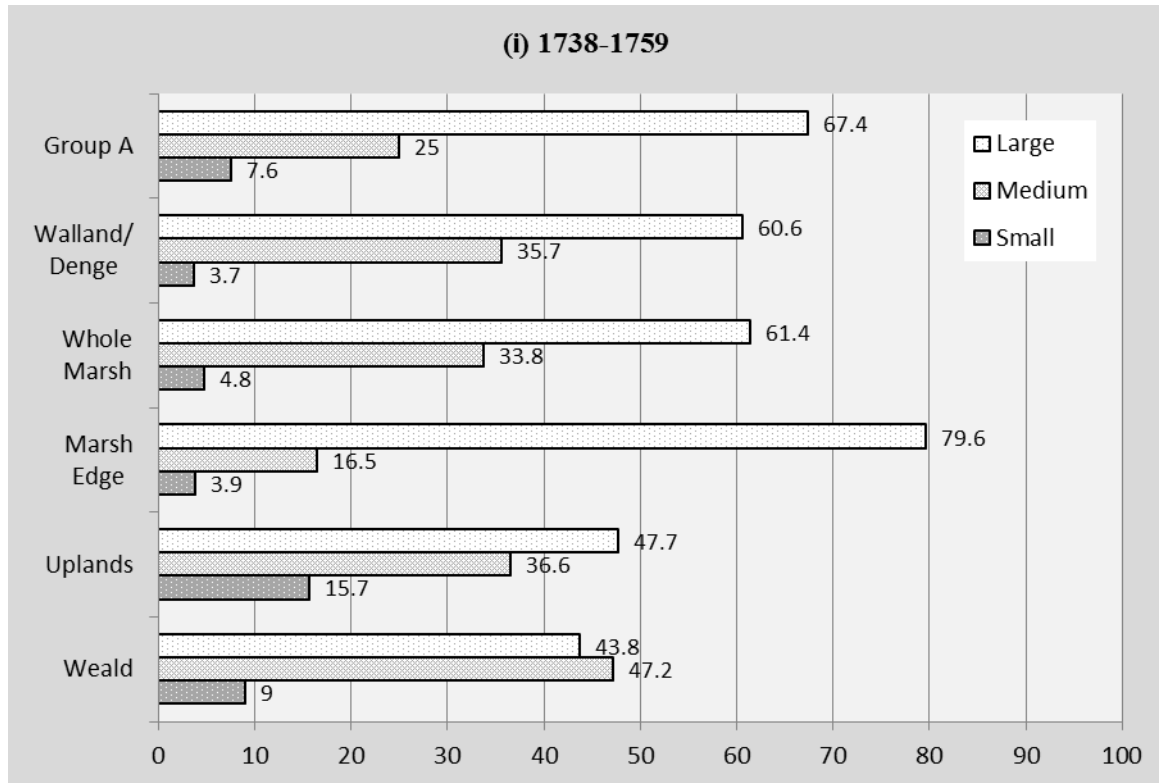


Fig 5.2(a) The Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c. 1738-91

- owner-occupation (%).

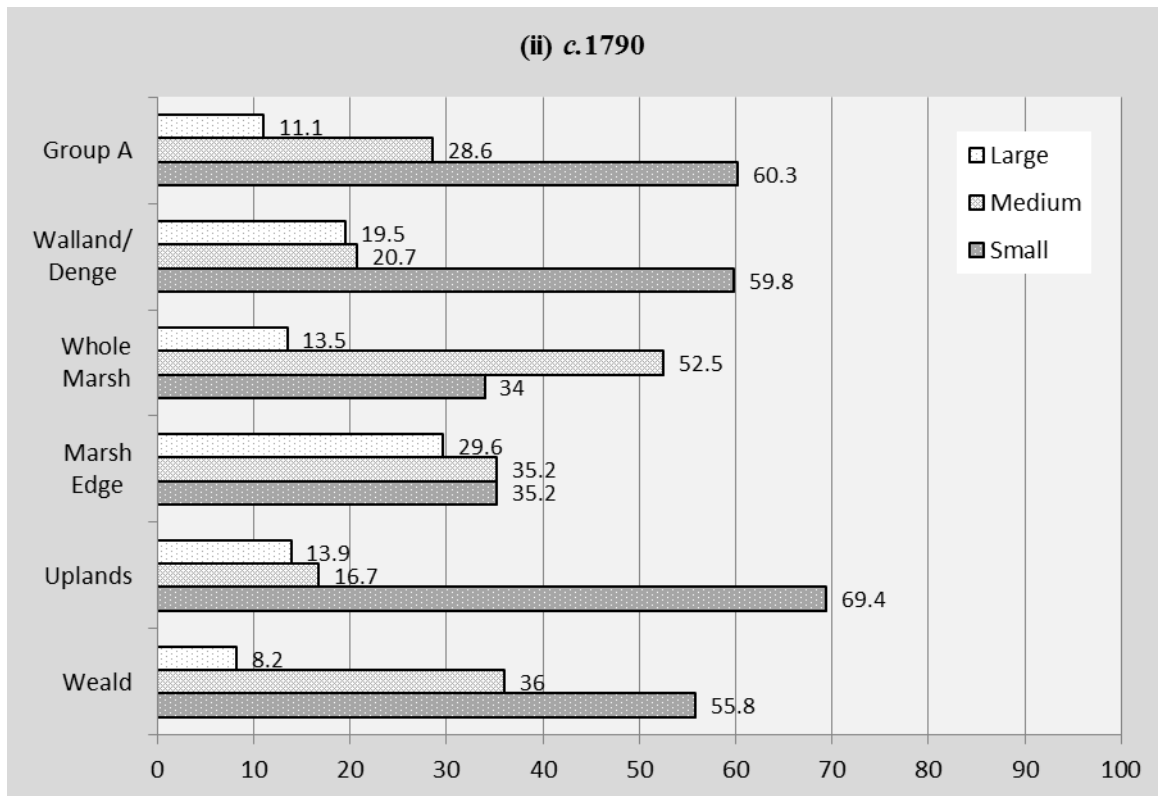
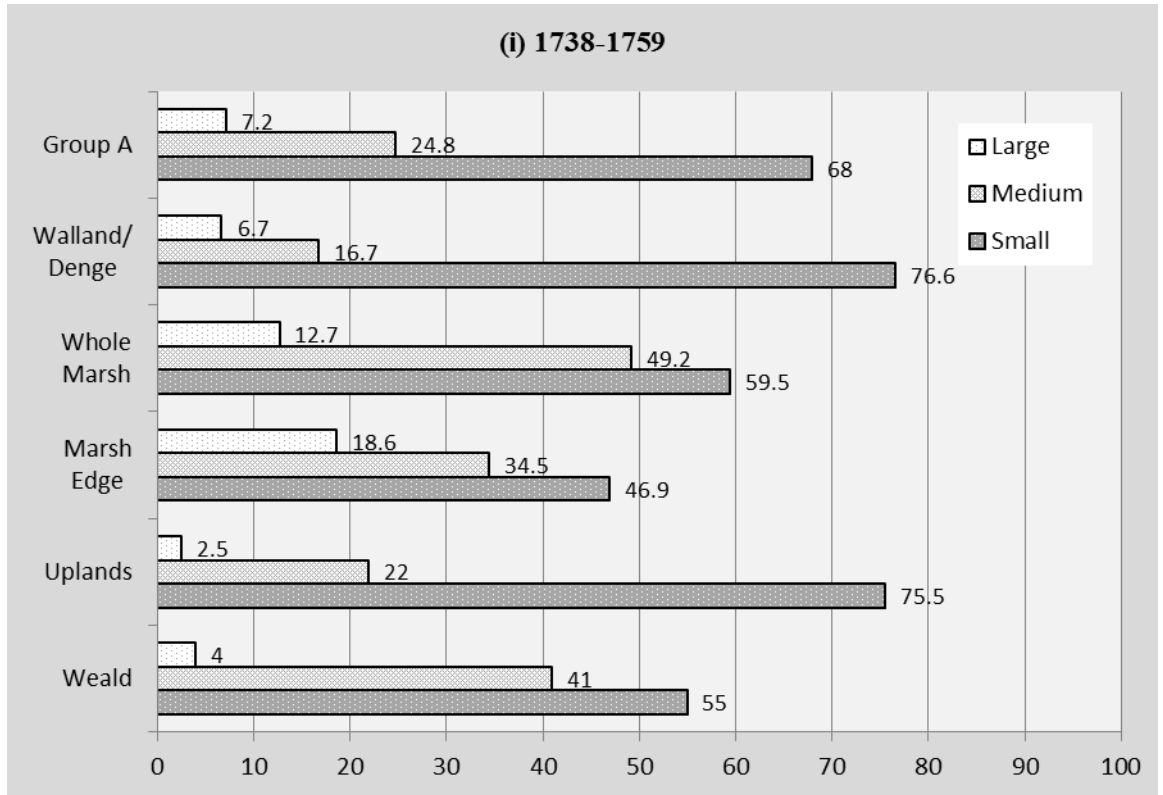


Fig 5.2(b) The Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c. 1738-91

- owner-occupation by value (%).

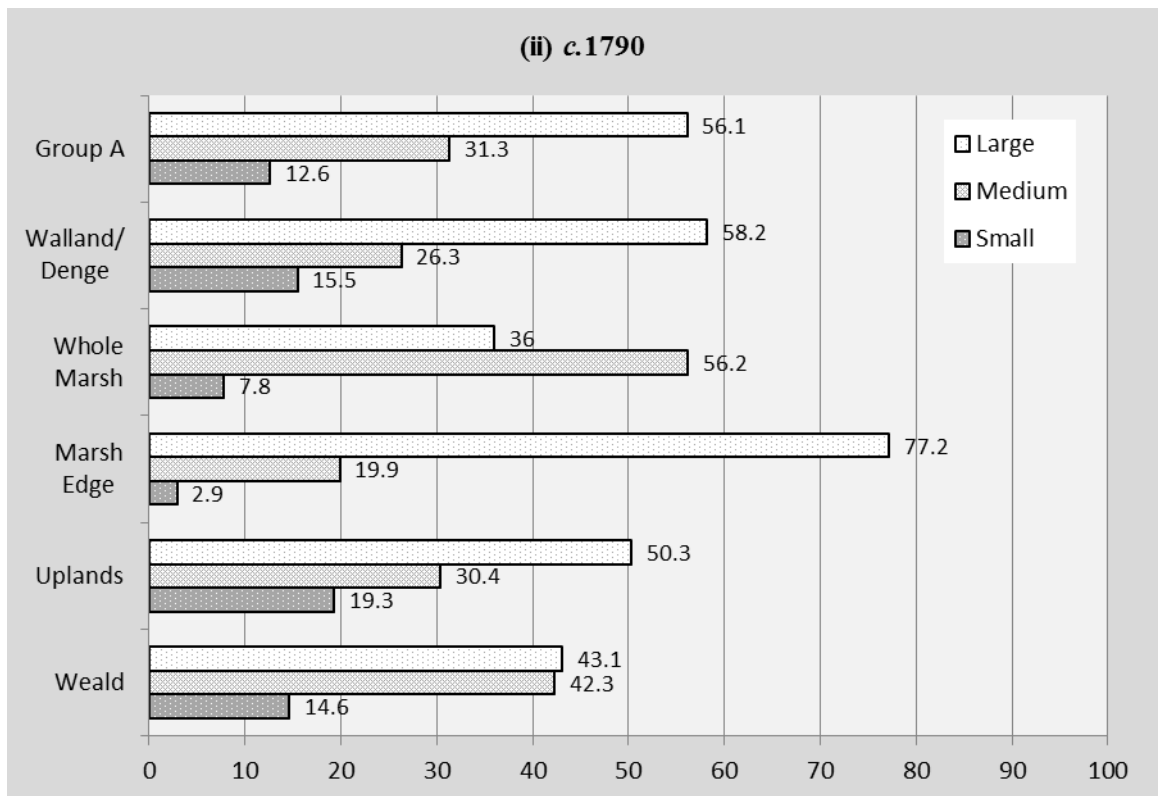
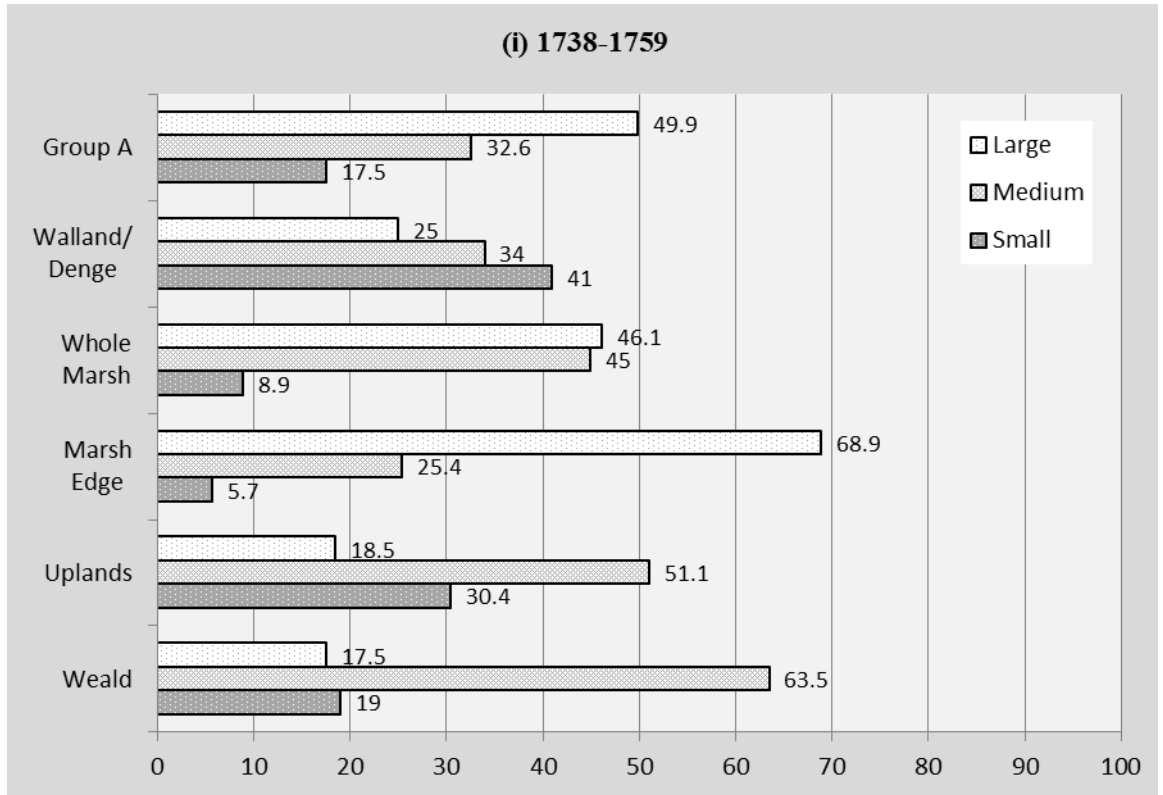


Fig 5.3(a) The Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c. 1738-91

- occupiers (%).

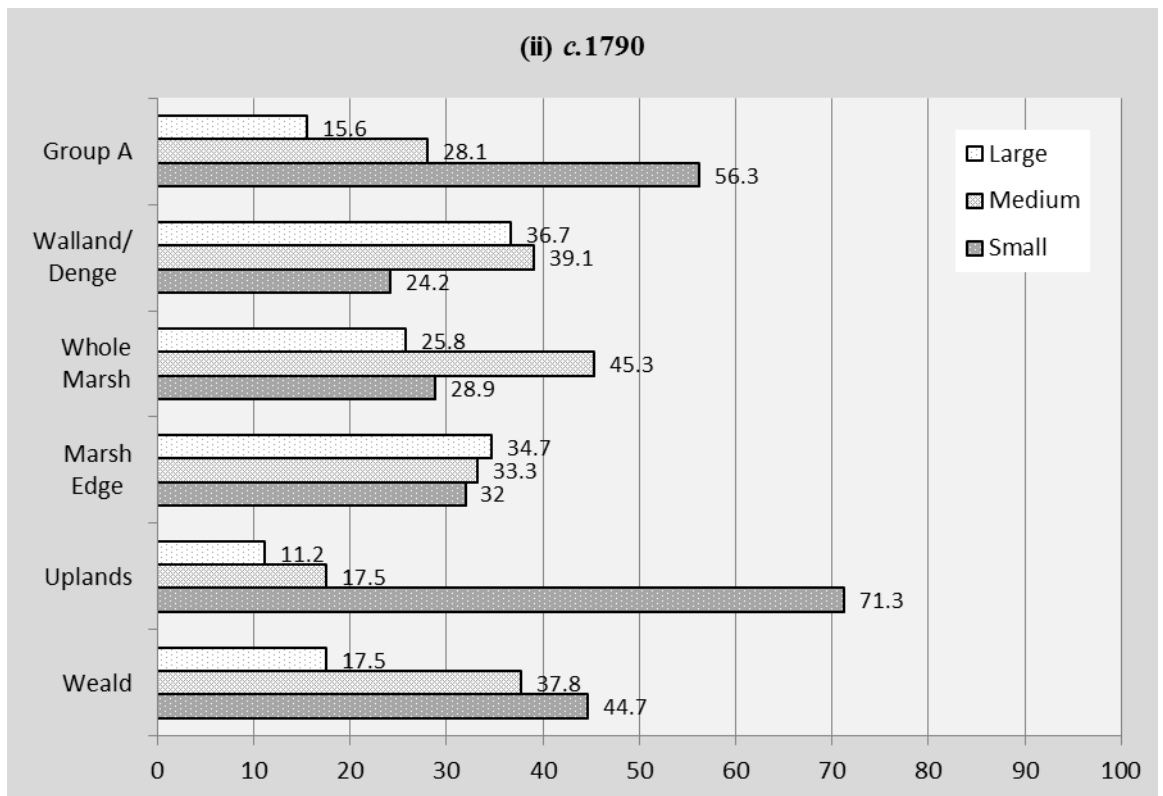
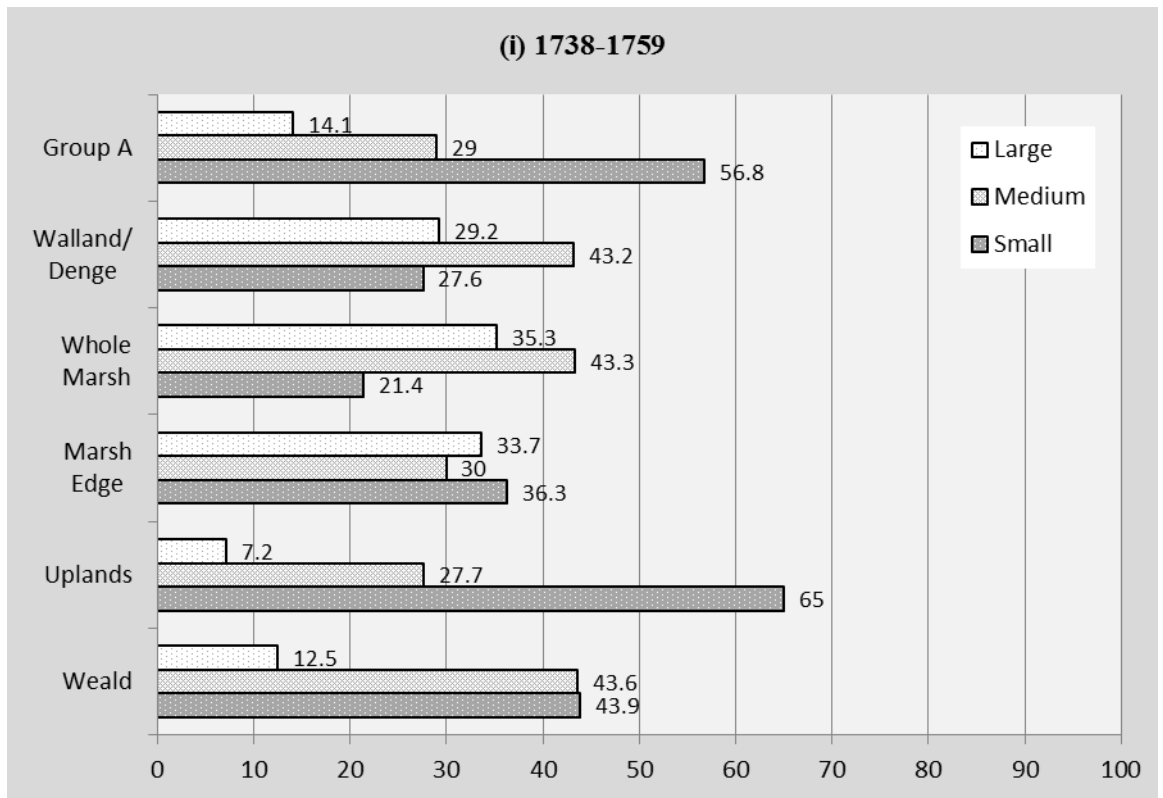
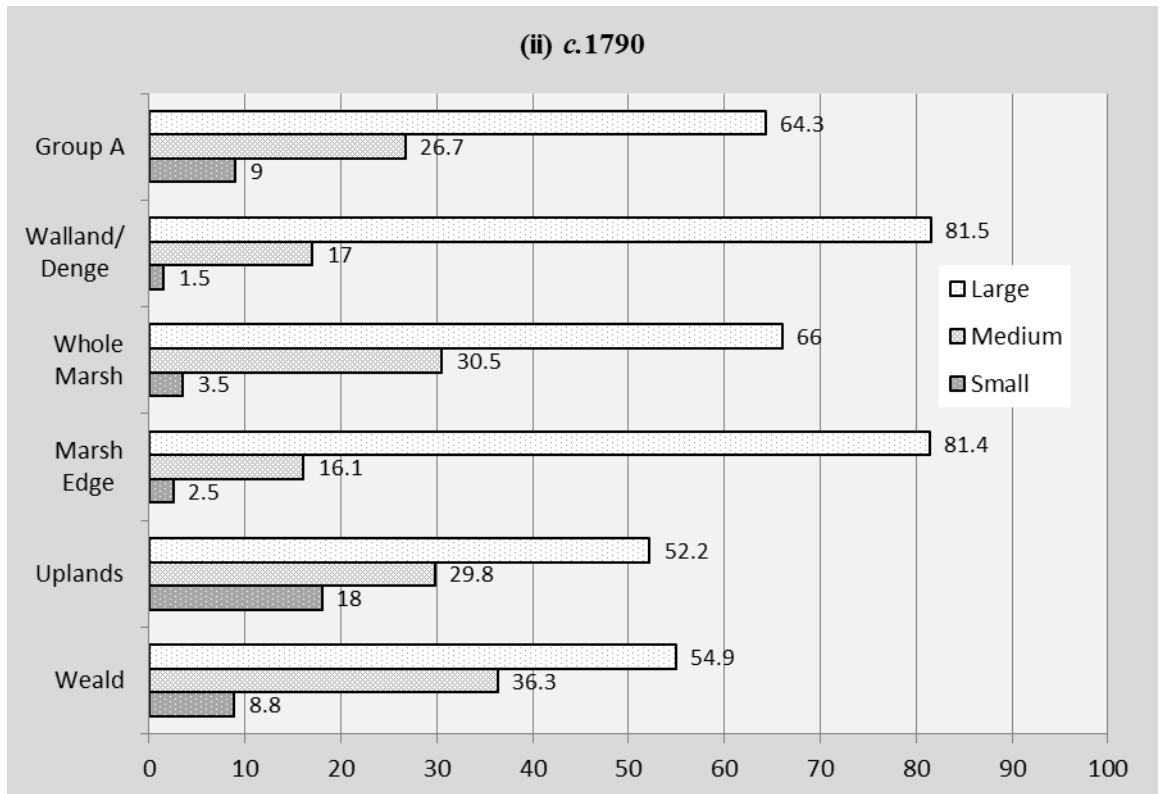
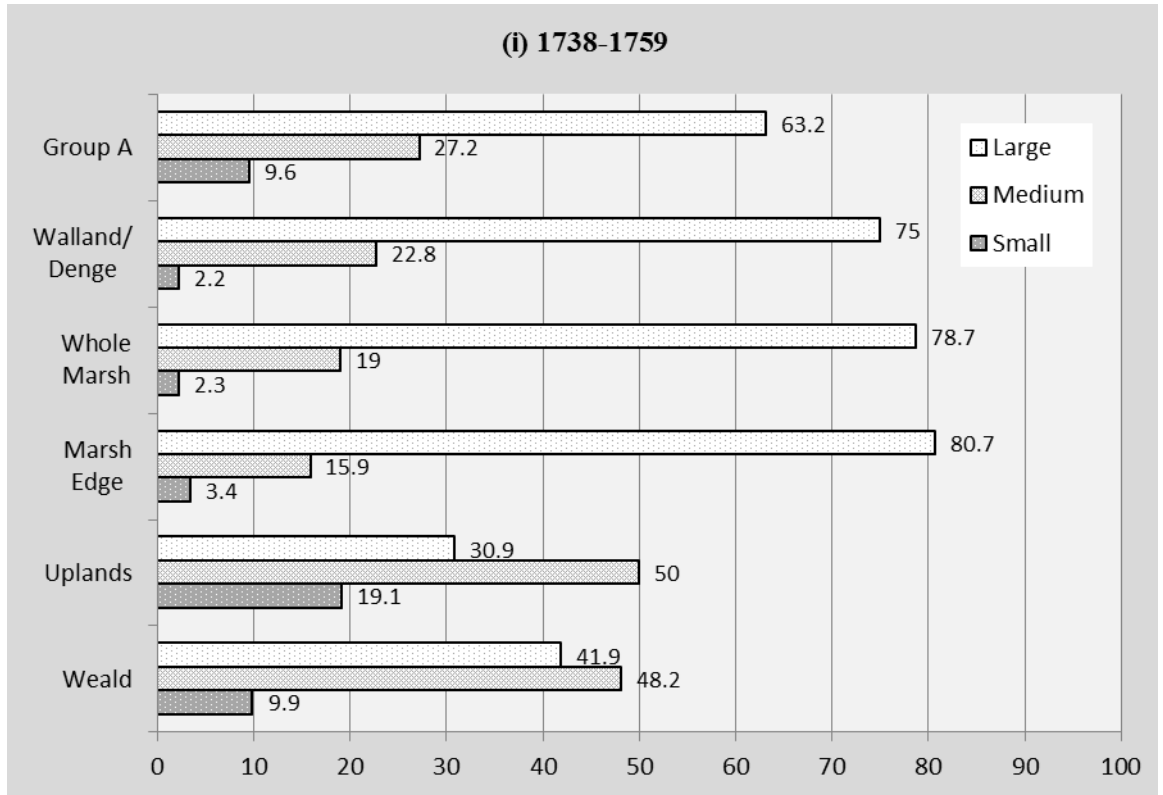


Fig 5.3(b) The Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c. 1738-91

- occupiers by value (%)



Chapter six. The Wealden- and uplands farms of the Knatchbull estate, c. 1730-90.

This chapter explores the development of the Wealden- and uplands- farms of the Knatchbull estate. It will break new ground, given the lack of in-depth research completed thus far on the landed estates of eighteenth century Kent. Particular attention will be paid to landlord-tenant relations and rents, as well as aspects of woodland management and the Home Farm economy. Mention will also be made of selected uplands holdings on the Rockingham estate, to compare with Knatchbull's uplands farms. Maps 6.1 (Knatchbull) and 6.2 (Rockingham) show the parishes where these uplands holdings lay. In addition, supporting information as to rentals on Knatchbull's Wealden and uplands holdings are set out in Appendix 2.

Chronological in format, what follows comprises two sections. Section one covers the c. 30 years from c. 1730, marked largely by the so-called 'agricultural depression' in the wider rural economy. A run of low grain prices throughout the 1730s-40s left many farmers struggling and landlords hard-pressed. Some substantial tenants were able to turn this economic situation to their advantage and make economies of scale. Livestock farmers tended to suffer less than their arable counterparts who, in turn, were more adversely affected in regions remote from London and the continent. Despite Kent's strategic location and its agricultural diversity, the north-east of the county witnessed (in the 1740s) a higher than normal turnover in tenancies, with larger farms hardest hit.¹

Bearing in mind that the uplands holdings considered here were mixed farms, the extent to which they suffered in this earlier phase will be explored. It will be argued that occupiers got into difficulties because the arable side of their operations fell victim to low grain prices. It will be seen that to a greater or lesser degree, both Knatchbull and Rockingham endured rent arrears, rent reductions and rental voids, and sometimes a higher than usual turnover in tenants. There were also instances of large occupiers making economies of scale. The Knatchbull evidence demonstrates that the depressed rural economy gave substantial tenants the edge in negotiating terms upon renewal of a lease. At the same time, no financial difficulties were evident on two of Knatchbull's smaller Mersham holdings. This could be considered unusual, in the light of the kind of problems experienced by other small farmers who, in a depressed economy, were particularly vulnerable. Nonetheless, the Land Tax evidence has (in conjunction with the marsh records) demonstrated that these occupiers were, in actuality, among the top-ranking occupiers in the vicinity, with large-scale, dual-regional farming operations. This underlines, yet again, the value of the LTAs as a historical source to analyse landownership and land occupation structures across consolidated areas of land that take in more than one parish.

¹ See above, p. 13.

one farm simply by shifting repair bills to the tenant and, on another, by taking back the produce from woodland that the tenant had, hitherto, enjoyed. It will be shown that income derived from timber on the Wealden farms was worth far more to Knatchbull than the rent due from these holdings. In Mersham, it will be seen that additional resources on the Home Farm were needed to service the mansion-building project. This led to a substantial rise in the number of horses to be catered for, and a commensurate increase in the quantity of oats needed to feed them. Oats were also commanding a much higher price compared to the 1730s-40s. It was, therefore, a pressing need to boost production. In the 1760s Knatchbull achieved this, not only by taking back land from tenants on adjacent farms, but also by renting additional acreage nearby.

As for leasing practice, farms/land on the Knatchbull estate were let for terms of years at a rack rent. In addition a cottage within the grounds of Mersham Hatch was occupied rent-free by Knatchbull's bailiff. There were also two houses (in Mersham) occupied on a tenancy-at-will basis, one let for £5 per annum and the other - the 'house in the Park' - for £3.⁵ Their tenants enjoyed a good degree of security. In October 1770, when the elderly Thomas Kemp was unable to pay the rent, he had a safety net in the overseers of the parish who picked up the bill. Hence, Knatchbull 'Rec[eive]d from the parish of Mersham for the house inhabited by Thomas Kemp one years rent due Mich[ael]mas, £4-0s-0d'.⁶ Kemp continued to be provided for in this way until his death in 1776.

On the majority of uplands holdings, rent was, in theory, payable twice yearly (Lady Day and Michaelmas) although in practice, it usually came in around six months later. This may have been associated with seasonal aspects of the farming year, allowing tenants leeway to harvest/sell produce before paying their rent. It seems that only after a good six months after the due date was payment considered well-and-truly late, and only after a full year, a full-blown rent arrears.⁷

Landlord and tenant usually contributed half each towards the cost of drawing up an agreement. Thus, on 12 October 1740, after Richard Barnard (the tenant of East Lenham Farm) took on an additional small holding at £16 per annum, Knatchbull noted that Barnard was 'to pay half the charge' of drawing up the lease.⁸ Equally however, there were times when the landlord met the cost in full.⁹ It normally fell to the tenant to pay for all local taxes, although the Land Tax was allowed against the rent. Generally, repair bills were also met by the landlord.¹⁰

⁵ From 1730-49, Henry Stockwell occupied the 'house in the Park'. Working as a general farm labourer, rent was, on two occasions, settled in full on account of work done around the estate. CKS U951 E12, CKS U274 T1 2/5.

⁶ 16 October 1770. CKS U951 A43.

⁷ On the marsh by contrast, tenants almost without exception paid on time and in full for the entire period under investigation.

⁸ CKS U951 E12.

⁹ On 22 October 1742 the baronet noted, 'I am to pay for the Leases' to be drawn up on a marshland holding. CKS U951 E12.

¹⁰ Leasing policy on the Rockingham estate followed a broadly similar pattern.

1. Landlord-tenant relations, c. 1730-60.

First for consideration on the Knatchbull estate is East Lenham Farm. The uplands parish of Lenham, extending to some 6,966 acres, was the seventh largest parish in the region covered by this study. Located just south of the foot of the chalk downs, it was characterized by generally sandy, relatively light soil that encouraged arable production.¹¹ The predominance of arable farming is perhaps best illustrated by the operations of Lenham resident Thomas Winder, styled ‘yeoman’. Valued at £301-6s-2d in January 1741, Winder’s farm included a ‘Wheat Chamber’, and an ‘Oat Chamber’ stocked with wheat, oats, tail barley, peas and tares (£27-16s-0d). More wheat, barley and oats (£44-4s-0d) were kept in the barns. Some 11 acres were planted with wheat (£17-6s-0d) and ‘Seeds on the Ground’ were valued at £2-3s-0d. Livestock included 34 sheep (£17), three hogs (£5) and cattle (£44). Overall, with crops worth £91-14s and livestock just £66, the ratio, in value terms, of arable to livestock, was roughly 2:1.¹² It is plausible to suppose that operations on East Lenham Farm were characterized by a similar ratio.¹³

The tenant, one Richard Barnard, styled ‘yeoman’, was already in occupation by 1729, although exactly when this tenancy began is unknown.¹⁴ However, we can be confident that before taking on this tenant, Knatchbull would have satisfied himself that Barnard was a safe bet. This was particularly important because the rental from this holding, at £160 per annum, was approaching half of the rental income generated by the estate’s uplands interests.¹⁵ We will see that between 1730-48, there were phases when receipt of rent was beset by delays and shortfalls. It is suggested that an unusually large family probably compounded Barnard’s cash flow problems, on top of the wider difficulties being experienced in the rural economy. However, Knatchbull did, eventually, receive all that was due to him in the way of rent.

Barnard doubtless intended to run an efficient, profitable operation. Yet winter 1729/30 to spring 1731 had been a particularly challenging time. His first wife having recently died, Barnard was left to bring up five children. In March 1731 he remarried and, with a second wife bringing into the household six children of her own from a former marriage, the size of an already large family had, at a stroke, more than doubled. Subsequently this marriage produced another four children.¹⁶

¹¹ In the eighteenth century, the parish’s weekly corn market and regular livestock fairs reflected this. Hasted, *History* 5, pp. 415-7.

¹² Probate inventory of Thomas Winder, Lenham, Yeoman, made on 23 January 1741. CKS PRC 11/82/86. Winder also owned a house/lands in Lenham that he rented out. CKS PRC17/91/46.

¹³ In 1749, an inventory was made of Barnard’s real and personal estate which, after certain deductions, came to £408-10s-11d. It is suggested therefore that the value of Barnard’s East Lenham enterprise made up the vast majority of this figure and was worth something of the order of £350-£400. CKS PRC16/579.

¹⁴ CKS PRC16/579.

¹⁵ See above, p. 25. In 1730, the annual rent for c. 1141.0 acres on Walland was £1252, while the c. 680 acres of land/property on the uplands was worth £362-10s.

¹⁶ In March 1731, the marriage of Richard Barnard to Sarah Bishop was imminent. However, their recent bereavements would have served as a stark reminder of their own mortality; if one of them died, the other would be left to care for all eleven children, not counting any more new arrivals from their own marriage. Barnard had an agreement drawn up, stipulating that should either of them die, ‘a full and true Inventory or

By 1730, Barnard's profit margins from the arable side of the business were probably already feeling the pinch, given the sluggish state of the wider rural economy. In the micro-economic context of East Lenham Farm, this was evident on the first tenants' day hosted by Sir Wyndham Knatchbull in 1730. Not a penny was forthcoming from Barnard. Indeed, not until Michaelmas 1731 did Knatchbull pocket any rent. Moreover, not only was it a year late but, at just £40, it was less than half of the six-months' rent (£82) due at Michaelmas 1730. Similarly, the rent due at Lady Day 1731 was eighteen months late and not before October 1732 was Barnard up-to-date.¹⁷ From 1730-2 then, Knatchbull had to wait, sometimes very patiently, to see any money trickle in.

Between July 1733 and Michaelmas 1735 Barnard settled up at fairly regular intervals. However, the payment due at Lady Day 1736 was well over a year late by the time it finally arrived (in May 1737). Yet after this lengthy wait, just two months elapsed (to July 1737) and Barnard had caught up, having settled his account to Michaelmas 1736. Then he fell behind yet again, with rent due at Michaelmas 1737 arriving in two installments nearly a year later. Similarly, from 1740-6 six to eight months would generally elapse after the due date before Barnard settled up; and on three occasions, it was nearly a year. However, November 1748 marked a watershed. It was the first time that a full year's rent was paid on time and in one go. It continued to be paid in this way thereafter.

For Barnard, rent for the farm *per se* was not the only monetary payment for which he was responsible. There was also East Lenham tithery to consider. This was a lay appropriation, let to Knatchbull for £17 per annum. Barnard acted as a sub-contractor to collect the £23 per annum due from the tithery, leaving Knatchbull with just £6 profit.¹⁸ However, the baronet had received absolutely nothing since succeeding to the estate in 1730. Barnard was a predominantly arable farmer in an unfavourable economic climate. Assuming that he had indeed *collected* the £23 due, actually handing it over might well have been something that Barnard either sidestepped, or else conveniently forgot.

The baronet, well aware of being short-changed, had not forgotten. With a profit margin of just £6 per annum on this investment and nothing whatsoever coming in he was, in actuality, making

Account' be taken their combined real and personal estate, 'to the Intent and Purpose that [the] Surviv[ing parent] might be the better enabled to maintain and provide for all ...the ... children of ... Richard Barnard by [his] former wife and [those] of Sarah ... by her former husband and also such other child[ren] as should be born out of [their own] marriage.' These funds were to provide each child with the sum of £40 on attaining adulthood (or marriage). After Sarah's death (in June 1749) the net total of the inventory came to £558-10s-11d. This included £150 for a house and land in the adjacent parish of Milstead that Barnard had purchased while Sarah was alive. Barnard instructed that this be sold to go towards honouring the agreement made in 1731. CKS PRC16/579.

¹⁷ CKS U951 A12.

¹⁸ Subsequently, Sir Edward Knatchbull commented on the very small profit made on this investment and eventually decided to give it up. On 30 November 1775 he noted, 'I have not renewed the Lease of the Tithes ... which was only £6 annual profit to me ...' CKS U951 A53. See also Hasted, *History* 5, p. 430.

a substantial loss. Having previously tackled Barnard on the subject, Knatchbull's patience was wearing thin when on 21 October 1738 he recalled,

I mentioned the Tithery of East Lenham Farm *again* to Barnard, who giving me no satisfactory answer, I told him I would give no longer time than til next Spring, and if when I should see him then he could say no more, I should expect him to account to me for all the years past of which he has put the Tithe in his own pocket, and to pay me for the future, as he is obliged to do.¹⁹

Yet Knatchbull had to wait another three years before this matter began to be addressed, suggesting that not before 1741 did Barnard's cash flow problems (or, perhaps, his memory) begin, slowly, to improve. By 1747, he had paid off most (but not quite all) of the arrears.

Barnard was also a livestock producer. In October 1732 he supplied Knatchbull's Home Farm with a number of Dorset ewes, for which he received £27.²⁰ By 1743, one of Barnard's sons was old enough to be actively involved in the business. Thus, on 13 August 1743 Knatchbull recorded that he had 'Bespoke 50 Dorset ewes from Barnard's son, not to exceed 14s a piece at most, and to lamb by Candlemas. He to furnish his son with the money, and to deduct it from my account.'²¹ Doing business in this way inevitably led to a good deal of contra-charging when accounts were settled on rent day.

These business deals worked well. The Home Farm took delivery of another consignment of ewes on 8 October 1743 when, as Knatchbull noted, there '... came 50 Wiltshire ewes by Barnard to Lamb at Candlemas'.²² Supplying the Wiltshire breed of sheep is significant given the economic context of the early eighteenth century. As a response to low wool prices, many producers had switched to mutton production for which there were better prospects, especially in the light of the demands of the capital's ever-expanding population. The Wiltshire breed was perfectly suited to these market conditions. Not only was the meat of exceptional quality but also – and unusually for a sheep – it had no fleece.²³ It is not surprising then, that this breed became hugely popular throughout southern England in the eighteenth century.

On 31 August 1744, Knatchbull again met up with Barnard's son. The baronet, wanting to buy in more livestock, 'bespoke of young Barnard 20 Dorset ewes to lamb at Xmas, and 60 more

¹⁹ Italics mine. CKS U951 E12.

²⁰ CKS U951 A12.

²¹ CKS U951 E12.

²² CKS U951 F18/2.

²³ Its coat was made up of hair which, on arrival of warmer weather in the spring, the animal would shed by rubbing up against trees or hedges. So there was no need for shearing.

Wiltshire ewes to lamb at Candlemas'.²⁴ 'Young Barnard' came with the news that a barn floor needed replacing. Two days later, on 2 September 1744, Knatchbull 'agreed with [one] Gyles [the local carpenter] to lay a new Floor to one of the Barns at East Lenham, 32 feet long, and to be 16 feet wide, and to have for the whole [£]17 ... N.B. It was 18 feet wide when last laid.'²⁵ As per their usual *modus operandi*, Barnard paid the bill initially, but was refunded the money later on.²⁶

While the evidence reveals little about this holding from 1748-63, we do know it was Barnard's intention that, after his death, his son William (by his second marriage) should take it over. Under the terms of Barnard's will, William was bequeathed the lease 'which I have from Sir Wyndham Knatchbull-Wyndham, Baronet, of the Farms and lands I now use and occupy, together with all my Right, Title, Interest, Term and Terms of Years therein, which shall be to come, and Unexpired at the time of my decease.'²⁷ Barnard also bequeathed 'four Bushells of Good Wheat to my Executors ... to be ground and made into Bread ... [to be] given and distributed to such of the Poor of Lenham aforesaid as they shall think proper.'²⁸ Perhaps this was an expression of Barnard's charitable disposition although it also made a final statement as to his status within the local community. After Barnard's death (in 1752) his son did, as hoped, take over as tenant. By the time (in 1763) that Sir Edward Knatchbull had moved into Mersham Hatch, East Lenham farm had a new occupant, one Thomas Winder, styled 'yeoman'. It was Thomas Winder's late uncle to whom we referred above and whose mixed farming operation illustrated the predominance (in value terms) of arable farming in this uplands parish. Occupied by the Winder kinship group until c. 1790, the farm's fortunes will be further discussed in section two.

We have earlier referred to rent arrears accrued by two of Knatchbull's Mersham tenants. James Hobday occupied the 120-acre holding known as Quarrington Farm and Thomas Hancock the Mill House Farm (24 acres) for which (in 1730) they paid £60 and £18 in rent respectively.²⁹ Knatchbull stood to repairs and, as earlier noted, these tenants were also entitled to a certain amount of firewood every year, *gratis*.³⁰ However, both tenants got into difficulty, aggravated by the fact that as relatively small-scale operations, they had little, if any, capital to draw on in an emergency. To make matters worse, the capital costs per acre for small farmers such as Hobday and Hancock would have been proportionally higher than those of larger operations.³¹ However, if a small farmer *in extremis* happened to own some land, he would have the option of selling it in

²⁴ An advantage of the Dorset breed was its ability to lamb all-year-round. It also produced a fine quality wool. CKS U951 E12; CKS U951 F18/2.

²⁵ CKS U951 E12.

²⁶ On 31 October 1746. CKS U951 A12.

²⁷ CKS PRC16/579.

²⁸ CKS PRC16/579.

²⁹ See above, pp. 35-6. Quarrington Farm had belonged to the Knatchbull family since the sixteenth century. Hasted, *History* 7, p. 598.

³⁰ See above, p. 30.

³¹ Mingay, 'Size of farms', pp. 471-2.

order to raise funds (for, say equipment/stock) and then continue occupation, albeit as a tenant; and we will see one example of this later on. But it seems that neither Hobday nor Hancock were in a position to do this. First to be explored are the fortunes of Quarrington Farm to c.1760.

Rent due from Hobday to Michaelmas 1730 was not paid up until June 1732. Another 16 months elapsed before Knatchbull saw any more which came by installments and (by October 1733) left a shortfall of £7. From Michaelmas 1735 Knatchbull reduced the rent to £55, although Hobday was still not able to pay off the £7 owing. Quite the reverse. His debts were piling up to the point where, by 1740, arrears to the tune of £16 had accumulated.³² Hobday made up his mind to call it a day and by the autumn of 1740 had given notice of his intention to vacate when (at Michaelmas 1741) the lease ran out. Hobday regularly provided services to Knatchbull, mainly by way of wagon transport to collect/deliver coal and timber. Small quantities of wheat grown on Quarrington were also supplied to the Home Farm.³³ Payment for goods and services (contra-charged against the rent) provided supplemental income, but it was not enough to keep Hobday in the black. For one thing, he had a team of carthorses to maintain – and this, for a small farmer, was particularly costly relative to the size of his operation.³⁴

Knatchbull therefore, was left to find a new tenant. Knowing full well that this was a buyer's market, he had a mind to ask for £55 per annum. Although there was some interest, it was not at the asking price. Moreover, there were strings attached. Thus, on 12 October 1740 Knatchbull recalled that he was 'offered only 50 guineas per annum: to have the first half-year's rent thrown in and the repairs to be taken on myself.'³⁵ In the event, Quarrington was let (on a relatively short, five year agreement) to substantial local farmer, one Thomas Jeffrey.³⁶ To Knatchbull's relief he did not have to throw in a rental holiday. However, he did have to drop the rent by 10 per cent (to £50-10s) and to stand to all repairs. Hobday, for his part, was expected to leave the farm in good order. Knatchbull, calling in tradesmen to give estimates, was told that 'the workmanship of Hobday's barn to repair will come to about a guinea'.³⁷ While Knatchbull stood to the cost of materials, the labour was down to Hobday who also 'promised to [undertake groundworks by making a way through] the great Grip (not yet opened) in the Batchelor Brookes: at his own charge; and the Farm House to be plaistered over with loam.' It was agreed that Knatchbull

³² Hobday managed to pay off just £4 of the outstanding debt by the time he left the farm. CKS U951 A12.

³³ He collected coal from Hythe on a regular basis, and transported timber that had been felled from one part of the estate to another. Three separate loads of wheat were supplied to the Home Farm in 1735/6. CKS U951 E12.

³⁴ Mingay, 'Size of farms', pp. 471-2. In April 1770, Sir Edward Knatchbull reckoned it cost £10 a year to keep a carthorse. CKS U951 A21.

³⁵ CKS U951 E12.

³⁶ In 1746, Thomas Jeffrey, with an LTA of £58, ranked fourth largest occupier in the (combined) LTAs for Mersham and West Brabourne Borough, after Edward Horne (first), Sir Edward Knatchbull (second) and John Eve (third). CKS CKS Q/CTL (Mersham) 1746; CKS QCTL (West Brabourne Bor) 1746.

³⁷ 28 August 1741. CKS U951 E12.

would ‘set the bricklayer about it, and [Hobday] to pay for it’, having noted that ‘... this is all I have required of [him]’.³⁸

Despite Hobday’s imminent departure, he had, of late, begun to produce oats on a commercial scale. It is suggested that had he done so earlier, Hobday may have been able to keep his head above water. A number of factors may have encouraged this new venture. The production of oats was, by c.1700, increasingly favoured by some farmers, including those on the Kent uplands; and it is reasonable to suppose that this trend continued into the early eighteenth century. In addition, during the 1730s-40s, the price of oats had seen a small decline compared to that of wheat. Moreover, oats were relatively hardy and forgiving of wet conditions, making them fairly easy to grow in the clay soil that characterized much of the northern part of Mersham where Quarrington Farm was located.³⁹ Fourth, Knatchbull’s Home Farm lay virtually next door and as will be seen, provided a ready market. In 1741, no less than 33 quarters of oats were trundled in to Mersham Hatch from Quarrington, for which Knatchbull was charged £16-10s-9d.⁴⁰ Significantly, this was the biggest sum for goods/services to be offset against Quarrington’s rent account since Michaelmas 1730.⁴¹

Knatchbull’s farming operation, heavily dependent on horsepower, needed a constant supply of oats to keep going. Comprising the vast majority of a horse’s diet, oats were, effectively, the fuel that ran the Home Farm economy.⁴² However, the farm was unable to produce enough of its own, and had to buy in more. A typical example was the five month period from May to October 1737. During this time some 50 quarters of oats were consumed (in the main) by the horses.⁴³ Of this, 36 quarters were delivered in by four different suppliers, at a total cost of £21-10s.⁴⁴ In 1741 then, the 33 quarters of oats supplied by Hobday would have represented the vast proportion needed to make up Knatchbull’s shortfall.

Following Hobday’s departure, Quarrington Farm continued to produce oats for the Home Farm. Furthermore, unlike Hobday, the incoming tenant Thomas Jeffrey did not fall into arrears and rental payments were generally made within eight months of their due date. It is suggested here

³⁸ Italics mine. 28 September 1741. CKS U951 E12.

³⁹ Hasted, *History* 7, pp. 592, 598.

⁴⁰ A bushel of oats weighed 39 pounds, with eight bushels to a quarter. C. R. Chapman, *How heavy, how much and how long?* (1995), pp. 38, 52.

⁴¹ Although Hobday vacated the farm by Michaelmas 1741, accounts were not finally settled until May 1742. CKS U951 E12.

⁴² In 1732, Knatchbull’s stock list included four coach horses and three saddlehorses. In 1749, the late baronet’s ‘goods and chattels’ at Mersham Hatch included 12 horses (three coach horses, two cart horses, four saddle horses, ‘the Master’s poney’ and two others). CKS U951 F18/1; CKS U951 E14.

⁴³ Some 47 quarters and 6 bushels were fed to the horses and the remainder to the dogs (two quarters and two bushels) and a hog (one quarter). By comparison, over the same period, only eight quarters of wheat were consumed and less than two quarters of barley. Wheat was regularly sent to the mill to be ground into flour, then returned for use in the house. Barley was used to feed ‘the fowls’ (poultry and pigeons). U951 E12.

⁴⁴ For which Knatchbull paid between 10-12 shillings per quarter. CKS U951 E12.

that this improvement was due, at least in part, to the considerably increased business done with Knatchbull.⁴⁵

Nonetheless, Jeffrey's occupation was short-lived. The five-year lease (to Michaelmas 1746) was not renewed. Thereafter, Quarrington Farm was taken 'into hand', to farm direct. However, Knatchbull's journal has not shed light on whether this was a conscious decision on his part or because there was simply nobody else prepared to take it on.⁴⁶ Either way, under the auspices of the Home Farm, Quarrington was carefully stocked and managed.⁴⁷ When it was, eventually, again leased out, under the trustees' administration, it saw a further (albeit slight) rent reduction (to £50 per annum).⁴⁸

We turn now to the Mill House Farm in Mersham. Between 1730-4, tenant Thomas Hancock had managed to keep up with the £18 per annum rent on this modest 24 acre holding. In June 1735 however, he ran into difficulties, offering two cows *in lieu* of rent, for which he was allowed £7. The following year (on 31 August 1736) 17s-6d was knocked off Hancock's rent for labouring work done on the Home Farm. In 1737, Hancock was forgiven an outstanding sum of £2. In August 1740 Knatchbull allowed 14 shillings for 'a young sow in further part of rent'. Yet by July 1741, the tenant was in trouble again. Knatchbull received just £10-3s-4d, noting that

with £2-0s-4d allowed for taxes and 0-14s-0d more paid by a Hog in August last, makes in all £12-17-8, and in part of 1 years rent due Lady Day last.

Mem[orandum]. There is also due to me an Arrear of £4 still due to make up the years rent to Lady Day 1739; and an Arrear of £2 more to make up the years rent to Lady Day 1740. *But N.B. if he pays me 40s of the first arrear I am to forgive him all the rest.*⁴⁹

Hancock paid back what he could, bit by bit. Unlike some of Knatchbull's contemporaries, the thought of evicting a tenant just because he had fallen behind would not have occurred to him.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Like Hobday, Jeffrey also provided goods/services that were offset against the rent. For example (in 1744) five shillings were allowed for fetching a load of chalk, £1 'for two days with a team in harvest', £2-10s 'for five journeys to Hythe' and £2-5s 'for three journeys to Faversham'. By the time they had finished totting-up, Jeffreys owed just £16-2s-8d. Similarly (in June 1745) he owed just £3-19s-2d, the remainder being contra-charged against bills to Knatchbull for the supply of straw (seven shillings) and oats (£18-6s-6d). By June 1746, he had supplied a further 50 quarters of oats which (at 10 shillings a quarter) came to £23-15s, as well as two loads of wheatstraw (14 shillings) and a cow (£4-10s) leaving Jeffrey with only £15-6s-4d to find. In September 1746 Jeffrey also supplied 12 cattle. CKS U951 A12; CKS U951 F 18/2.

⁴⁶ CKS U951 F18/2.

⁴⁷ CKS U951 F18/2.

⁴⁸ There is no rental information for the Knatchbull estate, 1748-58, when it came under the trustees' administration. Having been kept 'in hand', Quarrington Farm was again let out at some point during this 10-year period.

⁴⁹ Italics mine. CKS U951 A12.

⁵⁰ See above, p. 36.

And age, perhaps, was another consideration, for as early as 1734 Knatchbull had considered Hancock an elderly man.⁵¹

Nonetheless, by September 1744 Hancock, now 10 years older and (owing another £17 in back-rent) was in considerable difficulty. The downward spiral continued, reaching £26 by August 1745. By July 1747, and owing £48-7s-1d - equivalent to more than three years' rent – the tenant was deeply in debt. Knatchbull eventually took back the holding (at Ladyday 1748), although presumably not before making sure that 'Old Hancock' had another roof over his head.

Knatchbull also took account of the old man's livestock when on 27 May 1748 a note was made of 'Hancocks Stock at Ladyday 1748 when I took his farm in hand. Of 7 Milch cows, 2 sold with calves to [Messrs] Gold and Horn – 1 Milk'd at [the Home Farm] – 1 milk'd by Hancock – 1, a two yearling, with a calf [and] 2 fattening [on the Home Farm, and] ... of 1 Sow and 6 Pigs, all sold except 1 pig given to the Old Man.'⁵² We do not know for how long the Mill House Farm remained 'in hand'. However, by 1758 it had a new occupant in one James Clark, carpenter.⁵³

The impact of the economic slump can be detected in another Mersham holding. In 1730, some 80 acres of pasture, known as 'Quillets' were leased for £60 a year to substantial occupier, Henry Dunk of Stocks Farm, in the neighbouring parish of Smeeth. On 22 June 1734, Dunk gave notice of his intention to quit when the lease expired (Michaelmas 1735).⁵⁴ Yet before long, he had had second thoughts; and on 21 July 1735 Knatchbull 'Agreed to let Harry Dunk have a Lease for 5 years of his land from Michaelmas next ...'.⁵⁵

There is a strong suggestion again that in this buyer's market, the deal struck was more on Dunk's terms than Knatchbull's who, to get the repeat business, had to give a nine per cent discount, re-letting the holding for £55 per annum. The relatively short, five-year lease agreement was, perhaps, indicative that both parties were hedging their bets; Knatchbull could look forward to upping the rent in the not-too-distant future if things improved, while Dunk knew that if they did not, he was not tied in for too long. The terms of the new lease showed the extent to which the tenant was accommodated, insofar as the baronet had 'promised to hang two new gates to Bockhanger [Wood], make him a bridge [a]cross the brooks, and fit up his pound.'⁵⁶ Dunk subsequently renewed the lease in 1740, and continued to pay the reduced sum of £55 per annum, until at least 1749.

⁵¹ On 12 April 1734 that '*Old Hancock wants some Bricklayers work done*' and again (on 15 July 1734) that, '*here wants some posts and rails to Old Hancock's field*'. Italics mine. CKS U951 E12.

⁵² 27 May 1748. CKS U951 F18/2.

⁵³ CKS U951 A16.

⁵⁴ CKS U951 E12.

⁵⁵ CKS U951 E12.

⁵⁶ CKS U951 E12.

The remaining four holdings in and around Mersham rented out by Knatchbull were modest: a 20 acre farm, a two acre field known as Longhose, a house together with a smith's forge and 1.5 acres, plus another house and eight acres. On these holdings, landlord-tenant relations were stable; occupiers stayed-put - and in contrast to tenants Hobday and Hancock, there was no trace of arrears or unduly late payments. Significantly, the LTAs, in tandem with the marsh records, have established that two of the four holdings were nothing more than small components of much bigger dual-regional operations and, as we will now see, occupied by men of substance.⁵⁷

From 1730, George Wightwick of Willesborough/Hinxhill occupied the 20 acre farm. On Romney Marsh and the surrounding region, the Wightwicks were sufficiently important as a kinship group to warrant attention in Hasted's *History*.⁵⁸ They were also substantial in terms of owned and/or occupied LTAs on the uplands and (in acreage) on Romney Marsh. Indeed, George Wightwick was (in 1738) the ninth largest owner-occupier on Walland. Clearly then, this modest farm was part of a much bigger, dual-regional enterprise and its tenant more than capable of finding the £12 a year needed to pay for it.

From 1732-82 John Eve of Mersham rented 'Longhose'. Like Wightwick, Eve was not, by any stretch of the imagination, a 'small' farmer. In actuality, he was Mersham's top-ranking occupier, with none other than Knatchbull trailing behind him.⁵⁹ Eve would not have batted an eyelid at paying £1-10s a year for Knatchbull's field which (again) was part of a far more extensive operation.⁶⁰ Further reference will be made in chapter seven to the marsh interests of both Wightwick and Eve.

How did the fortunes of Knatchbull's uplands holdings compare with those on the Furnesse/Rockingham estate in east Kent to c. 1760? This we will now briefly explore by looking at a sample of 13 holdings across six parishes, all of which were broadly characterized by sheep-corn farming.⁶¹ Supporting information for these estates can be found Appendix 4, Tables 4.1 and 4.2. We will see that fortunes on these farms displayed some of the classic symptoms of a depressed rural economy outlined earlier.⁶² Substantial tenants made economies of scale, several holdings lay empty or with tenants in arrears, and abatements were granted to incoming tenants.

⁵⁷ The other two tenants were both skilled tradesmen. Gregory Barret, blacksmith, occupied the house, smith's forge and 1.5 acres. John Martin, wheelwright, occupied the house and eight acres. Martin's income came from a variety of sources in addition to his trade. He owned two shops, both rented out. As a (very) small-scale livestock farmer, Martin also owner-occupied one acre on Romney Marsh Level, from which he made a small amount of extra money by agisting cattle. CKS PRC17/98/459; CKS PRC11/85/66.

⁵⁸ Hasted, *History* 7, pp. 568, 588.

⁵⁹ In 1746, Eve ranked Mersham's largest occupier (LTA £70), with Knatchbull second (LTA £65). Eve was a lessee of two corporate bodies – the Dean and Chapter of Christchurch, Canterbury (in Mersham) and (in the neighbouring parish of Kingsnorth) the Worshipful Company of Haberdashers. CKS Q/CTL.

⁶⁰ Eve continued to rent Longhose for the next 50 years (to 1782).

⁶¹ See also Mingay, 'Agriculture' in A. Armstrong (ed.), *The economy of Kent, 1640-1914*, p. 52.

⁶² See above, pp. 12-3.

Between c. 1716-24, three large tenants took over additional holdings when they became available. Matthew Petley of Church Farm, East Langdon more than doubled his acreage (to 330 acres) by taking on neighbouring Street Farm. For the next 36 years, the Petleys worked these farms as one large operation.⁶³ Also in East Langdon, the Baker kinship group (occupiers of East Langdon Farm) expanded their operations by taking on Pinham Farm in 1723.⁶⁴ In Waldershare, John Birch of Popeshall Farm had, by c. 1723, expanded his operations by half as much again in acreage terms, with the addition of Newsole Farm, plus land in Ewell. In all, Birch now occupied 448.5 acres, stretching across three contiguous parishes.⁶⁵

By 1746, all three holdings lay empty. Newsole Farm and the Ewell lands were available to let at £50 and £22-10s respectively. Popeshall Farm was vacant throughout 1747, despite estate steward Richard Seddon's efforts to publicise its availability in the property section of the bi-weekly provincial newspaper, the *Kentish Post* (for which further information can be found in Appendix 3). A run of adverts for Popeshall Farm failed to attract serious interest. From Michaelmas 1747 Newsole Farm and the Ewell lands were let together for £75 per annum, the latter (at £25) commanding a slightly higher figure than perhaps anticipated.⁶⁶ However, another full year elapsed before Popeshall saw a new occupier.⁶⁷ Furthermore, considering that from c. 1710, Popeshall had fetched £158-10s per annum, the incoming tenant got it for a song, at just £120. He was also refunded roughly one third of the first year's rent for repairs. It is suggested here that negotiations for the lease of this farm were probably led more by the incoming tenant than the landlord.

If it had been a long haul for Seddon to find an occupier for Popeshall Farm, there yet remained another pressing task. A tenant was needed for another mixed holding, Minacre Farm in Northbourne, whose current occupier (Edmund Terry) had given notice to quit this 120-acre unit when the lease expired in 1747. Despite advertising Minacre Farm (along with Popeshall) 'several times', it had, by October 1747, failed to draw much attention. Finding new tenants must have been quite a headache for Seddon who was soon to find himself in the difficult position of having *yet another* large holding (Coldred Court Farm) becoming available when (at Michaelmas

⁶³ The rent remained unchanged (at £125 per annum) until 1752 when it was increased by £1 per annum on a seven-year lease. By 1754 both farms were occupied by another kinship group, albeit at the same rent.

⁶⁴ East Langdon Farm and Pinham Farm were let at a combined rent of £128-10s. In 1746, the Baker kinship group were still in occupation.

⁶⁵ Birch was another long-established Furnesse tenant, having occupied Popeshall Farm since c. 1710, if not before. See Appendix 4, Table 4.1, notes 5, 6 and 8.

⁶⁶ Nonetheless, this slight increase did not make up for the £45 refunded to the incoming tenants out of the first year's rent for 'Land Tax ... [and] Several Bills of Repairs Allowed as Rent Received'. EKAC U471 A3.

⁶⁷ Robert Finnis, who signed a 14-year lease (from Michaelmas 1748). The fact that c.1790, one Robert Finnis was noted as a beneficial lessee (of the Archbishop of Canterbury) of the Manor of Coldred, suggests he was a man of substance. Hasted, *History*, 9, p. 388. For further discussion on the beneficial leasehold system, see chapter seven.

1748) the lease ran out. Hence, by June 1748, and with Minacre still 'in hand', the *Kentish Post* was advertising

To be LETT, and Enter'd upon at Michaelmas [1748], COLDRED-COURT FARM, containing 280 Acres of Arable and Pasture Land: Together with COLDRED-PARSONAGE, containing 29 Acres of Arable Glebe Land; the Parsonage Barn and Land adjoining unto the Court Farm: all in the Parish of Coldred.' Also MINACRE FARM in the Parish of Northbourne, containing 120 Acres of Arable and Pasture Land. Enquire at Waldershare House.⁶⁸

How successful were the efforts to find tenants for these farms? As Appendix 3, Table 3.2(b) illustrates, the year 1748 witnessed a glut of large holdings advertised to let in east Kent. Some 17 farms were featured, nine of which were 220 acres plus. With weak demand for tenancies, landlords were having a hard time shifting their holdings, the more so large, mixed farms. Further advertising for Minacre Farm throughout 1749/50 again proved disappointing. Indeed, when the time came to update the estate accounts to Michaelmas 1750, the only income received from Minacre was £49-19s-2½d, 'for all the materials sold from thence'⁶⁹

Initially, Minacre Farm was integrated into the farming operations of one John Mackney who (from Michaelmas 1750) took occupation, in addition to the 160-acre holding he already occupied as a Rockingham tenant.⁷⁰ From 1750 Mackney also took on 28 acres of woodland in Northbourne, so that in all, his enterprise had, at a stroke, increased by 63 per cent in acreage terms.⁷¹ All three holdings were, from 1753, available, and there ensued a fairly rapid turnover of tenants. The first new occupant arrived in 1753 who, in return for a 14 year lease, paid just £80 per annum for the lot.⁷² Nonetheless, the stay was short-lived. In 1760 the farms were again split, with new tenants for Napchester Farm (with the 28 acres woodland) and Minacre Farm respectively. The rent on Minacre was reduced yet again (to just £35 per annum). In 1731 it had fetched £49 per annum. In just 30 years then, the rent on this farm had fallen by roughly a third, and it had also seen a relatively high turnover of tenants. Clearly, the effects of the sluggish economy were being felt, and not only in respect of Minacre Farm; the advertising campaign in June 1748 failed to attract interest in Coldred Court Farm. Indeed, it was 1750 before the latter saw another tenant, one George Rigden, who took occupation at the slightly reduced rent of £86

⁶⁸ *Kentish Post*, 15, 18, 22, 25 June 1748. In addition, Minacre Farm was advertised on 13 and 18 August 1748.

⁶⁹ 19 January 1751. EKAC U371 A3.

⁷⁰ Napchester Farm, Northbourne.

⁷¹ Until 1753, these were occupied on an annual basis, at £102 per annum.

⁷² Napchester, Minacre and the woodlands in Northbourne.

per annum) on a five year lease. This was the third drop in rent since c.1710, an overall slide of 7.5 per cent.⁷³

In 1746, arrears across the entire Rockingham estate in East Kent were running at 30 per cent, made up of two elements.⁷⁴ The first comprised arrears accruing because tenants of 10 farms owed back-rent to the tune of £609-7s. Seven of these were mixed farms in excess of 100 acres.⁷⁵ The largest was North Court Farm, a 370-acre mixed holding in Swingfield, occupied by John Hall. It was let out at £110 per annum on a lease that had four years left to run when (in October 1746) Hall's rent was again due. All he could hand over was a clutch of receipts totalling £21-7s, which Seddon allowed as the 'Total Rec[eived] by Cash Taxes and Repairs', with some £88-13s entered into the ledger as 'Arrears Remaining Carried Forward'.⁷⁶ By Michaelmas 1747, and despite 'Land Taxes [and] Several Bills of Repairs allowed as Rent Rec[eiv]ed' there was still '£113-6-3³/₄d deficient in John Hall's Account'.⁷⁷ Unable to clear this, Hall left the farm. Fortunately, North Court Farm was not destined to become yet another of the estate's holdings lying empty. However, this came at a price, insofar as the new occupants secured a 10 per cent discount in rent, on a seven year lease.⁷⁸ As for Hall's accumulation of arrears, Seddon simply wrote them off.

Secondly, arrears were accruing, on paper at least, because on four holdings there simply *were* no tenants. For accounting purposes, Seddon classed farms lying empty as being in arrears - a figure that, in 1746, fell not far short of £250. To compound things even more, landlords were liable for the Land Tax on their vacant farms, and (apart from one year) the 1740s saw the tax levied at the highest rate. To cap it all, the majority of farms on this estate had been comparatively heavily assessed in the national re-evaluation of 1692, so the tax liability would have been relatively high.⁷⁹

Between 1746-50 then, with taxes, repairs – and especially arrears - gobbling up around 38 per cent of annual rent, the Rockingham estate went through a particularly lean time. And although, at 30 per cent, the year 1746 was exceptionally bad, they continued to be high (15 per cent on

⁷³ It was 1775 before the rent on Minacre Farm increased from £35 to £43, and in 1798 it had still not recovered to the £48 per annum achieved in 1746. Coldred Court Farm was let for £93 per annum from c. 1710, dropping to £90 (by c. 1731) and (by 1746) to £86-8s. Rigden stayed until 1762. EKAC U471 A1; EKAC U471 A274.

⁷⁴ See also Appendix 4, Table 4.2, note 1.

⁷⁵ The holdings in arrears comprised Selson Farm (100 acres); Little Waters End Farm (100.5 acres); Napchester Farm (160 acres); Boynton Farm (211 acres); Barvel Farm (248 acres); Malmain Farm (330 acres); North Court Farm (370 acres).

⁷⁶ EKAC U471 A3.

⁷⁷ £100 per annum rent. EKAC U471 A3.

⁷⁸ At the end of their first year, the tenants (Messrs William and Richard Kelsey) were refunded one-third of their rent on account of repair bills.

⁷⁹ See above, pp. 53-4.

average) over the next three years, a figure three times higher than the level noted above in Turner, Beckett and Afton's recent findings.⁸⁰

The difficulties encountered by two of Knatchbull's smaller tenants, Hobday and Hancock, have already been outlined. Capital costs per acre were higher on small-scale operations, and there was usually nothing left for contingencies. If a small farmer happened to own some (or all) of the land he farmed, he could opt to sell it and use the proceeds to buy more livestock, and then rent back the land he had just sold.⁸¹ The following example suggests that this may have prompted one Pingle, a Waldershare farmer, to do exactly that. He would have found a ready buyer in Sir Robert Furnesse who (like Knatchbull) would not be likely to turn down any opportunity, however small, to add to his real estate. Hence, c. 1729, Furnesse purchased 'Three acres and a half ... of land at the end of [Waldershare] Park bought of Pingle. Let to him for £2.'⁸² Pingle probably used the money to buy in livestock while continuing to work the land, albeit as a tenant.

2. Landlord-tenant relations, c. 1760-90.

The lease on East Lenham Farm was due to expire at Michaelmas 1768. This (and the recent death of the tenant, Thomas Winder) prompted Sir Edward Knatchbull (on 31 March 1768) to pay a visit. On returning home, and recalling the day's events, he put pen to paper. 'I have been all over the farm at Lenham' he wrote, 'the lease expiring at Michaelmas next ... John Winder [the late occupier's brother] is desirous of taking it but seems not inclined to advance the rent'.⁸³

As a conscientious rentier, Knatchbull had given careful thought to the matter of East Lenham Farm prior to this meeting. Economic conditions were better and ideally, should be reflected in the level of rent set. Equally however, Knatchbull knew that the prospect of having a substantial tenant like Winder did not come along every day. Preferable then, to come to an agreement. Thus far on this farm, the landlord had stood to all repairs. And having looked through the figures Knatchbull could see that this had set him back roughly £25 per year over the last five years. Simply by shifting repair bills to the tenant, Knatchbull was confident that income would, effectively, 'be raised upwards of £20 a year'. Knatchbull also knew that by not increasing the rent he would be making Winder an attractive proposition – and all the more so if he was offered a long lease. Knatchbull continued, 'I shall make him an offer of a Lease of it for 21 years at the

⁸⁰ See above, p. 13.

⁸¹ French and Hoyle, *English rural society*, pp. 23, 29; J. Broad, 'The fate of the Midland yeoman, tenants, copyholders, and freeholders as farmers in North Buckinghamshire, 1620-1800', *Continuity and change* 14, 1999, p. 335.

⁸² EKAC U471 A274. We do not know if this represented all or part of Pingle's freehold interests.

⁸³ In addition to land/property, Thomas Winder's resources enabled him to bequeath £300 to his brother John, and £400 to his sister. CKS PRC 17/98/100.

old rent if he will pay taxes and Repairs, all but the Land Tax.’⁸⁴ Winder took up the offer, with the security of knowing there would be no more rent increases for the foreseeable future.

From earlier leases, Knatchbull was well aware of what had, and had not, gone with the holding. The farm included some 14 acres of woodland, comprising ‘several small woods ... of which the tenant has the underwood granted in the Lease, and the timber goes chiefly for repairs.’⁸⁵ Hence, given that the baronet had, thus far, paid for repairs anyway, it would not go against his interests to let Winder have the timber. Unlike the majority of the extensive woodland acreage belonging to the Knatchbull estate which (as will be seen) was a valuable resource, the woodland that went with the Lenham farm was, by Knatchbull’s admission, ‘but ordinary stuff’. It was of no commercial value to the baronet who had ‘never felled any timber there or coppice’ although, as observed on this latest visit, there was, ‘in one wood, some thriving timber growing’.⁸⁶ With regard to upping the rent, Knatchbull certainly got what he wanted; from 1768, income had, effectively, been raised by 11.2 per cent and, as he was at pains to remind himself some months later, this was, indeed, ‘a considerable advance ...’.⁸⁷

The expiry of the lease in 1788 gave Knatchbull the first opportunity for 21 years to make a rent increase. During this time, the market had continued to rise steadily, leaving the existing rent lagging far behind its true market value. It was time to catch up. Thus, a rise of 23.5 per cent (to £220 per annum) albeit a hefty jump, did nothing more than bring the annual rent back into line with levels currently being achieved in the wider rural economy.⁸⁸

In 1760, Quarrington Farm was occupied by one Thomas Price at a rent of £50 a year. He was granted a fresh lease in 1767, at the same rent, and remained in occupation until the end of the period, with the rent unchanged. Business dealings with Knatchbull were few and far between.⁸⁹ As for repairs, only one bill (in 1783) was allowed against the rent, suggesting that arrangements on Quarrington carried on much as they had after Hobday’s departure, with the tenant standing to repairs.

The Mill House Farm also enjoyed stable landlord-tenant relations. James Clark, carpenter, occupied the farm in 1758. After his death (in 1775) it was taken over by his son Richard, a

⁸⁴ Italics mine. CKS U951 A22. The tenant was not expected to meet the cost of extraordinary repairs. In 1779, a cottage on the farm burnt down and, as Knatchbull was to note, ‘... the tenant and I built a new one between us’, costing them £30 each. 30 November 1779. CKS U951 A43.

⁸⁵ Undated memorandum, post-1771. CKS U951 A43.

⁸⁶ CKS U951 A43.

⁸⁷ 30 November 1768. CKS U951 A42.

⁸⁸ Winder occupied the farm until the end of the period. Unlike Barnard, he had no other business arrangements with Knatchbull.

⁸⁹ Apart from the seven-year lease granted in 1767, the length of the terms of preceding and subsequent agreements are unknown. Two steers and a heifer were supplied to the Home Farm (in 1764) and (in 1773) two consignments of oats. CKS U951 A21.

butcher, for an extra £20 a year (an 11 per cent rise).⁹⁰ Knatchbull and Clarke were already well acquainted, having done regular business for the past nine years. The vast majority of the livestock sold from the Home Farm was bought by Clarke.⁹¹

In Mersham, South Stower Farm, a 160-acre mixed holding, had been purchased c.1750 by the trustees of the estate. In 1763 it was let for £67 per annum to John Blechyndon who (in 1771) renewed the tenancy on an 11-year lease, with the rent staying at £67. Knatchbull nevertheless noted that, 'But for the future, I am to have both Timber and Underwood of Broad Oak Wood which is 5 ½ acres.'⁹² The estate's woodlands were carefully managed. As we have seen, in the 1730s, Sir Wyndham Knatchbull kept a careful record of the timber marked out for felling, the purpose for which it would be used, together with an account of how much money had been saved by not having the raw materials bought-in from outside.⁹³ And Sir Edward was just as punctilious in his record-keeping, noting for example that in 1771, more than 26 tons of timber were felled in Broad Oak Wood. Knatchbull kept all the raw timber for his own use, but nevertheless made a mental note that it was worth at least £55.⁹⁴ By taking back the timber on this stretch of woodland that until this point, had gone with the farm, the estate's income was boosted, albeit in an indirect way. Some 10 years later (in October 1782) whilst the rent saw only a modest five per cent increase (to £70) the incoming tenants nevertheless had to pay a further £50 as a fine for the privilege of being granted a lease.⁹⁵

We come now to the land/property purchased by the trustees post-1745. An early acquisition (c. 1747) comprised two Wealden farms in Woodchurch and Halden together with 168 acres of woodland.⁹⁶ The addition to the estate of a substantial amount of established woodland turned out to be a wise investment indeed. In the first place, from c. 1760, well-managed woodlands were becoming highly profitable, with timber sales often yielding more income than the equivalent acreage of arable/pasture land.⁹⁷ The rent received from these two farms, compared with the income derived from the timber produced therein illustrates this well, as we will now see.

⁹⁰ The length of term of the lease is unknown.

⁹¹ In addition to livestock 'killed into the house', ending up on the dinner table, the Home Farm sold, on average, around £96-worth of livestock every year from 1766-75. CKS U951 A21.

⁹² Memorandum dated 12 October 1772. CKS U951 A43.

⁹³ See above, pp. 29-30.

⁹⁴ Felled from Broad Oak Wood were '25 tun, 10 foot Oak, 1 tun, 15 foot Ash'. Knatchbull noted that this, together with '10 tun, 20 foot of Oak' taken from Quarrington Wood, was 'all used at home being paling [fencing for the deer] Park. But being made use of at home, no Money rec[eive]d, so not brought to Account, but I suppose might be worth at least two guineas a tun naked.' 24 December 1772. CKS U951 A43.

⁹⁵ John Eve (tenant of Longhose field and Mersham's top-ranking occupier) took over after Blechyndon's death (in 1779). This was on a temporary basis however for (as Knatchbull noted on 11 October 1779), 'Blechyndon of the Priory is to have the refusal of this Farm, when Eve's time is out, which ends with the late John Blechyndon's lease' (October 1782). CKS U951 A43.

⁹⁶ CKS U951 A42. See also Hasted, *History*, 7, pp. 222-3.

⁹⁷ See above, p. 29.

The farm in Woodchurch was let for £75 per annum to one Nicholas Collis who, already in occupation in 1756, stayed throughout the rest of the period under investigation.⁹⁸ Whilst Knatchbull met the cost of general repairs, any major improvements were down to the tenant. Thus, in 1772 it was agreed that Cole was 'to pay [Knatchbull] annually £10 to discharge the expenses of building [him] a new Barn.'⁹⁹ In Halden, Tiffenden Farm was let for £85 per annum to long-term tenant Thomas Medhurst.¹⁰⁰ Medhurst was also one of Knatchbull's biggest customers, purchasing large quantities of timber (mainly oak) from the baronet's 168 acres of woodland. Between 1771-87, timber sold from all of Knatchbull's woodland interests in Kent fetched, on average, £487 per annum. Out of this figure, sales produced from trees felled in Woodchurch/Halden generated £251 a year on average, a sum far in excess of the £160 per annum rent derived from both farms.

In addition to income from timber sales, this stretch of woodland produced (in 1765) sufficient timber to supply wood for the new mansion currently under construction. Planning well in advance in order to select the timber required, Robert Lott (Knatchbull's bailiff) and Cole (the Ashford builder in charge) travelled to Tiffenden Farm on 18 April 1765 and, as Knatchbull duly noted,

At Tiffenden farm in Halding marked by Lott and Cole to cutt down this year 264
Oaken Timber Trees as follows

Field Timber – 131 Trees computed to contain upwards of 59 Tun of Timber; in
Pond Wood, 133 Trees computed to contain about 30 Tunn of Timber.¹⁰¹

In all, at 89 tons, this comprised the bulk of Knatchbull's timber felled in 1765; in taking stock of the estate's timber resources, the baronet noted that

This year, 1765. Upon the whole it is reckoned that [in 1765] I cutt down about 100
Tunn of Oak Timber which at a moderate computation with Topp and Bark will
come to £280. But then the felling and rining must be deducted, so that the Timber

⁹⁸ In 1756/9, Collis occupied LTA £64, ranking fifth out of 173 occupiers in Woodchurch and Halden. Of this, £4 was owner-occupied, the remainder belonging to Knatchbull, his only landlord, and with whom he had no other business dealings other than (in 1771) the purchase of a carthorse for £5. CKS Q/CTL (Woodchurch) 1756; CKS Q/CTL (Halden) 1759. CKS U951 A22.

⁹⁹ With the final payment made in 1776.

¹⁰⁰ Thomas Medhurst occupied the farm from 1747-88. In 1756/9 (with LTA £117) he ranked third out of Woodchurch and Halden's total of 173 occupiers. Of this, some £107 belonged to Knatchbull (with the remaining £10 occupied of another landlord). Some £112-10s received by Knatchbull from Medhurst for wood felled/sold in 1763 is one example of a number of similarly substantial transactions that took place in the 1760s-80s. CKS Q/CTL (Woodchurch) 1756; CKS Q/CTL (Halden) 1759. CKS U951 A43.

¹⁰¹ In addition, Knatchbull and Cole selected timber from the woodlands at Mersham Hatch, and 'marked [for felling] ... 13 Oaks and Ashes ... besides a great number of small Pollard Beeches ...'. 18 April 1765. CKS U951 A22.

[remaining] to me in the yard is worth per Tunn 46 shillings, wh[ich] comes to £230.¹⁰²

Knatchbull's calculations in respect of the timber felled in Woodchurch/Halden were exacting, insofar as they took account of the cost of transporting the timber back to Mersham. The expense, he was pleased to report, was more than covered by the monies received from selling the bark, and he made even more from faggots (firewood). Thus, from 'Halding Wood cutt 1765,

... the bark sold ... 36 load at £1-10s-0d per Load comes to £54-0s-0d which more than pays for felling and carr[iage] of my Timber home [and] with the addition of Lopp, Topp and Fagotts being 60¾ Loads at 10s-6d per Load amounts to £31-17s-7½d.¹⁰³

Four farms in the uplands parish of Postling were purchased by the trustees sometime between 1747-57. They included just over 58 acres of woodland which were 'felled in small parcels at different times according to the growth.'¹⁰⁴ Knatchbull kept some for his own use, and the tenants were allowed a certain amount of wood each year without charge (but then paid for anything used over and above). Hence, in 1771, some '6 acres [were felled] the underwood sold to [tenants] Frind and Jarman for £6-10s-0d an acre ... [while the] small wood in Postling Lees which contained 1 acre and 1 R[od] ... was felled in the year 1766. In [the] Spring 1783 I felled 10 acres. One for my own use and sold 9.'¹⁰⁵

Wealden timber was in constant demand on Romney Marsh, and this was but one facet of the so-called 'dual-regional' economy between the marsh and its hinterland. Oak timber was used for post and rail fencing as well as for piles and overlathes to shore-up Dymchurch Wall.¹⁰⁶ On 4 June 1773 Knatchbull received £40-9s-10d 'for Piles and Overlaths delivered at Dimchurch Wall from Postling Wood ... 800 long [piles], 1698 short [piles and] 803 overlathes'.¹⁰⁷

Stable landlord-tenant relations characterized these Postling farms, and there were no rent increases on the two smaller holdings (let for £23 and £51 per annum respectively).¹⁰⁸ The third farm was let (in 1760) to John Jarman for £125 per annum. Not until after his departure (in 1785) was the rent increased (to £150).¹⁰⁹ Rent for the fourth farm (let for £110 in 1760) was increased by eight per cent (to £125) in 1776. Knatchbull agisted lambs there regularly every year. For

¹⁰² N.D. CKS U951 A22.

¹⁰³ 25 May 1765. CKS U951 A22.

¹⁰⁴ CKS U951 A22.

¹⁰⁵ N.D. CKS U951 A22.

¹⁰⁶ See above, p. 6.

¹⁰⁷ £40-9s-10d net total, after payment of £10-3s-11½ to Prebble the carpenter 'for making'. CKS U951 A22.

¹⁰⁸ With only one change of tenant, turnover on these farms was very low.

¹⁰⁹ With an LTA of £117, and Knatchbull his only landlord, Jarman was Postling's top-ranking occupier in 1780.

example, on 11 November 1773, Knatchbull 'Paid [tenant Joseph] Frind of Postling for the keep of my 56 Tags 13 weeks at 2 shillings a week each score ... £3-12s-7d'.¹¹⁰ Agistment, albeit an informal arrangement was, for all that, no less valuable to the enterprises of all parties concerned. Indeed, although hard to quantify exactly, agistment played an important part in terms of functional farm size. The sometimes complex mechanics of agistment on Romney Marsh and the surrounding region will be further explored in chapter nine.¹¹¹

From 1763, Knatchbull sought to increase arable production. He did this by renting more land (and, significantly, for present purposes) by taking back into owner-occupation acreage on three smaller holdings in/near Mersham. It is argued here that additional arable acreage was needed to produce more oats for the estate's complement of horses, whose numbers had doubled since the 1730s-40s. Then, Sir Wyndham Knatchbull usually kept around 12 horses at Mersham Hatch. Following Sir Edward Knatchbull's succession, the stables accommodated 21 horses, sometimes more. These included a number of hackney horses, animals used specifically to pull the smart carriages belonging to the aristocracy. They were fashion statements, and not a necessity.¹¹² However, additional horsepower was deemed a necessity in order to transport materials for building the new mansion. Possibly neither the hackney horses - and certainly not the mansion - would ever have been contemplated without Sir Wyndham's windfall inheritance of £60,000. Nonetheless, the vast scale of the project was eating up even this 'Great Increase' in the estate's resources.¹¹³ Hence, as noted earlier, Sir Edward was forced to borrow money and even sell property to finish the job. Knatchbull admitted the extent to which he economized, to the point where he recounted that '... in this building it is my own bricks, lime, sand, wood for the kiln, my own teams draw all this and the straw to the brick kilns, which is a considerable saving.'¹¹⁴ Just as the number of horses on the Home Farm had doubled, so too had the demand for oats to feed them. Furthermore, the price of oats had risen considerably.¹¹⁵ Thus, there were compelling reasons for Knatchbull to boost production by all possible means, and it is argued here that this lay behind some of the changes that occurred on the estate's smaller holdings in/around Mersham from c. 1760. These developments will now be outlined.

¹¹⁰ CKS U951 A21.

¹¹¹ See also Davison, 'A 'particularly convenient and useful' arrangement', *passim*.

¹¹² In 1773 Mersham Hatch boasted 21 horses - six coach horses, six cart horses, three saddle horses, plus six others. In 1772, Sir Edward Knatchbull reckoned that it cost £60 a year to keep his carthorses. On 1 January 1775, the Home Farm's stock list included 24 horses. For the years 1771-4, the average cost for oats used on the Home Farm came to £124-10s a year. More than half of this sum was made up of oats bought in. From Michaelmas 1772-3, oats grown on the Home Farm were reckoned to be worth £50-2s-6d, and those bought in £73-8s. It was therefore advantageous to produce as much as possible in-house, not least considering the difference between cost price and retail price. In 1771 for example, Knatchbull calculated his own oats to be worth 12 shillings a quarter (presumably the cost price). He would, however, have had to pay the going retail rate for oats bought in. Thus, in 1771, oats brought in cost between 16-17 shillings a quarter (taken to be the retail price). CKS U951 E12; CKS U951 A21.

¹¹³ See above, p. 49.

¹¹⁴ See above, p. 50. Quoted in Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Kentish family*, p. 123.

¹¹⁵ In 1737 for example, the Home Farm consumed an estimated 100 quarters of oats. By 1768, this had risen to more than 200 quarters. Whereas (in the 1730s-40s) Knatchbull paid 10- to 12 shillings a quarter, by the early 1770s this had risen to between 16- and 18 shillings a quarter.

The 20-acre farm occupied by Wightwick since 1730 became available after his death in 1749. All his grown-up children died the same year so there were no surviving relatives to take over his operations locally or (as we will see in chapter seven) on Walland Marsh.¹¹⁶ The farm was taken on by John Burch who left in 1769. All told, this holding, which came with 20 acres of arable land, had been worth £12 a year in rental income to the Knatchbull estate. It is suggested that after Burch's departure, the baronet did not look to find a replacement tenant, because it was more cost-effective to take the land 'in hand' and farm it himself. In 1774 for example, 11 acres were sown with oats. This took up just over half of the farm's acreage. It would have produced a crop worth around £18 which, in itself, would show a much better return than the £12 in rent Knatchbull had been getting hitherto for the farm in its entirety.¹¹⁷ Indeed, he was still left with nine acres that could be used to produce other crops; these could either have been sold or used for domestic consumption.

Knatchbull also took arable land back 'into hand' from two smaller Mersham tenants, who continued to occupy (at a lower rent) what was left of their holdings.¹¹⁸ From 1771, in order to increase productivity still further, Knatchbull rented Ladd's Farm in Mersham, a 30-acre holding for which he paid £20 per annum.¹¹⁹ In March 1772, 16 acres were sown with oats, producing a crop which, to Knatchbull, was worth £28. Thus, using just over half of the farm's production capacity, Knatchbull had already produced a crop worth one and a half times the annual rent for the entire holding. Furthermore, by producing oats at home, the baronet had saved a noticeable amount on the cost of buying them in. He kept a careful account of the difference this made to his costs for the following year, noting (in 1773) that a home-grown crop had saved £5-18s-0d compared to 'the Expense for bought oats'.¹²⁰ And, with nearly half of the acreage on Ladd's farm still left to play around with this, for Knatchbull, was a win-win situation.

¹¹⁶ KASMI (ref. 43) Hinxhill.

¹¹⁷ In January 1772, 48 bushels of oats were sown on 16 acres (a seeding rate of three bushels per acre). At 18 shillings per bushel, the outlay in seed oats was £4-10s. Knatchbull later noted that this had produced a crop comprising '31 Seams and 1 Bushell, which at 18 s[hillings] per Q[ua]rter' was worth £28 (with a yield of 15.5 bushels an acre). Based on these calculations, the 11 acres sown in 1774 would have produced a crop worth about £18. In 1774, the yield (at 30.7 bushels per acre) had practically doubled. CKS U951 A21. Note that a seam of oats and a quarter of oats were both equivalent to eight bushels. A bushel of oats weighed 39 pounds (compared to a bushel of wheat, which could weigh between 56 and 60 pounds). Chapman, *How heavy, how much and how long?*, pp. 38, 52. For further discussion on seeding rates and yields, see Turner, Beckett and Afton, *Rents*, pp.168-9.

¹¹⁸ In 1764, rent on the house, forge and 1.5 acres in Mersham (occupied by Barret the blacksmith) was reduced from £9 to £7, Knatchbull 'having taken the field he used into hand ...'. At the same time, Knatchbull bought some more land (acreage unknown) adjoining Barret's field, to farm direct. In 1766, rent was reduced on a house and eight acres (let to John Martin) because Knatchbull had 'taken the plowed ground into hand [three small fields] which are to be thrown into two.' It is reasonable to suppose that these were amicable arrangements to all parties. On 23 April 1770, '2 sacks more of oats [were] sowed in the 2 Acres Martin Land ...' at 13 shillings a quarter. CKS U951 A42.

¹¹⁹ On a seven year lease from Michaelmas 1771.

¹²⁰ No date, but towards the end of 1773. CKS U951 A21.

As for the east Kent sample of Rockingham holdings during this later phase, landlord-tenant relations were generally as stable as those on Knatchbull's Wealden and uplands farms. Coldred Court Farm saw a new occupier in 1762, one Richard Hogben, of Upton Court Farm (a 160-acre holding). The addition of Coldred Court Farm (together with c. 30 acres of glebeland) virtually trebled Hogben's operations in acreage terms. Hogben stayed for the next 21 years and, in 1783, when new tenants signed a seven year lease on all three holdings, there was still no rent increase.

In East Langdon, Church Farm and Street Farm were let to the same tenants from 1754 onwards, and not before 1788 was the rent increased, and then only by a relatively modest £10 (7.5 per cent).¹²¹ The Baker kinship group, tenants of Langdon Court Farm since c. 1710, continued in occupation and by 1770 had further expanded by adding Pinham Farm and the Well Farm to their operations. There were rent increases on Langdon Court Farm (of £10 to £113-10s) and the Well Farm (of £8 to £68) in 1773.¹²² In 1778, new tenants took occupation of Langdon Court Farm and Pinham Farm (the rent unchanged). Baker however, signed a new seven year lease on the Well Farm, and the rent was again increased (from £68 to £72).

To conclude, this chapter has highlighted some of the challenges faced by landlord and tenant during the economic difficulties c. 1730-50. Whilst some occupiers managed to keep up with their rent, to a greater or lesser degree Knatchbull and Rockingham both had to put up with rent paid in installments, in kind or (in Rockingham's case) sometimes not at all. The latter also came off slightly the worse for wear in respect of vacant holdings, a circumstance that Knatchbull did not encounter to the same extent. Rents were reduced on some holdings in order to attract tenants. On the one hand, some of Rockingham's farms experienced a relatively high turnover of tenants coupled with repeated rent reductions. Yet elsewhere the estate enjoyed the benefit of long-established tenants who never fell behind with their rent. On balance, it was the substantial tenant who (although sometimes short of cash) held the balance of power in landlord-tenant relations, with more say about how much he was prepared to pay in terms of rent (and repairs).

We have also seen that (c.1730-50) tenants could adapt to market conditions by making economies of scale or responding to a ready local market. On the Mersham estate, landlord-tenant relations were marked by a degree of inter-dependency in business deals. For Knatchbull, social obligation and the paternalism expected of the local squire-cum-benefactor of Mersham's poor was another consideration when tenants were in difficulties. Overall, fortunes varied, with considerable give-and-take. The common element in all the farms experiencing problems concerned the low prices experienced in the 1730s-40s for arable producers. Although in a wider national context, livestock producers generally suffered less than arable farmers, it will also

¹²¹ Taking it to £136 per annum for a 10-year term.

¹²² There was no rent increase on Pinham Farm.

become apparent in chapters seven and eight that neither Knatchbull's nor Rockingham's marsh interests escaped unscathed from the adverse economy marking the earlier phase to c. 1760.

Over the next c. 30 years to c. 1790, landlord-tenant relations on the Weald and uplands holdings were uneventful and stable compared with the previous c. 30 years. Some farms saw relatively substantial rent rises, while on others there were no increases at all. The economic importance to the Knatchbull estate of extensive, well-managed woodlands has been illustrated, as has the estate's reliance on oats for feeding the horses, whose numbers, by the 1760s, had doubled. Knatchbull's careful management of woodlands as well as arable production on the Home Farm have demonstrated the cost-consciousness and determination of a responsible aristocrat to ensure the Home Farm economy ran as efficiently and as self-sufficiently as possible. The informal, but long-standing, arrangements for the agistment of livestock were also important to the Home Farm economy. The question of the degree to which social obligation and market considerations influenced landlord-tenant relations in a marshland context will be further explored in chapter eight, and the importance of agistment to the dual-regional economy will be considered in chapter nine.

Chapter seven. Landlord-tenant relations on Walland/Denge, c.1730-90 – aspects of corporate and private landownership.

By way of introduction to the themes explored in this chapter, we will briefly highlight some of the salient points in respect of recent findings using the marsh tax records. These have been fruitfully employed by Hipkin to disclose long-term movements in the structure of landownership and land occupation on the c. 45,000 acres of Romney Marsh for c.180 years to 1834.¹ The main agents driving structural change were shifts in the level of market demand and tenant initiative. Over the long eighteenth century, the broad economic trends experienced countrywide were also reflected on the marsh. They also help to explain the motives, actions and ultimately the longer-term fortunes of marsh landowners and their tenants. Two distinct and contrasting phases were identified. The earlier phase (c. 1650-1750) was characterized by a depressed marsh economy, with farmers facing falling demand and low prices for their produce. At the same time landowners experienced a shrinking market for tenancies, and rental income that at best, remained static. In the first half of the eighteenth century, many occupiers withdrew from the marsh, a disproportionately high number of whom were domiciled in the marsh hinterland. Moreover, the percentage of acreage occupied by these dual-regional farmers declined even more sharply, with the greatest fall among larger occupiers. Thus, in a weak market, owners were left with land on their hands and in a vulnerable position as those scaling-down their operations pulled off the marsh. However, substantial marsh-domiciled graziers were able to take advantage of the situation by accumulating, relatively cheaply, acreage becoming more readily available. By making economies of scale in this way, they were better placed to hold their own in an unfavourable economic climate. Not only did these marsh-dwelling farmers hold their own; they prospered. Indeed, in the half-century to c.1750, their numbers nearly doubled, as did their share of acreage.²

The second phase (c. 1750-1820) saw a reversal in economic trends. With a rising market, farmers were able to command higher prices for their produce. Competition for tenancies intensified and rentiers let smaller units at a premium. Despite the benefits of the economic upturn, there was nevertheless a downside for some larger marsh tenants, who (from the 1770s) found it increasingly hard to hang onto the extensive holdings they had earlier accumulated. By 1830, there had been a recovery in numbers of private owners, a sizeable increase in owner-occupation and a noticeable fall in mean acreage per occupier.

Hipkin thought, and tests carried out for this dissertation confirm, that marsh scot records provide highly accurate information about land occupiers.³ He did, however, draw attention to the need

¹ Hipkin, 'Landownership', pp. 69-94; id., 'Land occupation', pp. 147-63; id., 'Tenant farming', pp. 646-76.

² Hipkin, 'Landownership', pp. 83-4.

³ Hipkin, 'Land occupation', pp. 148-54; id., 'Tenant farming', pp. 646-52; id., 'Landownership', pp. 70-1, 73-4; see above, p. 6, note 34.

to regard information on landownership ‘with a degree of circumspection, if only because its accuracy was of less consequence to marsh administrators concerned to collect taxes from land occupiers’.⁴ Indeed, Thomas Maylam, deputy clerk of the Level of Romney Marsh who compiled the 1768 survey,

implicitly accepted the possibility that errors may have escaped detection in the final version ... “I have”, he wrote in the preface, “in general copied after the surveyor for the proprietors names, not doubting but, as it was his business to insert them properly and truly, he had, as far as consisted with his knowledge and the inquiries, done it. Such alterations therefrom as have since occurred to my knowledge I have made, and likewise corrected such of his mistakes as I have met with in the maps.”⁵

Hipkin argued that ‘the most likely occasion for error was where owners were confused with tenants who had contracted long leases with the intention of subletting the land’, but thought there were ‘no grounds for assuming that the data on landownership contained in the surveys and scot books are generally wide of the mark’.⁶ However, it remains an important task, where possible, to test how far this conclusion is supported when scot-book data purporting to describe owners are measured against evidence for landownership in other sources, notably Hasted’s *History*. As we shall see, landownership data were, broadly speaking, found to be reasonably accurate. An exception proved to be the amount of acreage owned by corporate bodies, which was found to be substantially higher than previously thought.

If the possibility of ‘hidden ownership’ is one problem with survey- and scot-book data for land ownership in the marsh region, the comparative rarity of evidence for landownership in these records is another. Whereas Hipkin had data for land occupation in seven years spanning 1699-1834, his data for landownership existed for just four years: 1654 (the Level), 1686 (Walland/Denge), and 1768 and 1834 (the region). Consequently his analysis of trends in landownership was framed in terms of two very broad periods either side of 1768, and unable to detect variations in trends *within* either period.

This chapter comprises two sections. Section one considers hitherto unexplored aspects of corporate landownership and the beneficial leasehold system. It will be shown that despite the advantages of the system for both owner and lessee, the financial impact for all concerned could be unpredictable and (for the lessee at least) financially awkward during the difficulties experienced in the so-called ‘agricultural depression, c.1730-50. Exploiting the extensive material that survives for Walland/Denge (1738-1834) the second part of the chapter concentrates on private landownership. It will be demonstrated that, coming at the tail-end of the earlier

⁴ Hipkin, ‘Landownership’, p. 74.

⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 73-4.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 74.

economic phase, the 30 years prior to 1768 witnessed a significant fall in numbers of private owners as well as in the proportion of owner-occupied acreage. It will be argued that between 1738 and c.1750, many owners pulled out of farming direct and took the rentier option. Significantly, it will also be demonstrated that the period 1768-1834 was not simply one of gradual increase in numbers of landowners and in the proportion of owner-occupied land, but rather, one that saw two phases: rapidly increasing owner-occupation until 1821 and a reversal of that trend thereafter. In short, the proportion of owner-occupied land in 1834 was, as Hipkin's results suggested, much higher than in 1768; nonetheless, it was considerably lower than in 1821.⁷ And, to a lesser extent, trends in numbers of owners followed a similar pattern.

Integral to this exploration of private landownership, reference will be made to the size and character of the land market on Walland Marsh. It will be argued that business was usually done on the quiet, behind closed doors, and that only a limited amount of acreage came onto the open market. The sense of community in kinship and business networks played a central part, for locals, in the market for land. It will be suggested that as well as purely market-led considerations, shared values and ties of social obligation were integral to the way in which the land market worked. This aspect will be traced not only in this chapter, from the landowner's perspective, but will also be explored (in chapter eight) from the tenant's viewpoint. The investigation raises leading questions about the motives, constraints and influences at work for landlord and tenant alike. Prospective purchasers, irrespective of their status within the social hierarchy, relied on local knowledge and an 'insider' network of contacts to alert them to any land becoming available. It will be argued that Knatchbull, the most substantial private rentier on the marsh, was as reliant on this way of doing business as the modest, up-and-coming marsh grazier, desirous of buying up acreage, however small, wherever he could.

In the c. 30 years to c.1790, the way in which substantial marsh-graziers bought up additional acreage for their own occupation will be explored. It will be seen that from c. 1760, as a result of a rising market and increased demand for land, this group of livestock specialists with initiative and plenty of capital at their fingertips made piecemeal purchases of acreage to farm direct. Land was usually acquired either from their own landlords who were willing to sell, or as a result of land becoming available following the deaths of their fellow marsh-domiciled neighbours. By c.1790 this process had taken them into the ranks of some of the larger marsh-based landowners.

1. Corporate landownership.

In order to test the accuracy of the marsh records in respect of landownership, a good proportion of the names of those purporting to be substantial owners of marsh acreage were cross-checked with information contained in Hasted's *History*. Whilst verifying the broad reliability of the

⁷ Hipkin, 'Landownership', pp. 71, 74-5.

marsh records, this exercise also uncovered the true extent of corporately-owned marsh acreage. It was found that the Countess Rockingham and the Duchess of Marlborough were both erroneously entered as owners when in actuality they were lessees of the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church Canterbury. However, as will become apparent in what follows, Rockingham, albeit strictly speaking a lessee, was nevertheless regarded in every way as the landowner by everyone apart from the Dean and Chapter. And the same would have been true of Marlborough. Indeed, there would have been no need for their occupiers (or, for that matter, the marsh administration) to think otherwise. Furthermore, just two lessees mistakenly identified as landlords and one ‘hidden’ owner would, ostensibly, seem to be a pretty good testimonial to the broad accuracy of marsh record keeping. Except, that is, for one thing. In reality, these errors, *in terms of acreage*, were very substantial, given that the Dean and Chapter was far and away the largest institutional owner on the marsh. Two seemingly minor mistakes; one massive tract of land. Indeed, at c.1600 acres, the Dean and Chapter’s interests covered roughly 10 per cent of the square area of Walland. Thus, by cross-referencing the marsh records with Hasted’s *History*, the shape of the marsh landscape has been considerably altered in respect of institutionally- versus privately owned acreage.⁸ Accordingly, Tables 7.1(a) and 7.1(b) set out the structure of corporate landownership for the period under study. Apart from the Dean and Chapter’s interests, some 1265.0 acres belonged to All Souls College Oxford, a further 70.0 acres to Magdalen College Oxford, and the remainder to the church, various charities for the poor, and Lydd Corporation. On average, around 17.5 per cent of total taxed acreage was institutionally-owned rather than the nine per cent indicated by the marsh schedules.⁹

We noted earlier that generally, large institutions in England had neither the time nor the inclination to manage their estates on a commercial basis, and that their land was let in large blocks to substantial private owners, on a tenure known as beneficial leasehold.¹⁰ Under this system the administration (and the risk) were passed to the lessee who, in return, paid a lower rent.¹¹ A beneficial lease normally ran either for a term of years (usually 21) or for three lives.¹² The institution levied a high entry fine, followed by a low annual ‘reserved’ rent, well below the current market rental value of the holding. Importantly for what follows, the lessee was liable for a substantial fine upon renewal which (in a 21-year lease) was normally every seven years, or (in

⁸ The tax listings covering the c. 23,500 acres of Romney Marsh Level (for the year 1768) noted some 447.0 acres belonging to the Dean and Chapter and 293.5 acres to All Souls College. However, by cross-checking the schedules with the *History* it was (again) discovered that both institutions owned considerably more land on the Level than previously thought (i.e., with revised totals of 1045.0 acres and 567.0 acres to the Dean and Chapter and All Souls College respectively). I am grateful to Dr. Stephen Hipkin for supplying his database compiled from EKAC S/Rm/Fsz10.

⁹ Hipkin, ‘Landownership’, p. 6.

¹⁰ See above, p. 18.

¹¹ Traditionally, church-owned (and collegiate) property was let via the beneficial lease system. Dunbabin, ‘Oxford and Cambridge College Finances, 1871-1913’, pp. 631-47. See also Clay, ‘Whig bishops’, pp. 128-157; Heaton, ‘Corporate estate management’, pp. 86-7.

¹² In theory, three lives were reckoned the equivalent of 21 years. According to sixteenth century parliamentary statutes, no church or college property could be let for more than 21 years or three lives (land) or for 40 years (buildings). Clay, ‘Whig bishops’, pp. 132, 141.

a lease for three lives) upon death (or ‘dropping’ of a life). A reduced fine was payable if one life was exchanged for another.

For the lessee, a beneficial lease was regarded as one of the most profitable financial propositions available. Lessees were rentiers, pure-and-simple, and it was cheaper to lease church-owned land in this way and sub-let it at a decent profit, rather than buy freehold land and do the same. Hence, land leased in this way normally stayed in the long-term possession of the lessee and could remain in the same family for generations. A lessee could also sell his interest in a holding in much the same way as his own land. Moreover, where sublet, the lessee (not the institution) was regarded as the owner by the subtenant. Substantial lessees of church-owned land were usually every bit a match for their ecclesiastical landlords in terms of wealth and status, thus relatively easily gaining the upper hand in their dealings with the churchmen. It would be no exaggeration to say that large corporate bodies generally had no accurate knowledge of what their estates consisted of exactly, never mind what they were actually worth. Hence, it was not hard for a lessee to be economical with the truth in these matters if it suited him.¹³ And the institution would be none the wiser.

Ideally, having invested in a beneficial lease for three lives, a lessee – by paying only the small annual ‘reserved’ rent – could look forward to a healthy financial return. After all, he was leasing very substantial acreage that, where geography allowed, could be split into two or more units, all relatively large, with each one sublet to a practicing farmer at a rack rent. Such optimism presupposed that the lives named in the lease did not fall – or ‘drop’ - like flies. And therein lay the catch. Bearing in mind that mortality rates in early modern England were sometimes inordinately high, it was to be expected that before too long, a life would ‘drop’, thereby precipitating a renewal fine with the insertion of a new life into the agreement. Hence, a lessee knew full well that he might have to fork out more than one hefty sum within a short space of time if two or more lives ‘dropped’ one after the other. And all with sizeable cash flow implications. Conversely, it was always possible that long periods could be enjoyed without any lives ‘dropping’ at all, considering that despite high mortality rates, a remarkable degree of toughness and longevity characterized the lives of many.¹⁴ Thus, while beneficial leasehold could work to the lessee’s detriment, it could – and generally did - also work to his advantage. Even so, for the lessee, the system was something of a lottery.¹⁵

Yet this could cut both ways. This was especially true if an institutional body (reckoning on filling their coffers with the proceeds of a renewal fine) had to wait patiently for many years before anyone named as a life finally took to their deathbed. Indeed, the law of averages in this

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 137-8, 146-8, 152-3.

¹⁴ Mingay, *English landed society*, p. 80; Clay, ‘Landlords and estate management’, pp. 292-4; Chambers, *Population economy and society*, pp. 1-29.

¹⁵ Clay, ‘Whig bishops’, pp. 141-4.

respect worked firmly against the financial interests of institutions granting leases for lives. Thus, it was generally recognized that a lease for three lives was more valuable than one for 21 years. Moreover, between c.1660-1760, 'there was a steady improvement in the life expectancy of both male and female members of the propertied classes' which, although good news for them, only made matters worse for the institutions reliant on lives 'falling' to pocket their fines.¹⁶ Not unexpectedly then, there was, post-1660, a fairly widespread and prolonged move among church- and collegiate bodies who, with the odds stacked against them in this particular respect, tried to coax their lessees away from leases for lives to terms of years.¹⁷ Hence, on 4 October 1763, the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester wrote to lessee Lord Irvin, expressing the intention to change the terms of the tenancy agreement on the grounds that 'the Lives in your Lordship's Lease have been extremely beneficial to your Family (no renewal having been made with ye Chapter since ye year 1717). *But they might have been very much the reverse.* Whereas a lease of 21 years, renewable every 7 years, prevents *all this uncertainty & great Inequality.*'¹⁸ How the recipient responded to this letter we do not know. We *do* know however that institutions were met with considerable resistance to change and could make only very gradual progress.

The Dean and Chapter of Christ Church Canterbury was the largest institutional landowner on Romney Marsh in the eighteenth century. Yet its interests were not confined to the marsh, but spread across several counties in southern England. In the 1720s it too was concerned to address the inequalities in the system. Thus, the Dean and Chapter's auditor did some research into 12 holdings held by leases for lives. Over a selected 21-year period, he found only two instances in which three lives had fallen, while two lives had 'dropped' in another three cases. Significantly, only one life had fallen in each of the remaining seven leases over the given period. In the early nineteenth century, the exercise was repeated, only this time on 241 leases covering the previous 75 years. It was found that on average, one life was equivalent to 13 years and three months – virtually double the 'book value' of one life for every seven years.¹⁹

Nonetheless, and in common with large institutions generally, there were, for the Dean and Chapter, some important compensations in the beneficial leasehold system. True, the annual 'reserved' rent *was* a mere fraction of the current going market rental value; but at least income was reliable, and arrears or vacant holdings most unlikely. Moreover, the churchmen were free from the bother of administration, having seen to it that the lessee did all the donkey-work. Importantly too, the substantial entry fine received by the institution provided the security that the 'reserved' rent would be regularly paid for the duration of the agreement.²⁰

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

¹⁷ On the Dean and Chapter's rural estate in England there was, between c. 1630 and c. 1800, a gradual move from leases for lives to terms of years. Heaton, 'Corporate estate management', pp. 84-7.

¹⁸ Italics mine. Cited in Clay, 'Whig bishops', p. 143; *id.*, 'Lifeleasehold', p. 85; Heaton, 'Corporate estate management', pp. 86-7, 147.

¹⁹ Clay, 'Whig bishops', pp. 140-1.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 140-1.

The beneficial lease system then, was the *modus operandi* of the Dean and Chapter. We will now explore the fortunes of the 1875.5 acres of marshland that made up the so-called 'Fairfield estate'. The name derived from the fact that some 1581.5 acres lay on Walland, and comprised a consolidated area that took up virtually all of the parish of Fairfield itself. However, an additional 294.0 acres spilled-over into the marsh-edge parishes of Appledore, Ebony and Stone. In 1738 the estate was split into two large units, and let to two substantial absentee rentiers, the Countess Rockingham and the Duchess of Marlborough.²¹ Both sublet the entirety of their holdings to a number of practising farmers. Rockingham's share of the estate will be considered first.

Rockingham's interests comprised some 1137.5 acres in all, held on beneficial lease for three lives, for which supporting information can be found in Tables 7.2(a) to 7.2(d). The estate included the above-mentioned 294 acres that lay on the marsh-edge, with the remaining 843.5 acres on Walland. The lease included the small tithes of Fairfield, collected by the lessee, and which brought in, on average, £23-15s-0d per annum. The lease also stipulated that the lessee was responsible for paying the annual salary of £50 to the curate of Fairfield.²² Rockingham's annual outpayments to the Dean and Chapter totalled £160-6s-3½d, including the 'reserved' rent of £95-13s-4d.²³ The lessee was also liable for a substantial fine upon renewal in the event of a death (or 'dropping' of a life). The figure was negotiable, but arrived at via a calculation that relied on an agreed figure as to the gross market rental value per annum. Yet arriving at a mutually agreed figure was usually a moot point, considering that lessees generally were extremely reluctant to be open in this respect. Fortunately for the churchmen however, the lessees of the Fairfield estate were rather more than usually forthcoming in this regard. Once an amount was agreed, it was converted to a net figure by deducting annual outpayments (in this case, £160-6s-3½d).²⁴ To calculate the fine, the Dean and Chapter used a standard rate of one-and-a-half years' purchase.²⁵ Thus, as Table 7.2(d) shows, the fine payable (in 1733) by Rockingham's predecessor was set at £1214.²⁶ Payment of the fine was tantamount to purchasing an annuity which after outpayments bought £812 per year in rental income from the estate. In theory, and all things being equal, this income would be coming in each year for the next seven years, based

²¹ Interest in Rockingham's 843.5 acres of marshland was, c. 1710, vested in Sir Henry Furnesse of Waldershare, east Kent. In 1735, the entire Kent estate passed in the female line to Furnesse's granddaughter, Katherine who (in 1737) became the Countess Rockingham. For convenience, this part of the Fairfield estate will hereinafter be referred to as Rockingham's Fairfield estate. EKAC U471 – North MSS. See also Hasted, *History*, 8, pp. 380, 442.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 381. Rev. Thomas Cobb of Lydd. See above, p. 88.

²³ The evidence suggests that the 'reserved' rent included the small tithes.

²⁴ Heaton, 'Corporate estate management', p. 122. See also Clay, 'Lifeleasehold', p. 83.

²⁵ The 'year's purchase' referred to the amount a holding yielded in annual rent and (with the number of years) the amount required for this income to yield the purchase price. In the eighteenth century, reference was normally made to Tables compiled by Sir Isaac Newton. Heaton, 'Corporate estate management', p. 122. Clay, 'Lifeleasehold', p. 88.

²⁶ The fine had been prompted by the 'dropping' of the life of Sir Robert Furnesse.

on the 'book value' noted above. Hopefully, the fine would yield this level of income for considerably longer, provided the law of averages worked in the lessee's favour and no lives fell.

So far so good. Except that rather inconveniently, lives were not in the habit of 'dropping' at regular seven-year intervals; and in 1735 - just two years later - another life 'dropped'. This time, it cost the lessee £1821, made up of another £1214 to insert a 'new' life, plus £607 to exchange one life for another.

As Table 7.2(d) shows, from c.1723-39 the gross rental income on the estate came to £972 per annum. However, after deducting outpayments this was reduced by 16.5 per cent, leaving a net figure of £812. Moreover, in order to take renewal fines into account (based on the theory of one life for every seven years) an additional sum of around £3675 would be required over the 21-year term. Effectively then, from the net income of £812, a further £175 per annum (21.5 per cent) was needed to be set aside to cover renewal fines. However, as we have seen, within a short space of time Furnesse had been obliged to lay out all of £3035. In 1735 then, it was lessee who found himself at the sharp end of the beneficial leasehold system.

Not so the Dean and Chapter, thanks to these, their latest winnings. Subsequently, it was their turn to feel the pinch. A full 33 years elapsed before they could claim (in 1768) the next renewal fine. Another 19 years ensued - and not a fine in sight. Finally, in September 1787, the Dean and Chapter received encouraging news that not only one- but *two* fines were in the offing. Yet for all that, they discovered they were expected to exercise yet more patience when, on opening a letter from Rockingham's successor Lord Guilford, they were met with the following appeal:-

'Since I came into Oxfordshire, a Death has happe'd on my Lease of Fairfield, by that of the late Earl of Shrewsbury, it comes very quick after the Death of Lord Bolingbroke, *and I must recommend my self to your mercy with that of the Chapter.* When I know my fine, I will endeavour to muster up money to add a new Life at the next Chapter, which I believe is to be some time in next November. The estate has been raised, I think as much as it will bear.'²⁷

Fortunately for the churchmen, Lord Guilford had no hesitation in letting them know all about the true rental value of the Fairfield estate upon which the fines would be based. He continued,

I enclose an account of the present Rent, and a Copy of the paper which was given me of the setting of the fine upon the last renewal ... I thought you would like to have from me, what information I could give relating to this Estate ... '²⁸

²⁷ Italics mine. Letter dated 16 September 1787. EKAC U471 E11/12.

²⁸ EKAC U471 E11/12.

With two lives falling in quick succession, the churchmen pocketed something of the order of £3216 in fines. However, all Lord Guilford stood to gain in return for his honesty was a clear conscience.

Large institutions had neither the time, the expertise nor the local knowledge to manage their estates on a commercial basis, and preferred to pass on the risk and the responsibilities to the lessee in return for a lower rent. This was all-well-and-good for the lessee when everything was running smoothly, but altogether a different matter under more difficult economic conditions, such as those encountered c.1730-50 when, in the wider, national rural economy, many tenants found it hard to pay the rent, or fell into arrears. And, inevitably, landlords suffered the knock-on effects. In line with broader trends, the marsh economy was adversely affected. Hence, it is telling that in 1738, Rockingham was faced with the job of finding new tenants for three of the four holdings on the Fairfield estate.

The timing, in the light of this shortage of tenants, was decidedly inconvenient. Barely three years had passed since the estate had forked out two lots of renewal fines. Yet the prospect was now looming that the vast proportion of Rockingham's 1137.5 acres could soon be lying empty. The estate was split into four units, ranging from 92.0 – 616.0 acres, as set out in Tables 7.2(a) to 7.2(c). The smallest farm, known as Fairfield Court, was occupied by marsh grazier James Knight, who paid £65 per annum rent.²⁹ This farm was the only one of the four holdings where the tenant intended to stay in occupation. Fairfield Parsonage House and 110 acres already lay empty. This farm had been occupied by a Wealden farmer, one John Betts of Halden who had faced financial problems. Those responsible for administering Betts' affairs had managed to settle up the £90 rent due at Michaelmas 1737; and this, for Rockingham, was fortunate, considering that earlier in 1737 Betts had got himself into financial hot water elsewhere on the marsh. Indeed, Betts' plight had been serious enough to warrant inclusion on the agenda of the General Sessions meeting of the Walland Marsh Sewers Commission on 1 June 1737, during which it was noted that '..... a distress had been taken on [Betts'] lands ... The stock was going to be sold, and the Scots like to be lost. Upon which the Bailiff and Clerk seized two bullocks and sold them for the Wains and Doubles, which according to the Custom of Romney Marsh are always allowed to be taken after the Scots which are not collected by the Clerk have been returned to the Bailiff ...'.³⁰

The remaining two holdings were occupied by substantial Wealden farmers. Richard Hope leased 319.5 acres for £253 per annum; Samuel Curteis occupied the 616.0-acre holding known as 'Beckett's Farm' for which he paid £540 per annum. Both men, domiciled in Tenterden,

²⁹ Fairfield Court remained in the continuous occupation of the Knight kinship group until the second decade of the nineteenth century. EKAC U471 T98/8; EKAC S/W SI8; EKAC S/W SI9.

³⁰ CKS U951 E12.

ranked among the town's wealthiest inhabitants.³¹ Furthermore, the scale of the marshland facet of their farming operations is underlined by the fact that by virtue of their interests on the Fairfield estate, they occupied, between them, nearly four per cent of the square area of Walland Marsh.³² Yet even Hope and Curteis were not immune from the effects of the economic slump, and it is argued here that they gave notice to quit because they were among the group of substantial dual-regional farmers who were forced to scale-down their operations and pull off the marsh - if not permanently, then at least until there was an improvement in the pastoral economy (as was the case with Hope's subsequent return).³³

For Rockingham, Hope and Curteis' impending exodus was, potentially, a serious blow. In the first place, these two farms, between them, generated £793 in rental income, nearly 82 per cent of the Fairfield estate's total annual rent. Secondly, neither holding had seen a change in occupancy for nearly 30 years; both Hope and Curteis were long-established, substantial tenants.³⁴ Clearly, their decision to leave had not been taken lightly, and given the size of their farms, their withdrawal implied a sizeable downshift. Furthermore, only relatively recently had the lessee parted with £3035 in fines and consequently the estate could ill-afford a rental void of any sort. Whilst Rockingham would have enjoyed all the trappings of society's wealthiest elite, in 1738, the only ongoing income that, as lessee, he could be confident of receiving from the Fairfield estate was £23-15s-0d in small tithes plus £65 for Fairfield Court – hardly enough to cover half of the annual outpayments to the Dean and Chapter.

The situation was serious enough to warrant the prompt services of one Robert Loftie, attorney-at-law.³⁵ Loftie placed a series of advertisements in the *Kentish Post*. For the Parsonage House and land, a tenant was found relatively quickly. However, the £90 arrears on the holding, owed by Betts since 1737, were not recovered until the autumn of 1740 and, after legal costs, left just £78-5s-6d.³⁶ Although the rent stayed the same for the incoming tenant the occupancy was short-lived: in 1745, the lease was not renewed. And the only way to get another tenant was to drop the rent to £75 per annum. Indeed, it was 1759 before £90 was again achieved on this farm.

³¹ Assessed at £180, Curteis was (in 1723) Tenterden's foremost occupier (out of a total of 203 occupiers) while Hope (at £64) was well within the top ten per cent. Furthermore, the predominance of the Curteis kinship group was reflected by the fact that their overall assessment amounted to £668 (£538 as rentiers and owner-occupiers, £130 as tenants). In total, this represented a 14.5 per cent share of Tenterden's parish total. CKS P.364 12/2; Hasted, *History* 7, p. 212. For further discussion of Curteis' interests on the marsh-edge, see above, pp. 98-99.

³² i.e., 603.5 acres in all, which excluded the remainder of Curteis' farm lying in the surrounding parishes.

³³ Having vacated this holding, Hope's marshland operations had all-but ground to a halt, were it not for some 17 acres that (until 1738) he rented out to marsh grazier Isaac Barling of Brookland. By 1748 Barling had made alternative arrangements and Hope reverted to farming this 17-acre holding direct. By 1758 – by which time the economy was beginning to improve – Hope began to recover his position by taking on 106 acres belonging to absentee rentier Sir Edward Hales, while continuing to owner-occupy the 17 acres. EKAC S/W/SI 1; EKAC S/W SI2.

³⁴ EKAC U471 A1 (c. 1710); EKAC U471 A274 (c. 1723-31).

³⁵ See above, p. 46.

³⁶ EKAC U471 A9.

Becketts Farm was also, initially at least, taken on by a Wealden farmer, John Marshall of Halden. Yet again this was a short-lived occupancy; by 1745 Marshall had left and a marsh grazier - George Carter of New Romney - took occupation of the farm. However, Carter's interest in this 616.0-acre holding was combined with the 319.5-acres that (following Hope's departure) he had occupied since 1738/9. Thus, from 1745, with 935.5 acres, Carter now occupied the lion's share of the Fairfield estate. Moreover, compared with the £793 rent previously achieved, the slightly reduced amount (£783) agreed with Carter was probably a reflection of the weak market for tenancies. The expansion of Carter's operations in this way is also a classic example of the activities of substantial marsh-domiciled graziers who, as outlined above, accumulated acreage relatively cheaply in the wake of retreating dual-regional farmers. The extent and speed of Carter's expansion is further underlined by the fact that prior to 1738 his interests on Walland amounted to just 76.0 acres, all of which he owner-occupied. Within a decade then, Carter had succeeded in joining the ranks of marsh-based tenants of 200 acres plus, whose numbers not only nearly doubled during the early eighteenth century, but whose share of acreage increased by the same proportion.³⁷

These findings have shown that Rockingham's Fairfield estate did not escape unscathed from the adverse effects of the depressed marsh economy that was also a reflection of the unfavourable climate for producers prevailing over much of England at the time. While the estate did indeed display some symptoms of the agricultural depression, such as rent arrears, a vacant holding, and rent reductions to attract tenants, Rockingham had, under the circumstances, paid a relatively small price compared to many landlords elsewhere in the country.³⁸ Yet, by virtue of being a beneficial leasehold estate, this holding was part of a system that could be unpredictable in the extreme, one minute working to the advantage of the institution, and the next minute, to the advantage of the lessee. There were long periods with a fine nowhere to be seen by either party, and then they arrived, one after the other, as they did (in 1733-5). The latter scenario, for the lessee, occurring in a depressed marsh economy and with an uncertain market for tenancies, would have been annoyingly expensive at the time. However, with hindsight, and viewed over the long-term, it was perhaps seen as nothing more than a temporary glitch.

The remaining 738 acres of the Dean and Chapter's Fairfield estate were vested in the Duchess of Marlborough. The entirety was sub-let. In 1738, the holding was split between four tenants, including up-and-coming marsh grazier Thomas Denne, domiciled in the small marsh township of Lydd. Unlike the more obvious signs of wealth in Hope and Curteis' home town of Tenterden, Lydd's outward appearance was modest by comparison. Governed by a bailiff and jurats, and

³⁷ Hipkin, 'Landownership', pp. 71, 83-4.

³⁸ See above, pp. 12-3.

enjoying the rights and privileges of a Cinque Port it was barely more than half the size of its Wealden counterpart.³⁹

In 1738 Denne leased 247 acres of Marlborough, which made up the entirety of his occupied acreage on the marsh. As we will see, the landlord's preference to let in large units was a factor that (indirectly) enabled Denne to acquire all 738 acres in the 33 years to 1771. In contrast to George Carter of New Romney and other marsh-domiciled graziers who absorbed the acreage no longer wanted by wealden/uplands farmers, Denne took on acreage occupied by *marsh*-domiciled tenants as opportunities arose. In the process, Denne joined Carter in the group of large marsh-based occupiers whose share of acreage doubled in the early-eighteenth century.

In 1738 Marlborough leased a further 297 acres to one James Pelham, also of Lydd, whose occupation of 1026.5 acres rendered him the most substantial occupier by far on Walland/Denge.⁴⁰ Marlborough's third unit (172 acres) was sub-let to Samuel Goddard, while John White occupied the remaining 22 acres. By 1748, Goddard had taken on White's holding in addition to the block he already occupied. Pelham's death resulted in the 297 acres formerly in his occupation being split between Denne (109 acres) and Thomas Shoosmith (188 acres). Like his neighbours Pelham and Denne, Shoosmith was also part of an established Lydd-based kinship group whose wealth ensured their place among the town's privileged few.

By 1758, Denne had also taken occupation of the late Samuel Goddard's 192-acre unit and by 1771 he occupied the entire 738 acres (of which 128 acres were held in partnership with kinsman John). This had been achieved in little more than 30 years, by taking advantage of every opportunity as land became available. At the age of 73 then, Thomas Denne had risen to become the second most substantial individual occupier on Walland/Denge.⁴¹

As for college-owned land on Walland, in 1738, All Souls College Oxford owned some 1265.0 acres, and Magdalen College a further 70.0 acres. Magdalen College land was let as one unit and sublet until 1781, after which it was farmed direct by the lessee. In contrast to the absentee rentiers of the Dean and Chapter, whose holdings were sublet, All Souls' tenants, almost without exception, farmed direct throughout the period.⁴² In 1738, the estate was split into five units, three of which were let to substantial graziers, James Brett, Charles Coxsell and James Pelham. All three, like Denne, hailed from Lydd and all, at one time or another, were serving members of

³⁹ See above, p. 10.

⁴⁰ EKAC S/W/SI 1.

⁴¹ In 1771, in addition to the 738.0 acres occupied of Marlborough, Denne owner-occupied a further 161 acres, plus 58.5 acres occupied of five different landlords.

⁴² Also note that between 1738-91, of the 17 occupiers (including three joint tenancies) only one partnership (Dover-based) and one Wealden farmer were domiciled off the marsh. The evidence also indicates stability over time in landlord-tenant relationships. EKAC S/W/SM1.

the marsh administration's governing elite.⁴³ By 1748, the largest block (401 acres) was occupied by Mark Skinner, yet another substantial Lydd inhabitant.⁴⁴ In 1722, Skinner's father had left 'Goods, Chattells, Creditts and personal Estate' valued at £2,768-1s-10½d, including 2,274 sheep (worth £1,256-5s-0d), wool valued at £367-0s-0d and 51 cattle (worth £167-16s-0d) – an impressive inventory reflecting wealth that would have matched any one of Tenterden's more prosperous residents.⁴⁵ Mark Skinner ranked in the same group of substantial marsh tenants who had, during the earlier half of the eighteenth century, greatly increased their occupied acreage. As will be seen in section two, leasing additional land was not the only way in which these substantial marsh-dwellers built-up their operations from c.1760; capitalizing on improved market demand that characterized the marsh economy and, with the resources readily to hand, they purchased, bit by bit, acreage to farm direct. Thus, these marsh-dwelling livestock specialists progressed from a position of owning little if any land to one in which, as owner-occupiers, they stood with some of the larger landowners on the marsh.

2. The structure of private landownership, c. 1730-90.

In this section, trends in the structure of private landownership are explored from three different angles. For the period 1738-91, Tables 7.3(a) and 7.3(b) set out numbers of owners by size group and the proportion of acreage owned by each. Tables 7.4(a) and 7.4(b) outline the structure of owner-occupation from 1738-91, while Table 7.4(c) follows this through to 1821. For the years 1738 and 1791, Tables 7.5(a) and 7.5(b) show the proportion of acreage owned by those who were exclusively rentiers as well as semi-rentiers (namely, practicing farmers who were tenants and/or owner-occupiers, but who also owned acreage that they rented out). Similarly, Table 7.6 shows the proportion of acreage belonging to each category of owner.

Tables 7.3(a) and 7.3(b) demonstrate that between 1738-91, numbers of owners fell by 16.5 per cent. Nearly two-thirds of this decline took place over the c. 20 years (to 1761), with the biggest fall among small owners (of less than 50 acres). By contrast, large owners (200 acres or more) saw the biggest rise in both numbers and acreage. The decline in numbers of owners can to some extent be accounted for by the strong correlation with total taxed acreage. For example, the year 1738 witnessed the highest number of private owners (229) as well as the highest privately-owned taxed acreage (16345.75 acres). Conversely, 1791 saw the lowest figures in both respects. Another contributing factor was the piecemeal acquisition of acreage by a number of marsh-based graziers so that, over time, the cumulative effect resulted in some consolidation, particularly at the bottom end of the scale.

⁴³ By 1748 Denne, as a Commissioner on the Walland Marsh Sewers Commission, was also part of the administration's governing elite. Charles Coxsell served as Bailiff of Lydd. In 1738 he ranked third largest occupier on Walland/Denge by virtue of his occupation of 659.5 acres, nearly a third of which belonged to All Souls College. EKAC S/W/SM1.

⁴⁴ Skinner also served as a Sewers Commissioner. EKAC S/W/SM1.

⁴⁵ EKAC S/WD SM1; CKS PRC 27/41/94.

In respect of owner-occupiers, Table 7.4(a) demonstrates that between 1738-58, the proportion of acreage farmed direct fell relatively steeply, from 11.0 per cent to 7.4 per cent of total taxed acreage. Similarly, the number of owner occupiers fell from 60 to 41. Within two decades then, Walland/Denge had seen around 35 per cent of its owner-occupiers pull out of farming direct. Why was this?

Part of the explanation lies in the intrinsically flexible landownership structure that characterized Kentish rural society.⁴⁶ On Romney Marsh landowners had long been, in the main, rentiers, and increasingly so in the century following the Restoration.⁴⁷ The predominance of rentiers, in acreage terms, by 1738, is illustrated in Table 7.5(a), which demonstrates that all but one of the 17 large owners (of 200 acres plus) were exclusively rentiers.⁴⁸ However, many other marsh landowners were semi-rentiers. And they came in all shapes and sizes.⁴⁹ In 1738 while the vast majority (c. 80 per cent) of owners each had less than 100 acres to their names, they shared less than 40 per cent of total acreage. Significantly however, nearly half of these smaller owners were both hands-on farmers and semi-rentiers, leasing out at least some (if not all) of the land belonging to them. Moreover, this gave them the flexibility to shift between renting out or farming direct, depending on what best suited them at the time, not least the impact of prevailing economic conditions.⁵⁰

The economic circumstances of the period c. 1738-60 were not dissimilar to those experienced a century earlier by sheep farmers looking to make a good return from wool production. From the 1620s a fall in prices heralded a prolonged period of economic depression, resulting in the withdrawal of many smaller occupiers from the marsh. In the absence of comprehensive landownership data, the consequences for small owners cannot be measured precisely, although Hipkin concluded that 'erstwhile direct farmers (*probably*) took the rentier option in greater numbers ...'.⁵¹ As we will now see, this was indeed what many owner-occupiers on the c. 16,500 acres of Walland Marsh decided to do between 1738-48.⁵²

In 1738, some 1683.25 acres on Walland were farmed direct by 53 individuals. By 1748 only 38 were left, owner-occupying 1138.25 acres - a fall of roughly a third in numbers and acreage. Hence, within a decade, 24 of Walland's owner occupiers - just over 45 per cent - had pulled out. Significantly however, 15 of these 24 farmers retained ownership of their land, but had opted to

⁴⁶ See above, pp. 19-20.

⁴⁷ Hipkin, 'Landownership', p. 74. The majority were absentees, drawn from the gentry and aristocracy.

⁴⁸ The exception was one Robert Mascall, who owner-occupied 128 acres of the 298 acres belonging to him. He leased an additional 43 acres of one landlord. EKAC S/W SI 1.

⁴⁹ See above, pp. 20, 94. See also Chalklin, *Kent*, pp. 1, 55-7, 59; Hipkin, 'Landownership', p. 86.

⁵⁰ By 1748, Mascall had taken the rentier option on all but 28 acres of his land. By 1758 he was again farming the entire holding direct, and then a significant portion of it until 1771. Thereafter Mascall's heirs acted as rentiers to a number of tenants.

⁵¹ Italics mine. Hipkin, 'Landownership', p. 86.

⁵² The decade 1738-48 was chosen due to the survival of landownership data, albeit confined to Walland.

rent it out instead of farming direct. Included among them was George Carter of New Romney who (in 1738) owner-occupied 76 acres.⁵³ As we have seen, by 1745, Carter was committed to an 11-year lease for 658.5 acres of Rockingham's Fairfield estate. This had not only rendered him Walland's third largest occupier, it had also significantly increased his overheads, by setting him back £783 in annual rent. It is feasible that the scale of Carter's expansion may have been determined, at least in part, by the Dean and Chapter's policy to rent out in large blocks. This alone could have stretched Carter's resources to the point where, in order to recoup, he opted to lease out the acreage hitherto farmed direct.

Neither was William Pattenson of Biddenden among Walland's 38 owner-occupiers in 1748, despite ranking the fourth largest owner-occupier in 1738, with 97 acres. In contrast to the marsh-domiciled George Carter whose interests had grown apace, Pattenson's were shrinking. Like Hope and Curteis, he was, in LTA terms, a substantial occupier in his home parish.⁵⁴ And, like them, his response to the depressed economic climate was to wind-down the marshland facet of his operations, although not in the same way or to quite the same extent. Indeed, Pattenson took a different approach. He could have vacated the 241-acre holding in 1747, on expiry of the lease, while continuing to farm the 97-acre unit direct. Instead, Pattenson kept the former, and took the rentier option on the latter. As far as the 241-acre unit was concerned, the Pattensons were in for the long haul, and stayed for the next c. 40 years. The circumstances surrounding Pattenson's decision to vacate the land in 1774 will be more fully explored in the chapter to follow.

Two more uplands farmers had, by 1748, withdrawn from the marsh. The first, John Mascall of Ashford, belonged to a kinship group with (c. 1746) widespread rentier interests across the marsh hinterland.⁵⁵ In 1738 however, the 84 acres Mascall farmed direct comprised the entirety of his occupied acreage on Walland. By 1748, it was leased to a marsh dweller. By 1758, it was again owner-occupied. As with Wealden farmer Richard Hope's subsequent return to the marsh, Mascall's come-back is another example of what (for some at least) was a temporary retreat.

Secondly, dual-regional farmer George Wightwick of Willesborough/Hinxhill who, as we have earlier seen, was a substantial occupier in his home parish, and occupier of 20 acres of Knatchbull land in Mersham. Wightwick (Walland's ninth largest owner occupier in 1738) was yet another example of a dual-regional farmer withdrawing from the marsh at this time. Unlike Mascall, who later made a come-back to the marsh, there was no sign of Wightwick.

⁵³ In addition he occupied 48 acres of kinsman Dr. William Carter.

⁵⁴ See above, p. 100. Pattenson's LTA of £105 (all owner-occupied) rendered him Biddenden's second largest occupier and fifth largest owner in 1759. CKS Q/CTL (Biddenden).

⁵⁵ In Sussex, Peasmarsh (1745); in Kent, Wye, Boughton Aluph, Willesborough, Hinxhill, Kennington (1746); Woodchurch, Halden (1756/9).

Considering that he was already 65 years old in 1748, Wightwick's age may have partly explained his withdrawal – with the adverse economy perhaps tipping the balance.⁵⁶

Thus, by 1748, four relatively large owner-occupiers - Carter, Pattenson, Mascall and Wightwick - had all pulled out of farming direct. Indeed, their combined acreage accounted for more than half of the land coming out of owner-occupation over the decade.⁵⁷ Pattenson, Mascall and Wightwick were all dual-regional farmers and, it may be suggested here, their withdrawal was a response to depressed economic conditions. George Carter by contrast, became a prime example of a relatively large marsh grazier taking on the acreage of those pulling out. At the same time however, Carter's successful expansion, as we have seen, also culminated in what was to be a permanent withdrawal from owner-occupation.

We come now to the second of the two distinct and contrasting economic phases in which (from c. 1760) a rising population fuelled consumer demand and better prices for agricultural produce. Demand for land increased markedly, with strong competition for tenancies as well as for land to buy. This broader picture was, yet again, mirrored in the micro-economic context of the marsh.

From c. 1760, Table 7.3(b) shows that small owners on Walland/Denge were again the ones to experience the biggest fall in acreage - and large owners the greatest gain. By 1791, more than half of all privately-owned acreage belonged to large owners (of 200 acres plus). Particularly noticeable was the increasingly strong position held by owner-occupiers. For example, Table 7.4(b) shows that from 1771-91, the proportion of owner-occupied land on Walland/Denge rose steadily, from 12.5 per cent to 21.5 per cent of total taxed acreage, with numbers of owner-occupiers increasing from 54 to 77. Moreover, in just 20 years to 1791, there had been a sizeable shift in the structure of owner-occupation insofar as the number of large owner-occupiers (of 100 acres-plus) more than doubled (from 7 to 15), and with their share of acreage rising to 58.2 per cent. At the other end of the scale, small owner-occupiers (of less than 50 acres) saw a fall of more than 10 per cent in both numbers and acreage.

In 1791, the ratio of rentiers to semi-rentiers, at roughly 6:4, had seen little change since 1738. Nevertheless, there had been a sizeable shift in the proportion of acreage belonging to each group. As Table 7.5(a) demonstrates, while (in 1738) an overwhelming 83.2 per cent of privately-owned acreage belonged to rentiers pure-and-simple, by 1791 this had fallen to 72.5 per cent, as shown in Table 7.5(b). All but one in the group of large owners (of 200 acres or more) were, in 1738, exclusively rentiers. Yet by 1791, there were six practicing farmers in this size

⁵⁶ See above, p. 139. By 1748, the 60.5-acre unit belonging to Wightwick was rented out to up-and-coming marsh grazier John Skinner.

⁵⁷ Life-cycle changes were behind much of the remaining owner-occupied acreage being rented out by 1748. For example, 12 owner-occupiers are known to have died between 1738-48, with heirs acting as rentiers on six holdings.

group – three of whom (Snoad, Denne and Terry) were marsh dwellers.⁵⁸ Likewise, surnames such as Knight, Munn, Shoosmith and Skinner also figured among established marsh-dwelling kinship groups who had, by 1791, become substantial owner-occupiers.

It is argued here that improved market demand from c. 1760 was the driving force behind the rise in owner-occupation. Marsh-based graziers such as those referred to above, with plenty of capital behind them, got hold of land to farm direct wherever and however they could. The nature of the eighteenth century land market was limited, with comparatively little acreage ever coming onto the open market. Consequently, prospective purchasers relied on word of mouth and their local, ‘insider’ network to alert them of any land coming up for grabs.

Broadly speaking, the eighteenth century land market was restricted insofar as perhaps as much as half of England’s acreage was tied up in marriage settlements and annuities. Many owners were, effectively, not free to sell at will. Indeed, it has been estimated that c. 1750, around half of the country’s land was ‘involuntarily kept off the market’ as a consequence of the strict settlement.⁵⁹ Yet land could also be rapidly released. The way in which this national context was reflected on the marsh can be seen in the way Sir Wyndham Knatchbull waited several years before (c. 1746) an opportunity arose to buy more land.

For some time, the baronet had been on the look-out for more acreage specifically on Walland. Relying on his local knowledge, he had even jotted down the names of a few contacts known to him with interests there. Thus on 20 June 1734 he noted that ‘Rutton and Hooker have no land in Walland Marsh, nor has Mr. Lake any. Persons that have land there ... are Dr. Turney, Mr John Tritton, *John Eve*, Pattenson, Blackmores.’⁶⁰ And, as noted above, John Eve was well known to Knatchbull. As well as occupying the baronet’s 2-acre ‘Longhose’ field, Eve also happened to be Mersham’s top-ranking occupier. As one of the (untitled) lesser gentry, Eve could not boast quite the same social standing as the baronet, and neither was he a substantial rentier with a country estate. The only land that actually belonged to Eve was just 52 acres of marshland which lay in White Kemp watering. This was ideal for Knatchbull because all of his interests on Walland lay in White Kemp. The 52-acres had originally come into the Eve family in the form of a dowry upon the marriage of John’s parents, Henry and Elizabeth. Henry Eve, as a marsh-uplands farmer, had farmed this acreage direct until his death in 1727.⁶¹ He left instructions that the land,

⁵⁸ The others were domiciled in Tenterden (Blackmore and Curteis) and Ashford (Mascall).

⁵⁹ Mingay, *Gentry*, pp. 10, 110; R. C. Allen, ‘The price of freehold land and the interest rate in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries’, *EcHR*, XLI (1988), pp. 36, 39; H. J. Habakkuk, ‘Marriage settlements in the eighteenth century’, *Trans R. Hist. Soc.* 32 (1950), p. 18; id., ‘England’s nobility’ in D. A. Baugh (ed.), *Aristocratic government and society in eighteenth century England* (1975), pp. 99, 110-11.

⁶⁰ Italics mine. CKS U951 E12.

⁶¹ The Eve kinship group occupied 278 acres on Walland in 1686. I am grateful to Dr. Stephen Hipkin for supplying this information.

liable to the dower of Elizabeth my wife ... [be devised] ... after my wife's decease unto my son John Eve ... In trust nevertheless and to the end intent and purpose that my son [as executor] ... do and shall sell and dispose of the Freehold and Inheritance thereof by sale ... and pay the Monies thereby arising, for and towards the several portions or legacies by me ... bequeathed.⁶²

It happened that during his mother's widowhood Eve was not mindful to occupy the land himself. He leased it to Wealden grazier Robert Beale who (in 1741) renewed the agreement for another five years.⁶³ Following the death of Eve's mother (c. 1746) he then had to fulfill his obligations as executor of his late father's will, and sell the holding. And, as we have seen, Knatchbull, on the look-out for land had, in the recent past, conveniently inherited £60,000. His insider knowledge would have given him first refusal. And so, it was a done-deal. There was no need for Eve to advertise, for word-of-mouth was advertisement enough. It is suggested that this way of doing business was usual, so that comparatively little land/property coming up for sale ever reached an 'open' market, so-called. Evidence from the *Kentish Post* lends support to this idea, as we will now see.

Appendix 3, Tables 3.1(a) to 3.4(b) show, at 10-year intervals (from 1738-68) the number of farms and land units advertised for sale/to let. In 1738, only one of the four marsh holdings advertised for sale was located on Walland. This comprised c. 130 acres, owned by the heirs of an absentee rentier, with a London-based attorney as a point of contact. By 1748, ownership had passed to another absentee rentier. In 1748 just two marshland holdings were advertised for sale, both of which lay on Walland. Again, both old- and new owners were probably absentee rentiers. In 1758, no acreage whatsoever came up for sale anywhere on the marsh, while in 1768, just two marsh holdings were advertised, neither of which lay on Walland. Post-1768, anyone leafing through the property section of the *Kentish Post* would probably not have much to choose from. With demand for land steadily increasing, it was ever-more likely to be snapped up as soon as word got out. With this in mind, the way in which marsh-based graziers went about buying additional acreage to farm direct will now be explored.

The steadily increasing activity in the market for land to buy can be detected in the Walland/Denge tax schedules. Between 1757-91, there were 92 recorded instances in which a total of nearly 3,300 acres changed hands. In the main, this acreage was acquired by marsh dwellers intending to farm direct. Generally, the amounts involved each time were relatively small - on average, around 30 acres. In 1757/8, just 89.0 acres were noted as having changed

⁶² Henry Eve bequeathed seven legacies (totalling £1,060), including £400 to each of Eve's two daughters, plus £100 to grandson William Edmunds on reaching 21 years. Provision was also made for William's keep and education, with John Eve to 'keep him and instruct him in grazing and find him in meat, drink and apparel til he comes of age ...'. CKS PRC17/86/35.

⁶³ He did not renew at the end of the term (in 1746). Instead, Henry Terry of Brookland rented the land until Jeremiah Read took occupation. For further discussion see chapter eight.

hands. In 1761, a further 291.5 acres had passed into the ownership of marsh-dwellers to farm direct and, by 1771, a further 285.5 acres. Thomas Denne was among this group, and we have already seen the way in which he built up his operations as Marlborough's tenant. Yet in 1738 he owned no land whatsoever, and was nearly 50 years old before making his first purchase (by 1748) of 33.5 acres.⁶⁴ By 1771 – aged 73 – Denne was a relatively large owner-occupier in his own right, having purchased an additional 128 acres from the heirs of an absentee rentier. By 1791, these activities had taken Denne's successor (David) into the group of larger marsh landowners of 200 acres-plus.

A good proportion of the acreage becoming available was bought up by the Shoosmiths of Lydd. Like the Skinners, the Shoosmiths illustrate the scale of the resources that could be at the disposal of substantial marsh graziers. In 1727, Thomas Shoosmith's moveable assets totalled £1,296-11s-0d, including livestock (£387-11s), wool (£67-17s) and a further £666-7s in security, bills and bonds.⁶⁵ His wealth expressed in this way, the value of Shoosmith's farming operation slightly exceeded those of 'the goods and chattels' left by the late Sir Wyndham Knatchbull who, as we know, was the largest private landowner on the marsh.⁶⁶ Furthermore, as indicated by the £666-7s-0d that Shoosmith had invested in securities and bonds, this marsh grazier had clearly made enough money to accumulate a large amount of surplus cash. It is suggested here that there would be no better way for Shoosmith's successors to spend their money than to purchase acreage to farm direct. While the appraisal of the late Shoosmith's moveable assets was indicative of one form of prosperity, this marsh-dwelling kinship group, unlike Knatchbull, had little wealth tied up in land. In 1738, they owned just 66 acres, 64 of which were owner-occupied, with the remaining two acres rented out. Between 1738-81, the Shoosmiths bought, for their own occupation, 267.5 acres, in 14 parcels, from 11 different owners.

Importantly, from the early 1770s, demand for land on the marsh, whether to rent or to buy, outstripped supply. Graziers bought land whenever and however they could get hold of it. In 1775, one Henry Earl, a substantial marsh grazier, was keen to acquire acreage belonging to friend and neighbour Robert Tilden. He also knew that Tilden did not have long to live and after his death the land would be sold off. The problem for Earl was not a shortage of cash with which to buy. Rather, it is suggested here, his concern was the high demand for land – and Earl knew he had to get in first. So he asked Tilden for first refusal. Thus, Tilden added, on his deathbed, a postscript to his will stipulating that Earl '... may have the first Offer of my Land and houses when ever wonted to be sold.'⁶⁷ The deaths of marsh-dwellers often prompted the purchase of acreage by their neighbours. They also bought up land they were already occupying of absentee

⁶⁴ Clay has suggested that men in the eighteenth century were more likely to be middle-aged, and towards the end of their working lives, before buying up land. C. Clay, 'Price of freehold land', p. 185.

⁶⁵ CKS PRC27/42/24.

⁶⁶ Knatchbull's inventory, taken in 1749, amounted to £1,233-9s-5d, including livestock (£234-14s-0d), crops (£225-19s-0d) and horses (£76). CKS U951 E14.

⁶⁷ 18 May 1775. CKS PRC 17/99/464.

landlords willing to sell. These matters open up leading questions about the dynamics of the land market, and the extent to which social considerations may, or may not, have mitigated commercial considerations.

By 1781 there had been a marked acceleration in purchases, with 23 individuals, again mostly marsh dwellers, acquiring 1073.5 acres. By 1791 however, this had shot up by another 50 per cent, with 1559.0 acres changing hands, involving 46 former owners. The evidence points decisively to the fact that in the rising market of the c. 30 years from c. 1760, buying up land for owner-occupation was a more attractive strategy for substantial marsh-based graziers than it had been in the less favourable climate witnessed in the first half of the eighteenth century.

Although the years post-1791 are outside the scope of this dissertation, a substantial body of additional evidence for the period 1801-21, and presented in Table 7.4(c), has disclosed a far more distinct picture as to the chronology of change in owner-occupation between 1768-1834. As Table 7.4(b) shows, by 1791, owner-occupation had reached 21.5 per cent of total taxed acreage, a figure already in excess of Hipkin's findings for 1834.⁶⁸ And Table 7.4(c) demonstrates that the proportion of acreage farmed direct continued to rise over the c. 30 years from 1791-1821. Initial findings show that by 1801, it stood at 27 per cent of total taxed acreage, and by 1811 had reached just over 31.3 per cent. By 1821, at 35.0 per cent, it had peaked. By 1834 then, and running at 19 per cent, owner-occupation was clearly in the throes of a decline that had begun up to a decade earlier. How, then, can these trends be accounted for?

The continuing rise in owner-occupation was the result, not simply of rising consumer demand or of a rapidly increasing population; there were also the effects of the Napoleonic wars. The war years brought even greater demand for land, with rents escalating to unprecedented levels. As a contemporary remarked of the first decade of the nineteenth century,

'Every purchase of land ... whether made with or without judgment, turned out favourably according to the then market rates, and it was supposed, in consequence, that money could in no way be so profitably employed as in buying land. Speculations, therefore, in land ... became general, and credit came in aid of capital for that purpose.'⁶⁹

The availability of credit gave aspiring owner-occupiers a further incentive to buy additional acreage, spurred on by the profits to be had by the steady rise in meat prices that reached a high point in 1813.⁷⁰ In the aftermath of war, there followed a period of country-wide economic

⁶⁸ Hipkin, 'Landownership', p. 76.

⁶⁹ T. Tooke, *History of prices*, I (1838), p. 326, cited in Chambers and Mingay, *Agricultural revolution*, p. 117.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

depression, falling prices, falling rents, and many farmers facing bankruptcy. The knock-on effect was a fall in the number of small owner-occupiers. It was perhaps partly because, in a wider, national context, livestock farmers were not quite as adversely affected as those with mainly arable operations that on Walland/Denge, the effects were not felt with such intensity. The fact that the decline in owner-occupation on the marsh occurred in the decade from 1821 may in part be due to a credit squeeze in the early 1820s, consequent on the widespread failure of country banks and the return of the gold standard in 1821. In a national context, it has been suggested that farmers who particularly suffered as a result of these financial difficulties were those who had earlier borrowed money to fund the purchase of acreage to farm direct.⁷¹ With a drop in the circulation of paper money, lenders were forced to call in their loans, and so many decided to sell their land and revert to leasing acreage instead. In addition, a severe epidemic of sheep rot in 1831 exacerbated the situation for sheep farmers. Further research will be needed to determine whether the fall in owner-occupation on the marsh was due to farmers selling up or whether some of them took the rentier option, as their predecessors had done in the unfavourable economic climate that marked the early- to mid- seventeenth century and the c. 20 years to c.1750.

This chapter has looked at hitherto unexplored aspects of corporate landownership on Walland/Denge, in particular the beneficial leasehold system. It has been shown that although the system of granting leases for three lives could (and did) operate well and to the mutual advantage of both parties, the unpredictability in the timing of renewal fines could also render the system a lottery for the lessee as well as the churchmen. The impact of this aspect of the system has been considered in the light of the economic slump, c. 1730-50. The fortunes of dual-regional farmers who retreated from the marsh in the wake of these difficulties have also been highlighted, as has the resourcefulness of marsh-based graziers who took advantage of the situation to make economies of scale.

These findings have added considerably to our understanding of the chronology of change in landownership structures for the two c. 30 year periods either side of 1768. It was found that the picture corresponded very roughly with Hipkin's broader landscape, insofar as in acreage terms, larger owners had strengthened their position, while numerically, small owners predominated throughout, although (by 1791) to a slightly lesser extent. The results have revealed, for the first time, the proportion of rentiers relative to semi-rentiers and changes over time, showing that the balance between the two had altered little between 1738-91, remaining at roughly 6:4, and with pure rentiers keeping the lion's share of acreage. The inherent flexibility in the landownership structure has also been demonstrated, insofar acreage tended to stay in uninterrupted ownership, but with owners shifting between renting out or farming direct.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 131-2.

These results have also shed further light on the chronology of change in owner-occupation between 1686-1768. The years c.1738-58 have been pinpointed as the time when owner-occupation fell by around one third in numbers as well as acreage, demonstrating that owner-occupation bottomed-out a decade earlier than previously appreciated, and was lower than hitherto realized. It has also been shown that during this time, many owner-occupiers retained ownership of their land, but rather than farm direct, took the rentier option in response to falling market demand. This scenario was very much as Hipkin had suspected happened from the 1620s.

From the late 1760s onwards, the way in which some marsh graziers bought up land for their own occupation has been explored. By a process of piecemeal acquisition, these marsh-dwellers progressed from a position of owning little if any land to one of being substantial owners in their own right. Thus, it was, to a considerable degree, the initiative of the practising farmer with cash in the bank who shaped, over time, shifts in the landownership structure on Walland/Denge. The evidence also suggests that not before middle-age did they take their first steps into landownership.

These findings, for Walland/Denge, have also shed light on the nature of the market for land to buy. They suggest that together, a sense of community plus kinship- and business networks acted as a hot-house to the local land market. And, combined with increased demand, they made for a heady mix. These themes will be further explored within the discussions to follow in chapter eight.

Table 7.1(a): The structure of corporate landownership on Walland/Denge, 1738-61.

Name	1738				1757/8				1761			
	Lessees		Sub-tenants		Lessees		Sub-tenants		Lessees		Sub-tenants	
	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A
Dean and Chapter	2	1581.5	10	1580.5	2	1580.5	7	1580.5	2	1635.0	7	1635.0
Colleges ¹	7	1335.0	1	70.0	5	1334.5	1	70.0	5	1334.5	1	70.0
Lydd Corp.	2	73.0	-	-	2	73.0	-	-	1	60.0	-	-
Poor	4	78.0	-	-	4	78.0	-	-	3	76.0	-	-
Sewers' Comms	1	7.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Church	11	271.5	-	-	13	420.0	-	-	14	366.5	-	-
TOTAL	27	3315.5	11	1650.5	26	3486.0	8	1650.5	25	3486.0	8	1705.0
Total taxed acreage	19661.2				19482.5				19391.75			
Corp-owned land as %	16.9				17.9				18.0			

Sources: EKAC S/W SI1; S/W SI2; S/W SI3; S/D SI1; S/D SI2; S/D SI3.

¹ All Souls College, Oxford and Magdalen College, Oxford (whose 70-acre holding was sublet).

Table 7.1(b): The structure of corporate landownership on Walland/Denge, 1771-91.

Name	1771				1781				1791			
	Lessees		Sub-tenants		Lessees		Sub-tenants		Lessees		Sub-tenants	
	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A
Dean and Chapter	2	1636.5	7	1635.5	2	1636.0	8	1635.0	2	1630.0	7	1630.0
Colleges ¹	5	1334.5	1	70.0	5	1373.5	-	-	5	1373.5	2	642.5
Lydd Corp.	2	73.0	-	-	1	60.0	-	-	1	60.0	-	-
Poor	4	78.0	-	-	5	91.0	-	-	6	94.0	-	-
Sewers' Comms	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Church	11	333.0	-	-	11	351.0	-	-	10	284.5	-	-
TOTAL	24	3455.0	8	1705.5	24	3511.5	8	1635.0	24	3442.0	9	2272.5
Total taxed acreage	19544.25				19574.25				19312.5			
Corp-owned land as %	17.6				17.9				17.8			

Sources: EKAC S/W SI4; S/W SI5; S/W SI6; S/D SI4; S/D SI5; S/D SI6.

¹ All Souls College, Oxford and Magdalen College, Oxford (whose 70-acre holding was sublet in 1771 and 1791).

Table 7.2(a): Rockingham's Fairfield estate: (1) Fairfield Court and c. 92 acres, c.1723-1802.

Date	Rent p.a. £
1738-73	65
1773-95	90
1795-1802	110

Sources: EKAC U471 A274; EKAC U471 E11/1-30; EKAC U471 T97/6-14; EKAC U471 T98/6-10; EKAC U471 T104/4-6; EKAC U471 T113/1-7; EKAC U471 A9.

Table 7.2(b): Rockingham's Fairfield estate: (2) Fairfield Parsonage House and c. 110.0 acres, c.1723-1805.

Date	Rent p.a. £
c. 1723-36	90
1736-7	90
1737-8	90 ¹
1738-45	90
1745-59	75
1759-79	90
1779-98	120
1798-1805	146

Sources: EKAC U471 A274; EKAC U471 E11/1-30; EKAC U471 T97/6-14; EKAC U471 T98/6-10; EKAC U471 T104/4-6; EKAC U471 T113/1-7; EKAC U471 A9.

¹ Vacant – rent received in 1740.

Table 7.2(c): Rockingham's Fairfield estate: (3) Becketts Farm and (4) 319.5 acres, c.1723-1800.

Date		Rent p.a. £
c. 1723-38	(3)	540
c. 1723-38	(4)	253
1738-45	(3) ¹	490
1738-45	(4)	293
1746- 66	(3) and (4) let together	783
1766-73	“	800
1773-93	“	1000
1793-1800	“	1300

Sources: EKAC U471 A274; EKAC U471 E11/1-30; EKAC U471 T97/6-14; EKAC U471 T98/6-10; EKAC U471 T104/4-6; EKAC U471 T113/1-7; EKAC U471 A9.

¹ The rent reduction (to £490) on Becketts Farm was due to the fact that 'Becketts Salts' was let as part of the 319.5 acre holding, which saw a proportional rent increase (to £293).

Table 7.2(d): Rockingham's Fairfield estate, c. 1723-1800: rents, outpayments and fines.

Dates	Rent p.a. £	Outpayments £	Outpayments %	Net less outpayments £	Net as % of rent p.a.	Fine £
1723-39	972	160	16.5	812	83.5	
1733						1214
1735						1821
1739-45	962	160	16.6	802	83.4	
1745-59	947	160	16.9	787	83.1	
1759-66	962	160	16.6	802	83.3	
1766-73	979	160	16.3	819	83.6	
1768						1227

Sources. EKAC U471 A274; EKAC U471 E11/1-30; EKAC U471 E18/17; EKAC U471 T97/6-14; EKAC U471 T98/6-10; EKAC U471 T104/4-6; EKAC U471 T113/1-7.

Notes. (a) Acreage. Total for all four holdings = 1137.5 acres. Circa 1723, Sir Robert Furnesse noted that these marshland interests yielded around 16/6d per acre. EKAC U471 A274.

(b) Rent p.a. The amount paid to Rockingham by tenants. This was inclusive of tithes, reckoned at £24 per annum on average.

(c) Outpayments. Annual outpayments to the Dean and Chapter comprised £95-13s-4d 'reserved' rent; £50 salary to curate; £0-7s-3d quit rent to Fairfield Manor; £14-5s-8½d, comprising one-seventh of £100 'double rent' due every seven years. Total = £160-6s-3½d.

(d) Fines. In 1733, a renewal of one life; in 1735, one renewal and an exchange (at half the rate for renewal); in 1787, two renewals.

Table 7.3(a): The structure of private landownership on Walland/Denge, 1738-61.

Private Owners	1738				1757/8				1761			
	Nos.	%	Acres	%	Nos.	%	Acres	%	Nos.	%	Acres	%
<10 acres	34	15.3	154.75	1.0	36	16.7	133.25	0.8	34	16.6	119.25	0.8
10-<20	31	13.6	451.5	2.7	26	12.1	397.0	2.5	23	11.2	339.0	2.1
20-<50	67	29.3	2110.5	12.9	62	28.8	1992.0	12.3	57	27.8	1828.0	11.4
50-<100	50	21.8	3727.5	22.8	47	21.9	3453.0	21.4	47	23.0	3475.0	21.7
100-<200	29	12.6	3810.5	23.3	25	11.6	3204.0	20.0	24	11.7	3140.0	19.6
200-<500	14	6.1	3894.5	23.8	16	7.5	4670.0	29.0	17	8.3	4870.5	30.4
>500 acres	3	1.3	2196.5	13.5	3	1.4	2247.75	14.0	3	2.0	2248.0	14.0
Total, privately-owned	229	100.0	16345.75	100.0	215	100.0	16097.0	100.0	205	100.0	16020.25	100.0
<20 acres	65	28.6	606.25	3.7	62	28.8	530.25	3.3	57	27.8	458.25	2.9
20-<100	118	51.4	5838.0	35.7	109	50.7	5414.5	33.7	104	50.7	5303.0	33.1
>100 acres	46	20.0	9901.5	60.6	44	20.5	10121.75	63.0	44	21.5	10259.0	64.0
Mean acreage per private owner ¹			71.5				75.0				78.3	
Owner-occupied land ²			2181.25	13.4			1451.75	9.0			1699.25	10.6
Ownership unknown			73.0				0.0				18.0	
Corporately owned land			3315.5	16.9			3486.0	17.9			3486.0	18.0
TOTAL taxed acreage			19661.25				19482.5				19391.75	

Sources: EKAC S/W SI1; S/W SI2; S/W SI3; S/D SI1; S/D SI2; S/D SI3.

¹ Mean acreage expressed as a percentage of privately-owned acreage.

² Owner-occupied land expressed as a percentage of privately-owned acreage.

Table 7.3(b): The structure of private landownership on Walland/Denge, 1771-91.

Private Owners	1771				1781				1791			
	Nos.	%	Acres	%	Nos.	%	Acres	%	Nos.	%	Acres	%
<10 acres	32	15.1	120.25	0.8	37	17.4	108.25	0.7	41	21.5	151.75	1.0
10-<20	25	11.8	359.0	2.2	28	13.2	407.5	2.5	17	8.9	240.0	1.5
20-<50	62	29.2	2021.0	12.6	61	28.7	1920.0	11.9	50	26.2	1637.5	10.3
50-<100	52	24.5	3867.5	24.0	40	18.9	2998.5	18.7	38	19.9	2674.0	16.9
100-<200	20	9.4	2591.0	16.1	26	12.3	3487.5	21.7	22	11.5	2945.0	18.5
200-<500	19	9.0	5437.0	33.8	18	8.5	5381.5	33.5	21	11.0	6177.0	38.9
>500 acres	2	1.0	1693.5	10.5	2	1.0	1759.5	11.0	2	1.0	2045.25	12.9
Total, privately-owned	212	100.0	16089.25	100.0	212	100.0	16062.75	100.0	191	100.0	15870.5	100.0
<20 acres	57	27.0	479.25	3.0	65	30.6	515.75	3.2	58	30.4	391.75	2.5
20-<100	114	53.7	5888.5	36.6	101	47.6	4918.5	30.6	88	46.0	4311.5	27.1
>100 acres	41	19.3	9721.5	60.4	46	21.8	10628.5	66.2	45	23.6	11167.25	70.4
Mean acreage per private owner ¹			76.1				76.0				80.1	
Owner-occupied land ²			2455.25	15.3			3249.5	20.3			4153.25	26.1
Ownership unknown			22.0				0.0				0.0	
Corporately owned land			3455.0	17.6			3511.5	17.9			3442.0	17.8
TOTAL taxed acreage			19544.25				19574.25				19312.5	

Sources: EKAC S/W SI4; S/W SI5; S/W SI6; S/D SI4; S/D SI5; S/D SI6.

¹ Mean acreage expressed as a percentage of privately-owned acreage.

² Owner-occupied land expressed as a percentage of privately-owned acreage.

TABLE 7.4(a): The structure of owner-occupation on Walland/Denge, 1738-1761

Own Occ'd	1738				1757/8				1761					
	Nos.	%	Acres	%	Nos.	%	Acres	%	Nos.	%	Acres	%		
<50 acres	46	76.6	892.75	41.0	32	78.0	487.25	33.6	30	75.0	456.25	26.9		
50-<100 acres	10	16.7	739.5	34.0	5	12.2	325.5	22.4	5	12.5	316.5	18.6		
100 acres-plus	4	6.7	549.0	25.0	4	9.8	639.0	44.0	5	12.5	926.5	54.5		
Total	60	100.0	2181.25	100.0	41	100.0	1451.75	100.0	40	100.0	1699.25	100.0		
TOTAL taxed acreage			19661.25	11.0				19482.5	7.4				19391.75	8.7

Sources: EKAC S/W SI1; S/W SI2; S/W SI3; S/D SI1; S/D SI2; S/D SI3.

Note. In 1738, some 1683.25 acres were farmed direct by 53 farmers on the c. 16,500 acres of Walland. Additional evidence for 1748 shows that only 38 owner occupiers were left on Walland, with 1138.25 acres.

Table 7.4(b): The structure of owner-occupation on Walland/Denge, 1771-91.

Own Occ'd	1771				1781				1791					
	Nos.	%	Acres	%	Nos.	%	Acres	%	Nos.	%	Acres	%		
<50 acres	38	70.4	672.75	27.4	50	70.4	679.75	21.0	46	59.8	646.25	15.5		
50-<100 acres	9	16.6	666.0	27.1	10	14.1	716.5	22.0	16	20.7	1091.0	26.3		
100 acres-plus	7	13.0	1116.5	45.5	11	15.5	1853.0	57.0	15	19.5	2416.0	58.2		
Total	54	100.0	2455.25	100.0	71	100.0	3249.25	100.0	77	100.0	4153.25	100.0		
Total taxed acreage			19544.25	12.5				19574.25	16.6				19312.5	21.5

Sources: EKAC S/W SI4; S/W SI5; S/W SI6; S/D SI4; S/D SI5; S/D SI6.

Table 7.4(c): The structure of owner-occupation on Walland/Denge, 1801-21.

Own Occ'd	1801				1811				1821			
	Nos.	%	Acres	%	Nos.	%	Acres	%	Nos.	%	Acres	%
<50 acres	74	67.9	1363.25	25.6	89	70.0	1569.75	26.0	98	72.0	1829.75	27.7
50-<100 acres	19	17.4	1402.0	26.4	20	15.8	1387.0	23.0	22	16.2	1644.5	24.9
100 acres-plus	16	14.7	2552.5	48.0	18	14.2	3062.5	51.0	16	11.8	3134.0	47.4
Total	109	100.0	5317.75	100.0	127	100.0	6019.25	100.0	136	100.0	6608.25	100.0
TOTAL taxed acreage			19528.0	27.0			19223.25	31.3			18840.0	35.0

Sources: EKAC S/W SI7; S/W SI18; S/W SI19.

Table 7.5(a): Private landownership on Walland/Denge, 1738 – rentiers and semi-rentiers.

Private owners	Less than 100 acres				100 - <200 acres				200 acres plus				Total		Total	
	Nos	%	Acres	%	Nos	%	Acres	%	Nos	%	Acres	%	Nos	%	Acres	%
Rentiers	98	42.8	5102.0	31.2	20	8.7	2660.0	16.2	16	7.0	5889.0	36.0	134	58.5	13651.0	83.5
Semi-rentiers	85	37.1	1342.25	8.2	9	3.9	1150.5	7.0	1	0.5	202.0	1.2	95	41.5	2694.75	16.5
Total	183	79.9	6444.25	39.4	29	12.6	3810.5	23.2	17	7.5	6091.0	37.2	229	100.0	16345.75	100.0

Sources: EKAC S/W SI1; S/W SI2; S/W SI3; S/D SI1; S/D SI2; S/D SI3.

Note. Under 'Acres', the figure of 2694.75 acres is made up of 2181.25 acres (owner-occupied), and a further 513.5 acres let by semi-rentiers. See also Table 7.6.

Table 7.5(b): Private landownership on Walland/Denge, 1791 – rentiers and semi-rentiers.

Private owners	Less than 100 acres				100 - <200 acres				200 acres plus				Total		Total	
	Nos	%	Acres	%	Nos	%	Acres	%	Nos	%	Acres	%	Nos	%	Acres	%
Rentiers	85	44.5	2958.5	18.7	12	6.3	1666.0	10.5	17	8.9	6809.75	42.9	114	59.7	11509.25	72.5
Semi-rentiers	61	32.0	1744.75	11.0	10	5.2	1279.0	8.0	6	3.1	1412.5	8.9	77	40.3	4361.25	27.5
Total	146	76.5	4703.25	29.7	22	11.5	2945.0	18.5	23	12.0	8222.25	51.8	191	100.0	15870.5	100.0

Sources: EKAC S/W SI14; S/W SI15; S/W SI16; S/D SI14; S/D SI15; S/D SI16.

Note. Under 'Acres', the figure of 4361.25 acres is made up of 4153.25 acres (owner-occupied), and a further 208.0 acres let by semi-rentiers. See also Table 7.6.

Table 7.6: Walland/Denge, 1738 and 1791: landownership by type

1738 - owned by	Acres	%
Rentiers	13651.0	69.5
Semi-rentiers	513.5	2.6
Owner-occupiers	2181.25	11.0
Corporate bodies	3315.5	16.9
Total taxed acreage	19661.25	100.0

1791 - owned by	Acres	%
Rentiers	11509.25	59.6
Semi-rentiers	208.0	1.1
Owner-occupiers	4153.25	21.5
Corporate bodies	3442.0	17.8
Total taxed acreage	19312.5	100.0

Sources: EKAC S/W SI1; S/W SI2; S/W SI3; S/D SI1; S/D SI2; S/D SI3; S/W SI14; S/W SI15; S/W SI16; S/D SI14; S/D SI15; S/D SI16.

Chapter eight. Landlord-tenant relations on Walland/Denge, c. 1730-90 – aspects of land occupation structures.

This chapter will build on the findings of chapter seven. The main body of what follows will be presented as two case studies. Both are quite possibly unique insofar as they comprise first-hand, near-verbatim accounts drawn from a series of conversations surrounding negotiations for the renewal of leases. They afford a remarkable insight into the balance of power in landlord-tenant relations in two distinct and contrasting economic contexts. The first case study, set in the 1730s-40s, coincides with a period of weak market demand, while the second is set in the rising market of the 1770s. Throughout the period, tenant initiative and market demand helped to re-shape landownership land occupation structures.

Between c. 1730-50, while substantial dual-regional farmers pulled off the marsh, specialist marsh-based graziers took advantage of the situation, making economies of scale by accumulating additional acreage relatively cheaply. From c. 1760, these resourceful marsh-dwellers continued to expand by buying up acreage in piecemeal fashion to farm direct. As a consequence, there was an overall increase in numbers of large occupiers (200 acres-plus) as well as a five per cent increase in the proportion of acreage occupied by them. The data in Tables 8.1 and 8.2 demonstrate this. In 1738 there were 28 farmers who occupied 200 acres or more. These figures disguise the fact that at least 17 were marsh-dwellers, occupying 58.2 per cent of the acreage in this size group. Table 8.2 illustrates that in 1791 there were 31 occupiers of 200 acres-plus. Significantly however, 23 of these (73 per cent) were marsh-based, so that the proportion of acreage occupied by marsh-dwellers in this size group had risen substantially, to 77.4 per cent.

These findings mark a contrast to recent results covering the 43,500 acres of the Romney Marsh region (for the years 1746 and 1800) and for the Level (1746 and 1790) which show a *drop* in numbers and proportion of occupied acreage by large tenants, a trend also broadly mirrored in the LTA evidence.¹ This has been seen as a natural outcome of the difficulty experienced by this size group in hanging onto substantial amounts of acreage because in a rising market, rentiers could let small units at a premium.² Marsh acreage was in such demand that by c. 1780, contemporary observer Daniel Jones complained, ‘it requires almost as much interest to get at, as it would to procure a place at court, and besides, of late years it is become so excessively dear as to be hardly worth the hazard of using.’³ Rentiers and tenants alike were ever-more conscious of the growing financial rewards to be had by letting or farming marshland acreage. This awareness was becoming increasingly apparent in a wider, national context, as demand for land gained momentum. Significantly for what follows, it was largely this upward spiral that encouraged a revival in demand for surveying, as rentiers realised that once the true extent of their holdings

¹ Hipkin, ‘Landownership’, p. 78, Table 4(b) and p. 82, Table 7. See above, pp. 100-2.

² *Ibid.*, p. 71.

³ Jones, ‘Sheep farming’, p. 7.

Table 8.1: The structure of land occupation on Walland/Denge, 1738-61.

Occupiers	1738				1757/8				1761			
	Nos.	%	Acres	%	Nos.	%	Acres	%	Nos.	%	Acres	%
<20 acres	53	27.6	440.5	2.2	35	19.9	192.0	1.0	30	18.0	182.5	1
20-<100	83	43.2	4473.0	22.8	82	46.6	4353.75	22.3	77	46.1	4221.25	21.8
100-<200	28	14.6	3774.75	19.2	32	18.2	4394.5	22.6	29	17.3	3845.5	19.8
200 acres plus	28	14.6	10973.0	55.8	27	15.3	10542.25	54.1	31	18.6	11142.5	57.4
TOTAL	192	100.0	19661.25	100.0	176	100.0	19482.5	100.0	167	100.0	19391.75	100.0
Mean acreage per occupier			102.4				110.7				116.1	
Owner-occupiers	60	31.2			41	23.3			40	24.0		

Sources: EKAC S/W SI1; S/W SI2; S/W SI3; S/D SI1; S/D SI2; S/D SI3.

Table 8.2: The structure of land occupation on Walland/Denge, 1771-91

Occupiers	1771				1781				1791			
	Nos.	%	Acres	%	Nos.	%	Acres	%	Nos.	%	Acres	%
<20 acres	42	23.6	253.5	1.3	43	24.7	240.0	1.2	39	24.2	284.75	1.5
20-<100	74	41.6	4169.25	21.3	66	38.0	3525.25	18.0	63	39.1	3270.5	17.0
100-<200	32	18.0	4273.5	21.9	38	21.8	5456.5	27.9	28	17.4	3950.5	20.4
200 acres plus	30	16.8	10848.0	55.5	27	15.5	10352.5	52.9	31	19.3	11806.75	61.1
TOTAL	178	100.0	19544.25	100.0	174	100.0	19574.25	100.0	161	100.0	19312.5	100.0
Mean acreage per occupier			109.8				112.5				120.0	
Owner-occupiers	54	30.3			71	40.8			77	47.8		

Sources: EKAC S/W SI14; S/W SI15; S/W SI16; S/D SI4; S/D SI5; S/D SI6.

were ‘knowne to the uttermost Acre’, rents could be maximised.⁴ In the second case study the impact, particularly for a tenant, of a landlord commissioning a survey to this end will be brought into sharper focus. It will be suggested that in a rising market, and in the absence of ties of social obligation, a tenant could find it hard to defend a holding, unless he was prepared for a bidding war.

In addition, the inherent historical contrasts between the Level and Walland/Denge probably had a bearing on differences in landholding structures and may explain a variation of roughly 20 per cent in mean acreage per occupier. In 1746 for example, this stood at 83.1 acres on the Level, and 104.4 acres on Walland.⁵ There was also a sizeable difference in mean acreage per private owner. For the nearest comparable dates (1768 for the Level and 1771 for Walland/Denge) these stood at 60.5 acres and 76.1 acres respectively. There were also, on average, fewer landlords per tenant on Walland than suggested by Hipkin’s findings for the Level. There is no economic reason to account for these variations, nor for those in respect of tenants of 200 acres-plus, because all c. 43,500 acres of Romney Marsh were subject to the same market conditions. In effect, there were fewer units of land available to prospective tenants on Walland/Denge than on the Level. It is suggested that these historic differences could, on Walland/Denge, reduce slightly the ‘flexibility and ready adaptability to changing market conditions’ that hallmarked the way in which acreage was available to tenants across Romney Marsh as a whole.⁶ This may also help to explain the general stability in landlord-tenant relations on Walland/Denge, a somewhat different scenario than the impression we currently have for the Level.

This then is the broad economic context within which the case studies are set. Covering nine years from 1734-43, the first case study is taken from Knatchbull’s ‘Hatch Memoranda’ journal and relates to 1193 acres, let in four units to substantial tenants. In that respect, it was of the same order as Rockingham’s Fairfield estate. On the Fairfield estate in the 1730s-40s, we saw marsh graziers make economies of scale as Wealden farmers retreated. We will see the same tendency in all but one of Knatchbull’s dual-regional tenants, with low wool prices specifically cited by one substantial Wealden farmer as a reason for withdrawal. Despite weak competition for tenancies generally, enough interest was shown in Knatchbull’s land to see that no holding lay empty.

Negotiations for land on the Fairfield estate were handled independently of each other. Those for Knatchbull’s land were on a different plane, often multi-faceted, taking in more than one unit (or one tenant) at a time. The marsh-domiciled Read kinship group played a central part in this,

⁴ Quoted in McRae, ‘To know one’s owne’, p. 341. See above, pp. 14-5.

⁵ See above, p. 95.

⁶ Hipkin, ‘Landownership’, pp. 75, 87-9. See above, p. 95-6.

notably Henry Read and Jeremiah (his younger brother).⁷ Both were proactive. In the 1730s, and intent on making economies of scale, the Reads asked Knatchbull for first refusal on land they were after, sometimes years in advance of a lease running out. And all within a depressed economy. As will be seen, the verbal exchanges between Henry Read, Walland's most substantial tenant, and Knatchbull, its biggest private landowner, are particularly revealing as to the balance of power in their relationship. As we have seen, the baronet acted as a Sewers Commissioner while Read served in the marsh bureaucracy. They had shared values and vested interests and were often in close contact.⁸

As we saw in chapter seven, many of these relationships were part of the 'insider' network that often determined the way in which the land market on the marsh operated. The motives and constraints at work for landlord and tenant will be drawn out of Knatchbull's first-hand account. Ties of social obligation, kinship links, and a sense of community sat alongside market considerations. These are the recurring themes that have a bearing on the tenor of landlord-tenant relations in the discussion to follow.

Set amid the increasingly competitive market of the 1770s, the second case study is taken from a series of letters written over four months (to February 1774) concerning terms for the renewal of a lease. The 241-acre holding in question, known as Little Cheyne Court, had been part of the Knatchbull estate from the sixteenth century. On the death of Sir Thomas Knatchbull (in 1711) it was inherited by his daughter Catherine and then passed by marriage to her first husband, Sir George Rooke, Admiral of the Fleet.⁹ By 1716, it was already occupied by substantial Wealden farmer William Pattenson of Biddenden who, as we have seen, retreated from the marsh in the 1740s.¹⁰ He continued as tenant of this holding until 1774. Whilst the farm remained in Rooke

⁷ The Read kinship group. 1. Henry Read. Depending on the date, references in the evidence would refer to any one of three generations, namely Henry Read I – b. 1684, d. 1754 aged 70; Henry Read II – b. 1720, d. 1777, aged 57; Henry Read III – b. 1751, d. 1775 aged 24. 2. Jeremiah Read (younger brother of Henry Read I) – b. 1693, d. 1768, aged 75. 3. William Read (Jeremiah's son) – b. 1749, d. 1776, aged 27. 4. John Read – b. 1728, d. 1781 aged 53. 5. John Munn – b. 1738, d. 1813, aged 75. Following the death of Henry Read III, John Munn inherited his leasehold interests of Knatchbull. Munn's background thus: in 1738, John Munn of Brookland occupied 64 acres of John Meers Fagge. Munn died in 1739, leaving a young widow (Elizabeth) and an infant son (John). Her death shortly afterwards left John an orphan. The late Elizabeth's father and sole executor, Henry Read I, was charged with John's upbringing, and to 'provide all things necessary as learning, meat, drink and apparel'. Read also took on the 64 acres farmed by his late son-in-law. In 1761 (and still owned by Fagge) it was occupied by John, now aged 23. He also took on a further 89 acres of the heirs of Mr John Tournay, of whom Read had previously been a tenant. Just as Henry Read II ranked Walland's most substantial tenant in 1771 (with 831 acres) so too did (in 1781) John Munn (with 1004 acres). KASMI (Brookland) refs. 596, 597, 604-6, 702, 705; CKS PRC17/19/21; CKS PRC17/95/78.

⁸ See above, pp. 44-7.

⁹ Hasted, *History*, 8, p. 403. Subsequently widowed, Catherine had (by 1725) married the Hon Rev. Dr. Henry Moore. Catherine died in 1755, followed by Moore some fourteen years later. Sir Edward Knatchbull, as one of the late Moore's trustees, received (on 26 March 1770) a legacy of £105. CKS U951 A22.

¹⁰ Pattenson was succeeded by his only son. A forebear, Roger Pattenson (originally from Yorkshire) bought Ibornden House, Biddenden in the early seventeenth century and this became the Pattenson country seat. Roger was sufficiently wealthy to buy (as well as build) several other properties in Biddenden. He

ownership, following Catherine's death Pattenson had to deal with agents acting on the landlord's behalf.¹¹ By 1773, with the current owner (another George Rooke) overseas in the Indies, affairs at home were managed (via power of attorney) by his father-in-law, one Robert Cooke, a London apothecary.¹² Cooke's diligence in having the extent of the farm's boundaries established precisely led him to employ cartographer Thomas Hogben of Smarden to conduct a survey. In Hogben, Cooke had chosen a highly reputable mapmaker, said to 'understand measuring land as well as any body you can employ'.¹³ Indeed, it was Hogben who had only recently surveyed the c. 23,000 acres of Romney Marsh Level on behalf of the marsh bureaucracy.¹⁴

The survey established that Little Cheyne Court was considerably larger than hitherto realised, and particular details shown on the map helped in the justification (if any were needed) of a rent increase. As we have seen, from c. 1770, the demand to buy or rent marsh acreage outstripped supply. This was reflected in the level of interest shown in the holding, and which the owner sought to turn into a bidding war. It will be shown that in setting the level of rent, Cooke would '*not give up a single shilling out of friendship to any one*'.¹⁵ Indeed, ties of social obligation were dwarfed alongside the purely market-led considerations guiding the owner's resolve to secure the best achievable rent.

Pattenson was anxious to continue as tenant, but not at an increased rent. His initial reaction to Cooke's offer was to seek legal advice from attorney (and kinsman) Josias Pattenson. He soon found out that any preconceived notions of goodwill or social obligation hitherto supposedly enjoyed with the landlord could not be relied upon to get the terms he desired. It will also be shown that the tenant had always known that the farm was 20 per cent larger than purported in previous lease agreements, while the owner only became aware as a result of the survey. It will be argued here that increasing the rent was a perfectly reasonable thing for the owner to do, especially in a competitive market. Pattenson's expectations, on the other hand, were unrealistic and probably atypical of a substantial marsh tenant in a similar situation. This is borne out by the weakness of the evidence mustered in support of his case which, as the attorney was at pains to explain, would be inadmissible in a court of law. Ultimately, Pattenson failed in his bid to continue in occupation, and the affair ended in acrimony.

died in 1638, aged 77. A descendant, Josias, left two sons, Josias and William (b. 1686, d. 1771, aged 85). The latter inherited Ibornden. Hasted, *History*, 7, p. 136; KASMI (Biddenden) ref. 256; EKAC S/W FS3.

¹¹ In 1755, the holding passed to George Rooke, a minor. By 1760 the young Rooke's father had died, and his mother (Ann) married one Robert Cooke. While Rooke was still a minor, Cooke and an executor (John Smart) had power of attorney over his estate.

¹² Cooke, by virtue of his marriage to Rooke's mother, Ann, was, strictly speaking, Rooke's step-father. However, the term 'father-in-law' has, hereinafter, been retained in the quotations used.

¹³ Beversham Filmer to Thomas Bates, farmer, Tenterden. (N.D., but c. 1762.) CKS U120 T78, 79.

¹⁴ See above, pp. 6-7.

¹⁵ CKS U2140 E25.

The chapter concludes by highlighting aspects of landlord-tenant relations on Knatchbull's acreage on Walland, c. 1760-90. Generally these were very stable. It will be suggested that the motives and constraints that lay behind the fortunes of Knatchbull's largest holding, occupied by Read, are open to interpretation. On the one hand, it is reasonable to suppose that even in a rising economy, landlord-tenant relations were not necessarily guided by the market alone, but were also influenced by ties of social obligation. Equally however, the strong historic links between Knatchbull and Read did not prevent, and may even have ameliorated, substantial rent increases on the marsh in the later eighteenth century.

1. Phase one, c. 1730-50 - the 'Hatch Memoranda' case study.¹⁶

In 1730, Knatchbull's interests on Walland extended to 1193 acres. Split into four units, two were occupied by substantial Wealden farmers, and the other two by marsh-based graziers.¹⁷ First for consideration are the outgoing tenants, all but one of whom were 'dual-regional' farmers retreating from the marsh.

Unit one comprised some 150 acres, let for £200 a year to Wealden farmer John Blackmore, whose kinship group had extensive landed interests on the marsh hinterland.¹⁸ Blackmore gave notice to quit on expiry of the current lease (at Michaelmas 1735). It is suggested here that Blackmore was scaling-down the marshland facet of his operations as a result of weak market demand.¹⁹ Despite this retreat, the tenancy was taken on by a partnership of Wealden-based farmers, Messrs Beale and Luckhurst.²⁰ Their occupancy was relatively short-lived.²¹ Having signed up for five years, with a 7.5 per cent rent reduction (to £185 a year) Beale decided to quit when the term ended (Michaelmas 1740). Luckhurst was prepared to stay, provided Knatchbull dropped the rent again and threw in some improvements. Hence, on 9 June 1740, Knatchbull 'Promised to give Luckhurst an answer, whether or not he should have my land at *£180 per annum, with a new washing tun ...*'.²² That Knatchbull had not refused Luckhurst's offer outright implied that no other interest had, as yet, been shown. Within just a few days he was offered £185 a year by marsh graziers Messrs Farnell and Barling. Knatchbull 'promised them, if no one offered more, and I heard a good account of them, to let them have it. And in case I

¹⁶ Unless otherwise stated, all quotations in this section come from Knatchbull's 'Hatch Memoranda' journal, CKS U951 E12.

¹⁷ On the estate's holdings on Romney Marsh Level, repair bills were allowed, while on Walland, tenants were liable.

¹⁸ This unit had been occupied by a Blackmore since 1684, if not before. CKS U951 A6. The LTAs have disclosed extensive rentier interests for Blackmore in 14 marsh-edge and Wealden parishes over the period.

¹⁹ Having given up this holding Blackmore continued to farm 189 acres direct, while occupying 15 acres as a tenant. Between 1738-48 he took the rentier option for 78 acres, although from 1758-91 this was again owner-occupied. By 1758, Blackmore had re-invested in the marsh, occupying a total of 423.5 acres.

²⁰ The LTAs have uncovered the substantial landed interests of the Beale kinship group in the marsh hinterland, with a total LTA of £642 spread across 18 parishes. Of this, the Beales occupied around £300 as tenants and £104 as owner-occupiers (mainly in Biddenden). The remaining £238 they rented out. CKS Q/CTL (1746, 1756, 1759); CKS Q/RPL (1780); ESRO ELT (1745); ESRO LT (1790).

²¹ The Fairfield estate followed a similar pattern.

²² Italics mine.

should let it to any body else, to send them notice of it.’²³ Their offer had clearly strengthened Knatchbull’s position, so that on 18 June 1740, when ‘Luckhurst came again and offered £180 for the land, without a new Tun’ the baronet turned him down – although not without first promising to give Luckhurst first refusal ‘if no more was offered’ although ‘in the meantime [Luckhurst was] at liberty to provide for himself elsewhere.’²⁴ The outcome with respect to the tenancy of this holding will be discussed later on.

In 1730, Wealden farmer George Stace occupied a 339-acre unit for £360 per annum. He belonged to one of the old-established, wealthy families of Tenterden, was its fourth largest landowner and had served as mayor eight times.²⁵ Apart from landed interests in another four Wealden parishes, he was also a specialist livestock farmer and ranked the ninth largest occupier on Walland in 1738. Of the 461 acres in his occupation, some 339 acres were Knatchbull’s. Stace was mindful to encourage a young relative into livestock farming, alongside another kinsman. Stace, in his mid-fifties and childless, would be looking to the long-term, and someone to whom he could hand over the business. Knatchbull recalled that on 6 October 1738, Stace expressed his intention to

bring a kinsman of his name into business and to join him with one Richard Gill (as I think) of Pluckley, and that if he took another Lease of my Land next Michaelmas it must be on the condition that he might, when he saw fit, with my consent, make it over to his kinsman and this Gill. That Gill was a man of substance and experience, and that as for his kinsman he was now but 17 years old, and when ever the Lease should be made over to them, he would be answerable for his kinsman. He further said that he would let me know more of this next year as soon as I should come down [from London] ...²⁶

We have seen that Knatchbull, quite rightly, was cautious about potential tenants who were an unknown quantity.²⁷ Yet with Stace, there was no risk to speak of; Stace was wealthy, and well-placed to act as guarantor. But Knatchbull refused to commit himself. ‘I would not promise to accept of these men at present’ he said, ‘and desired that we might understand each other as to that point. He said he understood me perfectly well ...’²⁸

²³ 12 June 1740.

²⁴ 18 June 1740. Luckhurst did just that. By 1748 he occupied 72 acres belonging to former partner Robert Beale.

²⁵ Stace was born in 1685 and died (childless) in 1753, aged 68. KASMI (ref. 270) Tenterden.

²⁶ 6 October 1738. CKS U951 E12.

²⁷ See above, p. 36.

²⁸ CKS U951 E12. With no surviving children, ‘Gill’ (Richard Giles of Pluckley) was one of the many beneficiaries of Stace’s fortune. His generosity to friends, relatives and indeed tenants, is borne out in the terms of his will. KASMI ref. 270 (Tenterden); CKS PRC 32/63/477.

The tenor of this conversation suggests that in October 1738, the idea of asking for a rent abatement had not occurred to Stace. This was not the case when they met up again eight months later, with the expiration of the lease fast approaching. The baronet recalled that with ‘Mr Stace’s lease being to expire at Mich[aelmas] next, he offered to take it for 1 year longer till I could provide a tenant’, to which Knatchbull agreed. Stace then ‘offered to take it again for 5 years, *with an abatement*’.²⁹ To this the baronet would not agree. Stace ‘complained chiefly of the low price of wool’, of which ‘he usually sheared 25 packs, but could not get more than £4 or £4-10s at most.’ Was Stace complaining unnecessarily or making too much of this in the hope of getting the holding a bit cheaper? There was no embellishment. Supporting evidence suggests that wool prices in the region had, by the late 1730s, bottomed out.³⁰ Nonetheless, Knatchbull was unequivocal; he ‘did not care to abate’.

The last outgoing tenant for consideration is marsh grazier Gamaliel Brattle of Brookland. Like the Reads, he was also part of the marsh bureaucracy.³¹ In 1730, Brattle paid £330 per annum for 320 acres. He did not make full use of the land, as nearly a third was sub-let (to one Taylor).³² There were four years left to run on the lease when, on 9 July 1739 Knatchbull, ‘on going over the Marshland ... [found] Brattle’s Pound ... much out of repair. That in Sheephouse field pretty good, and the Sheephouse; but one side of the gangway to the Tun very bad ... Brattle’s land slovenly enough, full of thistles and long grass ... That part of Brattle’s used by Taylor better kept than Brattle’s part.’³³

Neither the neglected state of Brattle’s land nor any other matter to do with the tenancy prompted further comment from Knatchbull. Indeed, their first recorded conversation about the occupancy did not take place until 4 October 1742, when Knatchbull ‘Gave Mr. Brattle, whose lease is out at Mich[aelmas] 1743], the refusal of my land *at the old rent*, from which I was forced to let it fall when he had his last lease; viz. at *£342 per annum*.’³⁴

²⁹ Italics mine. 9 June 1739.

³⁰ Circa 1684, Sir Norton Knatchbull’s wool fetched £10-15s a pack, but then dropped to £9-10s a pack; probate inventories valued wool (per pack) at £6-5s (1722); £6 (1725); £6-9s (1733/4); £5 (1735). In 1737, Sir Wyndham Knatchbull got £4-4s, rising to £4-15s in October 1742, and £7 in October 1744. In 1766, fellmonger Henry Gold of Ashford bought wool in at £5 per pack; in January 1768 Samuel Flint of Biddenden got £5-10s, rising to £6 in July 1769 and October 1770. CKS U951 A4; CKS PRC 27/41/94; CKS PRC 27/41/179; CKS PRC 27/41/122; CKS PRC 27/41/15; CKS PRC 11/80/149; CKS PRC 11/80/192; CKS PRC 11/80/235; CKS U951 E12; CKS U301 E6.

³¹ See above, pp. 46-7. Brattle was born in 1669, and died in 1750, aged 81. In 1738, he ranked among Walland’s top 20 occupiers. He resigned as Expenditor of White Kemp Watering on 16 May 1740, aged 71. KASMI (ref. 710) Brookland.

³² In 1720, Brattle occupied 148 acres, rising to 468 acres in 1721 (38 acres of which were in partnership with Henry Read). Between 1721-35 the Brattle-Read partnership continued to occupy some 320 acres and Brattle (on his own) the 148 acre unit. EKAC S/W FS3. On 15 July 1734 Knatchbull noted that ‘The pieces let to Taylor by Brattle are, Gatefield, 18 acres, 11 acres, 14 acres, old 11 acres, Reaches, Idens.’

³³ 9 July 1739.

³⁴ Italics mine.

Here, for the first time, Knatchbull was asking for an *increase* in rent (from £330 to £342 per annum). Brattle replied that ‘... *he grew old*, and would not be [Knatchbull’s] hindrance if [he] could get that rent for it, but that he could not give it himself.’³⁵ Brattle would have been all of 75 years old by 1743; reason enough to call it a day.³⁶ All things considered, he would probably have come to the same decision irrespective of the rent asked.

That Knatchbull was thinking in terms of an increase *at all* might seem unusual, given the state of the local economy. After all, only recently had two of his marshholdings been vacated by Wealden farmers. And, while there *was* interest shown in both of these units, there was also considerable haggling on the part of prospective tenants as to how much they were prepared to pay. The proposed increase is, however, better understood in the light of the fortunes of Messrs Henry and Jeremiah Read, and their place within the broader context of the baronet’s marshland interests, 1734-43.

In contrast to the retreating dual-regional farmers described earlier, the Reads were among the group of substantial marsh graziers whose numbers and resourcefulness facilitated their long-term aims. Brattle was not so well placed. Unlike George Stace, there was no kinsman in mind to whom he could pass on the business. Otherwise, this would have been mentioned, and Knatchbull would duly have noted it down. Yet ever since 1734, this holding (as well as the two abovementioned units) had, at one time or another, attracted serious interest from the Reads.

In 1730, Henry Read leased 332 acres of Knatchbull for which he paid £350 a year. His forward-thinking mindset became apparent when, on 12 July 1734, Read asked Knatchbull ‘to remember to reserve a way for him through Mr. Brattle’s grounds *in the next Lease to Brattle*.’³⁷ Such was the importance of this to Read that it warranted a reminder well in advance; there were still *nine years* left to run on Brattle’s lease.

Jeremiah Read farmed 32 acres of Knatchbull land on Romney Marsh Level and, as a sub-tenant, occupied part of his brother’s 332-acre holding. Keen to continue this arrangement, Jeremiah was also after renting additional acreage in his own right. Knatchbull’s account discloses something of their amicable relationship, Jeremiah’s aspirations and the baronet’s determination to see them met. On 15 June 1737, Knatchbull

‘ ... promised ... to endeavour that [Jeremiah] might continue to use the same parcel of his brother Henry’s land that he uses now, when his brother has a new Lease. And in case any of my land should want a new tenant, to give him the preference,

³⁵ Italics mine. 4 October 1742.

³⁶ Brattle’s advancing years probably lay behind the acquisition (by 1748) of an extra 50 acres on Walland which, by leasing it out, gave him some income until his death (in 1750) aged 81.

³⁷ Italics mine. This conversation followed their attendance at a general Sessions meeting of the Walland Marsh Sewers Commission.

whensoever that should happen. If Henry refuses my request, must oblige him to take the little parcel of Breeding Land at Brenzet with the rest that he uses; *for Jerry will have it.*³⁸

Knatchbull's anticipation that Henry might be obstructive in this matter suggests that he was also looking to expand his operations - if necessary, by blocking the sub-tenancy arrangement so as to regain full use of the 332-acre holding. Knatchbull, with the final say on the matter, was determined that Jeremiah would not be pushed out. The issue did not go away. A year later (7 October 1738) Knatchbull quizzed Henry about his intentions, recalling Read's promise that he 'had no intention of turning his brother Jeremiah out of that land of mine which he uses until he should be otherwise provided'. That clarified, the conversation turned to what might happen when the lease expired (Michaelmas 1740). Read also knew that only the day before (6 October 1738) Knatchbull and Stace had had a similar discussion. Knatchbull noted that

Henry ... agreed with me ... that he would be content to use my land at the old Rent provided there was to be no abatement of the Rent in the land which Stace uses, but in case there was any abatement of Rent there, then he should expect an abatement too. I promised him, if I abated in Stace's land, he should likewise have an abatement in his. The abatement that he wanted, was of £10 per annum, and then he offered to take a lease for 11 years. But as Stace, when he talked of a new Lease, made no mention of an abatement, I hope there will be no necessity of abating in either parcel of land.³⁹

This then, was how things stood in October 1738. Jeremiah Read's position was unchanged, and he was still on the look-out for more land. Henry had satisfied Knatchbull that his brother's sub-tenancy was not in jeopardy. He also wanted to continue as tenant of the 332-acre unit but, preferably with a £10 abatement for which he was prepared to take out an 11-year lease in return. Knatchbull was privately hopeful that when the time came, he would not have to drop the rent on either holding.

By the summer of 1739, with no economic improvement in sight, tenants were still looking for abatements. On 9 June 1739 Knatchbull refused Stace's offer to take a five-year lease in return for an abatement. A month later, on 2 July 1739, Knatchbull met with Jeremiah Read who offered to take 'Stace's land with [an] abatement of £10 per annum, and find himself a partner.' Here then, was Read's long-awaited chance to occupy more acreage although (with such a large unit) he also needed a partner. Knatchbull, sufficiently confident of Read's abilities, considered this favourably; but he was not happy about abating the rent. 'I gave [Jeremiah] to the 2nd of August

³⁸ Italics mine. 15 June 1737.

³⁹ 7 October 1738.

to consider whether he would give any more' he replied, 'but told him at the same time that Stace must have the refusal if there was any abatement.' Perhaps this demonstrated Knatchbull's even-handedness. Equally though, it could have been a ploy to encourage Stace and Read to out-bid each other in the hope, at the very least, of maintaining the level of rent.

That same day Knatchbull talked to Henry Read. Some 10 months earlier (October 1738) Henry had offered to sign up for an 11-year lease in return for a reduction of £10. Read's latest offer was 'to take a new Lease at an abatement of *£5 per annum for 7 years*'.⁴⁰ Knatchbull refused, although suggesting he could 'continue [as tenant but with an] agreement to leave *on giving 1 year's notice*'.⁴¹ Later, recalling the day's conversations, Knatchbull jotted down a passing, yet revealing comment. 'Henry', he wrote, 'owned that he *did not fear* to make my rent of it, but that he should not get so much as he ought. *He said Brattle's land was let cheap.*'

Jeremiah Read soon found a partner for Stace's land, in John Walker of Dover. The tenancy was to run from Michaelmas 1740 at the old rent.⁴² Jeremiah no longer needed the use of part of his brother's land, and gave up the tenancy of Knatchbull's 32 acres on the Level. Henry Read, for his part, would now have full use of his holding. Yet for Henry, the prospect of regaining full access was still not enough; for he was now expressing an interest in the 32 acres Jeremiah no longer wanted. But he was not prepared to pay the current rent (£26 a year) and '*insisted on [a] £1 per annum abatement*'.⁴³ At this point, Jeremiah offered to contribute towards making up any shortfall. This illustrates the multi-faceted nature of these negotiations. Thus, as Knatchbull was to note on 17 September 1739, Jeremiah 'promised ... that if I was obliged to abate the Rent of the Brenzet land to H. Reed at Mich[aelmas] 1740, *he would pay 10s per annum towards making it up.*'

In 1740, Henry Read's advance planning was again evident when, on 31 May, Knatchbull 'promised [him] the refusal of Brattle's Land, *if he leaves it - 3 years to come from Mich[aelmas]next.*'⁴⁴ In the meantime, despite the agreement to go into partnership with John Walker, Jeremiah Read had learnt that Beale and Luckhurst's land might soon become available. As a much smaller holding, this was a better proposition for Read to take on by himself. As we have seen, Luckhurst offered £180 a year to renew the lease, but only if Knatchbull built him a new washing tun. This offer, in the absence of any higher bids, raised the possibility of Knatchbull having to make another rent reduction. On 9 June 1740 Luckhurst was given until 1 July to reconsider his offer. Read would then be in the running for this unit if Walker could make other arrangements. It happened that Walker was part of an uplands-based kinship group of

⁴⁰ Italics mine.

⁴¹ Italics mine. 7 October 1738.

⁴² 17 July 1739. The Walker kinship group were among the top 20 per cent of occupiers on Romney Marsh Level in 1746. EKAC S/RM FSz10.

⁴³ Italics mine.

⁴⁴ Italics mine.

substantial livestock farmers. Unlike many of their dual-regional counterparts, the Walkers were looking to expand their marsh operations, and two of them ‘agreed to take the lease of Stace’s land to themselves’.⁴⁵ Jeremiah, in the meantime, also knew he would have to better Luckhurst’s offer to secure a deal, and offered £190 a year.⁴⁶ This was accepted with the stipulation that Henry was bound with Jeremiah in the lease. Knatchbull also held Read to his promise that if Henry ‘takes the Brenzett land at £25 per annum, Jerem[iah] is to allow me 10s per annum more towards making up the old rent of £26.’⁴⁷ There was also a cost-effective solution for the washing tun. Rather than build a new one, Knatchbull decided that ‘Whensoever Brattle’s lease is renewed Jer. Reed to have the privilege of washing at his Tun; if no detriment’.

Brattle’s lease was not due to expire until Michaelmas 1743. Only after Brattle said he was not interested in renewing did Knatchbull (on 4 October 1742) promise it to Henry Read. Having expressed the view that Brattle’s land was ‘let cheap’, Read could hardly complain when Knatchbull increased the rent by £10 a year. On 22 October 1742 then, the deal was finalised. Knatchbull ‘agreed with Henry Reed to let him a lease for 9 years of my land which he now uses, and also of Brattle’s at Mich[aelmas] Next at £690 per annum [for the two holdings] – Clause to be inserted for Jer. Reed to have liberty to make use of the Tun, and to find his proportion of repairs for it. I am to pay for the Leases.’

2. Phase two, c. 1760-90 – the Pattenson case study.⁴⁸

In November 1773, William Pattenson learnt with some consternation that as from Michaelmas 1774, the rental on Little Cheyne Court was going up by 20 per cent (to £248 a year). In sombre mood, he reflected on the relative ease with which previous agreements had been negotiated. Until recently he had assumed that the rent would, yet again, be set at £200 a year, ‘clear of all Deductions’, with Pattenson responsible for the Land Tax, all other taxes, and repairs.⁴⁹ Admittedly, there had been an additional expense at the last renewal when his father was asked

⁴⁵ 23 June 1740.

⁴⁶ 19 June 1740.

⁴⁷ The Brenzett land did attract more interest, but not at the right price. On 12 June 1740, ‘One Malam came to offer himself for Jer. Reed’s land at £24 per annum which I refused.’ Henry Read may have had this unit in mind for his son for, on 7 July 1740, Knatchbull agreed to let Henry Read junior rent it instead, on a seven-year lease, at £25 per annum.

⁴⁸ Unless otherwise stated quotations in this section come from a bundle of letters, catalogue reference CKS U2140 E25.

⁴⁹ Piecing together the surviving evidence, we know that (on expiry of an earlier lease) Pattenson signed a fresh, 21-year agreement running from Michaelmas 1725, at a rent of £200 per annum ‘clear of all Reprizes whatsoever’. Pattenson was responsible for paying the Land Tax (and all other taxes) and did not reclaim this from the landlord. He was also liable for repairs. Shortly afterwards, ‘at his own charge and expense [he] laid out a considerable sum of money in making and setting up a new sheep pound and sheep wash for the conveniency of using the said lands’. On 18 August 1726 it was further agreed that Pattenson could (at his own expense) pull down the ‘very old and useless’ barn and, with the materials, build a stable and wool room. Another lease ran for 11 years (from 1746-57) and then another, from Michaelmas 1760, again at £200 a year, ‘clear of all deductions’. In 1760, Pattenson paid £52-10s as an entry fine. CKS U2140 T12; CKS U2140 T12/2.

for a premium (entry fine) of £52-10s. But it had not dawned on William that this could presage further, steeper increases if the market continued to rise. On 23 November 1773, while in London, Josias Pattenson visited the Cookes on William's behalf. He took with him a letter addressed to William from George Rooke, the current owner, living in the Indies. The sentiments expressed therein gave William every confidence that Rooke held him in the highest regard. Indeed, Rooke's expression of esteem was such that, in William's view, his staying on as tenant (at the same rent) should be agreed as a matter of course. Furthermore, William had the distinct impression that Rooke would go so far as to *drop* the rent if that was what it took to keep him on.⁵⁰ Hence, the letter's contents were crucial to the upcoming tenancy renewal. On his return from the Cookes, Josias reported back. 'I have this morning been with Mr. and Mrs. Cooke' he wrote,

and am sorry I can't send you a good account of my success in bringing them to consider of what you desired me, *but I can find by them that some person has...offered ...more rent than [the £248] he now asks ... and to me it appears that he is in hopes you will not continue ... on that account.* I was with them three hours and made use of very argument that I could think of from the instructions you gave me, *but all to no purpose.* And indeed all I could get of him was that *he would allow you a reasonable time to consider of it and that if you liked to take a lease of the land at the price ... he had offered it to you, you should have the preference* I read that part of Mr. Rooke's letter ... that related to his letting the estate to you in preference to any other (even of an abatement of the present rent [i.e. £200 a year]) *but that seemed to have no weight with them.* And Mrs. Cooke told me she had heard and believed that some part of the land was worth thirty shillings by the acre per annum. I tried them with regard to the premium of £50 you gave the more granting the last lease, *but find they are determined to have the rent of £248 as mentioned in his[i.e. Cooke's] letter to you.*⁵¹

Pattenson was disappointed. Clearly, for the Cookes, neither an offer to pay another entry fine, nor the contents of Rooke's letter were of any consequence. Worse, alerted by the survey, someone else was now also in the running. With marsh acreage in such short supply, this promptly led to an (undisclosed) offer that exceeded even the £248 per annum demanded, a sum

⁵⁰ Rooke's letter was in reply to one of Pattenson's, most likely occasioned by the need to inform Rooke of his (Pattenson's) father's death. Pattenson was probably also making overtures to the effect that he wanted to stay on. The timing would fit. In the first place, Pattenson senior died in 1771. Secondly, on 4 December, 1773, Josias informed William that 'Mr Rooke is so distant [in the Indies] that an answer cannot be obtained from him for near a twelve month'. On that basis, between 18 months and two years were needed to allow enough time for a letter to reach Rooke, and for his reply to arrive back in England.

⁵¹ Italics mine.

Pattenson had already decided he was unwilling to pay. He was out-manoeuvred and out-bid. Reading on, he also learnt that

... on young Hogben's surveying the estate, no less than four graziers (as he says substantial men) went to London – [Cooke] thinks on purpose - either to buy or hire the same, so that it is plain this survey of the estate gave the alarm - and you know how the graziers ride after every parcel of land that is to be let in the marsh ... [Mr] and Mrs. Cooke ... expressed a great deal of regard to you. *But [they] were quite unmoveable as to the rent of the land.*

*He showed me the map ... and I find that the estimate of the value of the land at £1-0s-3 ¼ d per acre includes the whole, both lanes ditches and fleets ... The quantity in the whole is 245 acres ... including the lanes, fleets and ditches. The quantity of 235 acres you must have had ... is the quantity therein mentioned exclusive of the half lanes fleets and ditches.*⁵²

The survey was yet another blow for Pattenson. It had uncovered the truth about the farm, by revealing to the owner what Pattenson had known all along: Little Cheyne Court extended to some 241 acres and not the estimated '190 acres, more or less ...' intimated in earlier agreements drawn up by the owner himself. The Pattensons however, as marsh occupiers, had always been scotted to 241 acres. On Romney Marsh, with its system of taxation according to occupied acreage, *no* tenant could pretend they did not know exactly how many acres they occupied.⁵³ In William's defence, there was, perhaps, one mitigating factor. During his father's lifetime, demand for land was generally weak. Whether the farm was 190 acres 'more or less' or 241 acres exactly, may not have been an overriding concern for a rentier in a sluggish economy. In self-justification, Pattenson may have thought that in a depressed climate, Rooke was fortunate to have received any rent at all. Only when the estate was surveyed did it register with the owner that Pattenson was getting c. 20 per cent more land for his money than contracted for. However, by 1773, and in a fiercely competitive market, the tables had turned.

With every last lane, fleet and ditch newly accounted for, Cooke was, in actuality, merely asking for an increase commensurate with the farm's real acreage. This was not an unreasonable expectation. At the same time, had Pattenson thought about it carefully enough, he might have realised that the increase could be offset against a drop in expenses (Land Tax and repairs) that he would no longer have to meet, considering that

⁵² Italics mine. A fleet was a watercourse.

⁵³ See above, pp. 5-6.

Mr. Cooke seems likewise determined to pay the Land Tax and repairs himself for he says that he cannot help thinking that the repairs may be done for much less money than you have expended thereon (though he says he has no kind of doubt ... you have really expended as much as you say).⁵⁴

Cooke's comment revealed a weakness in his argument and one which Pattenson should have picked up. The terms of the lease had always been that the tenant was liable for the Land Tax and repairs. If (as Cooke insisted) the tenant would no longer be liable to the Land Tax, the saving, for Pattenson, would have gone halfway towards offsetting the rise in rent (to £248) if the tax continued at a three shilling rate.⁵⁵ Cooke was also probably under a misapprehension if he thought repair costs could be kept down, considering that the maintenance of post and rail fencing on the marsh was 'attended with very heavy expense'.⁵⁶ Clearly however, Cooke thought he was well informed. 'I find by his conversation', Josias added, 'that some person hath given him full information relating to this estate so that there is no probability of his altering his mind relating thereto.'⁵⁷

On 4 December, William was urged 'to give Mr. Cooke an answer soon to inform him that rather than leave the land you will give him the rent of £248'. William, procrastinating, clearly had not grasped the reality of the situation. Indeed, he was still in the mistaken (and unrealistic) belief that Rooke would, at the very least, let him continue 'at the present rent' which, as Josias reminded him, 'you have reason to think he will from his letter to you by saying therein that he was willing to make an abatement if you required it rather than you cease to be his tenant.' 'But' he added, 'I think he will not agree to it and indeed I should think Mr Rooke wrote to [Cooke] by the same ship your letter came by'. He continued,

Mr. Cooke seemed willing to grant a lease provided the rent was to be for the future £248-16s-6d, *but I fancy not for above seven years as he mentioned that the last lease was to have been but for seven years instead of eleven years.*⁵⁸

This remark, yet again, signals the way in which the length of term of a lease could be used as a bargaining point. In the agreement with Pattenson's father, having successfully negotiated the

⁵⁴ This, in respect of repairs, was a different approach to that of Knatchbull's for East Lenham Farm. It seems unlikely that this was a well-informed financial decision on Cooke's part, given the Land Tax burden plus the expense of post and rail fencing.

⁵⁵ Based on the LTAs for Old Romney (1746) and Brookland/Brenzett/Fairfield (1781), the farm was assessed at £152. £7-10s Land Tax was due for every shilling in the £ rate, making a total of £30 for any year in which the tax was levied at four shillings, and £22-10s if at three shillings. Between 1767-75, the rate was three shillings, except for 1771, which saw a four shilling rate.

⁵⁶ Jones, 'Sheep farming', p. 4.

⁵⁷ Italics mine.

⁵⁸ Italics mine.

entry fine, the landlord may have granted a longer lease to make the deal a more attractive one for the tenant. In a rapidly rising market, rentiers would have looked to make further increases sooner rather than later. ‘As to the sheep pound and fence you mention to have been put up by you’, continued Josias,

I think they will not allow any deduction as they will say that was for your own greater convenience. But it should be mentioned in the lease that the landlord should keep them in repair as good as they now are during the term and that you should be allowed the value thereof, or be at liberty to take the same away at the end of the lease.

As to Cooke’s motivation and character, Josias concluded that his

sole object seems to be the advanced rent and that the estate may be kept in repair at a smaller expense than what you have been at. But as I never saw him before I cannot form any judgement of him with certainty ...He seems sensible and if his motive is as he declares it to be, [namely] that he endeavours to do that for his son-in-law which he ought in justice to do, only so far he is commendable.

Josias felt that Cooke was ‘in hopes you will not accept the terms offered and if so, the sooner you come to a resolution the better for fear of his altering his mind and having a reasonable Plea so to do’. Furthermore, William had been given first refusal on a rent that, as Josias had advised him once before, was not excessive. ‘As to my private opinion’, he continued, ‘I still think the rent of £248-16s-6d is not too much for the estate (which I remember I told you when I had the pleasure of your company at my house).’

William heeded the advice, wrote to Cooke straight away, and duly agreed to the figure of £248-16s-6d. He then waited throughout December for a reply. None came. By the third week in January 1774, and still no reply, Josias’ nephew, Samuel Munn was drafted in to help.

Conveniently based in London, Munn visited Cooke and afterwards explained to Josias what had taken place. Using some persuasion, Munn learnt that one Jemmett of Ashford was the other interested party and that Cooke was waiting on him before replying to Pattenson. Munn concluded that Cooke was thinking to engineer a bidding war. ‘Upon the whole’, said Munn, ‘the matter seems to me to be this, that Mr. Cooke will try Mr. Jemmett to see what rent he will give and will then offer it to Mr. Pattenson at that rent - and if he will not take it at that rent, will offer it to Mr. Jemmett’.⁵⁹ Munn then suggested one way in which Pattenson might secure the tenancy. ‘Now’ he said, ‘will it not be best to see Mr. Jemmett and [tell] him his offering *any* rent

⁵⁹ Samuel Munn to Josias Pattenson. 20 January 1774.

will be to no purpose as Mr. Pattenson will have it at all events?’⁶⁰ In the next sentence however, Munn backtracked by admitting that this was, perhaps, a questionable way of going about things. ‘But what effect that mode of proceeding will have’ he said, ‘*and how far it is proper* I must leave to your superior judgements.’⁶¹

Josias, having eventually heard from Cooke, wrote again to William. He reiterated that for Cooke at least, the best outcome was for Pattenson to leave the land, observing that ‘it is pretty evident by his letter that he will dispute the matter with you sooner than abide by his offer [of £248-16s-6d] made to me for you’.⁶² Josias left it with William to ‘determine with yourself whether you will dispute it or not’. The central argument for William, as tenant, was one of social obligation. And by its very nature this was hard to quantify in monetary terms, or indeed to reduce ‘to a legal certainty’ a few vaguely worded sentiments of goodwill. As for the legal implications attendant on a court case, Josias was unequivocal. ‘I am afraid’, he warned,

[that] if you was to trie this matter upon his offer and Mr. Rooke’s letter, a Jury would not think Mr. Rooke ... would be bound by it, as your agreeing to give an advance of rent [i.e. to £248-16s-6d] must be deemed a departure from the supposed agreement from Mr. Rooke [namely] to let you have the land at an abatement [of the current rent of £200]. The expressions in Mr. Rooke’s letter are not clear enough to depend much upon.

To hammer the point home, Josias quoted an extract from Rooke’s original letter to William, wherein Rooke expressed the wish ‘that you settled [the matter with the executor] ... and my Father, for the reason that I never have interfered in the determining of those matters or others but entirely rested on them’. Pursuing a claim was futile. Rooke’s letter was inadmissible as evidence, for as Josias went on to explain,

when [Rooke] says he will authorise his friends to grant a lease ... and when he talks of an abatement he doth not say of what, nor is the word ‘rent’ once mentioned in his letter. Had [Rooke] recited any part of *your* letter in his it would have appeared clearly what he meant. But he has not done that ... [and] I think still all these expressions are too vague to be reduced to a legal certainty. But supposing they could, how can you prove his handwriting without which the letter would not be allowed to be given in evidence?

Upon the whole ... I think you will meet with so many difficulties to encounter and so much trouble thereabout as will not make it worth your while to contest

⁶⁰ Italics mine.

⁶¹ Italics mine.

⁶² 22 February 1774. Josias Pattenson to William Pattenson.

this matter at law (not to say anything of the expense if you should be wrong).⁶³

As to Cooke's stance in the matter, Josias concluded,

'I don't think that anything you can say will prevail on him to abide by his offer ... *If I judge right of him, he will not give up a single shilling out of friendship to any one* - as the rent offered is so much more he (I think) will run all hazards rather than let you the land at the rent of £248-16s-6d.

I am very sorry that this affair in which you had had so much trouble is not likely to turn out to your satisfaction and am with duty, etc.⁶⁴

The affair ended acrimoniously, dragging on for months after the incoming tenant took occupation. A dispute arose over Pattenson's having left the fencing in a neglected state, a costly job to fix and one that, under the circumstances, he was hardly likely to pay for as a goodwill gesture. Besides, in respect of repairs, Cooke had already specifically expressed the view that they 'may be done for much less money ...'.⁶⁵ Perhaps Cooke had since become more aware of the high cost of keeping post and rail fencing in order. But the point now was that Pattenson had breached the tenancy agreement, namely that 'at his own proper costs and charges ... [he would] keep everything in good repair'.⁶⁶ Cooke maintained that he 'never expected nor desired Mr. William Pattenson to do more than he by lease covenanted to do. I need not tell you the damage a tenant must sustain by the fences not being kept in proper repair. I have writ to Mr. Wall [the new tenant] to carry or send [an] estimate and I most sincerely wish to have this affair adjusted in an amicable manner.'⁶⁷

3. Landlord-tenant relations, c. 1760-90.

Aside from Knatchbull's purchase of 52 acres (c. 1745), the baronet's interests on Walland changed little in the c. 20 years following the events in 'Hatch Memoranda'. The 52 acre unit was subsequently leased to Jeremiah Read, together with the 150 acres he had occupied since 1740. On Sir Edward Knatchbull's succession to the estate in 1763, Read was still there. Walker continued to farm the 339-acre holding formerly occupied by Stace, and Henry Read's son had

⁶³ Italics mine.

⁶⁴ Italics mine.

⁶⁵ 23 November 1773. Josias Pattenson to William Pattenson.

⁶⁶ CKS U2140 T12/2.

⁶⁷ 13 June 1775. Robert Cooke to Josias Pattenson, dated 13 June 1775. This was subsequently copied by Josias and sent to William with a covering letter dated 21 June 1775, beginning, 'Under you have a copy of Mr. Cooke's letter to me in which he seems to be more moderate than when he wrote to you last ...'.

taken on his late father's interests in the 635-acre unit. It is evident that strong kinship links through the generations made for continuity of occupation on all three units post-1760. Thus, in respect of Walker's holding, Knatchbull noted on 14 October 1765 that 'Walker is dead and Cannon [his brother-in-law] now uses this land, at the same rent, during the remainder of John Walker's lease.'⁶⁸ On 14 October 1771 it was further noted that 'This land is now let [to John Cannon] for £400 a year on a new Lease for seven years.'⁶⁹ This 11 per cent increase was followed by another (of 12.5 per cent) when (in 1778) the rent increased to £450, and another kinsman (Walker Cannon of Dover) took on the tenancy.

Similarly, from 1768, Jeremiah Read's son (William) took over his late father's interests. In 1776 William was succeeded by John Read. On 14 October 1782, Knatchbull noted that the rent due was 'Received from Martha Read Representative of John Read dec[ease]d ...'⁷⁰ Monies received of an occupier's widow in this way usually indicated that, for the tenancy at least, the family line had come to an end.⁷¹ Hence, Read's holding became available for incoming tenant Jenkyn Hague of Biddenden who (in 1784) signed a fresh (11-year) agreement, at £280 per annum (a 12 per cent rise).

In the tax listings, a change of surname in the 'Occupiers' column sometimes disguised continuity of occupation by the same kinship group, but through the maternal line. So, for example, following the death of the third (and last) Henry Read in 1777, John Munn (as a grandson on the maternal side) became the main beneficiary of Read's livestock operation. As we will now see, whilst continuity of occupation in this way was not necessarily unusual, there is evidence to suggest that in this instance, ties of social obligation encouraged and eased the process.

The 'Hatch Memoranda' evidence has clearly demonstrated that Henry Read (as tenant) and Knatchbull (as landlord) were evenly matched. Both stood their ground on what, for them, were the 'non-negotiables', such as Henry's insistence on an abatement, and Knatchbull's determination regarding Jeremiah's continued use of part of Henry's land. It was a long-established, enduring relationship. Indeed, the name 'Henry Read' (representing any one of three generations of father-son) appeared alongside Knatchbull-owned acreage in the tax lists every year from 1716-77. There was also a long-standing business arrangement for agisting livestock, a practice essential to both operations. Agistment will be further explored in chapter nine.

Furthermore, the evidence suggests that ties between Read and Knatchbull were reinforced by a large entry fine in hard cash, plus a substantial legacy, both of which, it is suggested, helped to

⁶⁸ CKS U951 A42.

⁶⁹ CKS U951 A43.

⁷⁰ CKS U951 A43.

⁷¹ This tendency was particularly noticeable in the Rockingham rental accounts to 1790.

protect the tenancy into the fourth generation. From c. 1760-90, the 23 per cent rent increase (from £690 to £900 a year) on Read's 635 acre unit was commensurate with the increase on Walker's holding.⁷² Yet (in October 1772) Read's tenancy was subject to a hefty £800 premium.⁷³ This was indeed exceptional, as nothing of this sort was levied on the other three Knatchbull marshholdings. Furthermore, Knatchbull was a beneficiary of Henry Read's will, and (on 15 December 1778) acknowledged receipt, 'from ... Reads Executors, [Messrs] Kemp and Munn, the Legacy of £500 left to me for continuing the remainder of his Leases'.⁷⁴ John Munn took over the late Read's holding and in 1781 ranked the largest tenant on Walland/Denge, with 1004 acres.

In conclusion, the 'Hatch Memoranda' case study, covering the economically sluggish years of the 1730s-40s, has shown the way in which negotiations for land on the part of substantial livestock specialists were not conducted independently of each other. The balance of power in the relationships between Knatchbull and these tenants, especially the Read brothers, was fairly evenly balanced, with give-and-take on both sides. The way in which negotiations took place highlights just how much of a monopoly Messrs Read had in respect of the market for substantial blocks of land to rent. The proactive, business-orientated mindset of Henry Read safeguarded his options well in advance. The way in which both he and Jeremiah Read interacted with Knatchbull suggests that ties of social obligation were strong influences in their relationships. The case study makes for an interesting contrast with the fortunes of the Fairfield estate in the 1730s-40s, in which an absentee rentier advertised to attract tenants. In the later phase, in the midst of a fiercely competitive market, ties of social obligation between Read and Knatchbull still held good. The use of a substantial premium and a legacy would tend to suggest that these ties were strengthened with hard cash in order to secure the continued occupation of Knatchbull land by the Read kinship group. Knatchbull knew every inch of his land, both on- and off the marsh. As a Sewers Commissioner, he also had a thorough understanding of, and involvement with, the workings of the marsh system, and fairly close contact with other members of the marsh bureaucracy, notably Henry Read.

Rooke, by contrast, was an absentee owner. And more than just geographically remote from his marshland interests. Not until Cooke was prompted to commission Hogben to map the farm was its true extent revealed. He then took a perfectly reasonable stance by asking for the best market rent he could get. Imagine what may have happened had the farm not passed, via marriage, to the Rookes but instead remained under the auspices of the Knatchbull estate. In the first place, the overall landlord-tenant relationship would have worked from the premise that the farm extended to 241 acres. Not only that, this was prime quality, sought-after marshland, some of which, as we

⁷² It was, nonetheless, more than double the 11 per cent rise on the late Jeremiah Read's holding.

⁷³ This was paid in three instalments, the first £200 (received with the year's rent on 12 October 1772) a further £400 (on 20 November 1772) and the remainder on 14 May 1773. CKS U951 A43.

⁷⁴ CKS U951 A43. £100 he gave to his wife, and kept the rest for himself.

have seen, was held to be worth ‘thirty shillings by the acre per annum’. If ever an estate was ‘let cheap’ as Henry Read put it, then – at £200 a year - Little Cheyne Court certainly was.⁷⁵ Pattenson, had he been Knatchbull’s tenant, would have had to adopt a very different approach in order to protect the tenancy. It remains to be seen whether landlord-tenant relationships on the marsh (and further afield) were more akin to those of Read and Knatchbull, or Rooke and Pattenson.

⁷⁵ Considering the level of rent on Knatchbull’s acreage on Walland, and having taken due account of the Land Tax, neither was the figure of £248-16s-6d excessive.

Chapter nine. Wealden farmer Samuel Flint of Biddenden: agistment and the dual-regional farming economy.

In the opening pages of this study it was explained that to some extent the geographical scope of the region chosen for investigation was determined by the nature of the marsh-uplands farming economy. In recent research, as well as in the fresh evidence presented here, it is clear that in matters of agrarian economy, neither Romney Marsh nor its hinterland existed in isolation from each other. Trends in landholding structures on the marsh itself were ‘heavily influenced by decisions reached in farmhouses well away from the marsh’.¹ The aim of this chapter is to look at the synergy of the region as a whole. Attention will be drawn to hitherto unexplored aspects of farming practice, seen (for the most part) through the eyes of a Wealden farmer. The discussion will also focus on agistment, a practice that was integral to the specialist livestock operations that characterized the dual-regional farming economy.

In a nutshell, agistment involved taking in and caring for livestock for a period of weeks/months, in return for an agreed rate of payment. Hipkin has argued that in the context of the marsh and its hinterland, agistment ‘ought properly to be understood as a particularly flexible species of sublease, and the resources released to purchasers viewed as contributing to the size of their farms, whether cyclically or occasionally.’² Little is known about the role played by agistment in respect of functional farm size. The arrangements made between farmers, essential though they were to the effective running of their operations, were nevertheless informal, and by their very nature impossible to trace or quantify. With a dearth of suitable farming records to reveal some of the dynamics involved, there has not been much to go on.³

The farming diary of Wealden farmer Samuel Flint affords a first-hand account of the day-to-day running of a specialist cattle-rearing operation, 1766-83.⁴ In the discussion to follow, the nature and scale of Flint’s operations in the Weald and beyond will be outlined, including business relationships with marsh graziers. The evidence suggests that agistment was a rather more complex affair than previously appreciated, and practised on a wider geographical scale than perhaps realized. Not only was there regular movement of sheep and cattle between the marsh and the marsh hinterland; Flint’s diary discloses that agistment was a regular feature of farming practice within the Weald.

The importance, to uplands farmers, of agisting their livestock on the marsh will also be considered. In this respect, the role of the marsh ‘looker’ will be explained. The tenor of the relationships revealed in the fresh evidence presented here demonstrates a good level of stability

¹ Hipkin, ‘Landownership’, pp. 72-3, 94.

² *Ibid.*, p. 73.

³ Hipkin, ‘Daniel Langdon’, pp. 180-1.

⁴ Note. Unless otherwise stated, all quotations in this chapter are taken from Samuel Flint’s farming diary. CKS U301 E6.

and trust. They are in marked contrast to the impression given in contemporary accounts, in which marsh graziers were often exploited and their livestock suffered.

Discussion will begin by outlining some of the dynamics of agistment on the marsh itself, and why it was important to the farming system. The role of marsh shepherds, known as ‘lookers’ will be outlined, followed by consideration of Samuel Flint’s farming operations. The long-term business relationship between Samuel Pattenson (Flint’s grandfather) and Henry Read (Knatchbull’s tenant) will be highlighted, together with the arrangements for agistment made between Read and Knatchbull.

1. Agistment on Romney Marsh.

Historically, the seasonal migration of sheep away from the marsh was important for two reasons. The first consideration was the marsh climate, ‘evill in winter, grievous in summer and never good’.⁵ The strong constitution of the Romney Marsh breed of sheep persisted to the exclusion of other breeds because of its ability to better withstand severe weather. Yet the marsh winters were often too severe for vulnerable marsh lambs to survive. The second problem had to do with stock levels. Romney Marsh had an unrivalled reputation for the number of sheep per acre it could carry. But this did not apply all year round. Even today, although the equivalent of seven mature sheep per acre can generally be supported in the summer, this falls to just two sheep per acre in the winter. Likewise, in the eighteenth century, five sheep per acre could be kept ‘according as the summer may turn out for grass’ but over the winter this was greatly reduced.⁶ Contemporary observer Daniel Jones explained the solution. Every year, at the end of August or beginning of September

the Graziers send up their lambs to the Farmers that live on the upland, who put them on their stubble, meadows and pasture lands ... They are kept by the farmer at from 2 to 4 or 5 shillings per score per week till the beginning of April, which is about 30 or 32 weeks, when they are again brought down to the Marsh ...⁷

There was yet another problem for the marsh grazier. He was obliged to keep a close eye on the grass in the summer, especially if the weather encouraged rapid growth. Grass that was too long was detrimental to the sheep. Boys remarked that it was ‘always considered extremely bad policy to see much grass on the land among sheep.’⁸ The solution was to take in cattle from farmers based in the marsh hinterland. It was also advantageous for Weald/uplands farmers to send their fattening cattle away to the marsh over the summer, while their own meadows were ‘laid in’ and off-

⁵ Lambard, quoted in Hasted, *History*, 8, p. 469.

⁶ Jones, ‘Sheep farming’, p. 9.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁸ Boys, *General view*, p. 120.

limits. From mid-May, agisted cattle spent about 20 weeks on the marsh. Farmers paid for agisting their livestock. Arrangements were usually reciprocated, 'so that the one party is particularly convenient and useful to the other.'⁹ They were also commonplace and widespread. Farmers had a set of unwritten rules for the over-wintering of lambs and summer keep for cattle. A Cranbrook farmer reported to Daniel Price that as a rule of thumb, 'The proportion of lambs to bullocks is five lambs to be kept by the farmer in winter, for one head of cattle by the grazier in summer; but if more sheep or cattle are admitted, the price varies in consequence'.¹⁰

Problems arose when a marsh grazier did not have enough pasture for over-wintering stock. Sir Joseph Banks was informed that marsh graziers 'are obliged to put out their Lambs where the Keep is often very indifferent.'¹¹ Daniel Price observed that many complained that the farmers who took in their marsh lambs would

take every unfair advantage of them if they can: they advance the price of keep every year or every other year; they keep more lambs than they usually did or ought to keep; and they continue to maintain them worse. These are serious things that ought to occupy the attention of the graziers more than they do; and were they to hold together, an effectual remedy might be provided against this imposition.¹²

Writing in 1796, Boys reported that lambs returning to the marsh after a bad winter 'frequently go home nearly starved; from which they sometimes die in great numbers when they get into good keep'.¹³

2. The role of marsh 'lookers' in the dual-regional economy.

Marsh-domiciled 'lookers' were employed by dual-regional farmers to take care of their livestock. As Daniel Jones remarked, this group of livestock specialists were

generally in easy circumstances, though not very rich and live chiefly in villages or towns in the style of private gentlemen... If they live near, they ride over ground attended by their looker perhaps once or twice a week or perhaps not so often... In general, they have not much to do and what is done they always do before dinner.¹⁴

The 'looker' was portrayed as one with a full-time, desirable occupation enjoying

⁹ Jones, 'Sheep farming', p. 13.

¹⁰ Price, *System of sheep grazing*, p. 70.

¹¹ H. Carter, ed., *The sheep and wool correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks, 1781-1820* (1970), p. 290.

¹² Price, *System of sheep grazing*, p.

¹³ Boys, *General view*, p. 120.

¹⁴ Jones, 'Sheep farming', p. 6.

a house at an easy rent;... the keep of a cow at a moderate charge, ... all the fat of the dead sheep and the lamb skins if he lambs them and has the privilege of keeping a horse upon his master's ground gratis and is paid besides for whatever work he does upon the land; all which enables him to live in a comfortable manner and with a few other privilege if prudent, he can save money.

His business is to ride about ground, which he generally does once a day ... to see whether there be any sheep fallen into the ditches and whether the fence is anywhere broken down; he also counts the sheep and sees whether any of them is ailing or has been struck by the fly. He has always a dog with him ... He also attends and assists his master in everything with regard to the stock, that is done upon the land. One man can look after from three to five hundred acres of land or more and very frequently looks after land for several different masters at the same time and if any of them live at a considerable distance, he perhaps has a bed in his house to accommodate them.¹⁵

Richard Goodwin of Willesborough provides an example of a moderately wealthy uplands farmer who (in 1766) left a personal estate valued at £847-5s- 2¼d, and who employed the services of 'lookers' to take care of his livestock on the marsh.¹⁶ We will now consider the extent of Goodwin's dual-regional interests, beginning with those in Willesborough.

This uplands parish extended to some 1457 acres and, split roughly 50:50 between pasture- and arable land, gave encouragement to a mixed farming regime.¹⁷ Goodwin's land/property interests, (amounting to an LTA of £36) represented a modest five per cent share in Willesborough's LTA paish total. He owner-occupied £17 and occupied a further £19 of land/property that came to him via his marriage to Martha Wightwick, who belonged to a kinship group substantial enough to warrant attention in Hasted's *History*.¹⁸ Goodwin's operations were split between the Home Farm and another holding in the nearby hamlet of Lecton Green, rented in partnership with kinsman Edward Goodwin. The Lecton Green farm included eight acres of barley (£21-19s-1d) and six acres of wheat (£11-10s), two fields planted with £10-worth of oats and another seven acres with beans (£8), plus husbandry equipment, wagons and a number of horses. The Home Farm included a large stock of hay and clover, and nearly two acres planted with beans. Livestock included a bull, a goat, some pigs, plus five cows (shared in partnership). Wool to the value of £38-15s-6d

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁶ CKS PRC 11/84/185.

¹⁷ Hasted, *History*, 7, p. 568.

¹⁸ CKS PRC 11/84/185; Hasted, *History*, 7, p. 568.

was also included.¹⁹ The arable side of the operation is clearly evident. However, the emphasis on hay, clover, oats and beans reflects the overall focus on livestock husbandry, for these crops were probably grown as animal fodder.

On the marsh, Goodwin occupied 83 acres of marshland split between two parishes (Newchurch and Hope) on Romney Marsh Level.²⁰ In January 1766 livestock on the marsh consisted of 472 sheep and 3 heifers worth, in all, around £470. This facet of Goodwin's operations represented around 55 per cent of his moveable assets, and two marsh dwellers were employed to attend to the land.²¹ The first, Richard Reynolds, was paid £2-10s for 'looking after the Newchurch Land one year and cutting thistles' while Edward Carpenter received £1-5s 'for looking after the Hope Land one year'.²² Unlike the impression given by Daniel Jones above, 'looking' for Reynolds and Carpenter was an adjunct to their own livestock operations, although they may well have acted as 'lookers' for a number of dual-regional farmers like Goodwin.

3. The farming operations of Samuel Flint of Biddenden.

As outlined earlier, Wealden farms were historically relatively small and difficult to work. The Wealden farmer, often isolated on account of poor communications, was seen as hard-working, self-sufficient and frugal. He specialized in cattle rearing and fattening. How did the farming operations of Samuel Flint compare with this contemporary image?²³

Flint's diary account began in November 1766, when he took on responsibility for the everyday running of the farm in Biddenden that his grandfather, Samuel Pattenson, had operated hitherto. A proportion of this holding Pattenson occupied as a tenant. Flint took out a loan of £160 from his grandfather in order to buy the livestock and goods already on the farm. On borrowed money then, Flint purchased 129 sheep, two oxen, a black mare, 21 loads of hay, farm equipment, eight acres of seeds plus all the wood growing on the land. There followed a day-to-day account of expenditure ranging from a bill for 2d to mend the lock on a stable door to the latest mole-catcher's bill. Also included was a comprehensive record of work done around the farm, wages to farm labourers, an account of produce sold as well as the movement of livestock. In latter years there was a tailing off in the minutiae of detail. Nevertheless Flint continued to record wages paid

¹⁹ This had been sold for £5-5s a pack, a considerable improvement on the £4- to £4-10s which was the most that marsh grazier George Stace received in the late 1730s. CKS U951 E12, and see above, chapter eight.

²⁰ In two parcels, both belonging to absentee rentier John Thorpe of Bexley, for which Goodwin paid £45 and £24 per annum respectively. CKS PRC11/84/185.

²¹ Goodwin's sheep flock comprised 92 yearling weathers valued at £81 (18 shillings each); 100 tags - £30-8s (16 shillings each); 119 ewes - £70 (14 shillings each); three rams - £4-10s (30 shillings each) and 155 lambs - £62 (eight shillings each) and three heifers - £15. CKS PRC11/84/185.

²² This was rather more than the going rate of 8d. per acre as suggested for the 1780s. See Jones, 'Sheep farming', p. 5. Reynolds was also a tenant of 71.5 acres in his home parish (Newchurch). Edward Carpenter owner-occupied three acres in Hope and leased 84.5 acres in five different parcels across Romney Marsh Level.

²³ See above, pp. 3-5.

to local farm labourers and most importantly, kept careful records of the movement, feeding and keeping of livestock – especially cattle – both locally and on the marsh.

Between 1766-70, Flint borrowed money from relatives to help him get established. He had to keep track of every penny. Being in debt to his immediate family did not excuse Flint from paying the going rate of interest. Although diligent in paying off these loans, it was not until August 1771 that the final repayment was made, shortly after Pattenson's death. Thereafter, and having come into his share of his grandfather's estate, the indications were that Flint's cash flow problems had eased somewhat.

Flint's account vividly portrays the everyday life of a self-sufficient, hard-working and frugal Wealden farmer. The summer of 1769 saw the only spending spree devoted to personal items. These included five new shirts (made by his sister) and two pairs of new shoes. Other items – a pair of shorts, a watch and some shoes - were repaired and not renewed. There was little room for luxuries. Even after Pattenson's death, Flint continued to economize. Rather than buy a new coat, he paid out 1s-6d to have his late grandfather's coat altered to fit. His operations were in a different league to Knatchbull's.

Flint's chief farm hand, John Day, occupied a house on the farm, for which he paid £3 a year in rent. Accounts between them were settled informally every so often, and Day remained in Flint's employ from 1766-83. The year from September 1767-8 serves as an example of an average farming year on the Biddenden farm. The autumn was spent ploughing, preparing the fields with fertilizer (marle and lime), threshing (barley and oats), thatching (the clover stack) and buying in seeds for the next sowing of wheat.²⁴ Winter 1767/8 was taken up with more ploughing, hedging, ditching, muck-spreading, and buying in more lime. Flint purchased barley seeds in readiness for sowing. There was more hedging and ditching to be done in April before sowing wheat (five acres) and barley (four acres). June was taken up with weeding, 'spudding' (cutting) thistles, yet more ditching, stacking straw and making firewood. On top of Day's full-time services, extra help was needed for autumn and spring ploughing. And as for getting in the harvest, Flint drafted in as much as extra help as he could get. Day's family joined in with several others to gather in the produce (clover, hay, wheat and barley) a job that lasted from early July until well into September. And before the cycle began all over again, there were haystacks to prepare and corn to clean, thresh and store in the granary. Flint spent out more than £26 in wages for that year. This was largely offset by the £25 received by way of income over the same period from sales of barley, oats, wheat and timber products. Flint also grew apples and pears commercially and purchased plum, peach and apricot trees. Sales of turnips, flax and a small quantity of pork were also recorded. The business generated from the sale of produce comprised a small part of the farm's arable production in 1767-8. The remainder catered for Flint's specialized livestock

²⁴ Marle was a lime-rich mud containing clay and silt. Lime acted as a soil conditioner.

operation, the importance of which is reflected in the £152-4s income generated in 1767-8 from sales of sheep, wool and cattle.

Entries for 1767-8 record sales of sheep and cattle over six months of the year. In October-November 1767, 10 'fatt' (fattened) sheep were sold locally and a further seven to a regular customer, butcher Thomas Avery of Bapchild. In March 1768 Flint sold four sheep locally. He also drove another 26 sheep to Maidstone market where he sold half to Avery and the rest to a man from Chatham. In April 1768 Avery bought two fattened oxen for £29 and in July one fattened calf was sold to a local customer. In August 1768, another regular customer William Wildish of Harrietsham bought eight sheep. This was part of a £47 deal that also included seven cattle. In this and the following years, apart from local customers who bought mainly sheep skins, mutton or the odd calf or sheep, Flint continued to sell further afield. His brother-in-law from Headcorn bought a steer, and two old rams were sold to James Blackmore of Tenterden. Blackmore also hired a ram of Flint each November, as did 'Cousin' (kinsman) Austen.²⁵ Other customers came from Halden and Frittenden – and Flint also took his stock to sell at some of the so-called 'lower markets' such as Tonbridge or Maidstone.²⁶ He regularly attended local fairs, where, in the main, he purchased cattle. Fig 9.1 illustrates the location of fairs and markets frequented by Flint, and the geographical extent of his sphere of operations.²⁷ Fairs and markets provided a good opportunity for farmers to do business with each other. Thus, on 6 May 1770, at Tenterden Fair, Flint purchased two steers from Richard Woodman of Peasemars in Sussex. He then met up with none other than Henry Read, Knatchbull's most substantial tenant and foremost occupier on Walland. Read was due to settle an outstanding bill with Flint who, at the time, was acting as executor for the estate of his late grandfather. For 30 weeks over the autumn/winter of 1769/70, some 39 lambs belonging to Read were agisted on Pattenson's holding in Biddenden, for which Flint was paid £5-17s. Flint continued to look after Read's livestock for five more weeks, for which he received £5-17s. Despite the lack of additional supporting evidence, it is reasonable to suppose that the business relationship between Read and the late Pattenson was a long-established one; and Flint and Read continued this arrangement into the following year.

Much of Flint's record-keeping concerned the rearing of livestock. Careful notes were made as to the exact winter foddering requirements (with clover or straw) not only for cattle, but also for the working oxen and horses that were kept either in the Pound and Close on the late Pattenson's Home Farm, or taken down to the marsh. Examination of the account book shows the attention to detail in respect of the movement of cattle and sheep. The evidence suggests that a significant

²⁵ Rams were hired for the 'riding' (mating) season. Jones, 'Sheep farming', pp. 7-8.

²⁶ As well as the London markets (such as Smithfield), Daniel Jones referred to 'other small markets on this side of London called the lower markets ... [i.e.] Tonbridge, Maidstone and Rochester.' Jones, 'Sheep farming', p. 12.

²⁷ From 1779-81 Flint recorded sales of livestock (mainly cattle) to just two customers, Robert Colebrook of Tenterden and Robert Cobb, both of whom occupied land on Romney Marsh. Between 1767-70, wool sales averaged just over £13 a year.

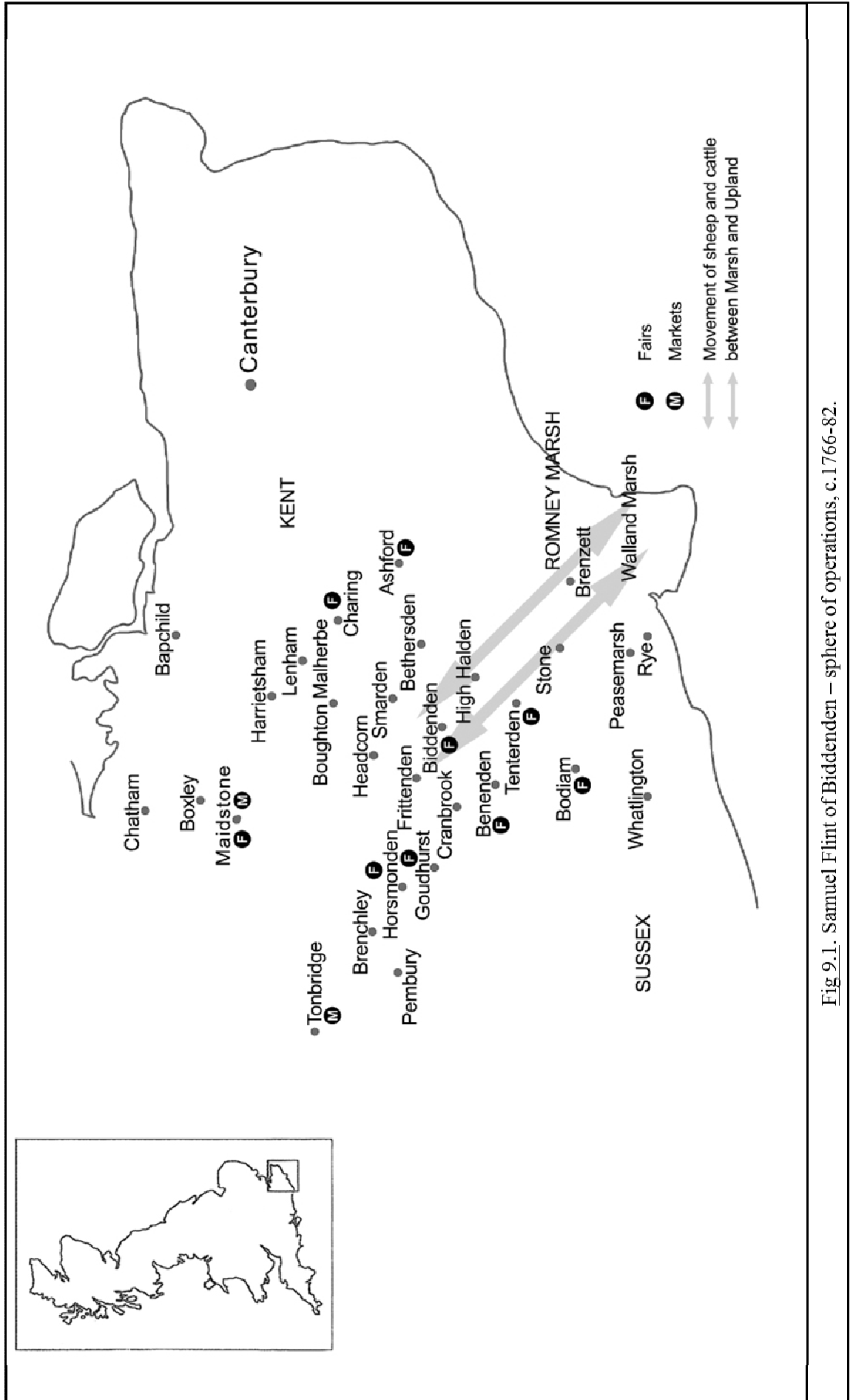


Fig 9.1. Samuel Flint of Biddenden – sphere of operations, c.1766-82.

proportion of cattle agisted on Flint's land was for locals. Thus on 9 October 1771, Flint 'took in to keep' a bullock for Witherden, for which he charged £2-2s. Five days later, he drove six of his own lambs 'to Freeman's' (an uplands farmer) where they stayed for the next 23 weeks over the winter. On 11 November 1771, two of Flint's steers were taken up to a Pound on another part of the farm in Biddenden, to be foddered three times a day. A week later, Flint 'took in to keep' one cow for John Day. On November 20th 1771, Flint took two of his own cows to 'the Old House' in Biddenden – again, to be foddered three times a day. One week later, he 'took in to keep' 12 sheep belonging to his brother-in-law. As for cow agistment, although John Day initially paid £3 a year, Flint's charges gradually increased, so that in June 1772, he made a special note that he had agreed to keep Day's cow at £3 10s per annum, excluding foddering. By 1775 Flint was charging £4 per annum to keep a 'milch' (dairy) cow for another local. Flint's charges may have been on the high side, for in 1772 it was Knatchbull's belief that 40s per dairy cow, per annum, was the going rate. Flint also over-wintered lambs with neighbouring Wealden farmers. The term 'looker' was not confined to the marsh. Just as there were marsh 'lookers', this expression would appear to be similarly used on the marsh hinterland for the agistment of livestock. Thus, in November 1769, Samuel Flint received 10s 6d 'for half a year's looking' for fellow Wealden farmer Jonathan Austen.

While Flint was taking in sheep for marshland graziers, he also over-wintered a good proportion of his own flock with neighbouring Wealden farmers every year to 1775.²⁸ This included 12 wether tegs driven to 'granpapas ground' in September 1767.²⁹ In August 1768 Flint 'drove to my granpapa[s] Ground 11 weather taggs for him to keep the winter at 2s. 6d. per score' followed by a further 10 wethers in October 1768. Five of these were taken away in February 1769, the rest in April.

Commercial connections were also facilitated by the convenience of kinship networks. This is illustrated in an entry dated 7 September 1769, when Flint 'Then took in to keep of my Cousin James Blackmore of Tenterden 20 Marsh Lambs at two shillings per score'. These were kept for 30 weeks until April 1770, with only one lamb lost. Flint was paid £2-17s but at the same time bought seven tegs from Blackmore for £5. In May 1770, Flint 'Then put out to keep to my Cousin James Blackmore three steers to fatt [on Walland]...' where they stayed until 4 September, at a cost of £2-5s. In the meantime, on 7 June 1770, Flint drove a further two runts down to Blackmore's to fatten, where they remained until 30 July – and similar arrangements continued between them until Blackmore's death. On 4 September 1770, the same day that Flint collected his steers from the marsh, he also took in 50 lambs to keep for Henry Read. In all probability Flint's steers and Read's lambs were driven together up to the farm in Biddenden, where the lambs remained until 8 May 1771. Flint kept several fattening steers over the winter at

²⁸ In May 1767 the flock consisted of 125 sheep and 36 lambs.

²⁹ A 'wether' referred to a castrated male sheep. A 'teg' referred to a sheep in its second year.

the Pound in Biddenden, foddered three times a day. On 2 February 1771, two of these were taken, on Flint's behalf, by Thomas Paine to Tonbridge market where they were sold for £18. Flint noted, 'Bought the same in and gave £10-10s.' – a differential of £7-10s.

Flint also had dealings with Henry Earle of Brenzett who, as we have earlier noted, was a substantial marsh grazier, ranking among the top five per cent of tenant farmers on Romney Marsh in 1775.³⁰ Unusually, but indicative of the flexibility of these arrangements, it was Flint – the Wealden farmer, who (in September 1773) took in an unknown number of bullocks for Earle, the marsh grazier. In June 1775 he was also paid 3s-1d 'for washing of young Mr. Earle's sheep, also for tarr [and] also for shearing of the said 20 sheep and winding wool.' He then carried Earle's wool to Tenterden for which he charged one shilling. Flint also put bullocks into Earle's 'keep' to fatten on the marsh over the summer of 1774; and in June 1779 kept a bay colt on Earle's marshholding in Brenzett. Unusually, in 1775, Flint kept 20 lambs for 13 weeks for Earle through the summer (from May to August).³¹ Flint's diary also discloses that by May 1779, Philip Ovenden of Tenterden had taken over occupation of the 78 acres in Walland previously occupied by his late brother-in-law Blackmore. The long-term stability in these arrangements was reflected in the fact that thereafter, Flint and Ovenden agisted sheep and cattle on each other's lands.

The arrangements between Knatchbull and the Read kinship were long-established, probably running ever since Read first began to lease Knatchbull land. Theirs was another mutually beneficial relationship. In the 1730s-40s, there are numerous references to Knatchbull's cattle being sent to Read's marshholding to fatten over the summer before going to market. In July 1735 Read asked Knatchbull if he would take in his 80 to 100 lambs to keep for the winter at Mersham Hatch. Sir Wyndham had earlier made a reciprocal arrangement with Read, and in working out what he might sell his cattle for, had calculated that 'My 3 cows which are come out of the marsh will probably weigh out 20 score a piece and will be worth by Michaelmas £12; but I must not refuse £11.'³² In July 1739, the baronet noted that Read was to send him 80 lambs to keep from August 1739 until Ladyday 1740. In the meantime, Knatchbull had been advised that the going rate for taking in 80 to 100 lambs for that period would be a penny a week per lamb. A similar rate for agistment was being charged in the early 1720s. For example, on August 21 1723, Daniel Langdon noted that he had 'Sent to my father at Ulcombe 140 lambs at 1d per week to Ladyday ...'.³³ Knatchbull had calculated that the 20 acres he had in mind for the keeping of Read's lambs would then be laid in for hay after they had been taken off again in the spring. In this case, the ratio of stock to winter pasture on the uplands was between four and five lambs per acre.

³⁰ See above, pp. 170-1.

³¹ Coincidentally, on 18 May 1775, Earle exacted a deathbed postscript to the will of his friend Robert Tilden, to have first refusal on his neighbour's land. See above, pp. 170-1.

³² CKS U951 E12.

³³ Hipkin, 'Daniel Langdon', p. 181.

Land on Knatchbull's Home Farm was used to over-winter his own sheep. In October 1742, some 67 sheep kept on the marsh at the 'Schoolland', plus a further 92 ewes and ewe tegs were 'brought home for want of grass'. While some farmers would keep their lambs until the following year and then sell them off as tegs, it was common practice at Michaelmas for those who had insufficient winter pasture to sell off their old sheep, all their wether lambs and the 'refuse' of their ewe lambs.³⁴ These were then bought up by Wealden/uplands farmers who bred few if any sheep themselves. They would buy up as many marsh lambs as could be accommodated on their land over the winter. Knatchbull did likewise in October 1742 when he 'Sold to Mr. Andrews all the ewes, barrens and weather lambs belonging to the Schoolland; so remain only the 28 ewlambs, which I did not sell.'³⁵

On 12 October 1770 Sir Edward Knatchbull paid Read £3-18s for keeping his bullocks on the marsh for 13 weeks. Knatchbull had long-term arrangements with some of his other tenants. He kept lambs over the winter on the Home Farm for substantial tenant John Dunk of Smeeth, who leased 439.5 acres of marshland of Sir Edward. The baronet also put his own lambs out to keep with tenant farmer Joseph Frind of Postling. In return, Frind grazed his own cattle on the Mersham estate – and such arrangements were all on a long-term basis.

To conclude, we have seen that in respect of the agistment of livestock on the marsh and its hinterland, many of the arrangements were amicable, continuing for generations. However, as reported by contemporaries, marsh graziers often found themselves at the mercy of the less diligent uplands farmers who provided winter pasture for marsh lambs. Some qualification is needed in respect of the movement of sheep and cattle between the marsh and the hinterland. Firstly, not all farmers moved all of their sheep and cattle. However, for those farmers who did agist a proportion of their livestock on each other's lands, especially within their local neighbourhood, the mechanics would appear to be a much more commonplace yet complex affair than has previously been realized. In addition, much of the movement of sheep specifically affected vulnerable marsh lambs, who needed protection from the harsh winter climate on the marsh; while the movement of cattle onto the marsh was for the specific purpose of summer fattening. The multi-faceted nature of agistment is exemplified in the farming operations of Samuel Flint and the study of his account book has shown something of the degree to which agistment occurred. Flint agisted his own lambs with other Wealden farmers, while taking in cattle to keep on the Home Farm for his neighbours – which usually involved just one or two beasts at any one time.

Significantly however, Samuel Flint also took in lambs over the winter for some of the highest-ranking graziers on the marsh, such as Read, Blackmore and Earle. This worked both ways. For

³⁴ The term 'refuse' referred to lambs who were reckoned to be the worst of the one yearlings. See Jones, 'Sheep farming', p. 7.

³⁵ CKS U951 E12.

Flint as a Wealden cattle rearing specialist, the marsh was essential to his farming economy. It enabled him to fatten some of his beasts on the marsh, thus freeing up some of his acreage at home to be laid in with hay.

Chapter 10. Conclusion.

In chapter one, we made reference to a view that in the early eighteenth century, landlord-tenant relations in England were characterized by values of partnership, flexibility, shared cost and risk, and that generally things worked reasonably well. To what extent does the fresh evidence presented here support or contradict this idea? In closing, conclusions that may reasonably be drawn will be highlighted, together with pointers for further research. Results are viewed from the perspective of landlord-tenant relations, farming practice and landholding structures; these were signaled as the three broad, interweaving strands running through the chapters of this study.¹

For the region as a whole, the LTAs have disclosed a diverse picture of landholding structures and trends over time, c. 1746-90. They also broadly mirror earlier results for Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Kent and Sussex, in which there was an overall fall in numbers of owners and occupiers, a rise in owner-occupation, and considerable diversity within the various size groups analysed. A move away from purely-rentiered estates was also noticed.

On Walland/Denge, numbers of owners and occupiers fell between 1738-91. Owner-occupation bottomed-out in 1748, a decade earlier than previously realized. In a weak market, there was a tendency for owner-occupiers to take the rentier option. Substantial marsh graziers took advantage of weak demand and accumulated acreage relatively cheaply. From c. 1760 owner-occupation saw a steady recovery, and by 1791 had doubled compared with 1738. There was also a trend towards large owners and occupiers. It was shown unequivocally that changes in landholding structures on the marsh were tenant-led. From c. 1760, and in a rising market, resourceful and substantial marsh graziers bought up additional acreage in piecemeal fashion from neighbours and landlords willing to sell. The land market was characterized by an insider network and business was generally done on the quiet. The indications are that there was a strong sense of community and shared values, with a possibly quite delicate balance between ties of social obligation and market considerations.

Qualitative evidence for the marsh hinterland for the c. 30 years to c.1760 indicate that in a sluggish economic climate, landlord-tenant relations displayed considerable flexibility and give-and take. On mixed farms in the uplands, low grain prices in the 1730s-40s

¹ See above, p. 20.

squeezed profit margins. To a greater or lesser extent, both Knatchbull and Rockingham endured late payments and/or rent arrears. The Rockingham estate came off worst, and although some tenants paid up regularly, there was a tendency for large farms to be hardest hit. Holdings lay empty, and for a short period arrears exceeded 30 per cent. Knatchbull was flexible in his dealings with uplands tenants, sometimes waiting for months for the rent to arrive. He was forgiving of small farmers who got into difficulty. Careful decisions on the landlord's part as to the choice of tenant were an important financial safeguard; in Barnard of East Lenham Farm Knatchbull had a safe bet.

Developments on the marsh have mirrored trends reported in earlier findings. Both Rockingham and Knatchbull witnessed the withdrawal of Wealden farmers and the emergence of resourceful marsh-based graziers making economies of scale. A particularly striking feature has emerged in relation to landlord-tenant relations. On Walland, negotiations to lease Knatchbull land were not conducted independently. Rather, they were conducted on a different level, often multi-faceted, taking in more than one unit (or one tenant) at a time. Forward-thinking in their intentions to make economies of scale, the marsh-domiciled Read kinship group were central to this dynamic. Power-relations between Knatchbull and (in particular) Henry Read were relatively evenly-balanced. Both stood their ground on things that were, for them, non-negotiable, while being flexible in matters that were not. Theirs proved to be a long-established and enduring relationship, with shared vested interests and values.

On the Knatchbull and Rockingham estates in the marsh hinterland, landlord-tenant relations from c. 1760 were stable insofar as most tenants were long-term. The picture in respect of rents was more diverse. Some farms had seen substantial rises by c. 1790. Elsewhere, on some holdings the rent stayed the same; on others there were modest rises.

On the marsh, Read paid a substantial entry fine to renew a lease. He also left a sizeable legacy to Knatchbull 'for continuing the remainder of his Leases'.² These developments were unique for the Knatchbull estate. This in itself raises important questions. To what degree was their relationship strengthened by ties of social obligation? And were ties of social obligation in themselves reinforced by hard cash? While we cannot be sure, the evidence tends to suggest the latter. Depending on interpretation, there is also a case for suggesting that reinforcing these ties with hard cash may have ameliorated rent increases, not only on Knatchbull-owned land but perhaps further afield on the marsh.

² 15 December 1778. CKS U951 A22.

By contrast, the Pattenson case study highlights the purely market-led considerations that were at work in some landlord-tenant relationships at a time of rising demand. The commissioning of Hogben's survey indicates an absentee rentier's awareness of the advantage in knowing 'to the uttermost Acre' the full extent and economic worth of a holding.³ As for Pattenson, in the aftermath of this affair, and having lost the tenancy, he may have told a convincing tale of victimisation and avarice, with listeners unaware of the sub-text. This serves as a salutary reminder of the responsibilities attendant in the handling of primary source evidence, not least in its interpretation. This is a conundrum, especially when the motives, constraints and flaws in human nature are to be taken into account in the interpretation of the subject matter, without losing sight of the colour of the lens through which it is viewed.

Hitherto unexplored aspects of farming practice have uncovered more about the symbiotic relationship between the marsh and its hinterland. The indications are that agistment was a much more commonplace affair than previously realized, both in the movement of sheep and cattle from marsh to hinterland but also *within* the local neighbourhood in the Weald. Long-term, amicable arrangements existed between Knatchbull and Read for the agistment of livestock on each other's lands, and Knatchbull also had long-running arrangements with some of his other tenants in this respect.

The Knatchbull evidence has uncovered, for the first time, the workings of an eighteenth century landed estate in Kent, embracing the marsh, the Weald and the uplands. It has shown, among other things, something of the economic inter-dependence of all three facets of the estate. The findings raise leading questions, particularly with regard to landlord-tenant relations on the marsh, and whether the multi-dimensional way in which negotiations were conducted was a one-off when seen in a wider context. In the absence of further evidence, we do not know whether farming practice and landlord-tenant relations on this estate represented the average, or the exceptional. (The latter I suspect.) The detail shown in this study is virgin territory. It will, at minimum, serve as a reference point for future research.

³ See above, p. 15.

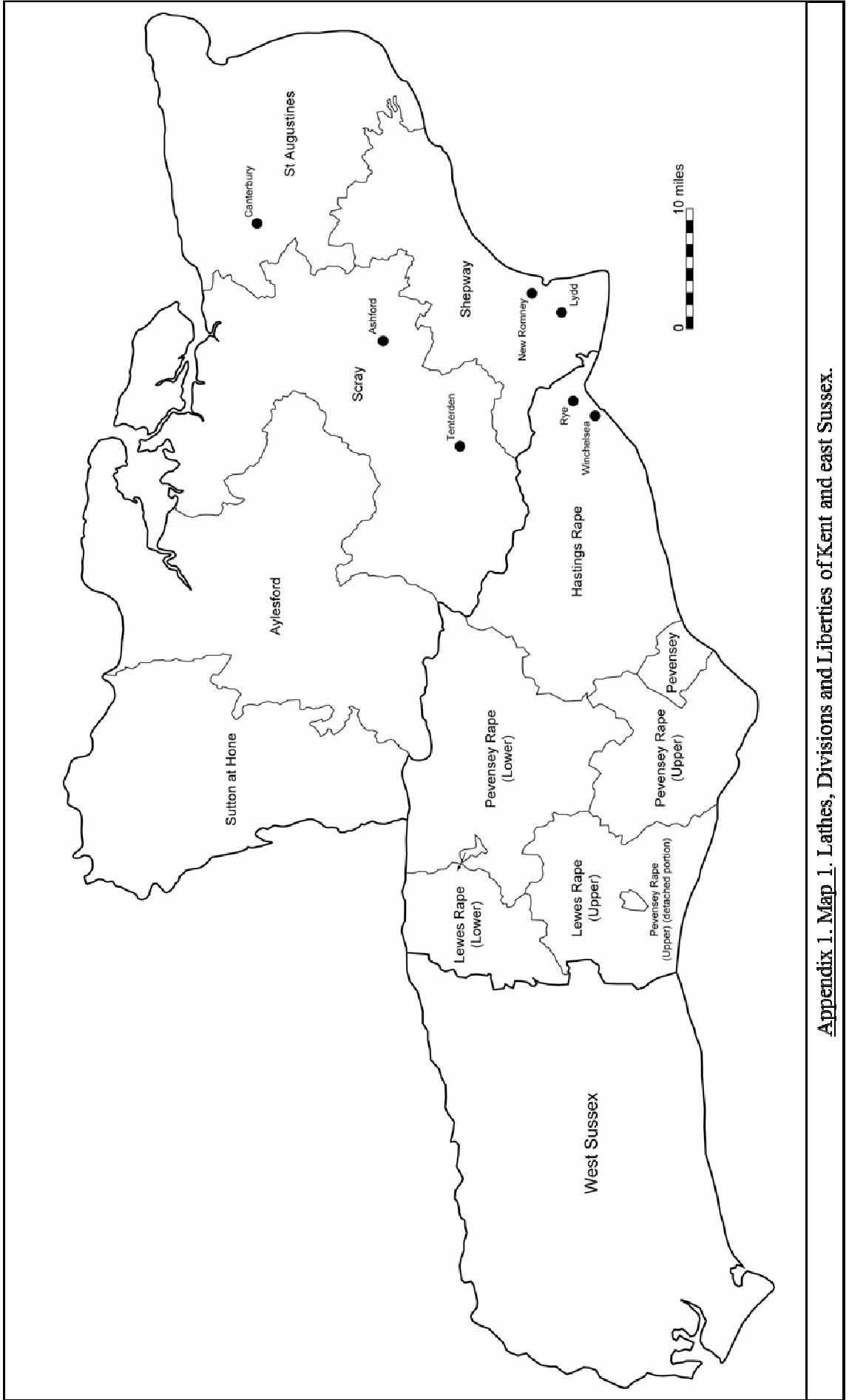
APPENDICES

Appendix 1. The Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex.

Appendix 2. The Knatchbull estate in Kent.

Appendix 3. The *Kentish Post*

Appendix 4. Furnesse/Rockingham – uplands holdings.



Appendix 1. Map 1. Lathes, Divisions and Liberties of Kent and east Sussex.

Appendix 1. Table 1.1. 'Ancient' parishes in the Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex.

Parish	Code	Acreage
Aldington	a	3591
Appledore	w	2900
Ashford	u	2850
Barham	u	4699
Beckley *	w	5540
Bethersden	w	6376
Biddenden	u	7208
Bilsington	b	2843
Blackmanstone	a	294
Bodiam *	w	1480
Bonnington	ab	1113
Boughton Aluph	u	2425
Brabourne	u	3528
Brede *	w	5700
Brenzett	a	1819
Brookland	a	1886
Broomhill	a	3323
Burmarsh	a	1834
Cranbrook	w	10372
Denton	u	1184
Dymchurch	a	1534
East Guldeford *	b	2430
Eastbridge	a	1150
Ebony	b	2215
Fairfield	a	1204
Godmersham	u	3107
Great Chart	u	3276
Hastingleigh	u	500
High Halden	w	3753
Hinxhill	u	717
Hope	a	1493
Hothfield	u	1829
Hurst	a	461
Iden *	b	3120
Ivychurch	a	4567
Kenardington	b	2164
Kennington	u	1391
Kingsnorth	w	3252
Little Chart	u	1578
Lower Hardres	u	1180
Lydd	a	12043
Lympne	b	2673
Mersham	u	2680
Midley	a	2161
New Romney	a	2564

Notes. (a) For acreages see Page (ed.), *VCH Kent* 3, pp. 358-67; Horsfield, *Sussex* II, p. 84. (b) * indicates a parish in Hastings Rape, east Sussex. (c) Codes. a = whole-marsh; b = marsh-edge; u = uplands; w = Weald (d) 'Ancient' parishes were usually (but not always) synonymous with 'Land Tax' parishes. See Appendix 1, Table 1.2.

Appendix 1. Table 1.1 cont.

Parish	Code	Acreage
Newchurch	a	3121
Newenden	w	1046
Newington	b	3115
Northiam	w	4100
Old Romney	a	2546
Ore *	w	2177
Orgarswick	a	402
Orlestone	b	750
Peasmarsh *	w	3772
Pett *	w	1941
Playden *	b	1296
Pluckley	u	2500
Postling	u	1564
Rolvenden	w	5622
Ruckinge	a	3449
Rye *	w	2462
Sandhurst	w	4449
Sellinge	a	2063
Sevington	u	833
Shadoxhurst	w	1972
Smarden	w	5380
Smeeth	u	1620
Snargate	a	1591
Snave	a	1494
St Maries	a	1936
Stone-in-Oxney	b	3042
Tenterden	w	8471
Udimore *	w	2250
Upper Hardres	u	2037
Warehorne	b	2883
West Hythe	b	1137
Westwell	u	5199
Whatlington *	w	1600
Willesborough	u	1457
Winchelsea *	w	1120
Wittersham	w	3625
Woodchurch	w	6949
Wye	w	7348
Total		242,326

Appendix 1. Table 1.2. – Romney Marsh Level, 1746 – occupied acreage/LTA £s

Surname of occupier(s)	Nos line entries	Nos parishes	Acres	LTA £
Abell	1	1	8	5
Andrews (2)	14	5	472	287
Ashbye	1	1	23	18
Bachelor	6	4	210	125
Beake	1	1	20	17
Beale	1	1	56.5	36
Beane	3	3	386.5	215
Bedoe	7	4	197	148
Bell	1	1	24.5	12
Boulden	1	1	12	10
Bourne (2)	12	5	368	205
Boys	1	1	36.5	20
Bull	1	1	29	20
Burk	8	4	270.5	162.5
Butler	2	1	24.5	15
Calverley	1	1	36.5	32
Carpenter	3	2	49.5	27
Carter	2	2	15	7
Coates (3)	19	4	642	444
Cobb (2)	8	5	327.5	136
Cole	1	1	43	23
Coleman	6	4	250	125
Collins	2	2	54.5	40
Cooke	2	1	17.5	12
Cooper	1	1	6.5	3
Curteis	1	1	37.5	22
Dent	4	4	213.5	178
Downe	6	2	104	75
Dray	1	1	14.5	12
Dunk	4	3	177.5	129
Durrant	2	2	23	15
Edwards	3	2	23.5	12
Elgar (3)	7	4	184	85
Elles	9	5	439	197
Elphick	1	1	42.5	28
Elvey	2	2	15	9
Eve	2	2	57.5	45
Fagge	1	1	2	2
Farnell	1	1	43.5	33
Firminger	1	1	101	62
Fisher	3	1	57.5	46

Sources. CKS Q/CTL; EKAC S/Rm/FS 10. I am grateful to Dr. S. Hipkin for supplying a transcript of this document. LTAs covered the parishes of Bilsington; Blackmanstone; Bonnington; Brenzett; Burmarsh; Dymchurch; Eastbridge; Hope; Newchurch; New Romney; Orgarswick; Orlestone; Ruckinge; St. Maries; Sellinge; Snave. Three more LTAs, (1) Aldington, Newington and Hurst (2) Ivychurch, Appledore and Brookland and (3) Lypne and West Hythe, covered detached parts of those parishes that lay on the Level.

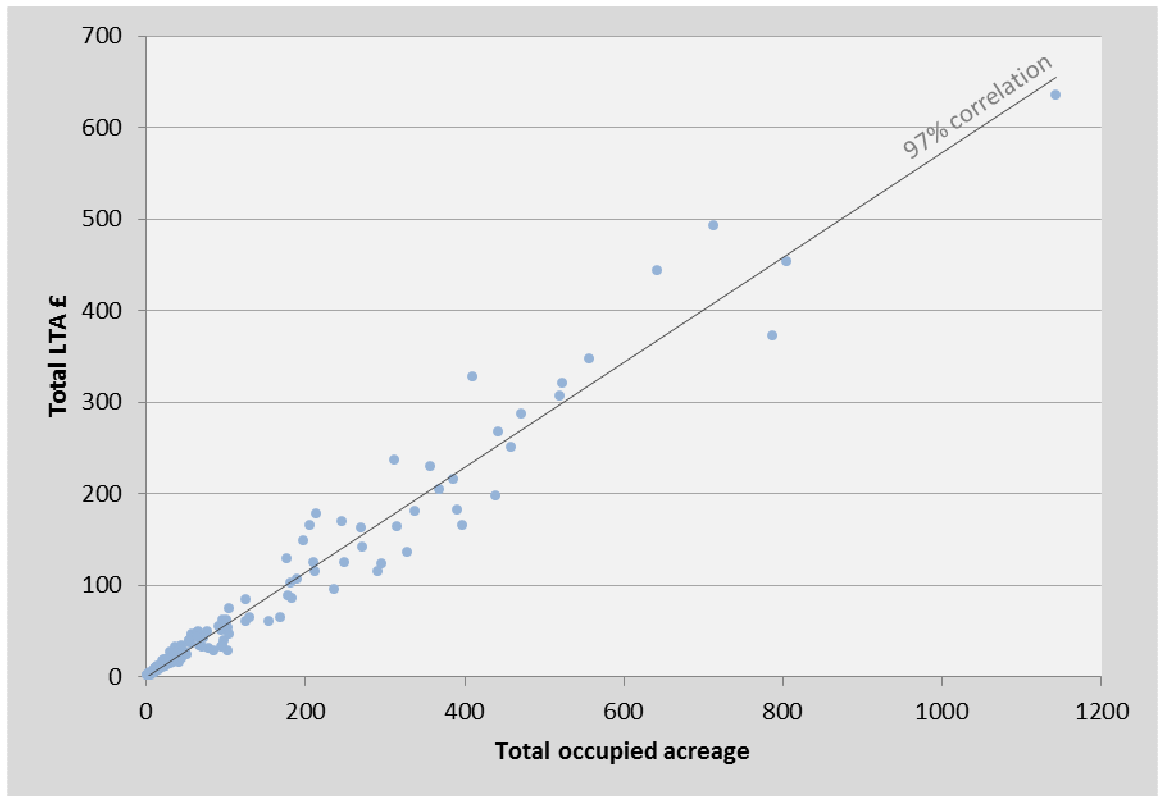
Appendix 1. Table 1.2 – cont.

Surname of occupier(s)	Nos line entries	Nos parishes	Acres	LTA £
Flint	1	1	102	28
Foster	1	1	23.5	12
Fowle (2)	15	9	713.5	493
Franks	2	2	97	62
Giles (2)	9	4	315	164
Gillett	3	3	78.5	31
Goddard	2	2	40	21
Godfrey	5	1	36.5	18
Grant	3	2	99.5	58
Green	4	3	125	60
Greenland (2)	8	7	272	141
Grist	1	1	30	16
Gutsole	2	2	66	49
Hambrook	1	1	1	2
Harris	1	1	5.5	2
Harvey	1	1	60.5	45
Hayward	1	1	11	6
Henley (2)	3	2	50.5	24
Hills (4)	6	5	76.5	49
Hobbs	4	1	30	27
Hodges	5	4	311.5	237
Honywood	1	1	153.5	61
Hope	2	2	32	20
Horne (3)	14	9	295.5	123
Howland (2)	16	10	557	347
Hoye	1	1	27	16
Hunt (2)	2	2	67	34
Inkpen	1	1	11	7
Jeames	1	1	70.5	32
Jordan (2)	2	2	34	15
Kennett (4)	23	9	1143.5	634.5
Lake	2	2	98	40
Langdon (2)	10	4	391.5	182
Lott	7	3	523	320
Luckhurst (2)	4	3	42.5	24
Mace	2	1	45.5	20
Mackrill	7	5	443	267
Mantell	1	1	16.5	12
Marsh	3	2	35.5	21
Marshall	2	2	95.5	34
Marten	9	3	182	102
Mascall	5	3	95	33
Maylam (3)	11	7	212	115
Miles	1	1	40.5	29
Moore	1	1	95	50
Morphett	1	1	72	42
Morris (3)	13	5	356.5	230
Munk (4)	16	8	787.5	372
Newman (2)	4	4	91.5	55
Nickoll (2)	15	5	411	328

Appendix 1. Table 1.2 – cont.

Surname of occupier(s)	Nos line entries	Nos parishes	Acres	LTA £
Noakes (2)	8	2	397	166
Oliver	1	1	25.5	15
Pamflett	1	1	29.5	14
Parris	2	1	5	5
Patey	1	1	85.5	28
Pattison	1	1	10	4
Pilcher (3)	10	5	337.5	181
Quihampton	1	1	101	60
Read	1	1	32.5	16
Rolfe	2	2	36	27
Russell	3	2	45.5	27
Rutton	5	2	44	34
Scoones	1	1	35.5	25
Skinner	2	2	104	46
Slodden	1	1	20	10
Smith (3)	18	9	805.5	453
Southerden	2	2	129.5	64
Spain	2	2	11	4
Stanley	2	1	16.5	9
Stapley	2	2	4.5	3
Steed	2	2	54.5	39
Stone	5	5	246	170
Swaine	1	1	11	9
Taylor (2)	4	4	190.5	106
Thomas	1	1	2	1
Tiddeman (2)	7	5	125.5	84
Tilden	1	1	11.5	8
Tookey (2)	3	3	236	96
Trevillon	6	5	458	251
Turner	2	1	22.5	18
Turrell	2	2	6	3
Vidgeon	2	2	25	18
Virgo	3	2	28.5	20
Waddell	3	2	33.5	15
Walker (2)	17	10	519.5	306
Wanstall	1	1	63.5	48
Watts (2)	2	2	41	16
Weeden	1	1	15	8
Weller	1	1	3	1
White	3	3	102	54
Wightwick	5	5	206	166
Wilson	6	6	291	115
Witherden	4	2	64	44
Wratten	8	5	178	89
Wright	5	4	169.5	65
Total			19,464.0	11,146

Appendix 1. Fig. 1.1. Romney Marsh Level, 1746 - occupied acreage/LTA £s per occupier(s) surname - correlation analysis.



Appendix 1. Table 1.3. The Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex – c. 1746 LTA parish totals and 1815 Property Act parish totals.

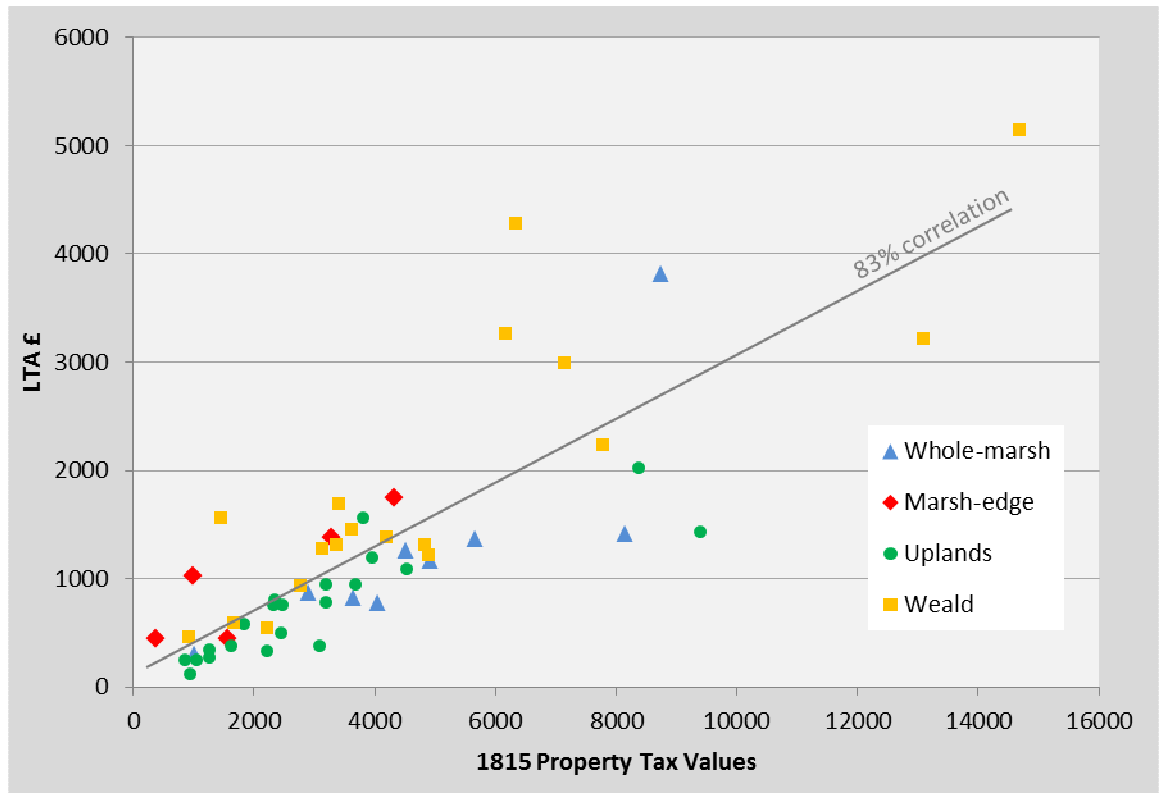
Parish	Code	c. 1746 LTA £	1815 Prop Tax £
Ashford	u	2013	8387
Barham	u	947	3684
Beckley	w	1380	4193
Bethersden	w	1216	4906
Biddenden	w	4282	6356
Bodiam	w	590	1665
Boughton Aluph	u	771	3193
Brabourne	u	1561	3809
Brede	w	1685	3416
Burmarsh	a	1369	5675
Cranbrook	w	3214	13102
Denton	u	241	1061
Dymchurch/Blackmanstone	a	1257	4523
East Guldeford	b	1750	4329
Eastbridge	a	876	2909
Ebony	b	442	389
Godmersham	u	750	2479
Great Chart	u	1194	3960
Hastingleigh	u	116	962
High Halden	w	1449	3634
Hinxhill	u	246	868
Hope	a	823	3639
Hothfield	u	748	2340
Iden	b	1380	3281
Kennington	u	489	2464
Kingsnorth	u	943	3198
Little Chart	u	324.5	2232
Lower Hardres	u	262	1271
Newchurch	a	1419	8146
Northiam	w	1270	3149
New/Old Romney/Midley	a	3820	8740
Ore	w	540	2222
Orgarswick	a	302	1020
Peasmarsh	w	1310	3379
Pett	w	935	2776
Playden	b	445	1576
Postling	u	376	1639
Rolvenden	w	2994	7159
Sandhurst/Newenden	w	3258	6187
Sevington	u	332	1281
Smarden	w	1310	4849
Smeeth	u	570	1850
Snave	a	776	4043
St Maries	a	1162	4915

Sources. CKS Q/CTL; ESRO ELT; House of Commons Parliamentary Paper, *Abridgement of the Abstract of the Answers and Returns made pursuant to an Act, passed in the Fifty-fifth Year of His Majesty King George the Third, intituled 'AN ACT for procuring Returns relative to the Expence and Maintenance of the Poor in England; and also relative to the Highways' - so far as relates to THE POOR.* House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online, 1818 (82).

Appendix 1. Table 1.3 - cont.

Parish	Code	c. 1746 LTA £	1815 Prop Tax £
Stone-in-Oxney	b	1027	988
Tenterden	w	5141	14688
Upper Hardres	u	370	3096
Westwell	u	1084	4542
Whatlington	w	460	936
Willesborough	u	797	2358
Wittersham	w	1562	1452
Woodchurch	w	2226	7800
Wye	u	1425	9394
Total		67,229.5	210,110

Appendix 1. Fig. 1.2. The Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex - c. 1746 LTA parish totals and 1815 Property Act parish totals - correlation analysis



Appendix 1, Table 1.4. The Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c. 1746-90. LTA documents - estimated acreage and dates used.

A. 52 Kent and Sussex parishes	Estimated acreage per LTA	Dates used
Aldington Newington & Hurst *	900	1746/95
Ashford	2850	1746;1790/2
Barham	4699	1745/90
Beckley	5540	1745/91
Bethersden	6376	1746/90
Biddenden	7208	1759/90
Bodiam	1480	1745/91
Boughton Aluph	2425	1746/91
Brede	5700	1747/90
Brenzett	1819	1746/92
Burmarsh	1834	1746/95
Denton	1184	1746/90
Dymchurch	1534	1746/95
East Brabourne Borough *	1500	1746/90
East Guldeford	2430	1748/91
Eastbridge	1150	1746/95
Ebony	2215	1746/90
Godmersham	3107	1746/91
Great Chart	3276	1746/91
Hastingleigh Borough *	500	1746/90
Hinxhill	717	1746/91
Hope	1493	1746/90
Hothfield	1839	1746/90
Iden	3120	1746/91
Ivychurch Appledore Brookland *	1300	1746/90
Kennington	3160	1746/91
Kingsnorth	3252	1746/90
Little Chart	1578	1746/90
Lower Hardres	1180	1746/90
Lympne & West Hythe *	800	1746/95
New Romney	2100	1746/90
Newchurch	3139	1746/90
Northiam	4100	1745/90
Ore	2160	1745/91
Orlestone	750	1746/90
Peasmarsh	3340	1745/91
Pett	1750	1746/91
Playden	1360	1748/91
Pluckley Borough *	2500	1746/90
Ruckinge	900	1746/90
Sevington	833	1746/90
Smarden	5386	1746/90
Snave	1494	1746/90

Sources. CKS Q/CTL; CKS Q/RPL; ESRO ELT; ESRO LT. Note. * indicates (with estimated acreages) where parishes named in the LTAs do not correlate with 'ancient' parishes.

Appendix 1, Table 1.4 – cont.

A. 52 Kent and Sussex parishes	Estimated acreage per LTA	Dates used
St. Maries	1916	1746/90
Stone-in-Oxney	3101	1746/90
Upper Hardres	2037	1747/90
Warehorne & Orlestone *	2100	1746/89
Warehorne & Shadoxhurst *	1400	1746/90
West Brabourne Borough *	2028	1746/90
Westwell	5222	1746/90
Whatlington	1600	1747/90
Willesborough	1487	1746/90
Wye	7348	1746/90
B. Kent Wealden parishes	Estimated acreage per LTA	Dates used
Appledore	2900	1759/91
Biddenden	7208	1759/90
Cranbrook	10372	1756/9;1790/1
Halden	3753	1759/91
Kenardington/Shadoxhurst *	3160	1759/91
Newenden	50	1756/89
Rolvenden	5622	1759/90
Sandhurst/part Newenden *	5449	1756/90
Woodchurch	7348	1756/90

Appendix 1. Table 1.5. The Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c. 1746-90. LTAs - parish totals.

A. 52 Kent and Sussex parishes	LTA c. 1746 £	LTA c. 1790 £
Aldington Newington & Hurst	647	651
Ashford	2013	2008
Barham	848	848
Beckley	1384	1336
Bethersden	1120	1124
Bodiam	551	581
Boughton Aluph	738	712
Brede	1575	1783
Brenzett	442	458
Burmarsh	1323	1318
Denton	218	215
Dymchurch	615	604
East Brabourne Borough	389	340
East Guldeford	1684	1644
Eastbridge	859	858
Ebony	392	402
Godmersham	678	731
Great Chart	1043	1066
Hastingleigh Borough	116	100
Hinxhill	236	246
Hope	837	837
Hothfield	713	712
Iden	1319	1335
Ivychurch Appledore Brookland	991	1023
Kennington	474	471
Kingsnorth	894	900
Little Chart	292	287
Lower Hardres	262	230
Lympne & West Hythe	365	365
New Romney	614	614
Newchurch	1367	1337
Northiam	1152	1160
Ore	449	567
Orlestone	202	204
Peasmarsh	1259	1270
Pett	822	863
Playden	339	416
Pluckley Borough	810	796
Ruckinge	637	668
Sevington	332	332
Smarden	1254	1254
Snave	737	738
St. Maries	1111	1118
Stone-in-Oxney	1417	1358
Upper Hardres	342	342
Warehorne & Orlestone	697	690

Sources. CKS Q/CTL; CKS Q/RPL; ESRO ELT; ESRO LT.

Appendix 1 Table 1.5 – cont.

A. 52 Kent and Sussex parishes	LTA c. 1746 £	LTA c. 1790 £
Warehorne & Shadoxhurst	446	445
West Brabourne Borough	565	558
Westwell	1009	1025
Whatlington	416	422
Willesborough	768	782
Wye	1313	1398
B. Kent Wealden parishes	LTA 1756/9 £	LTA 1790/1 £
Appledore	1297	1348
Biddenden	4092	4208
Cranbrook	2384	2067
Halden	1449	1325
Kenardington/Shadoxhurst	963	930
Newenden	140	134
Rolvenden	2883	2881
Sandhurst/part Newenden	2911	2624
Woodchurch	1874	2226

Appendix 1. Table 1.6. The Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c.1746-90. LTAs - parish totals, with LTAs to woodland.

A. 52 Kent and Sussex parishes	c. 1746 LTA £	c. 1746 LTA woodland £	c. 1790 LTA £	c. 1790 LTA woodland £
Aldington Newington & Hurst	647	0	651	0
Ashford	2013	14	2008	20
Barham	848	143	848	175
Beckley	1384	157	1336	155
Bethersden	1120	97	1124	49
Bodiam	551	14.5	581	0
Boughton Aluph	738	26	712	25
Brede	1575	144	1783	157
Brenzett	442	0	458	0
Burmarsh	1323	88	1318	78
Denton	218	36	215	37
Dymchurch	615	0	604	0
East Brabourne Borough	389	0	340	0
East Guldeford	1684	0	1644	0
Eastbridge	859	0	858	0
Ebony	392	0	402	0
Godmersham	678	5	731	91
Great Chart	1043	20	1066	21
Hastingleigh Borough	116	0	100	0
Hinxhill	236	2	246	2
Hope	837	0	837	0
Hothfield	713	14	712	14
Iden	1319	43	1335	16
Iychurch Appledore Brookland	991	0	1023	0
Kennington	474	0	471	0
Kingsnorth	894	15	900	15
Little Chart	292	0	287	0
Lower Hardres	262	17	230	1
Lympne & West Hythe	365	0	365	0
New Romney	614	0	614	0
Newchurch	1367	0	1337	0
Northiam	1152	44	1160	49
Ore	449	20	567	37
Orlestone	202	75	204	67
Peasmarsh	1259	45	1270	72
Pett	822	0	863	0
Playden	339	0	416	0

Sources. CKS Q/CTL; CKS Q/RPL; ESRO ELT; ESRO LT.

Appendix 1. Table 1.6 - cont.

A. 52 Kent and Sussex parishes	c. 1746 LTA £	c. 1746 LTA woodland £	c. 1790 LTA £	c. 1790 LTA woodland £
Pluckley Borough	810	2	796	0
Ruckinge	637	51	668	51
Sevington	332	0	332	0
Smarden	1254	49	1254	48
Snave	737	0	738	0
St. Maries	1111	0	1118	0
Stone-in-Oxney	1417	14	1358	18
Upper Hardres	342	61	342	60
Warehorne & Orlestone	697	0	690	0
Warehorne & Shadoxhurst	446	89	445	0
West Brabourne Borough	565	9	558	18
Westwell	1009	95	1025	115
Whatlington	416	0	422	3
Willesborough	768	0	782	0
Wye	1313	5	1398	5
B. Kent Wealden parishes	1756/9 LTA £	1756/9 LTA woodland £	1790/1 LTA £	1790/1 LTA woodland £
Appledore	1297	0	1348	0
Biddenden	4092	181	4208	156
Cranbrook	2384	33	2067	41
Halden	1449	65	1325	43
Kenardington/Shadoxhurst	963	62	930	37
Newenden	140	0	134	0
Rolvenden	2883	47	2881	10
Sandhurst/part Newenden	2911	14	2624	17
Woochurch	1874	158	2226	833

Appendix 1. Table 1.7. The Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c. 1746-90. Numbers of owners by parish.

A. 52 Kent and Sussex parishes	Nos owners c. 1746	Nos owners c. 1790
Aldington Newington & Hurst	18	18
Ashford	174	144
Barham	68	61
Beckley	56	51
Bethersden	67	56
Bodiam	23	15
Boughton Aluph	43	38
Brede	71	64
Brenzett	27	28
Burmarsh	45	39
Denton	15	18
Dymchurch	45	45
East Brabourne Borough	32	31
East Guldeford	26	23
Eastbridge	26	25
Ebony	8	9
Godmersham	34	19
Great Chart	52	42
Hastingleigh Borough	19	12
Hinxhill	21	24
Hope	39	37
Hothfield	46	38
Iden	36	30
Ivychurch Appledore Brookland	46	56
Kennington	50	40
Kingsnorth	38	41
Little Chart	19	14
Lower Hardres	32	30
Lympne & West Hythe	16	14
New Romney	33	31
Newchurch	74	70
Northiam	57	74
Ore	20	19
Orlestone	14	13
Peasmarsh	36	39
Pett	18	15
Playden	32	23
Pluckley Borough	33	25
Ruckinge	53	52
Sevington	24	22
Smarden	101	89
Snave	32	35
St. Maries	47	44
Stone-in-Oxney	48	44
Upper Hardres	27	26
Warehorne & Orlestone	50	46

Sources. CKS Q/CTL; CKS Q/RPL; ESRO ELT; ESRO LT.

Appendix 1. Table 1.7 – cont.

A. 52 Kent and Sussex parishes	Nos owners c. 1746	Nos owners c. 1790
Warehorne & Shadoxhurst	45	47
West Brabourne Borough	54	46
Westwell	59	53
Whatlington	23	27
Willesborough	54	44
Wye	116	102
B. Kent Wealden parishes	Nos owners 1756 / 9	Nos owners 1790/1
Appledore	31	33
Biddenden	200	174
Cranbrook	134	137
Halden	85	83
Kenardington / Shadoxhurst	53	53
Newenden	11	9
Rolvenden	84	80
Sandhurst / part Newenden	116	118
Woodchurch	86	87

Appendix 1. Table 1.8. The Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c. 1746-90. Percentage of owner-occupied LTA (including woodland) by parish.

A. 52 Kent and Sussex parishes	% OwnOcc LTA c. 1746	% OwnOcc LTA c. 1790
Aldington Newington & Hurst	4	20
Ashford	27	31
Barham	19	49
Beckley	21	26
Bethersden	20	14
Bodiam	38	17
Boughton Aluph	4	17
Brede	36	43
Brenzett	3	24
Burmarsh	11	20
Denton	32	27
Dymchurch	28	41
East Brabourne Borough	11	17
East Guldeford	25	37
Eastbridge	12	8
Ebony	3	20
Godmersham	57	44
Great Chart	12	17
Hastingleigh Borough	11	33
Hinxhill	9	16
Hope	16	10
Hothfield	27	35
Iden	31	42
Ivychurch Appledore Brookland	7	29
Kennington	13	23
Kingsnorth	4	6
Little Chart	21	22
Lower Hardres	16	33
Lympne & West Hythe	10	6
New Romney	24	34
Newchurch	15	26
Northiam	45	55
Ore	51	66
Orlestone	61	30
Peasmarsh	13	46
Pett	16	28

Sources. CKS Q/CTL; CKS Q/RPL; ESRO ELT; ESRO LT.

Appendix 1. Table 1.8 – cont.

A. 52 Kent and Sussex parishes	% OwnOcc LTA c. 1746	% OwnOcc LTA c. 1790
Playden	47	25
Pluckley Borough	63	70
Ruckinge	15	13
Sevington	15	12
Smarden	9	17
Snave	12	31
St. Maries	6	15
Stone-in-Oxney	8	23
Upper Hardres	26	31
Warehorne & Orlestone	16	41
Warehorne & Shadoxhurst	18	27
West Brabourne Borough	27	25
Westwell	25	27
Whatlington	12	42
Willesborough	25	36
Wye	29	40
B. Kent Wealden parishes	% OwnOcc LTA 1756/9	% OwnOcc LTA 1790/1
Appledore	8	18
Biddenden	23	23
Cranbrook	27	35
Halden	16	20
Kenardington / Shadoxhurst	18	34
Newenden	60	63
Rolvenden	9	27
Sandhurst / part Newenden	22	35
Woodchurch	11	33

Appendix 1 Table 1.9. The Romney Marsh region of Kent and Sussex, c.1746-90. Numbers of occupiers by parish.

A. 52 Kent and Sussex parishes	Nos occs c. 1746	Nos occs c. 1790
Aldington Newington & Hurst	19	18
Ashford	283	283
Barham	94	89
Beckley	72	64
Bethersden	83	65
Bodiam	23	17
Boughton Aluph	48	47
Brede	81	80
Brenzett	22	25
Burmarsh	29	36
Denton	26	23
Dymchurch	33	45
East Brabourne Borough	34	29
East Guldeford	23	24
Eastbridge	20	26
Ebony	8	8
Godmersham	43	26
Great Chart	92	79
Hastingleigh Borough	16	15
Hinxhill	19	27
Hope	30	36
Hothfield	47	47
Iden	36	35
Ivychurch Appledore Brookland	35	53
Kennington	58	56
Kingsnorth	48	45
Little Chart	38	31
Lower Hardres	35	29
Lympne & West Hythe	13	16
New Romney	25	31
Newchurch	54	60
Northiam	65	85
Ore	22	22
Orlestone	17	15
Peasmarsh	41	45
Pett	20	20
Playden	29	24
Pluckley Borough	41	38
Ruckinge	58	51
Sevington	25	20
Smarden	114	105
Snave	27	30
St. Maries	30	35
Stone-in-Oxney	45	42
Upper Hardres	37	31

Sources. CKS Q/CTL; CKS Q/RPL; ESRO ELT; ESRO LT.

Appendix 1. Table 1.9 – cont.

A. 52 Kent and Sussex parishes	Nos occs c. 1746	Nos occs c. 1790
Warehorne & Orlestone	40	44
Warehorne & Shadoxhurst	43	45
West Brabourne Borough	50	52
Westwell	85	74
Whatlington	24	24
Willesborough	62	49
Wye	116	112
B. Kent Wealden parishes	Nos occs 1746	Nos occs 1790/1
Appledore	41	40
Biddenden	247	211
Cranbrook	242	209
Halden	87	84
Kenardington/Shadoxhurst	58	56
Newenden	13	8
Rolvenden	124	128
Sandhurst/part Newenden	151	147
Woodchurch	116	112

Appendix 2. The Knatchbull estate in Kent – rents, 1730-88.

Sources. CKS U951 A12; CKS U951 E12; CKS U951 A16; CKS U951 A22; CKS U951 A24; CKS U951 A25; CKS U951 A25 'B'; CKS U951 A27-32; CKS U951 A2; CKS U951 A53; CKS U951 A44; CKS U951 C32/1; CKS U951 C32/2.

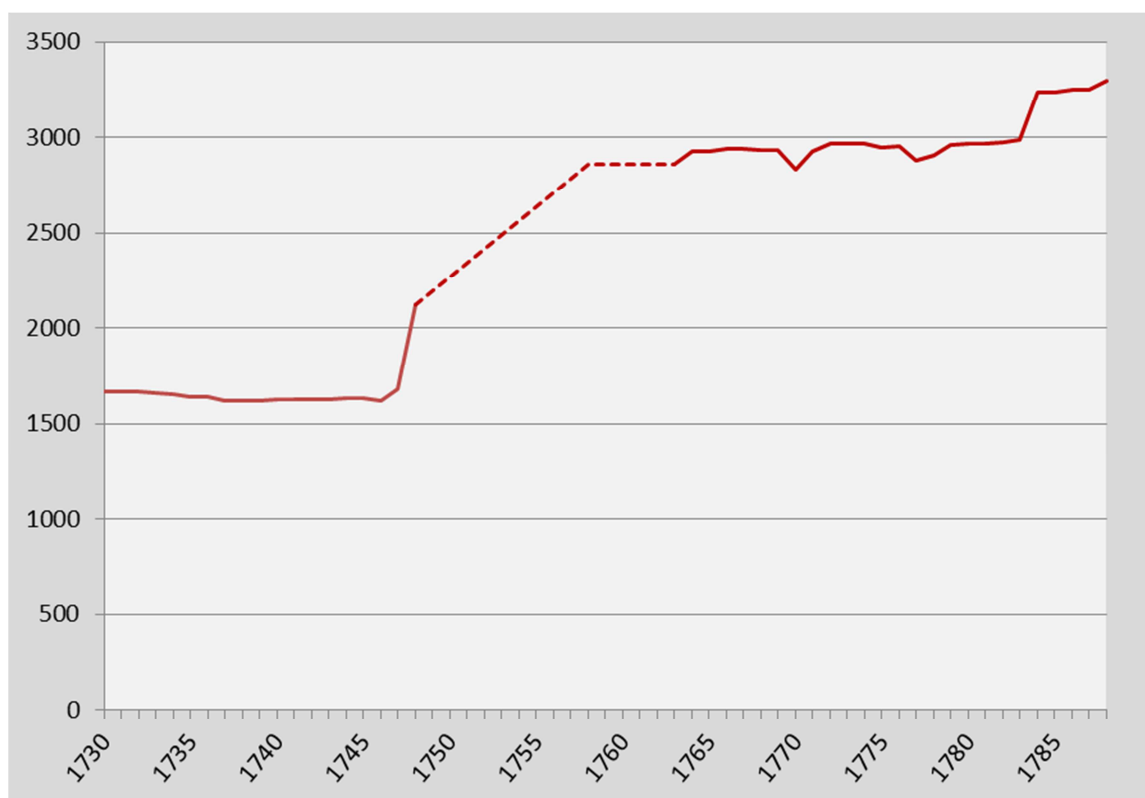
Notes. These rent accounts differentiate between the 'annual rent' payable for a holding, as well as the 'Neat monies received'. The latter referred to the net amount pocketed by Knatchbull, after the agreed allowances for taxes and repair bills were deducted from the annual rental figure. These allowances, for each holding, were meticulously itemized in the rent ledgers each time money changed hands. Provided all deductions (however large) for taxes and repairs had been accounted for by landlord and tenant, it was deemed that the 'annual rent' had been paid in full. Over the period, for the whole estate, some 86.1 per cent, on average, of the annual rental figure was, in actuality, banked by Knatchbull. For holdings on Walland the average figure was 89.8 per cent; for Romney Marsh Level, 84.2 per cent; for uplands farms, 82.1 per cent, and for Wealden farms, 61.0 per cent.¹

¹ See Turner, Beckett and Afton, *Rents*, pp. 22, 79; Mingay, *English landed society*, pp. 53-5.

Appendix 2. Table 2.1. Whole estate - rents and monies received, 1730-88.

Year	Rent £	Monies recd £	Year	Rent £	Monies recd £
1730	1667.5	1365	1766	2937.5	2509.75
1731	1667.5	1387.5	1767	2938.5	2552.05
1732	1663.5	1455.3	1768	2935.5	2586.45
1733	1658.5	1503.55	1769	2935	2554.7
1734	1653.5	1547	1770	2834	2536.9
1735	1637.5	1493.4	1771	2925.75	2518.8
1736	1638.5	1387.25	1772	2964	2509.15
1737	1621.5	1564.8	1773	2967	2416.1
1738	1621.5	1453	1774	2967	2426.6
1739	1619.5	1335.2	1775	2944	2501.6
1740	1622.5	1453.55	1776	2955	2361.05
1741	1626.5	1446.1	1777	2883	2380.75
1742	1622	1486.3	1778	2905	2433.45
1743	1622	1460.75	1779	2960	2391.1
1744	1632	1434	1780	2968	2529.15
1745	1632	1352.65	1781	2969.5	2439.55
1746	1620	1413.75	1782	2971	2570.55
1747	1680	1480.1	1783	2990.5	2511.4
1748	2120	1785.95	1784	3232.5	2732.55
1758	2862.75	2417.15	1785	3232.5	2740
1763	2862.75	2417.15	1786	3246	2730.4
1764	2929.5	2446.05	1787	3251.5	2756.6
1765	2927.5	2460.75	1788	3295	2744.25

Appendix 2. Fig. 2.1. Whole estate – rents, 1730-88.

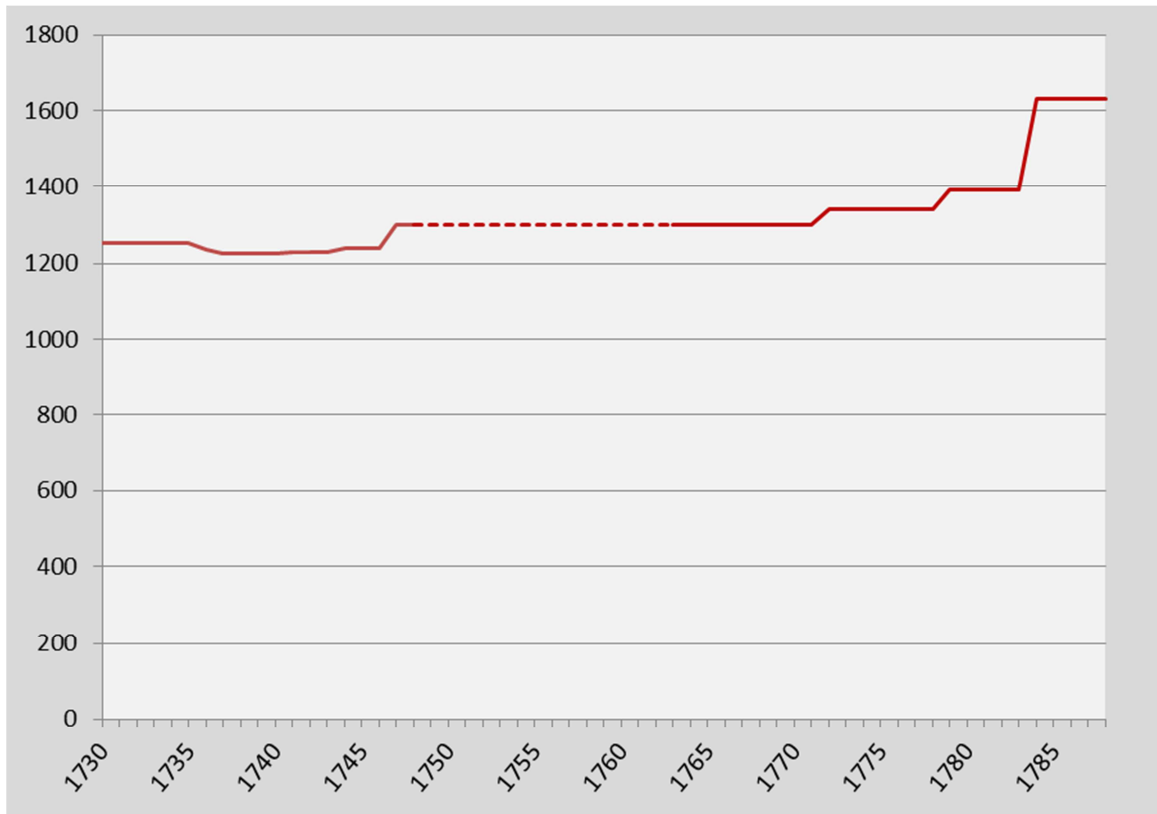


Appendix 2. Table 2.2. Marsh holdings (Walland) - rents and monies received, 1730-88.²

Year	Rent £	Monies recd £	Year	Rent £	Monies recd £
1730	1252	1156.25	1766	1300	1141
1731	1252	1175.15	1767	1300	1160
1732	1252	1194.55	1768	1300	1181.5
1733	1252	1213.45	1769	1300	1181.5
1734	1252	1194.25	1770	1300	1181.5
1735	1252	1175.25	1771	1300	1169.9
1736	1237	1160	1772	1340	1201.65
1737	1225	1148.25	1773	1340	1221.25
1738	1225	1148.25	1774	1340	1221.5
1739	1225	1031.25	1775	1340	1221.5
1740	1225	1099.25	1776	1340	1201.65
1741	1230	1075.5	1777	1340	1182.1
1742	1230	1075.25	1778	1340	1182.1
1743	1230	1075.25	1779	1390	1230.35
1744	1240	1085.25	1780	1390	1232.1
1745	1240	1085.25	1781	1390	1231.85
1746	1240	1185.25	1782	1390	1232.1
1747	1300	1138.25	1783	1390	1232.1
1748	1300	1138.25	1784	1630	1472.1
1758	1300	1141	1785	1630	1460.1
1763	1300	1141	1786	1630	1466.85
1764	1300	1141	1787	1630	1472
1765	1300	1142	1788	1630	1472

² Comprising (1) 150 acres, let for £190 per annum in 1730. A further 52-acre parcel of land, purchased c. 1746, and let for £60 per annum, was incorporated into this holding with the rent increased accordingly (to £250). In 1784 the rent was increased to £280 per annum. (2) 339 acres, let for £360 per annum in 1730. In 1771 the rent was increased to £400 per annum and (in 1779) increased again, to £450 per annum. (3) 332 acres, let for £350 per annum. (4) 320 acres, let for £330 per annum. From 1743, units (3) and (4) were let together, for £690 per annum. In 1772, a fine of £800 was levied for renewing the lease. In 1778, Knatchbull received a 'Legacy of £500 ... for continuing the remainder of [the late Henry Read's] leases.' In 1784, the rent was increased to £900. CKS U951 A43.

Appendix 2. Fig. 2.2. Marsh holdings (Walland) – rents, 1730-88.

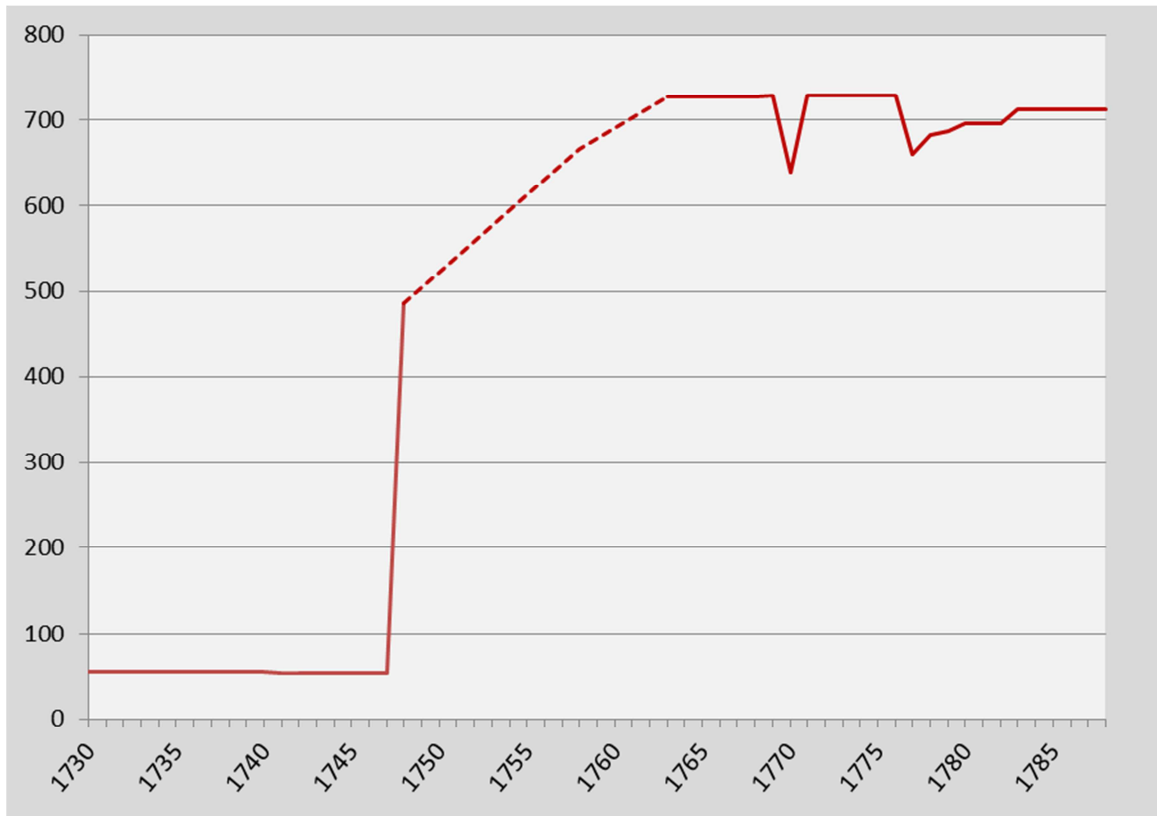


Appendix 2. Table 2.3. Marsh holdings (the Level) - rents and monies received, 1730-88.³

Year	Rent £	Monies recd £	Year	Rent £	Monies recd £
1730	55	52.25	1766	728	618.5
1731	55	52	1767	728	650
1732	55	51.75	1768	728	644.75
1733	55	52	1769	728.5	643.5
1734	55	53.5	1770	638.5	571.5
1735	55	52.25	1771	728.5	586.45
1736	55	32.5	1772	728.5	587.5
1737	55	53.5	1773	728.5	453.5
1738	55	52.75	1774	728.5	453.5
1739	55	52.25	1775	728.5	534.25
1740	55	52.5	1776	728.5	445.25
1741	54	50.5	1777	660.5	460
1742	54	48.75	1778	682.5	509.75
1743	54	48.75	1779	687.5	490
1744	54	50.75	1780	696.5	509.3
1745	54	50.5	1781	696.5	504
1746	54	50.5	1782	696.5	611.25
1747	54	49.75	1783	712	570.5
1748	486.5	419.05	1784	712	550.85
1758	666	531.65	1785	712	542
1763	728	601.75	1786	712	520.8
1764	728	631.75	1787	712	526.25
1765	728	640.85	1788	712	529.25

³ Holdings on Romney Marsh Level comprised (in 1730) just two units, namely 32.5 acres in Brenzett, let for 29 per annum and 'the Schoolland', held in trust for Ashford Free School, with the rent (£30 per annum) set aside to pay the schoolmaster's stipend (of £30). In 1763 the 'Brenzett land' was let for £25 per annum, and increased to £30 in 1779. From c. 1748, new purchases on Romney Marsh Level were made by the trustees, so that by 1763, there were four more holdings, comprising (1) 436 acres let for £364-10s per annum, increasing to £380 in 1783. (2) 88 acres, let for £67-10s per annum. Knatchbull held this land on a beneficial lease from the Archbishop of Canterbury, but sold it in 1776 for £1500, using the proceeds to help pay for building the new mansion at Mersham Hatch. (3) 103 acres, let for £90. The rent was increased to £112 in 1778. In 1782 the tenant (Thomas Fisher) also took occupation of the 32.5-acres in Brenzett, paying £142 per annum for both units. (4) 222.4 acres, let for £151 in 1763. In 1780 the rent was increased to £160 per annum.

Appendix 2. Fig. 2.3. Marsh holdings (the Level) – rents, 1730-88.

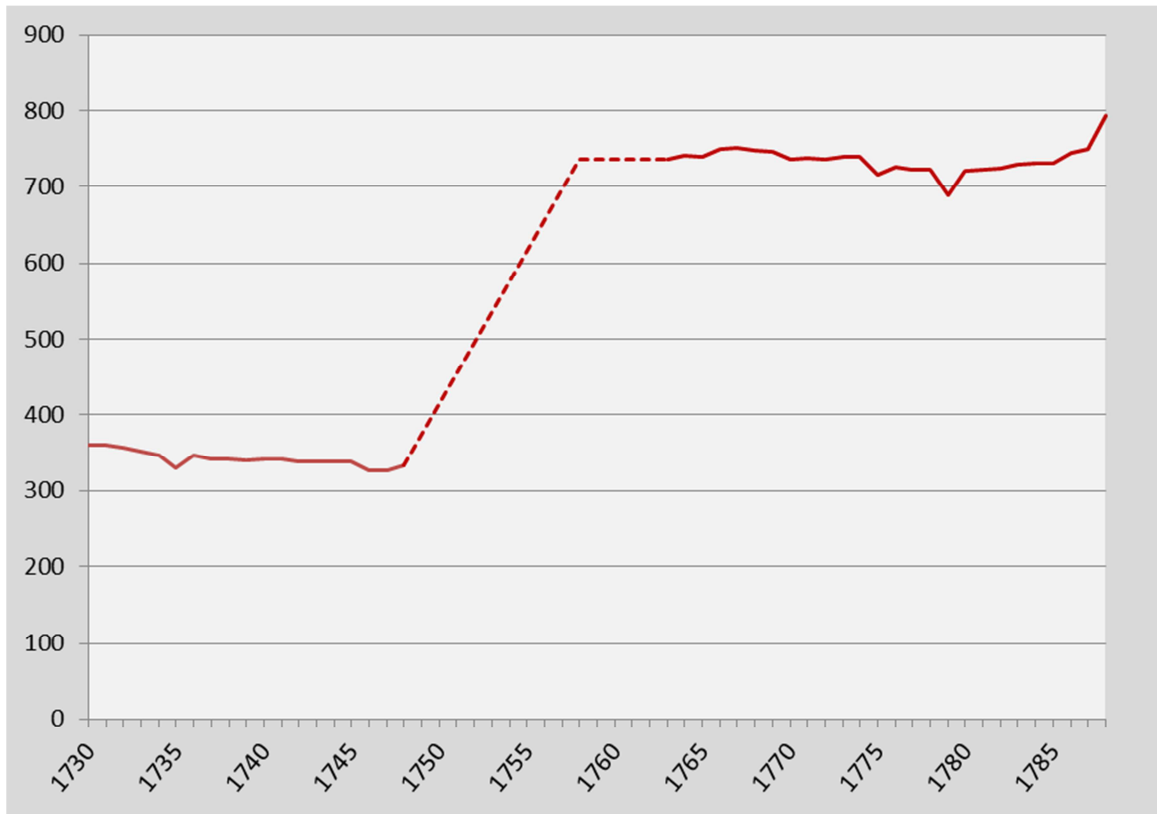


Appendix 2. Table 2.4. Uplands holdings - rents and monies received, 1730-88.⁴

Year	Rent £	Monies recd £	Year	Rent £	Monies recd £
1730	360.5	156.5	1766	749.5	652.25
1731	360.5	160.35	1767	750.5	643.8
1732	356.5	209	1768	747.5	650.55
1733	351.5	238.1	1769	746.5	630.2
1734	346.5	299.25	1770	735.5	678.15
1735	330.5	265.9	1771	737.25	660.7
1736	346.5	194.75	1772	735.5	623.5
1737	341.5	363.05	1773	738.5	645.85
1738	341.5	252	1774	738.5	646.6
1739	339.5	251.7	1775	715.5	640.6
1740	342.5	301.8	1776	726.5	606.9
1741	342.5	320.1	1777	722.5	643.4
1742	338	362.3	1778	722.5	645.35
1743	338	336.75	1779	722.5	575
1744	338	298	1780	721.5	608.5
1745	338	216.9	1781	723	618.95
1746	326	278	1782	724.5	629.7
1747	326	292.1	1783	728.5	608.9
1748	333.5	228.65	1784	730.5	607.35
1758	736.75	642	1785	730.5	636.1
1763	736.75	642	1786	744	649
1764	741.5	574.9	1787	749.5	661.6
1765	739.5	591.4	1788	793	654.5

⁴ Holdings on Romney Marsh Level comprised (in 1730) just two units, namely 32.5 acres in Brenzett, let for 29 per annum and 'the Schoolland', held in trust for Ashford Free School, with the rent (£30 per annum) set aside to pay the schoolmaster's stipend (of £30). In 1763 the 'Brenzett land' was let for £25 per annum, and increased to £30 in 1779. From c. 1748, new purchases on Romney Marsh Level were made by the trustees, so that by 1763, there were four more holdings, comprising (1) 436 acres let for £364-10s per annum, increasing to £380 in 1783. (2) 88 acres, let for £67-10s per annum. Knatchbull held this land on a beneficial lease from the Archbishop of Canterbury, but sold it in 1776 for £1500, using the proceeds to help pay for building the new mansion at Mersham Hatch. (3) 103 acres, let for £90. The rent was increased to £112 in 1778. In 1782 the tenant (Thomas Fisher) also took occupation of the 32.5-acres in Brenzett, paying £142 per annum for both units. (4) 222.4 acres, let for £151 in 1763. In 1780 the rent was increased to £160 per annum.

Appendix 2. Fig. 2.4. Uplands holdings – rents, 1730-88.

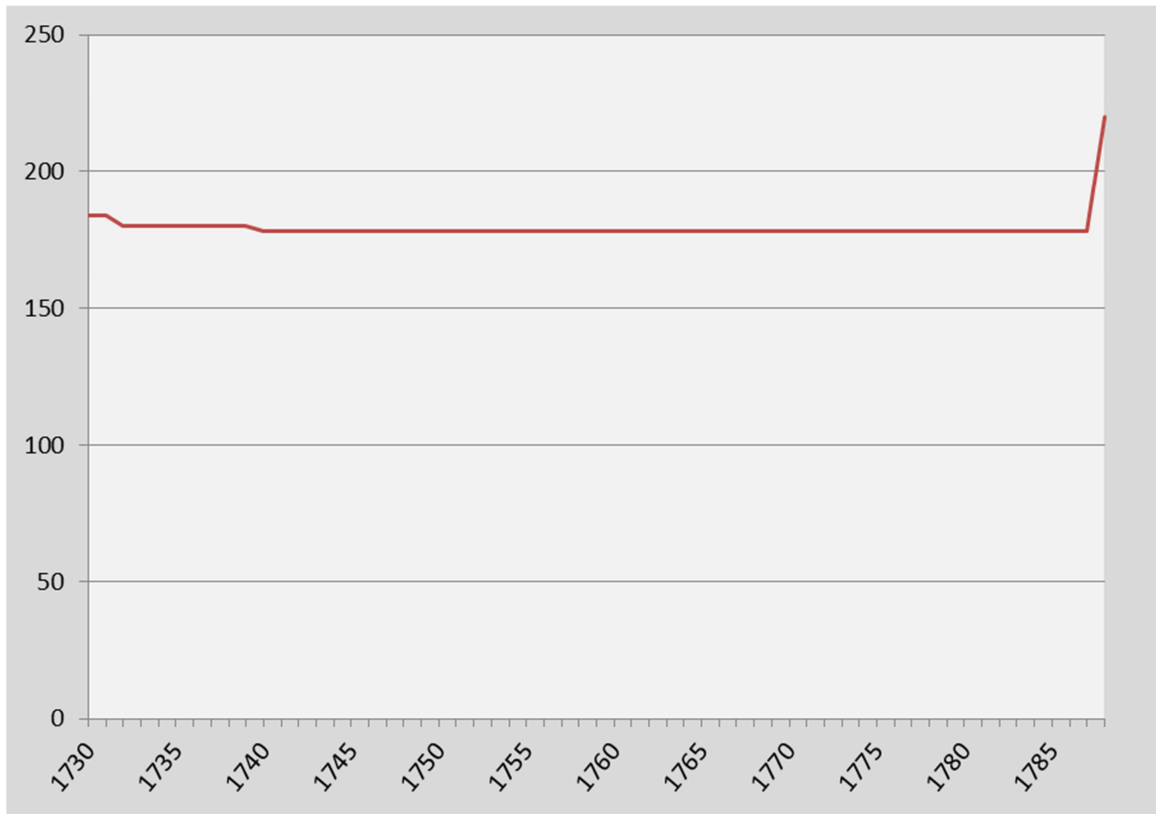


Appendix 2. Table 2.5. Uplands - East Lenham - rents and monies received, 1730-88.⁵

Year	Rent £	Monies recd £	Year	Rent £	Monies recd £
1730	184	22	1766	178	123
1731	184	53.4	1767	178	115.5
1732	180	55.25	1768	178	110.75
1733	180	90.5	1769	178	124.75
1734	180	143	1770	178	124.75
1735	180	119	1771	178	124.75
1736	180	76	1772	178	124.75
1737	180	211	1773	178	124.75
1738	180	-	1774	178	124.75
1739	180	125	1775	178	161.75
1740	180	159	1776	178	161.75
1741	178	108	1777	178	156.25
1742	178	165.75	1778	178	156.25
1743	178	134.25	1779	178	126.25
1744	178	144.5	1780	178	156.25
1745	178	126.25	1781	178	156.25
1746	178	101	1782	178	156.25
1747	178	125.2	1783	178	156.25
1748	178	139.25	1784	178	156.25
1749-62	178	unk	1785	178	156.25
1763	178	125.15	1786	178	156.25
1764	178	114.4	1787	178	156.25
1765	178	119	1788	220	177.25

⁵ In 1730, and rented out separately from East Lenham Farm, were two further holdings, namely, the Mill House and land (let for £8 per annum) and 'Cooper's land' (let for £16 per annum). Both were taken on by Richard Barnard, tenant of East Lenham Farm - the Mill House (from 1731) for £4 per annum and 'Cooper's Land' (from 1740) for £14 per annum. From 1740 then, the annual rent for East Lenham Farm rose from £160 to £178, but the increase was solely due to Barnard's taking on this extra land. In addition, Barnard acted as a sub-contractor to collect £23 per annum for East Lenham tithery (a lay appropriation for which Knatchbull paid £17 a year). Knatchbull gave up his interest in the lease of the tithes in 1775. From Ladyday 1788 the rent on East Lenham Farm rose by 23.5 per cent, to £220 per annum.

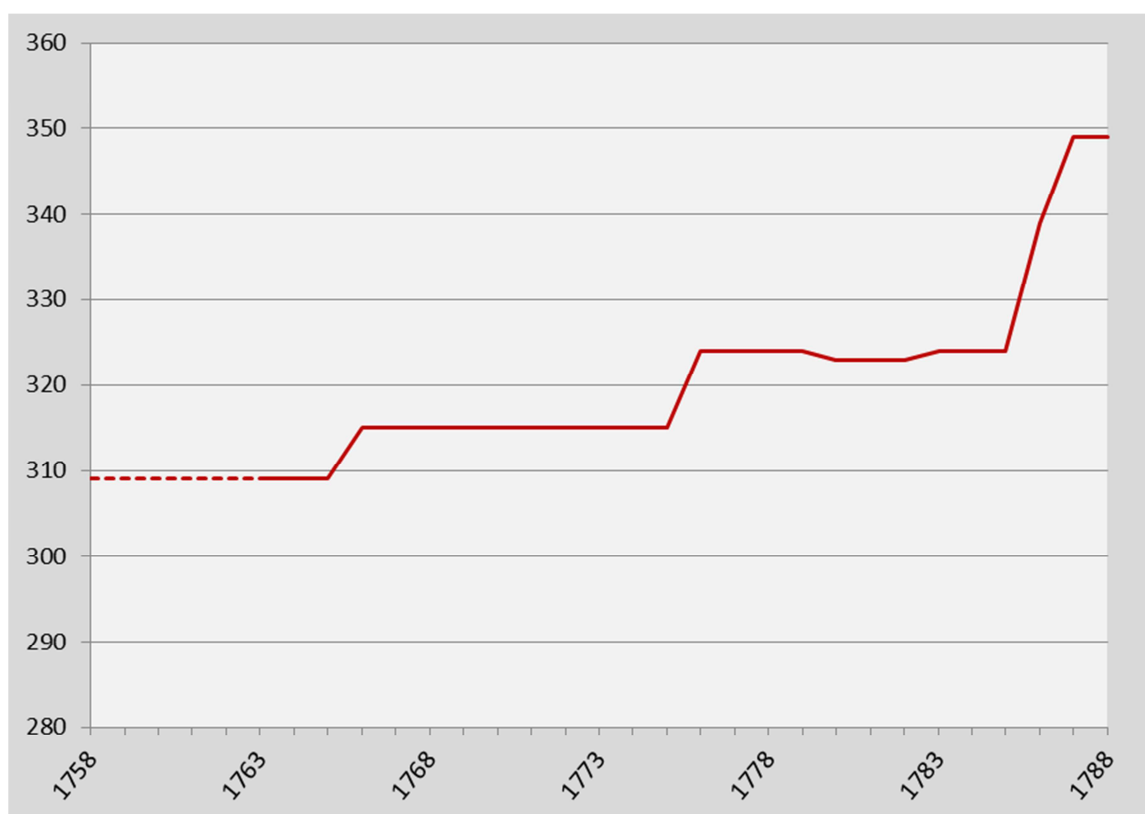
Appendix 2. Fig. 2.5. Uplands - East Lenham - rents, 1730-88.



Appendix 2. Table 2.6. Uplands - Postling - rents and monies received, 1758-88.⁶

Year	Rent £	Monies recd £	Year	Rent £	Monies recd £
1758	309	271.25	1776	324	235.6
1763	309	227	1777	324	284.05
1764	309	218	1778	324	256.75
1765	309	222.25	1779	324	251
1766	315	275	1780	323	249.35
1767	315	277.5	1781	323	260.45
1768	315	282.75	1782	323	264.05
1769	315	284.55	1783	324	241.15
1770	315	286.75	1784	324	247.35
1771	315	271.2	1785	324	271.1
1772	315	238.95	1786	339	281.25
1773	315	252.5	1787	349	298.35
1774	315	254.5	1788	349	270.75
1775	315	257.5			

Appendix 2. Fig. 2.6. Uplands - Postling - rents, 1730-88.



⁶ Comprising four farms purchased by the trustees c. 1750. On two farms the rent remained the same from 1760-88, at £51 and £23 per annum respectively. In 1763, rent on the third farm stood at £110. In 1767 this rose by £6 after Knatchbull purchased three fields (for £170) that were then incorporated into the farm. In 1783 the rent was again increased (from £116 to £125). The fourth farm was let for £125 in 1763, rising to £150 (in 1787). See also Hasted, *History* 8, pp. 212-5.

Appendix 2. Table 2.7. Uplands – Farm in Mersham – rents and monies received, 1730-69.⁷

Year	Rent £	Monies recd £	Year	Rent £	Monies recd £
1730	12	6	1742	12	11
1731	12	11.25	1743	12	11
1732	12	11.5	1744	12	11
1733	12	11.75	1745	12	11
1734	12	11.5	1758	12	11
1735	12	11.5	1763	12	11
1736	12	10.75	1764	12	11
1737	12	11.5	1765	12	11.25
1738	12	11	1766	12	11
1739	12	11.5	1767	12	11.5
1740	12	11	1768	12	11.5
1741	12	12	1769	12	11.5

Appendix 2. Table 2.8. Uplands – South Stower Farm - rents and monies received, 1748-88.⁸

Year	Rent £	Monies recd £	Year	Rent £	Monies recd £
1748	67	19.5	1775	67	58.25
1758	67	57.5	1776	67	61.25
1763	67	58	1777	67	59.75
1764	67	59.25	1778	67	89
1765	67	59.25	1779	67	59.5
1766	67	59.25	1780	67	59.5
1767	67	59.25	1781	67	59
1768	67	62.25	1782	70	62.5
1769	67	5.75	1783	70	62
1770	67	62.25	1784	70	62
1771	67	56.75	1785	70	59
1772	67	56.5	1786	70	62

⁷ (Let to Wightwick in 1730.) Following tenant Birch's departure in 1769, Knatchbull took this 20-acre holding back into owner-occupation.

⁸ A 160-acre farm, purchased by the trustees, c. 1748. In 1772 the tenant signed a new (11-year) lease at the old rent but Knatchbull took back for his own use the timber and underwood in Broad Oak Wood, a 5.5 acre stretch of woodland that went with the farm. In 1782 a £50 fine was levied upon renewal of the lease, in addition to a rent increase (to £70 per annum).

Appendix 2. Table 2.9. Uplands - Quillets – rents and monies received, 1730-88.⁹

Year	Rent £	Monies recd £	Year	Rent £	Monies recd £
1730	60	60	1766	55	55
1731	60	60	1767	55	55
1732	60	60	1768	55	55
1733	60	38.75	1769	55	55
1734	60	53.5	1770	55	55
1735	60	57.4	1771	55	55
1736	60	27.5	1772	55	55
1737	55	55	1773	58	58
1738	55	53	1774	58	58
1739	55	55	1775	58	58
1740	55	55	1776	58	58
1741	55	55	1777	58	58
1742	55	55	1778	58	58
1743	55	55	1779	58	58
1744	55	55	1780	58	58
1745	55	55	1781	58	58
1746	55	55	1782	58	58
1747	55	55	1783	58	58
1748	55	55	1784	60	50
1758	55	55	1785	60	60
1763	58	58	1786	60	60
1764	58	58	1787	60	60
1765	55	55	1788	60	60

⁹ Comprising 80 acres of pasture. In 1765, Knatchbull reduced the rent by £3 per annum (to £55) 'for shutting out Bockhanger Wood from [the tenant] and taking the land into hand.' CKS U951 A42.

Appendix 2. Table 2.10. Uplands - Quarrington Farm - rents and monies received, 1730-88.¹⁰

Year	Rent £	Monies recd £	Year	Rent £	Monies recd £
1730	60	30	1767	50	43
1731	60	0	1768	50	44.85
1732	60	45.5	1769	50	45.1
1733	55	55.75	1770	50	45.2
1734	50	28.75	1771	50	45.1
1735	50	40	1772	50	44.3
1736	50	42.25	1773	50	45.1
1737	50	49.8	1774	50	45.1
1738	50	13.25	1775	50	45.1
1739	50	21.75	1776	50	45.3
1740	55	35.25	1777	50	43.5
1741	55	65	1778	50	43.5
1742	50.5	54.25	1779	50	44.75
1743	50.5	61	1780	50	43.5
1744	50.5	47.25	1781	50	43.5
1745	50.5	3.75	1782	50	46
1746	50.5	37.25	1783	50	45.75
1747	50.5	22	1784	50	46
1763	50	28	1785	50	46
1764	50	49	1786	50	46
1765	50	43	1787	50	46
1766	50	43.5	1788	50	46

¹⁰ A 120-acre holding.

Appendix 2. Table 2.11. Uplands - Millhouse Farm – rents and monies received, 1730-88.¹¹

Year	Rent £	Monies recd £	Year	Rent £	Monies recd £
1730	18	18	1766	18	16
1731	18	14.8	1767	18	15.5
1732	18	16.75	1768	18	15.75
1733	18	16.25	1769	18	16.5
1734	18	15.5	1770	18	16.5
1735	18	14.5	1771	18	15.75
1736	18	16.25	1772	18	15.75
1737	18	13.25	1773	18	16
1738	18	17	1774	18	16
1739	16	13	1775	18	33
1740	16	15.7	1776	20	18
1741	16	14	1777	20	18
1742	16	13.8	1778	20	18
1743	16	13	1779	20	18.5
1744	16	17	1780	20	18.5
1745	16	0	1781	20	17.5
1746	16	0	1782	20	18.5
1747	16	5.5	1783	20	18.5
1748	16	0	1784	20	18.5
1758	18	16	1785	20	18.5
1763	18	16	1786	20	18.5
1764	18	16	1787	20	18.5
1765	18	16	1788	20	18.5

¹¹ A 24-acre holding.

Appendix 2. Table 2.12. Uplands - House/forge - rents and monies received, 1730-88.¹²

Year	Rent £	Monies recd £	Year	Rent £	Monies recd £
1730	9	6	1766	7	7
1731	9	6	1767	7	7
1732	9	6	1768	7	7
1733	9	8.75	1769	7	7
1734	9	8.75	1770	7	7
1735	9	8.75	1771	7	7
1736	9	8.5	1772	7	7
1737	9	8.75	1773	7	7
1738	9	8.75	1774	7	7
1739	9	8.75	1775	7	7
1740	9	8.75	1776	7	7
1741	9	9	1777	7	7
1742	9	8.5	1778	7	7
1743	9	7.5	1779	7	7
1744	9	8.5	1780	7	7
1745	9	8.5	1781	7	7
1746	9	8.5	1782	7	7
1747	9	8.5	1783	7	7
1748-57	9	unk	1784	7	7
1758	9	9	1785	7	7
1763	9	8.5	1786	7	7
1764	9	8.5	1787	7	7
1765	7	7	1788	7	7

¹² Also included 1.5 acres of land. The rent was reduced to £7 from 1764, Knatchbull having taken a field that had previously gone with the farm back 'into hand'. CKS U951 A42.

Appendix 2. Table 2.13. Wealden - rents and monies received, 1758-88.¹³

Year	Rent £	Monies recd £	Year	Rent £	Monies recd £
1758	160	102.5	1775	160	105.25
1759-62	160	unk	1776	160	107.25
1763	160	88.5	1777	160	95.25
1764	160	87.5	1778	160	96.25
1765	160	86.5	1779	160	95.75
1766	160	98	1780	160	98.25
1767	160	98.25	1781	160	84.75
1768	160	109.65	1782	160	97.5
1769	160	99.5	1783	160	99.9
1770	160	105.75	1784	160	102.25
1771	160	101.75	1785	160	101.8
1772	160	96.5	1786	160	93.75
1773	160	95.5	1787	160	96.75
1774	160	105	1788	160	88.5

¹³ Comprising (in Halden) Tiffenden Farm and (in Woodchurch) another (unnamed) farm, both of which (c. 1748) were sold to Sir Wyndham Knatchbull by Sir Sheffield Austen. The acreages of both farms are unknown. Throughout the period, Tiffenden Farm was let for £85 and the farm in Woodchurch for £75. See also Hasted, *History 7*, pp. 222-3.

Appendix 3. Table 3.1(a). The *Kentish Post*, 1738 - numbers/acreage of farms/land units advertised.

	Whole-marsh		Marsh-edge		Kent Weald		Uplands		North Kent		East Kent		Total	
	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A
Farms	2	726.0	1	181.0	5	457.0	6	421.0	5	830.0	10	2027.0	29	4762.0
Land	9	963.0	1	35.0	2	41.0	1	6.5	2	157.0	3	35.0	18	1237.5
Total	11	1689.0	2	216.0	7	498.0	7	427.5	7	1107.0	13	2062.0	47	5999.5

Appendix 3. Table 3.1(b). The *Kentish Post*, 1738 – numbers/acreage of units for sale/to let.

	Whole-marsh		Marsh-edge		Kent Weald		Uplands		North Kent		East Kent		Total	
	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A
For sale	4	234.0	1	35.0	4	206.0	5	127.5	1	187.0	2	5.0	17	794.5
To let	7	1455.0	1	181.0	3	292.0	2	300.0	6	920.0	12	2057.0	30	5205.0
Total	11	1689.0	2	216.0	7	498.0	7	427.5	7	1107.0	14	2062.0	47	5999.5

Data cover advertisements at 10-year intervals from 1738 to August, 1768 (when the paper merged with the *Kentish Gazette*). The first provincial newspaper (the *Bristol Post Boy*) appeared c. 1704, and the bi-weekly *Kentish Post* was first published in 1717. By 1723 there were 24 provincial newspapers, and 41 by 1745. Baker, *Agricultural prices*, p. 128; G. A. Cranfield, *The development of the provincial newspaper, 1700-1760* (1962), pp. 19-21.

Appendix 3. Table 3.2(a). The *Kentish Post*, 1748 – numbers/acreage of farms/land units advertised.

	Whole-marsh		Marsh-edge		Kent Weald		Uplands		North Kent		East Kent		Total	
	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A
Farms	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	127.0	1	40.0	1	1335.0	20	3245.0	33	4747.0
Land	3	163.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	56.0	1	208.0	3	104.0	8	531.0
Total	3	163.0	0	0.0	2	127.0	2	96.0	11	1543.0	23	3349.0	41	5278.0

Appendix 3. Table 3.2(b). The *Kentish Post*, 1748 – numbers/acreage of units for sale/to let.

	Whole-marsh		Marsh-edge		Kent Weald		Uplands		North Kent		East Kent		Total	
	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A
For sale	2	141.0	0	0.0	2	127.0	2	96.0	2	258.0	6	776.0	14	1398.0
To let	1	22.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	9	1285.0	17	2573.0	27	3880.0
Total	3	163.0	0	0.0	2	127.0	2	96.0	11	1543.0	23	3349.0	41	5278.0

Appendix 3. Table 3.3(a). The *Kentish Post*, 1758 - numbers of farms/land units advertised (with acreage where known).

	Whole-marsh		Marsh-edge		Kent Weald		Uplands		North Kent		East Kent		Total	
	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A
Farms	0	0.0	1	unk	2	334.0	1	20.0	11	unk	3	415.0	18	unk
Land	1	57.0	0	0.0	1	18.0	0	0.0	2	unk	9	97.5	13	135.5
Total	1	57.0	1	unk	3	352.0	1	20.0	13	unk	12	512.5	31	unk

Appendix 3. Table 3.3(b). The *Kentish Post*, 1758 – numbers of units for sale/to let (with acreage where known).

	Whole-marsh		Marsh-edge		Kent Weald		Uplands		North Kent		East Kent		Total	
	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A
For sale	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	45.0	1	20.0	5	175.0	3	144.5	11	unk
To let	1	57.0	1 ¹	unk	1	307.0	0	0.0	8	unk	9	370.0	20	876.5
Total	1	57.0	1	unk	3	352.0	1	20.0	13	unk	12	512.5	31	unk

¹ Westenhanger Farm, Stanford, near Hythe – acreage unknown, but advertised ‘with or without’ 57 acres of marshland in Newchurch, Romney Marsh.

Appendix 3. Table 3.4(a). The *Kentish Post*, January to August, 1768 - numbers/acreage of farms/land units advertised.

	Whole-marsh		Marsh-edge		Kent Weald		Uplands		North Kent		East Kent		Total	
	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A
Farms	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	448.0	4	288.0	2	186.0	12	1487.0	21	2409.0
Land	2	158.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	32.0	5	153.0	8	343.5
Total	2	158.5	0	0.0	3	448.0	4	288.0	3	218.0	17	1640.0	29	2752.5

Appendix 3. Table 3.4(b). The *Kentish Post*, January to August, 1768 – numbers/acreage of units for sale/to let.

	Whole-marsh		Marsh-edge		Kent Weald		Uplands		North Kent		East Kent		Total	
	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A
For sale	2	158.5	0	0.0	1	28.0	2	126.0	3	218.0	10	447.0	18	977.5
To let	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	420.0	2	162.0	0	0.0	7	1193.0	11	1775.0
Total	2	158.5	0	0.0	3	448.0	4	288.0	3	218.0	17	1640.0	29	2752.5

Appendix 4. Table 4.1. The uplands holdings of the Furnesse estate in Kent - rentals from 1710.

Sources. EKAC U471 A1 – Sir Henry Furnesse estate rentals, c.1710; EKAC U471 A274 – Sir Robert Furnesse estate rentals, c. 1723-31

Notes. 1. This Table covers the uplands holdings on the Furnesse estate in Kent that between them fetched some £4158-5s in rent. However, included in the rental books but omitted here are (a) Waldershare House, gardens and park, together with lands and woodlands, all of which were owner occupied by Sir Henry Furnesse and (b) the ‘Fairfield estate’, comprising land on Walland Marsh, covering virtually the entire parish of Fairfield. This was held on a beneficial lease for three lives from the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church, Canterbury. In October 1729 Furnesse noted that exclusive of tithes, the land ‘was Lett to overall at the rate of, per ann, £946 ... [for] 1150 acres [averaging] 16/6d per acre.’ The fortunes of this holding from c. 1730-90 are explored in chapter seven.

The death of Sir Henry Furnesse’s grandson (Henry) in 1735 resulted in the failure of the male line. Hence, the estate passed in the female line to the late grandson’s sister Katherine. In 1736 she married her cousin Lewis, Earl of Rockingham. Following his death Katherine married (in 1751) Francis first Earl of Guilford. When Katherine died, childless, in 1767, the estate passed to her second husband, the Earl of Guilford, in whose family it remained. See EKAC U471, North MSS (North family, Earls of Guilford).

2. Leases. These estate accounts reveal the length of leases on 24 holdings, as follows – 26 years (one holding); 21 years (two holdings); 14 years (seven holdings); nine years (one holding); seven years (six holdings).

3. LTAs and market rents. There are 35 holdings in this Table for which LTAs and annual rents are known. On average, LTAs were found to be 71.5 per cent of annual rents. This shows a strong relationship between the two, especially considering the close proximity of the dates; LTAs were completed in (or shortly after) while the market rents achieved covered the period c. 1710/23.

Appendix 4. Table 4.1. The uplands holdings of the Furnesse estate in Kent - rentals from 1710.

Location	Description	Acreage 1710 - 31	LTA £	Annual rent £-s-d ¹			Comments - rent per acre £-s-d ²
				1710	1723	1731	
Ash	Farm/land	unk	unk	10-5-0	10-5-0	10-5-0	
Bapchild	Farm/lands ³	31.0 plus woodland	27	37-0-0	37-0-0	37-0-0	
Blean Wood	Messuage and the kiln	n/a	unk	8-10-0	8-10-0	11-0-0	
Coldred	Coldred Court Farm	280.0	66	93-0-0	93-0-0	90-0-0	'6s 6d' (1710)
Coldred	Newsole Farm	80.0	36	45-0-0			'11s' (1710)
Coldred/ Waldershare	Newsole/ Popesole Farms ⁴	448.5	115	n/a	216-0-0	216-10-0	'About 9s 6d' (1724)
East Langdon	Two farms ⁵	330.0	83	125-0-0	125-0-0	128-10-0	'About 7s 6d' (1716)
East Langdon	The Well Farm	150.0	36	55-0-0	55-0-0	57-0-0	'About 7s d' (1724)
East Langdon	House and smith's forge	n/a	5	8-0-0	8-0-0	8-0-0	
East Langdon	Langdon Court Farm	218.0	unk	103-0-0	103-0-0	n/a	'About 10s' (1710)
East Langdon	Langdon Abbey	unk	unk		240-0-0		
East Langdon/ Guston	Misc. 'small rents' ⁶	unk	unk			11-2-0	
East Langdon/ Whitfield	Langdon Court Farm/Pinham Farm ⁷	unk	83	n/a	n/a	128-10-0	

¹ Where market rents are not available for the year concerned, the space has been left blank.

² Entries in this column refer to Furnesse's own marginal notes. They show, for these uplands holdings, the variations in market rental value, per acre, that could exist.

³ Farm and lands at Bapchild: comprised house, 31 acres plus woodland, held on a 26-year lease from Ladyday 1709.

⁴ In 1724, Newsole Farm was let together with Popesole Farm on an 11-year lease (and with a further 23.5 acres at an additional rent of £12 10s).

⁵ In 1710, these farms were let as two separate units, the first (Church Farm) leased to Matthew Petley at £65 per annum for 130 acres and the second (Street Farm) leased to Edward Austin at £60 per annum for 190 acres. In 1716 Petley increased his enterprise by taking on the latter and the two units were let together on an 11-year lease, at £125 per annum for a total of 330 acres.

⁶ The total of £11-2-0 for 'small rents' refers to 10 tenants, with annual rents ranging from five shillings to £2 per annum.

⁷ In addition to Langdon Court Farm, Lawrence Baker took occupation of Pinham Farm, c. 1723, paying £128-10s per annum for the two.

Appendix 4. Table 4.1 – cont.

Location	Description	Acreage 1710 - 31	LTA £	Annual rent £-s-d			Comments - rent per acre £-s-d
				1710	1723	1731	
Eastry	Farm	unk	unk	8-0-0	8-0-0	8-0-0	
Eastry	Selson Farm	100.0	unk			115-0-0	
Guston	Fryth Farm / Broad Lees	520.0	134	237-15-0	238-0-0		'9s'
Guston	Guston Court	unk	65	110-0-0	110-0-0	120-0-0	
Guston	Parsonage and glebelands	unk	22	30-0-0	30-0-0	32-0-0	
Hearn Hill	Elenden Farm and lands	120.0	17	38-0-0	30-0-0	30-0-0	'6s 6d' (1710); '5s' (1723)
Hearn Hill	Lands	unk	8		9-0-0	9-0-0	
Isle of Sheppey	Wallend House and land	235.0	unk	85-0-0	85-0-0	60-0-0	'7s' (1710); '5s' (1731)
Lenham	Sindale Farm	110.0	33	50-0-0	35-0-0	35-0-0	'9s' (1710); '6s' (1723)
Lydden	Land at Lydd Court	unk	unk	14-0-0	14-0-0		
Lydden	Swanton Farm	unk	123	131-15-0	135-0-0	135-0-0	
Lydden	Lydd Court Lands (part)	unk	60	64-0-0	64-0-0	64-0-0	
Lydden	Lydd Court Lands (part)	unk	unk	200-0-0	200-0-0	242-0-0	
Lydden	Lydd Court-out-Downs	unk	unk		514-0-0		
Minster-in- Thanet	Manson Court	237.0	63	90-0-0	95-0-0	95-0-0	'7s 6d' (1710); '8s' (1731)
Minster-in- Thanet	Pouses Farm and Kings Barn	528.0	107	150-0-0	150-0-0	150-0-0	'5s 6d'.
Minster-in- Thanet	Sarre Farm	unk	69	103-10-0	103-10-0	103-10-0	

Appendix 4. Table 4.1 – cont.

Location	Description	Acreage 1710 - 31	LTA £	Annual rent £-s-d			Comments - rent per acre £-s-d
				1710	1723	1731	
Minster-in-Thanet	Thorne Farm	465.0	125	210-0-0	220-0-0	220-0-0	'Around 9s-6d' (1724)
Nonington	Longlane Farm	129.0	unk	45-0-0	45-0-0	50-0-0	'7s' (1710); '8s' (1731)
Northbourne	House and close, Minacre	unk	unk	7-0-0	7-0-0	n/a	
Northbourne	Minacre Farm					49-0-0	
Northbourne	Land near Napchester	20.0	unk	10-0-0	10-0-0	n/a	'10s'
Northbourne	West Studdall Farm	295.0	72	90-0-0	90-0-0	90-0-0	'About 6s-1d' (1710)
Northbourne	Little Betshanger Farm	260.0	50	80-0-0	80-0-0	85-0-0	'About 6s ... very little more.' (1723)
Northbourne	Napchester Farm					50-0-0	
Ospringe	Cocklescombe and Warren Farms	232.0	unk	40-0-0	40-0-0	45-0-0	'Scarce 3s 6d' (1710); 4s 1731)
Ospringe	Messuage	n/a	unk	5-0-0	5-0-0		
Ospringe	Messuage	-	-	5-0-0	5-0-0		
Ospringe	Queen Court Farm ⁸	333.0	113	n/a	130-0-0	130-0-0	'Nearly 8s' (1723)
Ospringe	The Red Lion	-	-	8-0-0	8-0-0	10-0-0	
Ospringe	Painters Farm	183.0	59	65-0-0	80-0-0	80-0-0	'7s' (1710); '8s-6d' (1723)
Ospringe	Plumford Barn	279.0	unk	70-0-0	70-0-0	100-0-0	'5s' (1710); '7s' (1731)
Ospringe	Barn and lands	35.0	27	33-0-0	33-0-0	33-0-0	'19s'
Shoulden	Shoulden Marshes	61.0	42	48-10-0	52-0-0	52-0-0	
Swingfield	North Court Farm				110-0-0		

⁸ The tenant was liable for the Land Tax and all repairs in the 14-year lease for Queen Court Farm, granted from Michaelmas 1728.

Appendix 4. Table 4.1 – cont.

Location	Description	Acreage 1710 - 31	LTA £	Annual rent £-s-d			Comments - rent per acre £-s-d
				1710	1723	1731	
Minster-in-Thanet	Thorne Farm	465.0	125	210-0-0	220-0-0	220-0-0	'Around 9s-6d' (1724)
Nonington	Longlane Farm	129.0	unk	45-0-0	45-0-0	50-0-0	'7s' (1710); '8s' (1731)
Northbourne	House and close, Minacre	unk	unk	7-0-0	7-0-0	n/a	
Northbourne	Minacre Farm					49-0-0	
Northbourne	Land near Napchester	20.0	unk	10-0-0	10-0-0	n/a	'10s'
Northbourne	West Studdall Farm	295.0	72	90-0-0	90-0-0	90-0-0	'About 6s-1d' (1710)
Northbourne	Little Betshanger Farm	260.0	50	80-0-0	80-0-0	85-0-0	'About 6s ... very little more.' (1723)
Northbourne	Napchester Farm					50-0-0	
Ospringe	Cocklescombe and Warren Farms	232.0	unk	40-0-0	40-0-0	45-0-0	'Scarce 3s 6d' (1710); 4s 1731)
Ospringe	Messuage	n/a	unk	5-0-0	5-0-0		
Ospringe	Messuage	-	-	5-0-0	5-0-0		
Ospringe	Queen Court Farm ⁸	333.0	113	n/a	130-0-0	130-0-0	'Nearly 8s' (1723)
Ospringe	The Red Lion	-	-	8-0-0	8-0-0	10-0-0	
Ospringe	Painters Farm	183.0	59	65-0-0	80-0-0	80-0-0	'7s' (1710); '8s-6d' (1723)
Ospringe	Plumford Barn	279.0	unk	70-0-0	70-0-0	100-0-0	'5s' (1710); '7s' (1731)
Ospringe	Barn and lands	35.0	27	33-0-0	33-0-0	33-0-0	'19s'
Shoulden	Shoulden Marshes	61.0	42	48-10-0	52-0-0	52-0-0	
Swingfield	North Court Farm				110-0-0		

⁸ The tenant was liable for the Land Tax and all repairs in the 14-year lease for Queen Court Farm, granted from Michaelmas 1728.

Appendix 4. Table 4.2. The uplands holdings of the Rockingham estate in Kent - rentals in 1746

Location	Description	LTA £	Acreage	Annual rent £-s-d	Comments ¹
Coldred	Coldred Court Farm	66	280.0	86-8-0	
Coldred	Newsole Farm	36	80.0	(50-0-0)	In hand from 1746-8 (available at £50-0-0 per annum).
Coldred/Waldershare	Newsole/Popesole Farms	102	408.0		
East Langdon	Land – arable / pasture	-	3.0		In arrears (£1-10-0) in 1746. Terms – annual.
East Langdon	Lime Kiln	-	-	1-0-0	Terms – annual.
East Langdon	Langdon Court Farm	61	218.0	103-10-0	
East Langdon	The Well Farm	36	156.0	60-0-0	
East Langdon	Church / Street Farms	68	365.0	125-0-0	
East Langdon	House and Smith's Forge	5	-	8-0-0	Terms – annual.
East Langdon/ Whitfield	Langdon Court Farm / Pinham Farm	83	281.0	129-0-0	

Source: EKAC U471 A3 – Countess of Rockingham Rental Book, 1746-58 (No. 118). In addition to the uplands holdings set out in this Table, the rental book also refers to 'the Estate in Possession', namely the mansion of Waldershare House, together with the park and lands that went with it. This (in 1746) extended to some 613 acres and was reckoned to be worth £283-15s per annum. From 1751, the account book also includes the 'Fairfield estate'. This is referred to in Appendix 3 Table 3.1, and the fortunes of this holding are explored in chapter seven.

¹ This column identifies those holdings deemed to be in arrears. These, in 1746, stood at some 30 per cent of annual rent. This substantial figure can be explained by the fact that some holdings were vacant and were, for accounting purposes, entered up as 'Arrears carried forward' into the next year. However, as soon as farms were occupied, these 'paper' arrears were instead, simply written-off by the estate steward. Secondly, arrears accrued because of non- or part-payment of rent by existing tenants. In 1747, arrears overall amounted to 12.3 per cent of annual rent, while in 1748 and 1749 they stood at 16.2 per cent and 17.6 per cent respectively. They appeared to fall substantially when new tenants took on vacant farms and (to a lesser extent) when existing tenants caught up with their rent. In 1751 (when, coincidentally, Katherine, Countess Rockingham married the Earl of Guilford) arrears had fallen to just 0.3 per cent. These were made up of quit rents (amounting to no more than c. £10 a year) which were collected periodically rather than on a regular, annual basis. Thereafter, bearing in mind that there were neither vacant holdings nor tenants in arrears, quit rents were the only type of arrears accruing. The same applied post-1767 when (following Katherine's death) the estate passed to Earl Guilford.

Appendix 4. Table 4.2 – cont.

Location	Description	LTA £	Acreage	Annual rent £-s-d	Comments
Eastry	Selson Farm	unk	100.0	(115-0-0)	In arrears (£115) in 1746.
Eastry and Word	Parsonage and Glebe	332	56.0	510-0-0	
Ewell	Temple Lands	unk	69.0	In hand in 1746.	(Available at £22-10s per annum.)
Eythorne	Gosshill Close	0	3.0	0-15-0	Terms - annual
Eythorne	Goss Close and lower pasture	2	5.0	3-5-0	
Eythorne	Park End Farm (part)	-	9.5	11-5-0	Terms – annual.
Eythorne	Park End Farm (part)	6	6.5	10-10-0	Terms – annual.
Guston	Fryth Farm/Broad Lees	134	520.5	240-0-0	
Guston	Cottage and garden	-	0.5	(1-10-0)	In arrears (£1-10-0) in 1746.
Guston	Guston Court	65	300.0	150-0-0	
Guston	Parsonage and Glebelands	22	22.0	32-0-0	
Guston	Little Waters End Farm	unk	100.5	(37-0-0)	In arrears (£37) in 1746.
Guston	Land – arable	4	18.0	6-0-0	Terms – annual.
Hougham	Land – pasture	2	2.0	4-5-0	Terms – annual.
Northbourne	Napchester Farm	unk	160.0	(50-0-0)	£50 arrears in 1746. Terms – annual.
Northbourne	Minacre Farm	38	120.0	(48-0-0)	Available in 1746 (at £48-0-0 pa).
Shoulden	Shoulden Marshes	36	61.0	52-0-0	
Swingfield	Boynton Farm	unk	211.0	(65-0-0)	In arrears (£65) in 1746.
Swingfield	North Court Farm	90	370.0	110-0-0	In arrears (£88-13-0) in 1746.
Sybertswould	Farm	31	160.0	50-0-0	
Tilmanstone	Barvell Farm	23	248.0	90-0-0	In arrears (£45) in 1746.
Waldershare	Cottage/land	-	2.0	4-0-0	Terms – annual. Rent includes keeping one cow in Waldershare Park.

Appendix 4. Table 4.2 – cont.

Location	Description	LTA £	Acreage	Annual rent £-s-d	Comments
Waldershare	Malmains Farm	85	330.0	126-0-0	In arrears (£126) in 1746.
Waldershare	Inn	-	-	11-0-0	Terms – annual. Rent includes keeping three cows in Waldershare Park.
Waldershare	Popeshall Farm	79	238.0	120-0-0	In hand from 1746-8.
Whitfield	Pinham Farm	21	63.0	25-10-0	
Woodnesborough	Great Flemings Farm (part)	unk	34.0	(31-14-0)	In arrears (£31-14-0) in 1746
Woodnesborough	Marshland	-	7.0		Terms – annual.
Woodnesborough	Marshland	unk	17.0		Terms – annual.
Woodnesborough	Marshland	16	24.0	26-0-0	
Word	Lydd Court-out-Downs	223	1240.0	504-18-0	

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Note. As from 23rd April, 2012, the Centre for Kentish Studies and the East Kent Archives Centre have been replaced by the Kent History and Library Centre. For more information see www.kent.gov.uk/archives.

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