HADLOW
Life, Land & People in a Wealden Parish
1460 ~ 1600

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Edited by Joan Thirsk

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The Survey of Hadlow Manor, 1460, in Latin with English Translation (see separate file)

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AUTHORS' NOTES & INVITATION TO READERS

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The authors welcome any comments, corrections, additions, and discussion of their text which should be sent to:
Joan Thirsk, c/o The Library, Kent Archaeological Society, Maidstone Museum, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1LH, or by e-mail to kentarchaeology@btconnect.com.
We expect to be able to make consequent additions and emendations on the Internet.

When interpreting the diagrams of tenements and tenemental pieces, the authors emphasise that they do not depict acreages to scale, and all diagrams omit pieces of land that were detached from the main block, whose location has not been ascertained.

PICTURE CREDITS

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The publishers have made every attempt to trace the copyright holders of all images used in this volume. In case of omission please contact the publishers.
This book presents and discusses a survey of Hadlow Manor in 1460. The manor covered about 1200 acres of land, stretching from the Medway in the south, through the village centre, which lies east of Tonbridge, to its boundary in the north with North Frith Park. What was a survey? Surveys, often in the Middle Ages called custumals, terriers, or extents, began to appear in the twelfth century and gradually became more common. They were drawn up on the order of a manorial lord wanting to know how his land was tenanted, and what rents and labour services were due to him. They can vary greatly in the amount of detail that they give, but at best by the sixteenth century they listed all the land belonging to the manorial estate including demesne and tenant land, the acreages and names of the fields, the current use of the land as arable, meadow, or pasture, the names of the occupiers farming the land, the total size of each farm, the tenure by which each was held, the rents and other dues paid by the farmer to his lord, and the extent of commons and woodland.

In the Hadlow case, the document is called a rental or custumal and the information is partial. It does not include the demesne, but, so far as we can judge, it includes all, or nearly all, the tenements, the names of the pieces of land into which the tenements were divided, and the acreages, the use of some of the land, the names of the farmers and farm sizes, and the rents and other dues. It is not free from mistakes, omissions, and puzzling uncertainties of meaning, but it is unusually generous in aiming to give the names of people occupying land to the north, south, east, and west sides of each piece of land. It becomes possible to map the tenements, and gain some idea of the way they were laid out. In short, we catch sight of Hadlow and its people one hundred years after the Black Death, and 25 years before the first Tudor came to the throne.

The original manuscript was in Latin, and that is printed in a separate file with a translation into English alongside. Chapters 1-15 analyse the information drawn from the survey, using also other surviving archives about Hadlow at the same period in the Centre for Kentish Studies in Maidstone, the British Library, and the National Archives at Kew. They attempt to draw a picture of the way the inhabitants got their living, managed their land and lives, where they lived, and how they governed themselves.

The Weald was a distinctive countryside in many ways. It had small manorial estates, not large ones covering the whole parish, as one finds in Midland England. Its landowners were more likely to be modest gentlemen, rather than grand nobility. Its residents had a tradition of dividing their land between all sons, not passing the bulk of it to the eldest. This meant that land could quickly get divided into small pieces, but as occupiers enjoyed greater freedom than elsewhere to convey those pieces to others, amalgamations of land proceeded as readily as fragmentation. While we search here for clues to life in Hadlow, we learn more about Welden life in general. So finally, we put the history of Hadlow into a broader context, describing what is already known about the early settlement of the Weald of Kent, and what we can add from our one village survey.

The authors of this work are five women who have shared in a cooperative enterprise, exploiting their complementary expertise. Dr Bridgett Jones is the medieval scholar who transcribed the original Latin document and translated it into English. She did the same on several medieval court rolls of Hadlow manors. Without her, the rest of us could not have ventured on this work. The remaining four of us have all lived in Hadlow for many years. Anne Hughes is a history graduate, and has gathered much information about Hadlow from the many knowledgeable local people in our neighbourhood, as well as writing about the commons and the church. Caroline Wetton is an artist and designer who has made sense of the geographical information about tenements in our survey,
prepared innumerable plans and maps, of which some are printed here, and has walked tirelessly over the ground to match the past evidence with the present-day remains. Alison Williams is a history graduate who taught history for many years, and has examined all the surviving wills of Hadlow people living at the time of the survey, and constructed their family stories. She has also studied the workings of Hadlow's manorial courts using the surviving court rolls, and comparing their procedures with that of manors in very different kinds of countryside elsewhere. Dr Joan Thirsk is a historian of agriculture and rural society, who has striven to drain every drop of meaning from our documents to discover how Hadlow people got their livings, and to put our account into a wider context. In the past, she has written much about regional differences, and she holds the strong belief that Wealden society had a distinctive style that we should identify.

The survey of 1460 was copied out for some reason in 1581-3, and it is this copy that has survived. To bring the survey up to date more than a century after it had been compiled, the clerk made an attempt to scribble the names of new occupants over the old. But one cannot be certain that the document was fully revised in that respect. In one hundred years, all the occupiers' names must surely have changed, but not all the land is attributed to new owners. It is, of course, perfectly possible that many pieces of land had remained with the same families, but the document leaves the impression that the clerk was far from thorough in those investigations. Nevertheless, the revision in 1581 has persuaded us to write more generally about Hadlow's history up to 1600.

Hadlow residents will be surprised to discover the names of places and people in 1460 that are still familiar today. We encounter Watership (now Waterslippe), Blackmans (now surviving in Blackmans Lane) and Napiltons (now Appletons). Some surnames have continued to the present. Honewolds was the name of one tenement in 1460 and we still have a Mr Homewood living in the parish. Messrs. Palmer and Symonds are in the survey and are known still to be familiar local surnames. The surveyor also named lanes, roads, rivers, mills, weirs and sluices, with enough accompanying information in some cases to enable us to place them on the map. Hadlow as it was in 1460 begins to take shape before our eyes.
Readers will want to know how this Hadlow survey was discovered. It turned up unexpectedly at an auction in Mere, Wiltshire, in October 2002. Its existence had been unknown to us in Hadlow, but it had evidently been seen in January, 1772 by a member of Trinity College, Cambridge, who attached a note of commentary and explanation to it, probably for the benefit of the then owner, and signed it with his initials, S.P. The auctioneer, Mr Robert Finan, told us what little he knew about its history. He had been asked to dispose of a large, mixed collection of documents in the hands of Mr Geoffrey Woodhead, a bookseller of Honiton, Devon, when Mr Woodhead retired. Mr Woodhead died in the autumn of 2003. It took Mr Finan two and a half years to sort and sell it all. He could only guess that the collection had been built up in the course of some forty years of bookselling, and he suspected that part of it had been assembled by an earlier collector in the nineteenth century.

The note attached to the document when it came up for auction in 2002 was dated January, 1772, and had been signed by S.P. That was Samuel Peck of Trinity College, Cambridge. He described its contents, and added a postscript, dated 15 February, 1773, saying that he had passed it on to Lord Le Despencer, then lord of Hadlow manor. Judging by his note, Samuel Peck knew something more about Hadlow’s manorial history than was contained in its text. It was signed by Roger Lancaster, and dated 26 September, 1583. Peck claimed to know that Lancaster had become the steward of the manor in 1581. This makes the steward sound like a new broom, entering on his responsibilities with an undertaking to clean up inefficiencies of the past. Peck guessed, without explaining why, that the date of the original survey was 20 Edward IV, i.e. 1480-81. In fact, the document gave the reign but not the exact year, and internal evidence, showing the names of the tenants, has enabled us to correct the date to around 1460 (see further below).
Trinity College, where Peck was a Fellow and where he remained till he died in 1791, know a lot more about their former colleague. He was the son of John Peck of Market Weston in Suffolk, went to school in Bury St Edmunds, was admitted to Trinity College in 1742, graduated in 1749, and became an MA in 1750. He developed a consuming interest in law in general, and in manorial and county courts in particular. This must explain how he came to be consulted about the Hadlow survey. But he also acted as a poor man’s solicitor, welcoming local people to his rooms in Trinity College on Saturdays to answer their enquiries. He took no money, but gratefully accepted any produce they brought him. At the end of the day, a servant would come with a cart from Grantchester where he lived and take it all home.

The manuscript is a beautifully written document of 116 folios bound in limp vellum. Its main content is the survey of Hadlow manor, but it ends untidily on folio 96, petering out without showing decisively that the survey is complete. It resumes on folio 99, so two pages are clearly missing. It then continues with two other incomplete documents relating to the next door parish of West Peckham: the first concerns the grant in 1387 of the Peckham Parva church, i.e. West Peckham, dated 1387, to the use of the prior and convent of Leeds; it includes a ratification of this deed by the bishop of Rochester (Hasted, in his History of Kent, summarises the transaction). The second document starts on folio 101, is dated 15 June 1579, and is described as a survey of certain manors of Lord Abergavenny. It starts with the manor of Mereworth, but it is a summary, and not a full survey. On folio 109 it moves to the demesnes of West Peckham. West Peckham manor had become divided into two halves by 1365, and one half passed to the owner of Mereworth manor, hence the linking of the lordships of West Peckham manor and Mereworth. The explanation for the statement that the manors belonged to the Lord of Abergavenny lies in a legal settlement, not pursued here, when Henry, the second duke of Buckingham, died in 1483, was succeeded by the third duke, Edward, whose eldest daughter married George Neville, third baron of Abergavenny. The document ends with two names of the writers, James Ron and Tomas Fet, dated 20 July 1583. Both fragments are printed here as an appendix for the sake of completeness.

1. Hasted, 1798, V, 67-8

2. For the family connection see Hasted, 1798, V, 77
The first owners of this manor of Hadlow after the Norman Conquest were a French family that had come over to England with William the Conqueror. The same family also received the grant of Tonbridge, a strategically valuable place on the Medway, and many other estates in the vicinity. In England it took the surname of Clare after other still larger holdings (some 95 or more lordships) in Suffolk, situated around Clare, and granted to them by William I. When the male line died out in 1314, the female heirs divided the estate, and the part that included Tonbridge and Hadlow came by marriage to the Staffords, Earls of Gloucester. Humphrey Stafford, the second earl, was further promoted to be the first duke of Buckingham in 1444. Whenever the family came to Kent they dwelt, not in Hadlow, but in Tonbridge Castle.

The owner of Hadlow in 1460, therefore, was Humphrey Stafford, whose father had died in 1403 when he was only one year old. He took possession of his lands when he came of age in 1422, and was known as the Earl of Buckingham from 1438 when his mother died. He was an influential figure at court and in political life at Westminster, and was created first duke of Buckingham in 1444. He had married Anne Neville, daughter of Ralph, earl of Westmorland, some time before 1424, and she had borne him seven sons and five daughters. But Humphrey died in 1460, two years after his son and heir, another Humphrey had died in 1458. But he had left a young son and heir, and so in 1460 his grandmother, Anne, took charge of him. When he came of age in 1473, she received Hadlow manor as part of her widow's jointure. So, from 1460 until 1480 when she died, Anne, Dowager Duchess of Buckingham, was known to the inhabitants of Hadlow manor as the lady in charge of the estate. The survey plainly referred to her as the lady of the manor, and named a house of hers in Hadlow, though she may, in fact, rarely have visited it, for her favourite homes were in Writtle, Essex, and Kimbolton, in Huntingdonshire.

Our Hadlow survey is safely dated somewhere between 1460 and 1480 in Edward IV's reign. We can come yet closer to an exact year because by 1480 at least fourteen of the tenants named in the survey as landholders were long dead, and probate had been granted on their estates. The naming of one tenant, William Bishop as being 'lately dead,' plus the actual record of his death in 1456, and our knowledge of other family relationships in the Bishop family as disclosed in their wills, strongly suggest that the survey was prepared around 1460. In other words, the death of Humphrey, first Duke of Buckingham, in 1460 may have instigated the survey when his widow Anne took charge.

The manor of Hadlow was the largest, the most important, and the oldest in the parish. But it was not the only one. At some time in the past, fairly certainly under the rule of the Clares, grants of land in the Medway valley had been made to loyal servants who undertook to defend Tonbridge castle in time of need. These were termed knights' fees, and the grantees had turned them into manorial estates, possessing a lord's hall or dwelling house, a home farm, and other tenant farms, held by free or servile tenures. Tenants worked the land for themselves, and, if unfree, owed labour services to the lord. The inheritance custom of Kent, called gavelkind, prescribed the division of land between...
all sons. So in the course of generations, not only did farms get subdivided, so did manors; landowners wanted to provide estates for all their sons. At the end of the Middle Ages, therefore, Hadlow parish had splintered into some eight manors, the main one under scrutiny here, plus the others called Hadlow Place, Goldhill, Crombury, Fromonds, Caustons, Peckhams, and Lonewood. Some must have consisted of no more than 200-300 acres apiece. This means that our Hadlow manor did not extend over the whole parish; its land was intermingled with the land of other lords. So our survey does not give us a sight of every occupier or all land in the parish. But it records the largest slice, amounting to some 1200 acres.
The first folio of the Hadlow survey starts with a listing of knights’ fees, whose origins have been explained above. Having been granted by the lord to followers who were near in rank to himself, they became manorial estates, and whole knights’ fees had in course of time become subdivided into smaller units, thus dividing the burden of one knight’s responsibilities between more people. So the list for this manor names nine people holding fractions of knight’s fees, ranging from a half down to a fifth, an eighth, and a sixteenth. They cannot be added up tidily: the total amounted to one whole knight’s fee and 47/60ths; we have to assume that the remaining fractions were accounted for by other manors belonging to the Staffords in the vicinity. The duties of a knight were described as castle guard in time of war, the payment of scutage, and suit of court every three weeks, i.e. in the Tonbridge court, not in Hadlow. John Godyng’s duties, for some unexplained reason, differed from the others: he simply owed two capons or 12d. in rent at Michaelmas. Past changes in the ownership of fees were mentioned (William Watton’s fee was formerly Hugh de Causton’s, that is to say, of the Caxton family), and the current owners in 1460 divided themselves between well-known Hadlow gentry, like the Culpepers and Fromonds, and unknowns, like William Watton and John Godyng. Two changes were also noted in the revisions in 1581, bringing in Henry Fane and Thomas Peckham, in place of John Godyng and William Watton. One additional piece of information was the date on which John Godyng’s grant was first made, in the time of Richard Clare, when Earl of Gloucester, so dating it somewhere between 1230 when he came of age and 1262 when he died.

The remainder of the document lists the tenements. These were divisions of the manor land into tenements or farms, and as the survey makes clear, each had a name given to it, though that name was not permanent, and its connection with actual people, dead or living, is not usually clear. Over the years, changes in name had taken place, but even the most up-to-date ones did not usually name the current occupier, leaving the impression that changes in tenement names were a haphazard matter, without any consistency or logic, perhaps relying simply on current speech habits among the local people. As for the history of the tenements, it is not known for certain when they were originally created. Historians generally agree that original allotments represented in each district current opinion on what was sufficient land to support one family, and many of them do, indeed, cluster around the 30-35 acre size. In some other parts of the country too 30 acres or so were deemed a standard size for a family holding; in East Anglia it was only 12 or 24 acres. Some historians believe that the first allotment of tenements was made when a lord formally took ownership of his land, but in the case of the Clare family that would take us back to some time around the Norman Conquest. Others believe that many lords favoured a reorganisation of tenancies in the twelfth century, and standard tenements were created then. In a study by Altschul of the Clare family’s whole estate between 1217 and 1314, the author, without any precise reference to the Tonbridge estates, identified distinct efforts by the Clares in the second half of the thirteenth century and early fourteenth century to exploit their manors more effectively. So some tenements may
well have been laid out, or reshaped at that time. It is certainly reasonable to envisage a period when the Clares first took possession of their land after the Norman Conquest, but did not interfere much with the occupiers already there. That might then be followed by another phase when they took stock, recognised the economic potential of their property, and started to administer it systematically. They would then have reassessed rents and obligations according to some regular set of rules and requirements. We shall return to this subject below, and hazard the suggestion that in 1460 another new broom was tidying up after many decades of neglect on the Stafford estate. But first we should analyse the layout of the tenements as shown in the survey.

The total number of named tenancies amounted to some 59-60, plus three holdings in the village centre that were not full tenements. Almost half measured (45%) between 20 and 40 acres, and a little under a quarter were between 30 and 36¼ acres; 30 acres was probably the ideal. In places the survey contains ragged notes and does not end tidily, so that the total number of tenements is inexact. What is highly significant, however, is that of all the tenements of 20-40 acres, 17 lay near the Medway or in the vicinity of the town of Tonbridge (they are listed on folios 2-45 of the survey). In other words, nearly two-thirds (63%) of what were probably the oldest holdings to be administratively designated as tenements were close to the standard 20-40 acres. Other so-called tenements were either small fragments of land (11 were under 10 acres apiece) or were larger than average; the larger ones numbered 5 tenements of between 40 and 52 acres and one outsize one, at the east end of the parish, measured 82 acres. We may picture this last one lying in a part of the parish that held no great attraction for cultivators or possibly, as will be suggested below, was regarded as being somewhat apart from the centre of village affairs since the land was intermingled with other manors.

Each tenement comprised smaller pieces of land, some adjoining each other, some lying in the same field but not adjoining, and others separated, and often so unclearly defined that their location has not been determined. All other manors in Hadlow (some seven in all) similarly consisted of pieces that were more or less scattered in the same way, and that is made plain by the fact that sometimes adjoining parcels of land are cited in our survey as boundary pieces, which do not feature anywhere else in our survey. They must have belonged to other manors. Nevertheless, the scattered pieces of each tenement usually lay in one segment of the parish. Our maps show how the pieces of one individual tenement lay, with a few exceptions, in one general area of the parish, and the surveyor’s order of working through his task was based on that knowledge.

The surveyor started down at Hadlow Stair, strongly suggesting that that is where he considered the most lively economic activity to be concentrated. We are not certain where exactly the Stair was situated (further discussion of this follows), but The Stair was the wharf and landing place on the Medway where most goods for Hadlow were loaded and unloaded. It is usual to say that the Medway was not made a navigable river until the 1740s, but that was for larger vessels of 4 tons and more. Before that the river was constantly used by small, flat-bottomed craft plying up and down on local errands.
carrying small goods. Hadlow people were sufficiently satisfied to make no loud complaints. It was not until the second half of the sixteenth century when commercial traffic intensified, that an agitation began to move larger vessels down the river, resulting in the early seventeenth century in a survey of all the obstructions, and endeavours to clear them.

Land in the vicinity of the river, then, was probably the scene of most farming and trading activity in 1460, and that suggestion is strengthened by the extraordinarily small size of the land parcels into which these ancient tenements on the floodplain had become divided. Pieces of a quarter of an acre and some even smaller indicate how sought after was this rich meadow land. It was liable to flooding in winter, but benefited greatly from the rich sediments that were thus deposited for they fattened cattle superbly in the summer. The family names of farmers down at the Medway and the number of individual occupiers having the same surname suggest that this was the most desirable part of the parish as far as the older families were concerned, and it was there that the competition for land was fiercest. The custom of gavelkind had resulted in people keeping such land within their own kinship circle, and dividing it into ever smaller pieces. As we walk round the whole manor, surveying all the tenements, we shall become aware of different values being set on different sectors of Hadlow land.
The surveyor went round the manor enumerating each tenement, usually giving it a name, identifying a main occupier (though this did not mean that the main occupier had the largest share of the land), and describing what acreage he held. Often the names of the pieces of land were given, and in most cases the neighbours to north, south, east and west. The pieces of land occupied by others (for all tenements were much subdivided) were then enumerated, the occupiers being called ‘socii’ or ‘parcenarii’ in Latin, i.e. associates or co-parceners. At the end of the account of each tenement, a total acreage for the whole was given, and dues in money and kind were stated. (The italicised words in our survey text distinguish those that were entered later, presumably in 1581, to bring the information up to date.)

The first holding in the survey was called Cowling tenement, no explanation being given for the name Cowling. It was largely in the hands of one old family, the Bishops, and the main tenant was John Bishop, son of Robert, who had his house there. It had formerly been held by William Bishop, perhaps the grandfather or great-grandfather, but now other Bishops were occupying pieces of the tenement, namely, John, son of Richard (the cousin of John, son of Robert), and
Thomas Bishop, probably their uncle. Two other occupiers had different surnames but they could have been related to the family at some time in the past on the female side. The tenement was somewhat below the average in size, 24½ acres and 3 dayworks (henceforward the small daywork measurement will usually be omitted from this text - it was one tenth of a rod), and the land lay between what is now Higham Lane on the west and the old Hadlow Road to the south and east.

The second tenement was formerly Ralph Kene’s, extending to 30½ acres. His will was dated 1443, and so he was now dead and John Bishop, son of Robert, living in Cowling tenement next door was regarded as the main tenant and held the Mill House there. It lay across the road from the house in which he lived in Cowling tenement. Old William Bishop was remembered here too, having once occupied some of the land. Other tenants of Cowling tenement reappeared, including two more of the Bishop family. The lady of the manor was also a tenant. Four houses were located on this holding, so although it stretched down to the Medway and part was low-lying, having the Lady’s marsh, Rowying Lake, and the Mill Ditch within its compass, most of the land and certainly the houses lay above the floodplain.

In the next tenement, called Wodmaneys, two more Bishops, Gervase and William, were remembered as former occupiers, and the land of Gervase still belonged in the Bishop family, having come to John Bishop, son of Robert. In other words, this one family network was still conspicuous round here, while reference to the Stair shows how near it was to the river wharf. Similarly, in the next two tenements, Freferding and Walter at Steyre, the Bishop family was successfully accumulating yet more land, all of it running towards the Medway. Indeed, Freferding land actually crossed the Medway to the other side. But the survey is, of course, referring to the old course of the Medway before the navigation that we know today was established. The old course, which was probably on average no more
than ten feet wide, ran much closer to the high ground than it does today, and the Stair or riverside landing place was created on Walter at Steyre's tenement where the contours are much closer together than on any other part of the manor.

One house on the Walter at Steyre tenement, occupied by Lawrence Farman, is now Stair Farm, and another occupied by Thomas Fisher, in right of his wife Alice, formerly Mrs William Honewold, seems to be on the site of the present Stair House. We shall recognise in due course how often women with rights to land married local menfolk and conveniently brought neighbouring fields together. The Fishers, like the Bishops, were an old Hadlow family, and this Thomas Fisher, also holding Fishland tenement, had special fishing obligations to catch fish for the lady of the manor whenever she required it, using her nets, they firmly noted.

Further along the main road to Hadlow, on Knett the Hoggs tenement, were two more Fishers, Peter and Thomas, though a Bishop, John, son of Robert, was the main tenant. Here the holding was again a standard 30 acres in size, but subdivision had produced 18 pieces of land divided between 7 people. Richard Fisher holding only one piece of 2.1 rods, shows how small some fragments could be. Some of this land was on the corner of Three Elm Lane.

As four out of these eight first tenements conformed to the 30-acre standard, we might suspect an origin more ancient than the rest, granted at a time when uniformity was expected. That notion might even draw further support from another odd statement relating to Jopes tenement. It said that joint-tenants of the manor had eleven sows grazing in North Frith throughout the year, and owed certain pigs, and money dues according to the pannage season. It sounds a generous allowance, and might well be a statement that was intended to apply to all tenements. The subsequent revisions in 1581 show that some other tenants, but not all, did indeed have grazing rights for pigs in North Frith for their obligations to pay the lord in pigs or pork were enumerated. The puzzle is further discussed below in Chapter 5.

As a guide to the structure of the tenements hereabouts, we may pause to emphasise the fact that four out of the first eight tenements were exactly 30 acres apiece, and subdivision had produced 35 separate pieces of land in the most extreme case, and twelve in the least. The surveyor continued his survey by moving along the Hadlow Road, remaining concerned with tenements that mostly lay to the south of it. This land lay on the floodplain of the Medway with names such as Warelake, Lodeweer Pool, Jopislake; in short, it was all on what we shall conclude was the most sought after cattle-fattening land, having useful access to transport on the river and Tonbridge. The tenement, called Fishland, had Thomas Fisher as its main tenant, and lay in the vicinity of the present Fish Hall. Taking all the Fisher family's land, we find them holding 68 different pieces in 1460 amounting to 111 acres. It is clear that they were a prosperous Hadlow family with a long history, and perhaps were verging on gentry. Moreover, Fishland tenement had some pieces of land called Inner and Outer Herbery and Le Arber, names hinting at land that had once made a pleasure garden. Had the house once belonged perhaps to a courtly family in contact with Tonbridge Castle? The same
land was now just meadow and arable, but later documents show that Fish Hall itself remained a house with somewhat higher social standing than other tenemental messuages. Three Elm Lane was one of its boundaries, and Posterngate was mentioned, so its general location was clear.

After the first eight tenements, sizes diverged more sharply from the standard 30 acres, showing more irregularity. This fact hints at the allotment of the next farms being made some time after the first round. Four out of fourteen were 15 acres or less, while two, nearing and reaching the present-day Ashes Lane which runs north of the Hadlow Road to North Frith Park, were larger, measuring between 39 and 41 acres. Moreover, as field names denoting land on the floodplain petered out, the tenements were less fragmented; evidently demand for this land was less pressing.

Tanners tenement abutted the main Hadlow Road, near Three Elm Lane, and Henry Hextall features here for the first time as a noticeable occupier from Tannerys onwards. He held pieces in Peacocks and Pococks tenements, some of which land was arable running from Higham lane towards Hadlow and reaching as far as the river Bourne; Hextall was probably more of an arable farmer than a grazier. He will become one of the more conspicuous names in our survey for he was an official of the Stafford family, and was possibly the steward. He was the leading tenant of Pococks tenement, but he dwelt in the centre of the village, in Lords Place in Church Street. (More about the Hextalls follows below).

Some of the land in these tenements now reached as far as the boundaries of North Frith Park (see Pynchon tenement), and it was occupied by individuals having a considerable number of pieces in other tenements as well. So the notion of 30 acres as a standard holding was being lost to sight, though the larger pieces of land around here suggest little competition for it. Thus, in Pynchon tenement, which was only 4½ acres (the surveyor showed an incorrect 3½ acre total), Richard Pynchon had 3 acres and John and Thomas Fychett had just over 1 acre. Pynchon’s hardly deserved to be called a tenement, though it did have a house and garden, with some land on the highway from Coiffe’s gate to Tonbridge; it looks more like a squatters holding. The next door
A WALK ROUND HADLOW MANOR IN 1460

FICHET’S

An old pit in the vicinity of Knights tenement now filled with water.

HOLMANS

Brick and tile making

KNIGHTS

STIDINGS

BROOMFIELD

tenement, Fichet’s, leads us to the present-day Poult House, and near the boundary of the hunting grounds of the lords of Tonbridge in North Frith Park. This tenement comprised 33½ acres. It was held by the same two Fichets, who held land in Pynchon tenement, but it was here that they had a house and garden. The only other resident hereabouts seems to have been John Crocher, and it was through his wife, Juliana, who had been married to Robert Watt, that he held the house up here where he lived, in fact, Poult House itself.

The surveyor in this area was now looking at tenements that had a far different character from those down at the Medway. It was woodland peppered with pits from which sand and brick-clay were extracted. The next tenement was Holmans, recalling a Walter Holman whose surname had not survived anywhere else on this manor. It too contained several pits, some of them lying in a line. One pit evidently yielded sand and was called Sandherst; the pits were shared between a Pynchon, the two Fychets, Henry Hextall, and the lady of the manor. All these occupiers had other land elsewhere, and must have valued the minerals on the tenement while having no desire to live on it. All the land lay near the present Pitts Wood, where the visitor can still get some impression of how the land looked then, amid pits turned into ponds, old coppicing, and sloe bushes. Later on a brick kiln was also situated here, and towards Higham Lane were furze fields, furze being valued for flash firing.

The next door tenement, Knights, was on similar terrain, although, having only 12 acres, it had little more than half the land of Holmans. It had once been occupied by a Nicholas Tanner who perhaps had followed the tanning trade and wanted to exploit the tree bark. In 1460 one occupier was John Beald, a carpenter, so he may have coppiced the timber here. But Henry Hextall was the main tenant and all around were other familiar neighbours occupying pits but not living there. Yet another rough piece of land up here was Broomfield tenement next door, comprising only 10 acres, divided between two men, John At Stable and Thomas Bishop, and owing nothing but a money rent. The condition of this neighbourhood as scrubby land is further suggested by the next door tenement, called Stidings, formerly said to have been occupied by Amicia Stidings whose surname appears nowhere else in the survey. It was less than 6½ acres and was two pieces of land sandwiched between the occupiers of Broomfield tenement. The land seems to have lain on the main Hadlow to Tonbridge road, and it is tempting to imagine it as vacant waste land on which Amicia squatted, having turned up from nowhere, and stayed till she died. Thomas Bishop already had land on one side and he was now in 1460 deemed the occupier of these two pieces as well, owing rent and relief. This was the only place in the whole survey where the rate at which relief was levied was actually stated. It was charged on tenants at all changes of occupier, whether by sale or when death brought in a new heir, and the payments feature constantly in the court rolls. Relief, explained the surveyor at this point, was a fourth part of the rent ‘according to the manor’s constitution’. In discussing manor court business below, we shall show how remarkably small were the sums that fell due for relief when compared with the relief levied in other parts of the kingdom. They support the notion that the Weald was a relatively poor part of the country, given a lowly valuation in the estimate of contemporaries, and not promising a high standard of living to its residents.

The surveyor now returned to the Hadlow Road and surveyed more tenements on either side. Some pieces of land lay on both sides of Brewis Lane, a footpath still known into the 1950s but since lost. It ran from the present-day Farm Shop on the Hadlow Road towards Faulkners Oast, and in the sixteenth century was known as Sherriff’s Lane.
Gilbert and William Shereve were both occupiers here in 1460, having no more than 3½ acres between them in a tenement called Brewis. The element ‘burgh’ is noticeable in several place-names here, denoting ancient administrative terminology which is more prominent elsewhere in the Weald; it is visible here only in this one district, but that may be worth remark since, when the parish boundary between Hadlow and Tonbridge was changed in 1932, the new line was set on Brewis Lane.

John Bishop, son of Robert, was the chief occupier of Brewis in 1460, and, as we have seen, he was a notability on the manor for altogether he farmed nearly 90 acres in 11 different tenements. Indeed, he was possibly the largest of all the landholders. The Brewis tenement was largish, 39½ acres, and nine people shared in it. Moreover, dues, and labour services in ploughing, harrowing and carrying were so substantial (120 small works and 24 great works) on this tenement, and the bread and herrings given for work so precisely stated, that it is tempting to guess that it constituted a tenement newly chartered by the Stafford family in 1330 when they took possession and started to reorganise the estate to their liking. Significantly, the labour services were the same as in the case of Jordans tenement, and those were, indeed, said to have been declared in a charter made at Tonbridge Castle in 3 Edward III, sometime between January 1329 and 1330. This was not long after the Staffords had taken charge. The Clare estate, as we have seen above, had been divided between women in 1314, when the male line ended with the death of Gilbert, tenth Earl of Clare. Through marriage, the next lord of Tonbridge was Ralph, who later became the first Earl of Stafford, and died at Tonbridge. He may have been more involved in giving instructions for the managing of his estate in 1330 than the Clares had been. Miscellaneous other clues also tempt us to think that Brewis tenement lay in the more intensively cultivated arable part of the manor.

The surveyor was now approaching Ashes Lane, then known as Palmer Street, and was not too far from Bourne bridge and the village centre. A tenement like Cardons
running up to the boundary of North Frith Park with 'birch wood' place names and Welsh's tenement also having woodland names, were not greatly divided. But Palmers tenement, extending to the Hadlow Road certainly was. Its total acreage was 36 acres, but it had eight occupiers, and six houses stood here, one of which was Palmers Place, a name signifying a substantial dwelling. Henry Johnson lived in it, and occupied almost half the land, 15 acres, though he held no other land in the manor and we know nothing about him. But the subdivision of the holding and the six houses fire the imagination, since riders coming along the main road from Tonbridge must have recognised this unusually well populated corner as the point at which they had to turn left to go up to the hunting grounds at North Frith. Palmers Place lay approximately on the site of what is now the restaurant called 'The Rose Revived', and that is known to be an early sixteenth-century house; it could have been a striking building that attracted attention. Moreover, being near a cluster of other dwellings that are still there, it prompts the thought that they housed some of those who worked on the fencing and gating of the hunting park, kept watch for poachers of deer, and guarded the falcons at certain times of the year.

It is a pity that the Palmer surname has disappeared from Hadlow place-names. Welsh's tenement, the one surveyed before Palmers, had formerly belonged to a Richard Palmer, and he had also lately occupied Peckham manor (see below). The Palmer surname remained well known in Hadlow into the later twentieth century; in the 1950s a Palmer was a coal merchant; in 1975 a Mrs Palmer sold a house near the common. But the only Palmer occupying land on this manor in 1460 was Alice with only half an acre in the vicinity of the river Bourne.

Holdings now were approaching the village centre and took unexpected shapes and sizes. Wekerylds tenement lay on both sides of the Hadlow Road, its land on the right-hand side of Ashes Lane having three houses on it. But its land was divided by the main road, for some lay along Blackmans Lane; a history of arable cultivation was possible here as labour services were due from its occupant. The next tenements were nondescript
A WALK ROUND HADLOW MANOR IN 1460

holdings, smaller than the standard size but all in the Three Elm Lane, Blackmans Lane area, and all except Crouchland owing labour services. The holdings were watered by brooks or the river Bourne itself, and Aleynslove tenement seems to be the present-day Bourneside farm. In only two out of six cases was any dwelling mentioned, so we have to contemplate these farming families living in the village, but on the land of other manors. John Symonds, senior, was shown earlier to be living in a house along Palmer Street (Ashes Lane), but now the same John was named as the one occupier of a small unnamed tenement which had only two acres of land, but accommodated the maltmill on the river Bourne; Symonds, the occupier, was not necessarily the working miller. The Hadlow manor at this point was close to its northern boundary, which adjoined Peckham manor, where Lady Elizabeth Culpeper had an interest. She may, in fact, have been the lady of that manor at this time. Her tomb is in West Peckham church.

This mill was not the only one on the river Bourne at this point. We are familiar to this day with the site of one watermill here, at the bottom of the lane leading off Carpenters Lane. But our survey mentions three mills in 1460, and still in the eighteenth century documents refer to three mills, and calls them Hadlow mills. One of these must have been the cornmill, and the third was possibly a fulling mill, used for fulling cloth, because a tenterfield lay in Paynes, the next door tenement, and this was where the woven cloths when fullled were stretched out to dry. Hadlow was not a significant clothmaking village in the Weald; much more celebrated was the area around Cranbrook. But if a fulling mill did exist on the river Bourne, it suggests that Hadlow families made sufficient cloth for household use to appreciate such a labour-saving asset.

Moving into the village across the Bourne and approaching the church, one would expect to find more houses along the high street, but they were surprisingly few in number, suggesting that other manors in the parish had some houses there too. Paynes tenement, lying wholly on the north side of the village, stretched back to include the tenterfield already mentioned somewhere on the east side of Carpenters Lane. It had only one house standing on its 42 acres, so it was plainly not a built-up part of the village. Fletchers tenement next door was larger still, covering nearly 52 acres, and here stood the corn mill and a millpond, from which water flowed south and west to a maltmill. Fletchers, then, must be what we now know as Bourne Mill. Its leading occupier was Richard Culpeper, esquire, who lived at Oxenhoath, and also occupied the largest slice of Fletchers's land, 24½ out of its 52 acres. The whole tenement extended towards the village street, and Lady Elizabeth Culpeper, probably his mother, held a small piece of 4½ acres during her lifetime, almost certainly as part of her widow's settlement. Some of this land was meadow as one might expect so close to the Bourne; one piece was called Waterships, which we recognise nowadays as Waterslippe; and a road through it led to Lonewood, which was a considerable area to the east and north and included some common land.

The main occupier on Paynes tenement, having some 22 acres altogether, was John Newman, the village maltster, one of the few inhabitants to have a specialist occupation assigned to him. Continuing now along the north side of the village street, Gibbons tenement was a large holding of 48½ acres, with only two tenants, of whom
Nicholas Stopersfield was the main one, having 33 acres and his house there. The land included a Fullersfield, reminding us again of cloth processing by the villagers. Somewhere in the vicinity was the vicarage house and rectory land, and one acre on which a barn had been built next to the vicarage. Being so near to the main street, the barn could well have looked like Old Barn, a family house which stands to this day at the corner of Court Lane.

Following on Gibbon’s tenement, the surveyor then described one tenement having only one occupier (a rare example in this survey), and he was again Richard Culpeper, esquire. The Culpepers were gentry hereabouts, and we begin to realise how much land they held in Hadlow. A John Culpeper at the beginning of the fifteenth century was justice of the common pleas at Westminster and was already living at Oxenhoath. According to Hasted, it was he who gave Dukes Place to the Knights Hospitallers. Some of his other land, lying in Hadlow manor, included this so-called tenement, formerly of Thomas Peckham, but it was said to be 'lying in an ancient park'. The record then particularised and stated that Richard and Joan Brewer now held the whole tenement between them, but it was 'in the new park', and it was shown in an ancient rental to have been occupied by William Gifferey and lately by Richard, son of John Palmer. The full meaning of this description is not altogether clear, but it appears to identify as a tenement what later came to be known as Peckhams Manor, though no court rolls have ever been found for it. Evidently, an ancient park had once lain here; had it, perhaps, fallen into neglect after the Black Death? Now in 1460 a new park had evidently taken its place within which a tenement had been established, though the clerk gave no acreage. We catch sight of some fundamental re-arrangement of the land here, something that was common in other parts of the country following the Black Death (see Searle on Battle Abbey estates). More changes in later centuries give us the estate known as Bourne Grange, which became part of Hadlow College in 1968.

A tiny piece of land was surveyed next, consisting of less than 4 acres of land, belonging to Richard Nepicar. It was not described as a tenement, but it had Lawday Place, a mysterious place-name discussed below, on the east, with the common of Lonewood on the west and north. Richard Nepicar, known to the locals as Richard of Loamwood (as the common was then called), lived in a house on the tenement next door, part of that called Honewolds, that name reminding us how long-lived is that surname in Hadlow. Nepicar, in fact, was living amid a cluster of houses in the very centre of the village; eight altogether lay on this tenement, five on the north side of the village street, and three on the south side. Most occupiers had very small pieces of land amounting to no more than 2 acres or less, enough for a garden. Plainly, their houses were relatively congested along the main village street. In the same neighbourhood, the lord also had garden land, and a field called Cotmansfield; this was the field at the junction of the village street and Court Lane. The name revived a memory of the past for the lord's home farm had once relied on serfs or cotmen to work it. These lowly servants performed the heaviest labour services on their lord's land, but nevertheless shared a field in which they cultivated food for their families. The Black Death had dealt a blow to that arrangement, for heavy mortality among the population undermined the authority of the lord, and as labourers became scarce, and wage rates rose high, manorial lords generally ceased to cultivate their own home farms. As this survey did not define the legal status of any tenants in 1460, we cannot say how many were free, how many were unfree, and whether any were called cotmen. But in the sixteenth century when tenants' status was given in some documents, none was called 'a cotman'. Our survey in 1460 shows the
Somewhere opposite the end of Court Lane, then, we can picture village houses running eastward along what the local people then called the road to West Malling. Absolutely no mention was made in the survey of a road to Maidstone. That road did not then exist, and we find support for that unexpected fact because the road itself nowadays contains no ancient houses. Hadlow people moved between Tonbridge at one end and West Malling at the other, and seeing the width of the West Malling High Street today, we can readily imagine how Hadlow people added to the throng of people shopping in that broad street on market days.

On the south side of the main street, the surveyor now standing at its very centre, described Coiffe’s tenement, formerly Richard Kempe’s and before that Richard White’s. He did not complete his account of its acreage; perhaps it was complicated because of the many villages houses that we suspect were there, though not belonging to Hadlow Manor; he planned to finish it later and forgot. What he did mention was the path to the church, i.e. Church Street and Napiltons (the present-day Appletons). Here he named three shops, though he did not locate them exactly. Two were either on the village street or in Church Street, probably, in fact, on the corner. The man with most land here was John Newman, the maltster, already mentioned for living on Payne’s tenement, but the shopkeepers were John Herberd, and John Somer. A third shop was jointly owned by John Herberd and Henry Hextall and was on the other side of Church Street, adjoining Lord’s Place. Henry Hextall was shown living in Lord’s Place, that is to say, the large house on the left side of Church Street that was a pub in the 1950s, known as the King’s Head, and now called Church Street. If the manorial lord had been resident, he would have lived there. But Hadlow’s lord had such high rank that he lived at Tonbridge Castle, and so his house was given to Hextall who was a responsible servant of the Duke of Buckingham, and may indeed have been the manorial steward. Additionally, Hextall occupied a lot of scattered land on the manor, almost as if he had been picking up any land that came vacant. Assuming that the surveyor’s compass points are correct, the shop of Herberd and Hextall lay to the left of Lord’s Place on the site of Cobblestones, and Matilda Broker lived in the house on the other side of Cobblestones, i.e. No. 1 Church Street. Behind this row of shops and dwellings lay Napiltons (= Appletons).

The surveyor now moved along the village street to Coswyn’s, an average holding of 32¾ acres, lying adjacent to what is now James House and Cemetery Lane. The occupier of most land here was William Nepicar, holding 13 acres; he had the same surname as the occupier of that other house with land on the other side of the road. The highway that we now call the road to Maidstone was known as the road to West Malling, and diverging from it was one highway to Goldhill (i.e. Golden Green) and one to Yalding. Court Lane was much the most direct road to Goldhill and Yalding for people in the centre of the village. But another road led off the main road further along at a place called Dorants Cross, in the vicinity of the present James House, most likely what we now call Cemetery Lane rather than the footpath that diverges just before Cemetery Lane. William Nepicar’s house lay somewhere on the right hand side of the main village street, and so did William Hogett’s. But population and cultivation were thinning out along this road, so Haymonds tenement consisted of less than 5 acres with 2 occupiers, and John Pelsount, singularly, held the whole of the next tenement, Rodbards, giving him 22 acres and a house, no subdivision of his tenement having yet taken place. He had land in two other tenements but all of it lay in the vicinity, giving him a sizeable holding of some 37
A WALK ROUND HADLOW MANOR IN 1460

acres, without close neighbours. We have arrived at a motley array of tenements bearing no sign of conforming to any uniform size: Hecotts amounted to little more than 3 acres, another holding of Richard Steyle's was 4½ acres, its status being left unclear; both resembled squatters' holdings. Fosters tenement with 17 acres promised a better living. It is now part of Goblands farm, and lies along the parish boundary with East Peckham; hence it had a field called Boundsfield, and lay in the territory of the Fromond family. In fact, the will of Thomas Fromond of Goldhill in 1447 mentioned three pieces of land called Bounds, somewhere near here, to be sold at his death along with the tenement and adjoining garden. John Goding was the main tenant of Fosters, and his land included crofts at Bourne Stile, which can be identified in the nineteenth-century boundary perambulation as the point where the footpath leads to Peckham Bush. The same boundary perambulation claimed that the Goding family 'from time immemorial' gave cider further on at 'the cider stile' to the parties walking the bounds; but it is unlikely that 'time immemorial' reached back to 1460! (The Goding surname later became Golding, the family responsible for developing the Golding hop). The next tenement, Spaldings, was said to be 12 acres (though, correctly added, the two pieces came to 17 acres), and it had only two occupiers, of whom one was William Whettenhall, a gentleman living in East Peckham, the next door parish. Land here gave the impression of being somewhat detached from Hadlow, and not commanding much interest among the locals. Lockbridge's tenement was only 10 acres divided into 6 pieces and lay on the highway that led from Hadlow to Yalding. The surveyor was perhaps losing interest at this point; he named the tenement of Henry Ashdown on the way to Yalding but it contained only 6 acres. Grove tenement was only 9 acres divided between two people; it contained a reference to Gooseland which adjoined some land lying on the edge of Caustons manor. The land here was lying in bits and pieces of varying sizes, and was far from conveying any impression of well-established tenemental holdings. Rather it suggests an unfavoured area awaiting occupiers, available to anyone who turned up; we may wonder if perhaps it had suffered some dislocation when the Causton family departed from Hadlow, and left it untenanted?

Having started his enquiries at Hadlow Stair, the surveyor had now described something more than a semi-circle around the northern half of the parish but had not yet taken stock of the south-eastern quarter. This was where a noticeable number of Hadlow's smaller manors lay, namely, Caustons, Fromonds, Crombury, and Goldhill, four of the seven which we assume to have been created by the Clares as a result of their granting knights' fees to loyal senior servants. Their close grouping at this end of the parish, and the fact that the surveyor left this area till last suggests that it was regarded by contemporaries as somewhat apart from the core of the manor. Its location, in fact, would be consonant with the notion that when the Clares installed themselves in Tonbridge and a castle was built there, they sought to keep the land nearest to the castle for themselves, and chose for their knightly grantees land that was still attractively near the Medway, but more distant from Tonbridge and as yet undeveloped (a similar speculation is made by Searle with reference to Battle Abbey estates). This is guesswork, but it is a credible formulation of likely settlement history, for the rivers Teise, Medway and Beult run together at this south-eastern end of the parish, joining up in Yalding parish next door. The terrain here is likely to have been more open, accessible, and ripe for development by others when the first knights' fees were granted at an early date than more wooded areas in other parts of Hadlow parish.

It may also be significant that some of the wording of the survey in the next pages hints vaguely at ancient allotments of land in this neighbourhood, possibly going back earlier than those around Hadlow Stair. In tracing the earliest settlement of the Weald, Kenneth Witney focused attention on this meeting point of the three rivers, the Medway, Teise, and Beult as an obvious first entry point into the forest of the Weald for those moving south off the downland. From Gibbons tenement onwards, some pieces of land are referred to in ferlings, which was an ancient unit of land, representing a quarter of a
A WALK ROUND HADLOW MANOR IN 1460

yoke (some 10-13 acres). The same measure features in Fosters, Lockbridge and Stoperfield tenements. The larger unit, the yoke, is nowhere mentioned in our survey as a basic unit of family land (though, in noticeable contrast, the survey of Wye manor on the downslands, owned by Battle Abbey, Sussex, and also having a survey of the mid-fifteenth century, uses the yoke as the standard measure). The ferling, being a quarter of a yoke, is an equally ancient term, but survives in use only in this sector of the manor, and it is tempting to think that there is some significance in that fact.

The account of Stoperfield tenement, (35½ acres), which uses the term ferling, is unusual in another respect. It was formerly a tenement of Hugh de Causton, and was an amalgam of pieces of land formerly (and presumably after Hugh de Causton's departure) occupied by five different people. It made up 15 acres plus a house and included half a ferling held by one of the five former occupiers through 'a charter of the lord Earl of Stafford as is shown in an old rental'. More pieces made up the whole of Stoperfield tenement, but it finished by adding up the money due from all the tenants as noted 'through an old charter in an old rental, as they say'. Such words seemed to imply some disbelief on the part of the surveyor, because no documentary proof was being offered.

Some land here was in the vicinity of Causton manor, and indeed, the next tenement, called Puddings, was also said to have belonged formerly to Hugh de Causton, so we may be observing here the break up of Hugh de Causton's estates, including the manor that took his name. As the date of the departure of Hugh de Causton from Hadlow is a mystery not so far solved (more on the history of the Caustons follows in Chapter 15), it is possible that, in the background of the tenemental structures described here, lies some rearrangement well before 1460 not only of tenements but of manors also. This is at variance with the manorial conventions we expect and find in other parts of the country. But a somewhat unceremonious procedure for creating and maintaining manors in other parishes of the Weald is further discussed below, and it alerts us to be watchful for a similar attitude in Hadlow; it may be that the stricter administrative formalities of the sixteenth century, which are so noticeable in other parts of the country had not yet penetrated the Weald; in accord with this guesswork runs the assumption that the whole region was economically backward.

Stoperfields tenement also attracts notice for another reason. Some of its land lay along the road from Goldhill to West Malling, that is, Victoria Road, and two occupiers held pieces of Park Field, amounting to nearly nine acres. To the north of Park Field lay

3. Muhlfeld, 1974, xv

STOPERFIELD

PUDDINGS

Map showing:
position of Stoperfield tenement and the demesne land and other points of interest including the approximate position of Lawday Place.
'the Lord's meadow and land'. An acre of land called Park Croft also lay in that tenement and Nicholas Stoperfield also held a piece in Courtmead by the river Bourne on the western boundary of the demesne lands. On the southern boundary of the tenement, land held by William Martyn, although not in our survey, was termed 'demesne land'. Are these the vestiges of an old hunting park? The land to the north of Stoperfield tenement later became the ornamental parkland of the old Court Lodge and subsequent Hadlow Castle. Are we witnessing here the beginning of the change from an old hunting park to the formation of more structured leisure grounds? It can be no more than a guess.

The last pages of the survey moved around to the Medway, and Brooke tenement. Brooke tenement encompassed much land that was surrounded by water, and is likely to have been flooded in winter. Anote Island was here, Jordanslake was prominent, and several sluices and weirs featured. Perysbrook and Perystown were place names, and it is fairly certain that Perystown was on the site of Barnes Street. Brooke tenement, moreover, was the largest of all tenements in the survey, extending over 82 acres. It was divided into 37 pieces among ten people, and emphasised the importance of the Fromond family in these parts. John Fromond of Goldhill held one-sixteenth of a knight's fee and occupied 13 pieces of land, Lady Margaret Fromond held one sixth of a knight's fee and three pieces of land, and Gilbert Fromond held two pieces. (For more on the Fromonds, see Chapter 13) Some land was described as meadow and the place name, The Hills, suggests that some was lifted out of the floodplain, but the absence of any dwellings was significant.

Lake tenement next door (of 44 acres) lay next to Hartlake bridge going east and was previously held by William at Grove. John Fromond of Kempinhale held 15 acres including his dwelling house 'Clobcroft', which was probably on the present site of Hartlake Farmhouse and another house called Thomas at Grove. A third messuage was owned by Richard Knight. There was a common here called Jordans.

The last two tenements named in the survey were both in the hands of the lady of the manor. Had her senior officials perhaps noticed the omission and drawn attention to them? Jordans consisted of two pieces of land, each of 10 acres, lying on the north side of Three Elm Lane and south of Brewis tenement. They were summarily described, with reference to a charter of 1329/30. The very last tenement was called Lawerk or Larke at Larkhale, located in the most northerly part of the manor at Stallions Green, and that too was plainly an afterthought, being far from where the surveyor had ended his enquiries in 1460. Thomas Fader occupied land by copy of a court roll of 1466/7, thus dating the entry well after the main survey had been completed. The survey petered out here, and indeed one page seems to be missing.

The surveyor had more or less returned to his starting point, and neatly it was John Bishop, who had featured so prominently at the beginning of the survey, who was here at the end, occupying one of the two pieces of Jordans tenement. We can imagine the surveyor inscribing that last note and laying his survey aside with a groan, wondering what other holdings he had overlooked.

**PUZZLES IN THE SURVEY**

With regard to the content of the survey, the reader is left at the end with certain puzzles that need to be discussed. The document is described as a rental or customary of all lands and tenements within the demesne of Hadlow, giving information about each tenant of the demesne. The word 'demesne', as used here, referred to the whole estate of the lord, as originally granted to him. He subsequently let many parcels to tenants, but kept sufficient for a home farm for himself. According to later usage, the word 'demesne' came to mean that portion of the land which the lord reserved for his own use, which constituted his home farm. Custumals like this one started by recording the land of tenants only, but by the end of the twelfth century, they had begun to add an account of the manorial demesne. In the Hadlow case, however, this did not happen. A walk round Hadlow Manor in 1460

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4. In the Court Rolls of the Manor of Thomas Fromonds of Hadlow, 1432 (CKS U55 M360) the words 'de Kymynthale' are added after Thomas Fromond at Waters name. Does this imply a connection between the two?

5. Harvey, 1984, 18
not describe or measure the pieces of demesne, or explain how they were being used by the lord, or tenanted by others, except in one or two exceptional instances.

We expect most, though not all, of the lord’s demesne to have lain immediately around the manor house. So in Hadlow, we expect it around the present Hadlow Castle which now stands on the old manor house site. But all that land is omitted, apart from one piece called Cotmansfield, lying centrally on the corner of High Street and Church Street, and, significantly, near the lord’s garden. It is probably explained by its special history. Cotmen were the poorest class on the manor, doing heavy labour services, and it may well be that this field had once been allocated to them for their families’ use. When labour services ceased to be demanded, it would no longer have been so designated, and so perhaps the land was reclaimed by the lord; it is something that could well have happened some time after the Black Death. The suggestion is highly speculative, of course; it can only be judged to have any validity if similar circumstances are discovered elsewhere.

Another puzzle concerns the comparatively few houses described in the main street. Those mentioned are six houses on the south side, three on the north, and one without a location. Again, we have to resort to guesswork, and suggest that more houses were, in fact, sited along the village street, but they belonged to some of the other seven manors in the parish of which we have no record.
In return for their land in Hadlow manor, tenants owed to their lord rent, labour services and other dues in money and kind. These were stated in the survey tenement by tenement, along with the acreages of land that they occupied. We have to imagine that the clerks held some kind of record at their elbow, and the tenants had some idea of what they owed. Supposedly, the clerk expressed his view, and tenants were asked to agree. Usually the phraseology of the document does not suggest any debate or argument about what was owed. But the occupiers of Tannerys tenement disputed the value of their labour services, and again towards the end tenants of Stoperfields named a document supporting their rights which they evidently could not produce. The clerk noted the facts 'as they say', perhaps in this case believing in the existence of a charter and an old rental, and left it at that.

Usually in a survey we look for some uniformity in the obligations and rights of tenants, but we have to bear in mind the possibility that in 1460 the lord of the manor was clarifying matters that had been long neglected. We know how lords drastically tightened up their affairs administratively and financially in the course of the sixteenth century; gradually all the lax landowners followed the example of those who had started an efficiency drive. But around 1460 these moves were only just beginning. Moreover, it is possible that tenants already held by tenures that differed between themselves. Conditions in the mid-fifteenth century, when land was relatively plentiful and occupiers were not eager to take it, were very different from those that had obtained in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when population was rising fast, demand for land was intense, and it was in short supply; in other places we have clear evidence of young men at that time marrying old widows, in order to secure access to the women's land. So lords had had to agree different terms with their tenants in two very different economic periods. We cannot expect our survey to show uniformity throughout.

Certainly, that is the case here. All tenements owed a certain money rent four times a year and 'an aid at St Andrew's Feast', that is on November 30. These were stated in the summing up at the end of each listing of tenemental land. The aid is discussed below; we deal here with the rents per acre. The rent on Cowling tenement was said to be 3½d. 'and less' per acre, 'in all 7⁄8 of a penny' (the meaning of those last two qualifications, is not clear, and more such obscure phrases are found later in the document that are not discussed here). The 1460 survey usually stated the rent per acre but did nothing to add up what each tenant actually owed. In 1581 the clerk did in places add the total rent due from individual tenants and it often coincided roughly with the rent per acre as stated in 1460. (The 1581 interpolations are printed in our text in italics.)

On the first tenement, namely Cowling, John Bishop's rent, unusually, was said to be 4s.4d. per annum, but his acreage was not added up. The list of pieces showed him holding 16 acres 3 rods 6 dayworks. This should have brought his rent to 4s.11d. p.a., but the surveyor reckoned the rent at 4s.4d. When the later surveyor made his calculations in 1581, he was more accurate. On John Bishop's land he picked on one piece measuring 14 and a half acres and 9 dayworks and at 3½d. the rent should be 4s.3½d; he calculated the rent for this to be 4s.2½d. p.a. The next tenant was Thomas Bishop: he had two pieces of land and the rent for one of them was stated in 1581, and that too was correct at 3½d. an acre. No rent was calculated in 1460 for the third tenant, Lawrence Ferman, but it was correctly calculated in 1581.

A closer scrutiny of the money rents would give many more insights into the reasoning behind the clerks' calculations and their accuracy, but here we draw attention only to the different valuations of the land. Starting with 3½d. per acre on Cowling...
Rent was significantly lower on the tenements with pits.

Rent varied immediately on the next tenement (Kenes) to 4d. per acre, 6d. on Woodmanyes, and 3d. on Walter at Stair and Bowlere and Wells tenements. These were all holdings in the Medway area of the manor. Fishland paid no rent, presumably because it had an unusual obligation in supplying the lord of the manor with fish whenever it was asked for. Odamys paid only 2d., whereas Knet Le Hogs paid 5½d., Tannerys 5¾d., and Peacocks and Pococks 4d. an acre. Moving up towards North Frith, the rent per acre was significantly lower on four tenements, including those with pits, ranging from 1¾d., through 1¼d. to 1d. per acre, but returning to 4¾d. on Broomfield. Moving nearer the village centre, rents varied between 3½d. for Stidings, 4d. for Palmers, 4½d. for Berwys, 6¼d. for Somers and Hamnett, and 8¼d. for Moyles. The range of rents then remained at the lower end of this scale as one moved westward, but turning southward toward the Medway again, it fell to 2½d. on Lockbridge tenement. On Ashdowne tenement, having only one occupier, we can work out from the rent a valuation of 1¾d. per acre. Yet Stoperfields tenement, next in line, paid 5¼d. an acre, and the tenants there held through an old charter of the Earl of Stafford, 'as is shown in an old rental' says the document in one place; in another place, more sceptically, it says 'as they say'. Land on Puddings tenement was valued even higher at 7d. an acre, whereas the very large Brooke tenement with over eighty acres was valued at only 1¼d. an acre, almost the lowest valuation of all. On the last two tenements of Lake and Lotewood the land was reckoned at 4d. and 2d. an acre respectively. In short, Hadlow land varied in its desirability, and rents ranged between 1d. and 8¼d. per acre. As suggested earlier, part of the explanation must lie with the quality and use of the soils, and part with the economic circumstances reigning when the rents were settled; we can carry the discussion no further.

Two other money payments were required from all tenants, namely 'aid' and 'relief'. The aid was due on St Andrews day, and on most tenements it amounted to 21d., presumably per tenant, except in a number of cases where it was half that, 10½d. In other cases it was an inexplicable variant: 33d. on Cowling (a slip of the pen perhaps?), 16d. on Woodmanyes, 6d. on O damys, and a little less than 21d. on Tannerys. In some cases the aid went unmentioned, as on five tenements where the clerk was recording the land that had few occupiers towards North Frith where several pits lay. The aid resumed on Stidings tenement but cost only 6d., was back to 21d. on Berwys tenement, but was irregular on Cardon tenement (again in the North Frith area), only 14d. on Welshs tenement though (in 1581?) 21d. was overwritten. The standard charge of 21d. was set down on the next six out of seven tenements (omitting any reference to the aid on Crochland tenement, but the sums quoted now became increasingly erratic. They were 21d. or thereabouts in 6 cases, exactly half that (10½d) in 8 cases, between 2d. and 6d. in 3 cases, and 14d. to 16d. in 3 cases.

Relief was another money due from each tenement whenever it changed hands, and it involved yet more laborious counting. It appeared at the end of each tenemental account, and for Cowling it was one and five eighths of a farthing for three acres. The total in that case came to 13¾d. Every tenement thereafter produced a varying valuation; in the first fifty pages of the survey, the charge varied from a ½d. per acre to one 1¼d. for 10 acres to 1d. or a 1½d. for 4 acres; Fishland tenement inexplicably owed no relief.

We next analyse labour services. In the past they had been significant in distinguishing free land from servile. Freeholders usually performed no services, whereas unfree tenants did. In this survey the clerks did not identify tenures, so the irregular allocation of labour services may be our only clue to tenurial differences. But we cannot treat them as a reliable guide. By 1460 on many manors elsewhere labour services had
been commuted for a money payment, the old system having gradually collapsed after the
Black Death. No sign of commutation shows in this survey, and, indeed, where labour
services were deemed to be due, they were very precisely counted. But commutation
could have happened silently, so that the tenements owing money rents without labour
services may not, without further information, be assumed to be free land. All we can do
is to recognise that in 1460 certain tenants still recognised their obligations to work on
their lord's land, even though the work may not, in practice, have been called for
regularly (in which case, of course, one might explain a difference in rent). We may well
notice and ponder the irregular distribution of services: for example, the tenements along
Palmer Street which had pits but almost no houses, and where, admittedly, some unusual
duties in maintaining the hunting park may have fallen on occupiers, owed no labour
services, whereas land elsewhere that is likely to have been fair arable land did owe them.
But further comparisons carry us into speculations leading nowhere for we lack any secure
factual foundation. Nor are the tenants' statements free of all ambiguities. All we can
safely infer is that tenants were stating things as accurately as they knew, and counting the
occurrence of labour services, we find them acknowledged on 39 tenements, boonwork
only on 8, and no labour services at all on 17 tenements, somewhat under a third of them
all. Among tenements owing labour services, one common standard was the ploughing of
one acre of land in winter and one acre in Lent plus
harrowing, valued at 12d. For this tenants received four
loaves worth 2d. per acre and 8 herrings worth one penny,
the food costs being taken into account. In some
nonconforming cases the obligation was halved to the
ploughing and harrowing of a half acre in winter and Lent,
worth 6d., while on Tannerys tenement a quirky measure
of work was required of one acre one rod, and the tenants
in any case disputed their obligations with the surveyor.
Each tenement owed a certain number of small
works, valued at a halfpenny, and great works valued at
twopence, the usual scale being either 80 or 120 small
works and 16 or 24 great works. Odd proportions may
have been due to a mis-hearing or mis-transcribing by the
clerk; in one case only (Walter at Stair) was a total acreage prescribed, the tenants having
to plough 10 acres in winter and 10 in Lent, and in another ambiguous statement,
occuring in several places, 2 acres' work were said to be worth 12d., and in one case
(Fletchers) 7d. It may be that each individual tenant took responsibility for some portion
of his tenement's total labour services, and as these were valued in money, and, indeed, in
some years in the fifteenth century, may have been discharged in money he could reckon
up how many acres of work he owed. Another slightly later document tells us that tenants
had responsibility for collecting rents for their lord, so we can guess at much haggling
between them each year to ensure the performance of all work due.
Along with the small and great works usually went 3 boonworks with 2 men in
autumn valued at 6d. The nature of boonwork was not explained, any more than was the
difference between small and great works. Small works, however, evidently included
threshing, for on Kenes tenement it was said that if tenants threshed, they got two and a
half bushels of hard corn and 6 bushels of oats for each small work. It is likely that this one
statement, seemingly relating only to Kenes tenement, applied to all other tenements. It
suggests that the manorial demesne allowed a significant amount of grain to threshers.
Carrying services were expected from most but not all tenements, and they were worth
4d. except in two cases where their value was only 3d. They were valued at more than
other services, presumably because they could involve some long distances. One
tenement owed only half a service, and another only a quarter service, valued at 2d. and
1d., while the disagreement that was rife on Tannerys tenement, surfaced again in 'seven
parts of a carrying service' being due, valued at 3½d.
The enumeration of all these labour services leaves us totally puzzled about their practical significance in 1460. Were they regularly demanded? Were they occasionally asked for, so requiring the steward to keep a record? The fact that the steward in 1581 insisted yet again on copying out the record of 1460 begs still more questions. Medieval historians usually assume by the fifteenth century that the demand for labour services had all but ended; it only survived in unusual circumstances. Prof. Bruce Campbell has suggested that only 8 per cent of lords' farm produce was secured in the late Middle Ages through obligatory labour services. Kent is certainly not a county in which one would expect them to have survived so late. A further search in other parishes of the Weald is needed.

Heriot and relief were additional obligations, subject to the concession that those owing carrying services did not give up a horse or mare as heriot; (it could have prevented them from carrying out their obligation!). The form of these words, used on Keneden tenement at the first point in the survey where labour services were mentioned, probably was again intended to apply to all tenants. Dues in kind were modest, and concerned only iron, hens, pigs, and pork, and were erratically distributed. Two tenements owed iron or plough shares, while Stoperfields, having four tenants all told, had one tenant named John Newman (he was the maltster) who was obliged to make the ironwork for one plough at his own cost, using the lord's iron; he also had the obligation to enclose the lord's Morton close, its meaning unexplained. This maltster did not owe any hens to the lord, but Nicholas Stoperfield, the main tenant in the same tenement, did owe 3 hens each year along with two other tenants elsewhere who also owed hens: John Symond of Palmer Street, holding 'one geldland in a malmill' (sic), near Lady Elizabeth Culpeper's land towards Oxenhoath, owed two hens on Symonds tenement; so did Fosters tenement, where the chief tenant was unnamed, but the obligation showed 'in an old rental'. Surveys of manors in other parts of the country often asked for far more hens than this, from many or even all tenants.

As for dues in pork or pigs, we have already cited the words appearing under Jopes tenement describing the right of 'all tenants of the manor who are called joint tenants' to keep eleven sows in North Frith all the year round, except in the prohibited month. For this they owed 15 pigs for every two sows at the feast of St Martin (November 11). The statement is not entirely clear, however, for it then gave a different calculation that they ought to render 5 pigs for every sow at the same feast or at least their value, varying according to the plenty or scarcity of pannage each year. Two shillings per pig was due in plentiful years, 18d. in scarce years, and 12d. if there was no pannage. In winter they were entitled to receive from the lord one quarter of barley for each sow in return for a yearly payment for each pig and 12d. for each sow 'of their quarter rent'. We have to assume that they all knew exactly what that meant, even if we do not.

Pigs or pork were owing from six other tenements (Holmans, Welshes, Somers, Hamenett, Blackmans and Lake, and after some contorted calculations the sums turn out to be approximately right for the acreages involved. The manipulation of the figures is worth attention. Holmans tenants owed half a sow and two and a half pigs in 1460 but in the revised figures for 1581 they owed three quarters of a pig and one and one eighth legs of pork. In that same year, the land and pork dues of individual tenants were then separately itemized: the main tenant's dues were in all cases not mentioned (perhaps he paid none), while those of the others were an intricate subdivision of pigs and legs of pork, all different. (The lady of the manor, for example, owed 1 pig, 1 leg of pork and 4 parts of half a leg.) At the end a total was stated for the whole tenement (still in 1581) of

1. Campbell, 2000, 2-3
20 acres 3 dayworks, owing 1 pig for 7 acres 1 daywork and more for half a daywork. This represented a total, more or less, of 3 pigs, while the total dues of individuals' pigs and pork joints added up to two and a quarter pigs, plus three and a half legs (guessing that 10 parts made a leg), to make up the missing three quarters of a pig. On Welshe's tenement, occupiers owed 5 pigs for one sow in 1460, and in 1581 5 pigs (7½ pigs were written alongside) for 8 acres. The holding was just over 41 acres, so it owed 5 pigs, and the dues individually itemised in 1581 added up to 4½ pigs and 1¾ legs.

On Somers and Hamenett's tenements, the pig dues went unmentioned in 1460 but were given in 1581. On Somers the total due was 5 pigs but the dues from two tenants including the lady of the manor added up only to 3¼ pigs and ¾ legs. So the clerk submissively calculated the land being paid for per pig, and moved on; was the lady of the manor's due perhaps deficient, and in this way he avoided saying so? On Hamenett's, the five tenants owed 5 pigs and what they paid amounted to 4¾ pigs and 2 legs.

Blackman's was a relatively tidy tenement of 25 acres, owing one pig for every 5 acres. Five tenants shared payment, making a total of 4½ pigs and 1½ legs altogether. Many tenements following this one omitted all references to pigs until one at the end, Lake(2), owed them, and a general statement was made in 1460, showing a total obligation of 20 pigs, or 1 pig for every 2 acres 8½ dayworks. This was distributed in 1581 between 8 tenants, excluding as usual the main tenant, and amounted to 11 pigs and 5¼ legs of pork.

The enumeration of pig payments supports the many general statements by historians about the high importance of pigs in the Weald. Pigs are not conspicuous as bequests in wills, and we lack probate inventories to shed light on their numbers. Nor does one expect to catch sight of them around the farmyard, since they were better off in the woodland. But significant single instances are documented below (in Chapter 8) of pigs wandering into people's living rooms and being carried upstairs into bedrooms during storms to save them from drowning. We should not underrate the role of pork and bacon in Hadlow people's food.

This survey of 1460 appears to open up a long view on Hadlow's tenurial history in the past. Otherwise, we have no way of explaining the extraordinarily complicated system of dues in money and kind that had evolved by 1460. Presumably, it had started long ago with a simple system of obligations, imposing the same dues on every family occupying a like holding. Over many generations they all had had to be subdivided, to fit in with the gavelkind system of inheritance whereby single holdings were regularly divided between all boys in the family, and if not boys, then girls. The complexities now sometimes required ⅜ of a penny to be paid for land when no such coin existed; assuming the whole of a leg of pork to consist of ten parts, do we also have to picture a tenant carving eight parts out of ten from a leg of pork to carry in payment to the lady of the manor? Or was the lady content to keep a record of under-payments and over-payments from one year to another? The situation is not unlike that at which we have arrived in the twenty-first century with regard to income tax laws and social security benefits. The system then and now cried and cries out for simplification. No sixteenth-century text has yet been found expressing the need for such a solution. Yet in practice that is what must have happened.

The administration of manors underwent much scrutiny in the sixteenth century, involving lawsuits at Westminster between lords and tenants. A Hadlow rental of 1587 arrives at money sums without any reference to pigs, or legs of pork, plough irons or hens. We have to guess that a red-letter day arrived when every obligation was turned into a money sum.

2. See, for example, Peter Brandon, 2003
The Hadlow manor survey offers a picture of an estate divided between the lord, who still held some land in demesne, and the tenants. The tenants made their living from over a thousand acres of its farmland, by this time divided into many separate holdings. For this they paid rent to the lord and acknowledged labour services, although, by the date of the survey, they may not have performed all or any of them. To keep such an estate running smoothly, settle disputes between neighbours, and see that the lord received his due, required a permanent administrative framework. By this time the manor court had evolved to provide just such a structure and manorial authority was exercised at its regular meetings. Some manors in other parts of the country have surviving court records covering whole centuries. In Hadlow we are not so lucky, and can only capture the flavour of its routine business by examining the record of a few years in the court rolls. Some further fragments of court rolls have survived for three of Hadlow’s sub-manors, but they relate to other periods.

For the most part manor court rolls from different parts of the country, and the courts they describe, follow a standard pattern. This is especially true by the late fifteenth century by which time several guides had been written, by professional lawyers and by estate managers. It is only on closer examination that local variations show up. In earlier times and in some areas the manor court took two forms; a court baron and a customary court for free and customary tenants respectively, but in practice by the end of the fifteenth century the two courts had become one, the court baron.

The court baron dealt with the normal business of the manor, including the regulation of agricultural affairs. Principally it defined the relationship between the lord and his tenants but it also intervened to regulate the relationships between tenants and, to a limited extent, allowed villagers to have their say. One of its main functions was to register change in occupation of land, due to death or sale, and to exact payment of a relief for free land, or a fine for customary land. Either amounted to a tax on the change, sometimes a sum the equivalent of half a year’s rent. In the event of death, a heriot, traditionally the deceased’s best beast, might be claimed by the lord. In most parts of the
country this was considered to be one of the signs that the land was not free, but in Kent heriots were sometimes paid on free land as well.\footnote{Furley, 1874, II (i), 756} The court also ensured that all new tenants surrendered their land to the lord, to have it granted to the new occupiers. This transaction was important to the lord symbolically as well as financially as it confirmed that all land was his, to be re-granted by him under certain terms and conditions.

All those who owed suit of court could be amerced for not attending. As the court was supposed to meet every three weeks, and as some men owned land in more than one manor, the duty must have been very inconvenient, especially as it would often have involved riding or walking several miles. This is borne out by the number of excuses (essoina) for absence offered at the beginning of a court and the fines for non-attendance which were paid in advance for the whole of the following year.

In areas where common fields were the norm it must be assumed that the court played a key role in the organisation of agriculture, although there is little evidence of this in the rolls themselves. In Hadlow and Hadlow/Lomewood manors, where there were no common fields, this function of the court was probably of little importance. A lesser function of the court was to deal with disputes about trespass and debts up to the value of 40s. The court also elected manor officials such as the reeve or the beadle, normally once a year at Michaelmas.

The king might also grant the lord of the manor the right to hold a court leet. The court leet was usually granted 'with view of frankpledge', at which all men aged twelve and above were obliged to appear and pledge to keep the king's peace. Unlike the more frequent court baron it was usually held only twice a year, at Hokeday and Martinmas, in the autumn and spring. The court leet with view of frankpledge exercised many of the functions of the sheriff's twice yearly hundred courts or tourns and, according to Du Boulay, often had the same venue.\footnote{Du Boulay, 1966, 303} It was valued by landowners as a source of income but also as a means of keeping law and order, dealing with such matters as assaults, obstruction of waterways and highways and control of various trades, especially the brewing of ale and baking of bread. These were matters the king might have reserved for his own courts but chose to leave in the hands of the lord of the manor.

In theory the lord's steward presided at the courts although on larger estates the understeward or the bailiff must often have stood in for him. The bailiff certainly substituted for the steward on the Kentish manors of the Archbishop of Canterbury at the end of the thirteenth century, where the bailiff swore an oath on taking office, 'loyally to hold the leets and courts in my bailiwick at the due times and usual places and make them profitable to the lord according to right and reason and the custom of the manor'.\footnote{Du Boulay, 1966, 303-304} It is heartening to read that Archbishop Kilwardby also issued a set of instructions to his stewards and bailiffs, 'for we desire and order you who are judges to hold simple courts and instruct those who do not know how to plead in the telling of the truth', nor were his judges to take any present from either party or organise unjust exactions, even for the benefit of the archbishop's finances.\footnote{Du Boulay, 1966, 303} One of the manuals has a similar passage.\footnote{Selden Society, 1891, 70. The Society printed extracts from several manuals which were reprinted in book form in 1967} So far we have found only two short sequences of manor court rolls for Hadlow, one between 18 October 1478 and 19 February 1482/3, the other between 7 October 1512 and 28 July 1513. The manor court roll dated 1512/13 is in Staffordshire Record Office, and is part of a large roll of miscellaneous documents relating to the Stafford family possessions in the south-east. It is one of a series of documents written in a clear, legible script, obviously that of a well-educated professional.

The earlier manuscript is by far the longer and far the more interesting because it is nearer in time to the survey, but there is some question of whether it refers to Hadlow manor or to Lomewood manor. One possible explanation is that Lomewood was a small manor or sub-manor which held its own court baron but joined with Hadlow manor for the more formal view of frankpledge. Similar arrangements certainly pertained with
Kirtlington and its smaller sister manor, Northbrook, in Oxfordshire, and in the vast
manor of Wakefield which was divided into graveships. The word 'Lomewood' only
appears in conjunction with the view, the courts baron being introduced simply with the
formula, 'Hadlow, court held there,' and the date. Analysis of the various land
transactions recorded by these courts shows that a great many of the people involved are
familiar from the survey of Hadlow manor and so are the names of tenements and land
holdings when they occur. Even if the rolls are those of a separate Lomewood manor, as
Hadlow manor had the same lord/lady, the Duke or dowager Duchess of Buckingham,
and presumably the same bailiff or steward presiding, its proceedings are of obvious
relevance.

The record of one court held for another manor, Hadlow Place, on 30 March
1518, is of some, mainly negative, interest as is a much earlier view of frankpledge (1305)
for 'Hadlow Vill'. Records also survive of manors courts held in the manor of Fromonds,
1339-1438, and again from 1596, for the manor of Cautons, 1598-1698, and the manor
of Crombury, 1596-1641.

The Hadlow manor court roll of 1512/13 began with the recording of two courts
with views of frankpledge

[276x552]held between 10 October 1512 an d 9 April the following year.

These accounts were followed, on a new membrane, by the record of five 'courts' 'held
there', between 7 October 1512 and 11 June 1513, and one 'court of Swan' 'held there',
28 July 1513.

Of the two courts with views of frankpledge, held six months apart, one was
closely preceded and the other closely followed by an ordinary court session. Unlike in
some other areas the view of frankpledge in Hadlow did not cover the business of the
normal manor court but was held separately. After stating the date of the court and the
common fine, the two views have the phrase 'Thomas Chaplam tithingman there came
with his suit and presented that'. The court's business followed. At the end of the O
tober session arrangements were made for the election of a new tithingman and constable by the
Jurats. These were not listed by name. The document concluded with the total sum of the
common fine and of the amercements collected. The intervals between ordinary courts
varied between five weeks and ten weeks but were always longer than the traditional
three weeks. They were introduced with the words 'The Homage presents' and ended
with the total of sums collected in reliefs, fines and amercements. In this document
Hadlow is the only place mentioned for holding the court.

The Hadlow/Lomewood court rolls were arranged differently. The series began
with an account of a view of frankpledge for Hadlow/Lomewood on 6 October 1478.
The views appear to have dealt with matters from three different locations, each with its
own aletaster, namely Hadlow Street, Goldhill and Stair. Then five courts were held
between 4 November 1478 and 22 April 1479, all introduced by the formula 'Hadlow-
court held there the -- day of --', no other place being mentioned. The pattern continued;
a view of frankpledge held at intervals of roughly six months, interspersed with between
three and five courts (baron), held roughly four weeks apart. The format of the courts did
not change except that in the views of frankpledge held in May and October 1481 there
was no separate aletaster for Goldhill and in April 1482 Goldhill and Stair were taken
together. At the end of each court baron a total was given of all the money collected in
fines, amercements and relief. The largest amounts for the courts were in October-
November because they included fines (2d. or 4d. a head) for those who wanted to be
excused attendance for the following year. On those occasions the total could be as much
as 8s. The value of a heriot also increased the total. In between, the average collected was
12d. though once it was nothing.

Each of the Hadlow/Lomewood views of frankpledge began with the name of the
tithingman, a restatement of the common fine (10s.), and a list of excuses for absence,
with the 'fines', usually 2d.- 4d., which bought the right not to attend for the following
year. There followed a list of those amer ced for non-attendance without an excuse,
usually 2d.- 4d. per 'default'. At the end of each court was a list of the names of the Grand
Inquisition later called the Grand Jury, and a total of all the money collected in fines, amercements or relief. The sums were more substantial than from the ordinary courts, on one occasion yielding 70s.3d. though more usually about 20s.

A new roll was begun in October each year and at the end of the old roll a summary was given of all the fines collected for the year, broken down into categories. For example:

Full total of 2 views and 9 aforesaid courts is 64s.4d. and ½ farthing
Of this total    20s. is from the common fine
          6s. is for remittance of suit of court
          8d.½ farthing reliefs
              12s. heriots
    26s.8d. from other perquisites

As in the later Hadlow manor rolls, a new Constable and Tithingman were elected each autumn.

THE COURTS

Both the Hadlow and Hadlow/Lomewood courts baron and views of frankpledge conformed to the general pattern for manor courts discussed above, and the following comments are based on the two series. The survey of 1460 recorded 105 individual names and of these no less than 35 reappeared in the court rolls, although some of these may be family members with the same name as a forebear. If family names instead of individuals are counted, the proportion rises to 28 out of a possible 74. As one might expect there were more people from the survey in the Hadlow/Lomewood rolls which date from 1478, eighteen years later, than in the Hadlow rolls which did not begin until 1512. More names from the survey appeared in the transactions of the court baron than in the view of frankpledge, again unsurprising when it is remembered that one of the main functions of the court baron was registering the change of land ownership and those in the survey were all land owners. Very few of the names which appeared in these transactions were not in the survey and most of the land names were also familiar from it.

THE COURTS BARON

During the four years covered by the Hadlow/Lomewood rolls 33 changes in land occupation were recorded. The term normally used was that A 'alienated' the land to B. On seven occasions B was said to have 'purchased' the land from A. The money levied on these transactions was always referred to as a 'relief', not a 'fine'. Several times fidelity was sworn to the lord for pieces of land held by 'feoffment' of a third party. In the Hadlow manor rolls of 1512-13 there were six land transfers and here 'feoffment to use' was the norm. Joint ownership of land seemed to have been common and the majority of the changes resulted in more rather than fewer individuals sharing the holding. On only five occasions was the land transferred as a result of a death and on three of these the lord claimed a heriot. When John and Richard, the sons of Thomas Fisher, inherited Agnes Stabbykobit's lands they had to hand over 'one bullock four years in age, price 12s.'. The Hale brothers, inheriting land from their father, Robert Hale, had to give the lord, 'one bullock, price 4s.', and John Fitchet's son, Richard, paid one cow, valued at 6s.8d. If in each case these animals were the tenants' best beast it confirms the importance of cattle to the farmers of Hadlow.

Compared with the value of a heriot, reliefs, claimed by the lord when land changed hands, were very small. They were consistently said to be 'a fourth part of the rent,' ranging from half
a farthing to 7d. However, occasionally 'no relief' was recorded 'because according to the custom of the manor coteland does not pay relief'. Once there was no relief 'because the lands are held in fee farm' and once 'because the lands are held by Petyseramuth'. There was no record of an entry fine as opposed to a relief. Disputes about trespass and debt made up the rest of the business of the court.

In a typical entry for a Hadlow/Lomewood court held 4 November 1478, those fined for 'remittance of their suit this year', included Elizabeth Colepeper, William Wotton, John Bishop, John Fromond of Goldhill, Richard Fromond, Peter Fisher, Martin Coggar and the heirs of Richard Bishop, Richard Styles, and Margaret Burgeys. The court also dealt with the admission of two new tenants, John Somer and Richard Aysschedown to lands alienated to them by Thomas Stopperfield and Thomas and Nicholas Bourne, for which they swore fidelity and paid 4d. and 1 farthing relief. Thomas Tewssnoth, William Godyng, James Grosse and John Croucher were involved in pleas of debt and John Symonds was elected reeve.

The one account of a court held for Hadlow Place manor, on 30 March 1518, followed a very similar formula. It began with a list of 'Jurors, homagium'. It is noticeable that not one of these twelve nor any of the fourteen others appearing at the court, were mentioned in the survey of Hadlow manor. This document too includes a heriot, 'of one brown ox'. More importantly, a day was appointed for all tenants to appear to prepare 'a new rental' for the lord. The document followed and was presumably the reason why this one court record was preserved.

The courts with view of frankpledge provide a glimpse of village life. Numerous individuals with the same names as those from the survey were recorded going about their lives, remarkable when it is remembered that we are looking at documents dating from between eighteen and fifty years later. Unfortunately the time lag does make it difficult to deduce much from the number of people who appeared in the court rolls but did not appear in the survey. It would have been useful to form an idea of the proportion of landless people in the manor. Many of those with trades regulated by the views or punished for minor crimes may not have owned land but it is often difficult to be sure if new names represent those without land or simply newcomers to the manor since 1460.

While it is of great interest to follow the land transactions of individuals from the survey nothing compares with learning more personal details. Thomas Bishop, of that seemingly respectable family, was twice in trouble, once when he attacked John Galton, 'with a binculus called A styk and thrashed him contrary to the lord king's peace', and again when he, 'offered insult to Nicholas Taylor with a round staff'. The first time Thomas Fisher and Richard Kebyll stood surety for him, the second time (only a year later) the court sentenced him to pay 2d. Standing surety was rather more than standing bail. It meant Thomas and Richard were friends or relatives who were prepared to stake their reputation on his good behaviour and support the truth of his statements. What of Isabelle Somer, regularly amerced for brewing ale 'against the assize'? Was she wife, sister, daughter or merely cousin of John Somer the shopkeeper of Church Street? Was Richard Miller who scandalised the community by maintaining a 'disorderly house' with his own wife as the centrepiece, related to anyone we know from the survey?

The way the court was organised seems to have remained consistent over the years. The earliest record of a view 'de hundr' de Littlefeld de villa de Hadlo' was dated the Wednesday next after 'Hokeday' in the year 1305. It began by giving the communal fine of 10s. (which was to remain the same at least until 1512) and went on to list those making excuse for absence. It then named Nicholas Fromond 'borsholder' or tithingman of Hadlow, 'who with the whole borgh (or tithing) presents that...'. Here followed a list of six offences against the peace, in two of which blood was drawn, indicating a more violent society than appeared in the court records of 150 years later when one or two assaults per court were the norm. The court then named four aletasters, including a Nicholas Fromond,
who between them presented twenty-eight people for brewing 'against the assize', one of them being William Fromond.

This pattern had not varied very much by the time of the first of the Hadlow/Lomewood views, on 6 October 1478. The court began with the name of the tithingman 'there as sworn' who came with his tithing and presented that 'they give the lord 10s. as common fine as from ancient times'. Next, 26 people who had 'made default of their attendance at this view' were listed and their amercement of 2d. each recorded.

The next section, where various trades were regulated, took up a large part of the court's business. John Walter, butcher, was amerced 2d. for selling his meat at 'excessive profit', a charge to be repeated at each of the following nine views, including two in 1512 and 1513. He was joined later by John, then Richard, Wyks, and in the 1500s by three others including a Richard Newman. Not all butchers were dishonest, however, as at least one, John Fisher, appeared in the roll for other reasons but was never charged as a butcher. The butchers were followed by a single tanner, John Farman, seemingly amerced for operating outside the borough. Described as a 'red tanner', presumably handling red leather, that is leather from cattle and horses, he was amerced each session. In 1512 his successor, Thomas Farman, 'a common tanner of white tawed leather', that is soft pliant leather from sheep, was also amerced 2d.

The number of millers amerced for taking 'excessive toll' during the five-year period covered by the rolls would seem to bear out Chaucer's cynical attitude. No less than 11 names appeared, most of them again and again. The amount of the amercement varied from 2d. to 6d. but one miller, Thomas Dunbar, surely not a local man, always seemed to attract the higher penalty. Were his tolls even more 'excessive' than those of the other millers or was it an example of national prejudice?

Hadlow does not appear to have had any mechanism for the regulation of the sale of bread. No mention was made of anyone being presented for breaking the assize, although there were several instances in local wills of money being left for the distribution of bread to the poor at the will maker's funeral and 'month's mind'. We must assume that Hadlow had no professional baker. Perhaps the community was too scattered and housewives found it more practical to bake their own bread.

The regulation of brewing, however, was a serious matter reported at the end of the court proceedings. Each area, Hadlow Street, Gold Hill and Stair, had its own ale taster and no less than 41 of those 'licensed to brew' were amerced over the four year period. This was brewing on a very small scale. Ale without hops did not keep well and had to be made in small quantities for speedy use. However, the amercements, always 2d. or 4d., were the same as those imposed on butchers and millers, which implies that the ale sold was of similar value. Forty-one brewers must represent a fair amount of ale and these were only those caught 'breaking the assize' or selling before their ale had been tested. The vast majority of the brewers were female, as was usual at the time. One, Isabelle Somer, was amerced in every one of the views held between October 1478 and October 1481. What was wrong with her ale? How did she keep any customers? Or perhaps it was so good that they were prepared to put up with short measure, one of the commonest offences. It is tempting to see the amercements as merely a type of value added tax or licence fee taken by the lord though not every brewer was amerced at each view.

These entries show that there were other means than farming or fishing for making some part of a living in Hadlow. As well as the regulated trades, other occupations were mentioned in the rolls. There were two carpenters, Henry Pottekyn and William Norton, John Newman a 'poulter' (not to be confused with John Newman, labourer), William Shaw,
'a dyer of old cloth', three clerks, Ralph Houghton, Thomas Aland, and Thomas Down, and one Richard Shoemaker, as well as labourers and serving men. Probably most of these men owned land but such occupations help explain how some of the holdings could be so small.

The next section of the court dealt with general offences. They could be described as of two types, civil and criminal, all fairly petty. Of the 'civil' offences, 30 out of 35 in the earlier rolls (1478-1482) and 6 out of 12 in the later rolls (1512-13) were about damage to the 'highway'. A typical entry reads 'that the highway is out of repair and of uneven surface towards Richard Carter's land from Sagon Cross as far as Rysebreyge Lane, thus causing great danger to the countryside because the same Richard's ditches have not been cleaned; now he is amerced 6d. as above'. This complaint of ditches not being cleaned was repeated on 27 of the 30 occasions when the highways were declared in a bad state of repair. Often the amercement was followed by the threat of a much heavier 'penalty', if the ditch was not cleaned before the next view. Even the Lady of the manor herself was not exempt. In April 1480 it was reported, 'that the highway is much out of repair at Castle Field because the ditches of the most honourable lady the Duchess of Buckingham have not been cleaned; now she is amerced as above and she is presented to amend same before the next court under penalty of 40d'. She was amerced again the next year, once in respect of the highway at Castle Field but also at Hvet Gate. The following year the highway was still very dangerous at Castle Field 'for want of cleaning of the ditches' but now it was the 'farmer of the aforesaid field' (unnamed) who was amerced 4d. and threatened with a penalty of 3s.4d. if he had not cleaned them by the next court. This was about the time that the duchess died.

As well as problems with ditches Thomas Tewesnoth was accused of breaking up and digging sand from the highway at Berghwys and John Fruter for causing damage with his untrimmed oak trees. There were four occasions when bridges were said to be broken and individuals were amerced, and a further two, at the bridge at Solomons and later at Goldhill bridge, when the damage was said to be 'by neglect of the whole tithing'. On three occasions common waterways were stopped up and in 1512 Henry Fane enclosed part of Common Lane between Goldhill and Jordans Lake for which he was amerced 10d.

Sixteen cases of assault were recorded during the six views of frankpledge held between October 1478 and May 1482, and one in the two courts held in October 1512 and April 1513. Usually this was described as 'offering insult' 'contrary to the lord king's peace'. If it was done with 'the fist' the crime attracted the comparatively light amercement of 2d. Attacks with some type of weapon were sometimes amerced more severely, especially when the offender 'drew blood'. The weapon was always described. Thomas Fisher for instance was attacked with 'a staff called werehokys', Thomas Bishop 'thrashed' John Galton 'with a biniculus called a stick' and later 'offered insult' to Nicholas Taylor with a 'round staff', while Simon Everard, one of the millers, used a 'certain ryfyle' (presumably only as a threat as he was amerced the usual 2d.). An attack by Richard Kebbyll with a 'knife called a hanggar' resulted in the comparatively heavy amercement of 12d. More serious still was the attack by the carpenter Henry Pottekyn who hit John Welde on the head with a 'hegebyll, entering his brain from which blood flowed'. He fled the manor and the officers of the court were unable to apprehend him. Sometimes we can see the follow up of an attack. In the view held in April 1470 James Grosse was amerced 2d. for offering insult to Isabel Newman, but then John Newman, labourer, was amerced 4d. for offering insult 'with a staff' to James Grosse.
Theft was much less common than assault and taken far more seriously, judging by the amercements. There were only three cases. Alice Symonds broke into Thomas Tewsnorth's close, 'forcibly with a staff and knife' and stole a lamb worth 3d. and drove away a bullock. For this she was amerced 40d. as was Thomas Symonds for attacking the same Thomas Tewsnorth and stealing 4d. A poor labourer, William Ayshdownn, was amerced 6s.8d. for stealing half a measure of wheat, value 8d., from Nicholas Bourn's barn.

Only one case did not fit either category. In the view of April 1513 the tithingman presented that 'William Bugge harbours a suspected concubine and insulted Richard Miller's wife in that Richard's house and had carnal knowledge of her contrary to the king's peace'. He was amerced 12d. That the story was more complicated than appeared at first is shown by the next entry. Richard Miller was amerced 8d. because 'he keeps a reputed disorderly house and knowing that the said William cohabits with the said Richard's wife... he permitted and assisted William and concealed his deeds'.

Each of the Hadlow/Lomewood courts ended with a list of the 'Grand Inquisition', usually twelve men, while the later Hadlow courts recorded 'the Jurats'. Nearly all of the members of the inquiry that drew up the survey were also members of the Grand Inquisition at one time or another. At the October view each year officers were elected for the next twelve months, as tithingman, constable, and ale tasters. These, with two 'afferatores' or assessors who assessed the amercements, were the court officials in Hadlow, presided over by the Lord's chosen bailiff.

### COMPARISON WITH OTHER MANORS

How do the procedures and contents of Hadlow's courts compare with those in other areas and with the 'ideals' presented in the manuals? The manuals, although written and later printed at intervals over several hundred years, are in general agreement over the proper conduct of the manorial courts. Samples of court rolls have been examined, coming from four different areas and ranging in date from the earliest, beginning in 1348, to the latest which ends in 1650. The samples are:

- Wakefield, Yorkshire, 1348-50
- Walsham le Willows, Suffolk, 1351-99
- Kirtlington, Oxfordshire, 1500-1650
- Tottenham, Middlesex, 1510-1531

In 1348 Wakefield was part of the dower lands of Joan de Bar, the Countess Warenne. Since the Conquest it had been part of a well-organised estate belonging to an aristocratic family of similar status to the Clares. Centred on the small town of Wakefield it consisted of two large blocks of land divided into eleven graveships, each under a grave or reeve. It included upland areas with scattered communities. The courts for the manor were held in three different locations where each graveship had its own representative. Next in date are the rolls from Walsham le Willows, a vill in the fenland, ten miles northeast of Bury St.Edmunds. The vill had a population estimated at between 1300 and 1500, but no great house or resident great family. Walsham manor was the larger of the two manors of the vill, containing approximately six hundred acres. There is an almost continuous series of rolls covering the period 1351-99. Kirtlington, one of two manors in a parish of about 3,582 acres in Oxfordshire, and its smaller sister manor, Northbrook, both owed suit to Kirtlington court. They were both part of one, typically Midland, field system which contained at least 700 acres of common land. Again there was no great house or resident aristocratic family. The rolls show the development of the court between 1500 and 1650. Tottenham was already, in 1510, showing characteristics of a more urban manor. Although it still contained some common land much enclosure had already taken place. Merchants from nearby London were buying land and the views held there show much greater evidence of 'strangers' passing through the manor. It had been granted by Henry VIII to Sir William Compton. Situated in a low-lying area close to marshes, Tottenham shared Hadlow's preoccupation with scouring ditches. The section of
rolls examined here ends in 1531.

Hadlow conformed quite strictly to the 'official' pattern for holding its courts. One manual states explicitly that the court of the view of frankpledge should be held twice a year and that 'all male laymen of the age of twelve years or above should be in a frankpledge, or, which is the same, in a tithing'. Hadlow's views were held twice a year at six monthly intervals and we have a reference to two new members of the King's assize, Thomas Bacon and John Hogyn, 'aged twelve years and more,' being sworn in. In between the views, courts baron, called simply 'courts', were held at intervals of roughly four weeks rather than the three weeks recommended by the manuals. In Hadlow a strict distinction was made between the two types of court and the business conducted in them. This was not true in Kirtlington, where normally only two courts were held each year, one at Michaelmas, with a view of frankpledge with the proceedings of the court baron at the end, and one at Easter which was a court baron only. In Walsham the lord did not have the authority to hold a court leet with view of frankpledge but did deal with assizes of bread and ale and poaching offences in his court baron. These were only held about twice a year. Wakefield's court baron was extremely active, obviously the arena for the settlement of all manner of local disputes and covering many of the functions of the turn or view in other manors. Here too the turn or view often included business more properly covered by the court baron. In Tottenham the pattern was nearer to Hadlow with two regular views held each year, interspersed with courts baron, though there were fewer than in Hadlow and they were sometimes merely tacked on at the end of the record of the view.

The court officials were much the same in each manor. The court rolls of Hadlow never mentioned the name of a presiding steward, unlike those of Walsham le Willows where the current steward's name was recorded and where he seems to have held the courts with the aid of a recording clerk. At Kirtlington and Wakefield too the steward appears to have been the judge of the court. The steward of the vast Clare estates would probably have been far too important to preside at a small court like Hadlow. However, one of the sample letters quoted in a manual was from the Clare family steward to all the bailiffs throughout the honour of Clare; 'we command you that each of you do cause his court to be summonsed for the day named below to meet us'. This would imply that at least from time to time the steward would be present to check the way the court was run, and indeed on at least one occasion in Hadlow the bailiff retained custody of a stray animal on the express order of the steward. Normally it was the bailiff who was the lord's representative and who presided over the court. Even in the other manors the bailiff (or sergeant/grave in Wakefield) had an important function, as the local man, in the choosing of juries and carrying out the orders of the court.

At Hadlow each view ended with a list of the twelve members of the Grand Inquisition, later called the Grand Jury, and the ale tasters and assessors were also named. At the view held in the autumn a constable and tithingman were elected and sworn in to serve for the year. Much less regularly the intermediate 'courts' recorded the election of reeves and beadles. All the other manors named assessors and ale tasters. Tottenham, mentioned a constable, but only once. Kirtlington courts changed over the period covered by the rolls. In 1470 there were ale tasters but no constable, later the ale tasters' job was done by the tithingmen and the constable became the most prominent manorial official. The courts baron of both Walsham and Kirtlington noted the election of lesser manorial officers such as haywards, woodwards, foresters, pinders, herds, and surveyors of the common fields, in addition to the reeve and beadle, reflecting the importance the courts had in these areas for the organisation of common agricultural matters. In Hadlow only reeves and beadles were elected. The general impression is that the Hadlow courts, were both more regular and more formal, making a clear cut division between the functions of the court baron and the court with view of frankpledge, a situation which was only approached by Tottenham among the other manors considered.

The number of Jurors and their social mix make another point of comparison. It has
been argued that the jury was selected from the 'chief tenants of the manor'. This was certainly true in Kirtlington according to Matthew Griffiths's account of the proceedings of the manor court there. In a detailed analysis, he considered that 'juries were dominated by the larger farmers and the middle-ranking copyholders of the parish', although, 'occasionally lesser men were jurors or tithingmen' and it was from this lower class that officials such as haywards were chosen. In 1528 all twelve of the jurors were fairly substantial men and the constable, who was to serve for fourteen years, was deemed a 'gentleman' in the lay subsidy of 1523. Selected by the steward or bailiff, most Kirtlington juries numbered between fifteen and twenty for a court with view and twelve for a simple court baron. We have no detailed examination of the Wakefield jurors but Angus Winchester has commented of the area in general that 'decision making at the manor courts was firmly in the hands of the more substantial members of the community'. He shows that over a six year period the jurors were drawn from a small pool in each community, one serving in each court and a quarter serving in more than half the courts. The juries could consist of up to twenty-four men. In Walsham the jury 'ill defined and subject to variation' numbered between ten and eighteen. In Hadlow, during the period of the rolls, the jury for the view varied only between eleven and thirteen men. The 'homagium', or jury for the court baron was never specified by name or even number. The Grand Jury certainly contained the names of some substantial farmers, such as John Bishop and Thomas and Peter Fisher, but it also contained John Newman, whether the 'maltster' or 'labourer' is unspecified; John Newman, labourer, certainly served as an ale taster. Constables and assessors came from much the same group. Many of the jurors do not appear in the survey but this could be accounted for by the passage of time rather than the fact that they had no land.

The relative importance of the two types of court differed from area to area. Walsham only had a court baron which carried out some of the functions of the court with view, including the assizes of bread and ale. In Wakefield the regulation of trade was confined to the twice yearly 'turn', often recorded on the back of the record of the court baron held the same day. It was that court, held frequently at three different locations in the huge manor, which was of greater importance to its inhabitants, including many of the functions elsewhere covered by the view. Tottenham had the traditional mix of functions spread between the two courts while Hadlow seems to show, from its way of recording the proceedings, that the court baron was of less importance.

The sums levied by the courts baron varied very little in regard to amercements for absence, failure to pursue or defend a suit, or permission to settle a dispute. They were nearly always between 2d. and 4d. By far the most numerous cases pursued were cases of debt, followed by trespass. In Kirtlington and Wakefield some details of the actual disputes were given, the sum of the debt, how it was incurred, how damage was done during trespass and its extent. In Hadlow only the amercement due to the court was noted. Hadlow was also unusual in that pleas of trespass were few. In other manors, particularly Walsham, trespass, often on the lord's property, was common and sometimes amerced more heavily if damage was done. A difference between the functions of the court baron in Hadlow and in Kirtlington, was that in the latter the court was used to pass detailed by-laws. For example, in Kirtlington it was specified that no more than 40 sheep
should be put in the West Field and no more than one cow per cottager on the common. Angus Winchester also talks of this important function of the court in the border country but the Wakefield rolls show no evidence of it. No regulations of this kind were made by the court in Hadlow, neither did the manor court there seem to interfere in the upkeep of tenants’ houses as was the case in both Walsham and Tottenham. In Wakefield regularly, and Walsham occasionally, there were also fines for marriage, and, once, for the birth of an illegitimate child. The impression is that Hadlow inhabitants were less at risk from interference by the manor court in their personal lives.

When it came to reliefs or entry fines paid on inheritance or sale or transfer of property they were also at a great advantage over the inhabitants of the other manors. The standard relief seems to have been a quarter of a year’s rent rather than half a year or even a year’s rent paid for entry fines in other areas. During the years recorded this was as little as half a farthing and only twice more than 5d., once 7d. and once 2s.4d. The first of these was on inheritance so presumably represented relief on the whole of a man’s holding, the second involved a joint venture by four substantial landholders taking over a whole tenement. It was only when a heriot was claimed, in one case a bullock worth 12s., that the incoming tenant had to pay a relief even approaching the value of the entry fines paid in the other manors. In Walsham they ranged from 6d. to 26s.8d., usually between 1s. and 2s. In Tottenham they were between 11d. and £6.13s.4d., usually over 5s., and often over £1. On the few occasions when a relief rather than a fine was paid in other manors it too was quite light. One of the reasons the reliefs in Hadlow were so small may be that most land was freehold and land holdings were comparatively small. As Witney has argued, where land was less burdened with services due to the lord a much smaller sized plot could support a family.

Apart from the private examination of women landowners to make sure their consent to a transaction was genuine, there is no evidence in any of the manors of interference in the free transfer of land, provided the relief or fine was paid and the lord’s authority acknowledged. However, the earlier rolls from Wakefield and Walsham reflect a society more closely regulated by its courts, while Kirtlington used its courts to organise its agricultural community.

Walsham had no court leet but in the other manors the court leet with view of frankpledge was the main instrument the lord had for controlling social behaviour. One of the main functions of the court was to regulate trade. In Kirtlington, Matthew Griffiths is of the opinion that, ‘in 1470 it was the ale tasters who regulated the assizes of bread and ale and other local trades’.14 It may well have been the same in Hadlow, they certainly seem to have been fairly important officials whose duties were supervised by the grand jury who had to swear that they had been carried out efficiently. In Tottenham too ale tasters were regularly elected. In Walsham, this function of the court was carried out by the ordinary court baron. The main difference between Hadlow and the other manors was that whereas brewers, millers, butchers and leather workers were all amerced for various misdemeanours, there was no assize of bread. In comparison with Kirtlington, Hadlow’s brewers seem to have offended regularly rather than just occasionally. The amercements charged in the manors were similar, 2d. or 4d. with an occasional 6d.
Like Tottenham, a large part of the business of the court in Hadlow was the maintenance of local facilities, mainly the highways. In both Tottenham and Hadlow the state of the ditches was a major cause of concern and numerous inhabitants of both manors were amerced, initially moderately but for a repeated failure to comply, quite severely, in theory if not in practice. Encroachment on or damage to the highway was also punished as was the blocking or diversion of water courses, and the failure to maintain bridges.

Another aspect of the court’s work was the prosecution of minor crimes of a criminal rather than civil type. In other areas of the country one of the main phrases appearing in the rolls was to do with the ‘hue and cry’ raised when a crime had been committed and a criminal had to be apprehended. The manual specified ‘he who levies the hue wrongfully shall be amerced, also he against whom it is levied rightfully’. If the hue was raised unnecessarily all involved were amerced, if justly the offender. Strangely, of the five manors it was only in Wakefield that the phrase was used. Otherwise the types of crime were very similar. Assault was common, probably more so in Tottenham than in Hadlow or Kirtlington. Stealing was not very common and heavily amerced, though again there were more instances in Tottenham. Each community also seemed to have had an occasional case of someone ‘keeping a disorderly house’ or ‘harbouring suspicious strangers’, but Hadlow had no cases of scolds or ‘barrators’, nor of amercements for playing at dice, cards, football, or for neglect of archery.

In the three later series of court rolls the full range of society appeared before the courts, not just the court baron to register their land transactions but also before the views, to be amerced for various offences both civil and criminal. In Kirtlington the Prior of Bicester was amerced for default of suit and members of the Arden family, lords of the manor, were several times presented for breaches of custom or by-law. In Tottenham the Prior of Clerkpenwell, Sir Robert Southwell and Sir Thomas Lovell were all amerced on several occasions for failure to scour their ditches. In Hadlow Thomas Bishop, a substantial landowner, was twice amerced for assault and no less a person than the lady of the manor, the dowager Duchess of Buckingham was amerced twice for allowing her ditches to overflow. The earlier courts at Walsham and Wakefield do not show such independence. It would appear, however, that by the late fifteenth century the manor court represented not only the lord’s will but also that of the local community, and in some areas had an authority over and above that of the lord himself. Of the five manors studied the inhabitants of the manor of Hadlow appear to have been the most fortunate. Although in comparison with the other manors the courts were both more regular and more formal, they impinged less on everyday life, and in general the fines they imposed were lighter.
Historians regard the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as a long bleak period of famines, plagues, war, declining population, and economic stagnation. But it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good, and in hard times some people spot new opportunities where others see nothing but misfortune, and profit from them. Today we see farmers in the midst of a similar bleak phase of fortune, and watch some of them adopting alternative strategies and making a success of them. So we can reasonably guess that the same mixed picture obtained in 1460. Moreover, having the benefit of hindsight, we know that the next century developed into an era of remarkable enterprise and economic progress, so that we should expect some faint signs of economic revival to show as early as 1460.

Our survey first points us back to a distant past when a farmholding of 30-36 acres was deemed a standard sufficiency for a family. But then it shows clearly how subdivided the holdings had become through the practice of gavelkind and the free market in land. Yet some of our small peasants were plainly building up larger than average holdings, by taking up pieces of their neighbours' land as they fell vacant, acquiring other more scattered pieces, and sometimes marrying a woman holding Hadlow manor land that was then added to their own.

Thus the low state of economic life immediately after the Black Death gradually improved, and hard days gave way to hopes of a better future. In that spirit, Christopher Dyer has recently depicted a fifteenth-century scene that modifies the bleak accounts of the pessimists, preferring to view it as a transitional phase that was already showing signs of fresh enterprise. In that same spirit, we can interpret the scene in Hadlow in 1460 where some families like the Bishops had become conspicuously acquisitive towards land down at the Medway. Even the compiling of a survey by the lord can be interpreted as a sign of the landowner taking stock of his/her estate with fresh interest.

So when in 1581 the steward copied out the Hadlow survey of 1460 afresh, we should judge that as another moment of stocktaking undertaken in an increasingly optimistic mood; moreover, it matches similar activity in Wrotham, a next door parish, where the steward at much the same time was rescuing from obscurity records of former surveys and scrutinizing them anew. Our Hadlow steward, for his part, endeavoured to bring the old survey up to date by scribbling in the margin the names of tenants who had followed those of 1460 and those in current occupation. Unfortunately for us, he does not seem to have done a very thorough job. In the interval of some 120 years, some three generations had come and gone. All the tenants must have changed, yet he only scribbled changes in some cases and not in others. We cannot therefore judge accurately the new pattern of landholding that had resulted. We would have expected a trend towards larger holdings and fewer tenants to have continued, since that is what was happening in other parts of the country in the course of the sixteenth century. Farming became prosperous again, food prices rose substantially, many landowners returned to the direct farming of their home farms, while a class of substantial yeomen farmers also emerged. But all these events lay silently in the background; what our survey emphasises is changes in the identity of some of the influential landowning and farming families. We can also make use of other Hadlow records to fill in a picture of other economic developments that gave a new look to the Elizabethan age.

In 1581 somewhat less than half of the old families were still prominent, including the Bishops and the Fishers, both of whom had taken up yet more land on the manor. Some seventeen family surnames had survived from 1460, compared with 21 that were new, though the designation 'new' may include women of old families whose surnames had changed through marriage. Also others will have belonged to old families who had...
long held land in Hadlow but it belonged to the sub-manors. We notice some surnames that had changed their spoken form and spelling: Broke looks like the old Broker, Farman became Ferman, and Steyle became Style (and we still have a house in the parish called Style Place). Henry Hextall who had held so many scattered pieces of land in the manor in 1460, and probably held some administrative role in the service of the Duke of Buckingham, had evidently left no descendants, for his lands were dispersed among five people, four of whom came from old families, the Somers, Fishers, Crudds, and Bishops. The Hextall name had entirely disappeared from Hadlow, though it would be long remembered in neighbouring East Peckham because William Hextall had built and lived in Hextall Place.

A noticeable feature of the survey of 1460 was the absence of any attempt to identify the tenures by which the land was held. In most surveys that were being undertaken by 1581 this was deemed crucial information, but no attempt was made in this revision to add anything on that score. We do have a rental of Hadlow manor in 1587 that differentiates them, though without inspiring much confidence in its completeness. It named but did not identify a first group of tenants (probably free tenants), a second group as tenants at will, and a third as tenants for years. The occasion for the rental was the conveyance of the manor to Sir George Carey, (the Queen's cousin), and the incoming lord seized the opportunity to come to a new agreement about rents with David Willard who was expanding his activities in shipping iron from Tonbridge and Hadlow.²

The new settlement by which Sir George Carey raised the rent paid by David Willard draws attention to a highly important aspect of the economic changes taking place in and around Hadlow; the farming is more fully dealt with in the next chapter. The production of iron affected Tonbridge and South Frith more than Hadlow, but the finding of a heavy, carefully shaped, iron bowl buried in North Frith park yields fairly conclusive evidence that some forging of iron was carried on there. Certainly, the burning of the wood for charcoal took place in the Frith, for Hadlow streams and the river Medway through Hadlow lay conveniently near to carry it all to the furnaces and forges in Tonbridge; and David Willard's diversion of one stream at Fishall to suit himself is documented below.

The speed with which the timber in North Frith was being destroyed resulted in the lease of woodland for 40 years in North and South Frith being cut short, as those renting it declined to pay any further rent.³ It is difficult fully to comprehend all the many other consequences that surrounded this dramatic change in the landscape. The woodlands were ancient, and enormous human effort was required to cut down oak trees that could have been as much as five hundred years old. Mick Rodgers, farming at North Frith (and still repairing the paling round the park!), uses power tools, but he marvels to think of the human strength and time needed to cut down so much timber. The men will all have come from Hadlow and Tonbridge, perhaps from Shipbourne too, and so a pressing demand for workmen must have wrought a major change in the expectations of Hadlow menfolk. They may also have reflected sadly on the loss of the hunting that followed, for they had had many a good night's sport poaching deer in North Frith in the 1530s (see Chapter 15).

The iron industry had received its first strong stimulus to enterprise in this neighbourhood from the Sydneys of Penshurst. To begin with, the effects were felt in the vicinity of Robertsbridge and Lamberhurst. Only subsequently did they spread to Tonbridge and South Frith, and it was then that greedy eyes fastened on the timber in North Frith as well. Thus with remarkable speed its woodland was stripped, with little
subsequent success in coppicing or fresh planting. Those involved did not altogether neglect the need to conserve the woodland. The documents suggest that leases to the iron founders insisted on their reinstating the woodlands. But the ironmasters failed to do so, and this accusation was specifically directed at Willard in 1586. It may not have been entirely his fault. A different lawsuit against the Bishop family described a tumult when Tonbridge men violently resisted the planting of fresh coppice after the land had been cropped with wheat. One can imagine a fierce argument raging between those wanting bread rather than fuel for iron casting. The result was that new farms were laid out across a great swathe of former hunting parkland, and the memory lives on in such names as Trench Farm and Little Trench Farm.

Some of the Hadlow people that saw the process at closest quarters were Thomas Somer, Thomas Barton, Wyatt and Michael Playne, Alexander and Lawrence Salmon, Henry Stubberfield, William Weller, Walter Trice and more (all from Hadlow). They were summoned by a Commission, issuing from the Court of Exchequer, to assemble at the Lodge in South Frith by 9am on December 10, 1570, and conduct an enquiry. Their task was to determine the present, reduced value of South Frith, Postern, Cage, and North Frith Parks, and so it was that they testified to the fact that the woods were now ‘well nigh spent’.⁴

We have already seen how the Staffords, Dukes of Buckingham, were the ruling family in Hadlow in 1460 and for twenty years after, when Anne, the Dowager Duchess was in charge. For all we know to the contrary, the administration of the estate in her time ran smoothly. But a stormy period in the life of the last duke ended in an accusation of treason against him, his execution, and the forfeiture to the Crown of the entire estate in 1521. We can only guess at the disruption this caused to administrative routines on Hadlow manor. What is clear is that it brought a crowd of speculative courtiers and local gentry onto the scene, at a time when economic life in general was reviving, and the dissolution of the monasteries in the next decade would bring another large quantity of land onto the market. That further stimulated the expectations and schemes of acquisitive gentlemen, while wealth in lay hands was also increasing. The ambitions of Henry VIII at the same time created a demand for more ample state revenues that could only be met by picking the pockets of his subjects. They faced a demand for higher taxation, which turned the first half of the sixteenth century into what W.G.Hoskins has called The Age of Plunder.

Along with a changing economic ethos, social and spiritual aspects of Hadlow life were also much altered during the sixteenth century. Historians working in other parts of the country have noted a significant increase in the numbers of people claiming the title of gentleman, and acquiring manorial, or near-manorial estates. This obliged some of them to build entirely new houses, and to settle in hamlets rather than villages. We have noted already in 1460 the Culpepers and Fromonds as gentry families owning sub-manors here. But the Culpepers did not live in Hadlow, and although the Fromonds did, they were modest parish gentry who do not appear to have taken part in public affairs, and they had virtually gone from Hadlow before the end of the sixteenth century. (See Chapter 13 for more on the Fromond family.) The most prominent Hadlow
gentry from 1533 until 1551 were the Fanes. We can be sure that Sir Ralph Fane, until his execution in 1552, brought the flavour and the latest news of London life to Hadlow, since he was closely involved at court as a Gentleman Pensioner; and he almost certainly entertained some high-ranking visitors at Hadlow Place. Then the Fanes were followed by the Rivers at Fishall from the 1560s onwards, and they formed a longer-lasting bond with Hadlow, though without leaving any great memorial by building a substantial house. (See Chapter 13 for more on both these families.)

Both the Fanes and the Rivers families, however, almost certainly made a significant contribution to the spiritual life of Hadlow in this century of religious reformation. Both were devout Protestants, though they have left no strong memory of this loyalty in our documents, and we only find the evidence by digging deep. Protestant sympathies in the Weald are a long story starting with the Lords at least from the fifteenth century. Most evidence then focuses on Cranbrook and Tenterden rather than on Tonbridge, though heretics were found in West Malling, Brenchley, and Yalding, and one man, called Richard Herberd of Hadlow, was under suspicion for keeping heretical books in 1431.6 A clue to some of the same sympathies is found in the different styles of early wills of the Bealde family, not always in what they did or said, but rather in their silences. A traditional Catholic preamble to a will contained bequests for masses for the soul or for lights and images, while a Protestant will omitted such things; and some, of course, showed mixed sympathies. Richard Bealde in 1456 was a conformist Catholic, leaving his soul to God, the blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints. He left money for 300 masses to be celebrated at Aylesford for his soul and the souls of all his benefactors. In 1491, his son, Lawrence Bealde, on the other hand, left his soul simply to God Almighty, and in giving money for works of mercy, he defined them as being for 'foul ways and poor maids' marriages'. His spare text almost certainly would have been read by his contemporaries who knew him as a judicious statement that avoided charges of heresy.

Reading more wills between 1500 and 1560 for four parishes in and round Tonbridge, Alison Williams concluded that while the Tonbridge area was more strongly Protestant than the country as a whole, the Hadlow wills were the most conservative in her sample in the early years.7 But the coming of two new resident gentry families to Hadlow from 1533 onwards changed the situation. Everything suggests that both the Fanes and the Rivers families played an influential role through their support for Protestantism. Ralph Fane left no clear statement of his religious sympathies, but as he was closely connected with Protector Somerset's circle, his Protestant convictions can be assumed, and were in accord with those of his wife. Her fervent Protestantism is on record in Foxe'sActs and Monuments where she was described as 'a special nurse, and a great supporter' of imprisoned Protestants, that is to say, those who were persecuted in Mary's reign. She corresponded with them, exchanged books and spiritual advice, and may have disseminated their prison writings.8 In Hadlow, she was the mistress at Hadlow Place from 1533 until some time around 1558. She had no children, so she removed to London, where she died in 1568, and was buried in St Andrew's church, Holborn.

The Rivers family were also dedicated to the reformed faith, choosing a simple, even austere style of life, judging, at least, by their wills that prescribe the form of their funerals. Lady Joan Rivers, in particular, attracts attention as a devoted mother, commanding the respect and loyalty of her children (see more in Chapter 13). In short, these two gentry families seem to have offered strong leadership in the Protestant cause. It is difficult to generalize about how things stood in Hadlow in 1600 compared with 1460. Much had changed in religious, economic, and social life. Almost certainly people wondered what could possibly lie ahead for so much of the future seemed uncertain. The Queen was an old lady, unpredictable, lively and sick by turns, and the succession was unsettled. A run of bad harvests between 1594 and 1597 had produced alarming food shortages throughout the kingdom, a national index of mortality rates showing deaths rising by 52% in 1597. Indeed, the whole of western Europe had suffered. Tonbridge now nurtured an iron industry, which had caused so many furnaces and forges
to be set up in the parish by 1550 that the woodlands of North Frith had been devastated, and efforts at reinstating them was being contested. Iron had turned David Willard into a rich man before he died, (probably) in 1587, and his sons were continuing in the same business. In South Frith its vanished woods were already being replaced by farmland, clearing a site for the building in 1611 of a splendid Jacobean house at Somerhill by the Earl of Clanricarde, based on a plan of Palladio. The Protestant reformation in Tonbridge and Hadlow seemed to be secure, but no one could be sure. The Gunpowder plot at the beginning of the next reign would show how much rumbling opposition simmered under the surface, and in the 1620s the Whetenhall family in East Peckham, Hadlow's next door parish, would startle their neighbours by renouncing their devotion to Calvinism and turning to Roman Catholicism. The brightest outlook at this time, perhaps, lay in farming, which was prospering as more people demanded more food. Fortunately, that was the calling which gave the majority of Hadlow people their livelihood. We turn to their routines of life in the next chapter.
Almost everyone in 1460 lived off the land, but we cannot say anything reliable about the size of their holdings. We can add up the scattered pieces occupied by each individual, but that does not give us a reliable measure of any man's total farmholding since every single one of them could have held pieces of other manors in Hadlow, not to mention land in neighbouring parishes. All we know is that the original tenements had been laid out on the assumption that about 30-36 acres could sustain a family. One of the largest tenants here in 1460 occupied over 80 acres on this manor alone, whereas Robert Hall held 3 acres, and Richard At Hill just over an acre. Inequalities of wealth in the fifteenth century were substantial, and that is corroborated by a wider-ranging study of Wealden holdings by Michael Zell in which he presented a table grouping by size the holdings in five sample Wealden parishes (see diagram below).

This analysis makes it certain that some people had to do extra work apart from farming, like carting, carrying, shopkeeping, and fishing to make a living. No one needed to earn a lot of cash, however, since, among those living modestly, the need for money was small - to pay dues to their lord (some of which were anyway paid in work or kind) and to the church for the peace of their souls. They needed to buy pots and pans for the kitchen, farm tools, and salt, but most of their needs for food were met by producing it on their own land and by exchanges with their neighbours.

So how did Hadlow people use their natural resources? We cannot rely on any document of the time to answer that question directly, but we can look for indirect clues. Hadlow's heavy clay soils were not easy to cultivate, and it was not until the twelfth century that population in the Weald began to increase noticeably and people sought more permanent homes there, rather than simply exploiting the forest's resources seasonally for grazing. It is true that Hadlow lies on the rim of the Weald, so that the movement of more people settling permanently in the Weald began somewhat earlier there than in the parishes deeper into the woodland. Also the presence of Tonbridge Castle only four miles away meant that kings and courtiers arrived from time to time for the hunting and made heavy demands on the locals for attendance and sophisticated services. North Frith and South Frith were attractive hunting country, and some Hadlow people were needed to attend to the deer, nurture falcons, keep up gates and fences.
total population at Domesday was modest, and interest in attracting settled tenants, to lay out farms, and improve cultivation did not begin to hold a firm place in the administrative schemes of landowners until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

After that, we can only guess how the population grew, for we have no figures. Our only firm figure for Hadlow's total population shows 110 communicants in 1608 (compared with 110 at Shipbourne, and 80 at Mereworth), suggesting about 150-165 people in the parish in 1608.2 Around 1460 and, indeed throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, our researches have shown that people in the Weald were generally poorer than those living in other parts of Kent. They lived simple lives, building their houses out of local timber, clay and wattle, and relying for food on what they could produce for themselves. When they made wills, the most valued personal possessions left to their children were their animals, notably cattle. At the same time, our survey shows that considerable labour services were nominally required of servile tenants for working the arable land and harvesting the cereal crop. So arable farming was expected to afford self-sufficiency in food.

Reading between the lines of our survey, we have seen the small sizes of pieces of tenemental land on the floodplain of the Medway, and so have guessed at some pressure of demand for land at that point, and registered the importance of the river to Hadlow's inhabitants. They fattened their cattle there and ate the beef. They also had fish for food from the river. The value of the eels is confirmed in a statement by Yalding people, living in the neighbouring parish in 1600, when the Sewer Commissioners tried to clear a deeper passage down the river to Maidstone and sought to remove the weirs.3 The locals stoutly defended their weirs, for, they said, they greatly increased the quantity of fish caught by angle and net, and their value was estimated at some 200 marks p.a. In spawning time, the locals had been known to catch two bushels of eels in a night. Since two days a week in the fifteenth century were obligatory days of abstinence from meat (increased to three days a week in 1563), people ate a lot of fish, and still more during the whole of Lent. So having the river Medway running through Hadlow was a precious asset. Our survey has shown us how the mistress of Hadlow manor required the family occupying Fishland tenement (and, incidentally, having the surname Fisher), to supply her with fish whenever she asked. Another insight is afforded in a later document of 1627 when another attempt was made by the Sewer Commissioners to clear the river from Penshurst to Maidstone, and the locals protested at new restrictions which seemed to them to prevent them fishing from their boats and

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2. Dyer & Palliser, 2005, 521.xii
3. BL, Add. MS 34218, ff.37-57
taking their friends on board with them. The Commissioners allayed such anxieties by saying that they did not intend to be ‘so strict’. But the alarm of the local people also conjures up a lively picture of old routines when friends joined together to fish for eels from boats belonging to the men who occupied land along the river.

Additional details about the condition of the river in 1627-1629 make it clear that occupiers of land on the banks had been accustomed for centuries past to do what they liked with their own stretch of water. Intelligent self-interest and common sense obliged them to clear away trees and shrubs from the banks and pull out fallen logs, but individuals had freely constructed bays to make use of the flowing water for washing and watering animals as well as other jobs, and had erected weirs to catch goodly quantities of fish for themselves and for sale. This free-for-all world worked amicably until new commercial pressures arose between the 1540s and 1570s and iron forging developed in the Tonbridge area. Local resources of timber in North Frith and the Hurst lay ready to hand to fuel the iron furnaces, and a change of life style threatened the local people as woodland was cut down on a massive scale to provide charcoal.

The stimulus to the iron industry filtered into Kent from the Sussex Weald, urged on by the Sydney family among others when they installed themselves at Penshurst. Industrial activity then spread to Tonbridge, and David Willard, some time in the 1550s or 1560s, set up an iron forge in the vicinity of Fishall, stopped up a stream leading into the Medway, and diverted it to enable him to send iron by boat from a different spot, down to Fishall and so to the Medway. We have already described the destruction of timber in North Frith that followed. 4

Returning to the years around 1460, however, these pressures were as yet unknown. Other resources of value to Hadlow people that they drew from the river were water birds, ducks, geese, and swans, and wild birds that arrived seasonally. All these supplied eggs and meat for family food, feathers that filled mattresses and pillows, and quills for pens; quills from swans were deemed the best writing implements of all. So when strangers arrived in the 1620s to clear obstacles from the river, and roamed freely up and down the towpaths, they helped themselves to some of these natural assets, and we hear the people at Yalding complaining bitterly of their losses. Hadlow people will have had the same experience; having been accustomed in the past to enjoy a quieter life among friendly, less grasping neighbours, commercial intrusions introduced them to a very different world.

Our attention so far has been focused on the Medway, silently omitting the river Bourne. It was another valuable waterway, entering the parish at its northern end and joining the Medway in the south-east corner. It was a source of valuable soil nutrients for it watered lands that are named as meadows in the tenements lying across its course. It also served another vital purpose in supplying water to mills that were situated towards the central part of the parish.

The congestion of small pieces of land down at the Medway has already suggested that Hadlow people at this period met each other more often in the vicinity of Hadlow Stair and along the Medway than in the village centre. But the low-lying land on the wide floodplain and the interlacing of many meandering streams left them few dry sites on which to place their houses. Some of their dwellings, therefore, plus the obligation on all to attend services at church, and the need for social diversion brought them to the village centre.

The need to mill cereals for making bread also regularly brought Hadlow people this way. The river Bourne, flowing across the main road between Tonbridge and West...
Malling, provided water power for the mills that are mentioned in the survey. Fletchers tenement accommodated the corn mill and a mill pond. The malt mill, says our survey, was also 'latelty situated there' on Symonds tenement, but seemingly had been moved. Instead, another malt mill was mentioned, standing to the south and west of the corn mill. Located somewhere on the river Bourne but before the river crossed the main road, its site has been lost. As for the one-time malt mill, we may wonder if it had been turned into a fulling mill, since the tenterground for drying cloth that had been fullled stood so near. It is a distinct possibility.

Hadlow people, then, had their essential corn and malt mills sited near the centre of the village. Walking along Carpenters Lane and down the narrow lane to Bourne Mill, we can see how high the banks and houses stand above the road level and appreciate how many generations of people trudged down those roads cutting their course deeper into the muddy clay. But we have to ponder also the relatively long walk that was involved for those with houses down near the Stair. Admittedly, they were not likely to be growing much cereal down there. But if any was growing nearby, it may be that people had a concession to use the cornmill in Tonbridge; after all, Tonbridge belonged to the same lord. Also we have to ponder the mystery surrounding John Bishop who lived in 'The Mill House at the Stair', suggesting a mill that we have not identified. Where the survey returns to the Medway at the south-eastern end of the parish, it describes William at Lake's smallish tenement of 17 acres, and mentions also a highway from Perys mill (i.e. Pierce mill) to Saffrayns Plain. That mill probably served the sub-manors of Caustons and John Fromonds (Barnes Street) in Hadlow parish.

The next major natural resource of Hadlow was the land. The survey did not regularly distinguish the use to which the fields were put, but it did often differentiate land, meadow, and pasture. From this, it is fair to guess that what was called 'land' was the ploughland, growing cereals for bread and some pulses. In the Weald as a whole in the sixteenth century, we find some Wealden farmers with no more than 5-8 acres under the plough; that gives a reasonable measure of arable for a family holding in Hadlow in 1460. Some of the cereal was probably wheat, though not grown in any large quantity. The soil was certainly better suited to wheat than barley, but much land in the Weald at this date was generally cropped with oats; indeed, one man with land in West Peckham, the next parish north of Hadlow, asserted that he grew nothing but oats, and in the next century the Weald was known for growing oats for seed to sell to other regions. So oats may well have played rather more than a subsidiary role in Hadlow people's diet in 1460. It was certainly also used in brewing beer, either mixed with barley or not.\footnote{Thirsk, 2000, 90}

Economic conditions in 1460, however, did not yet exert any pressure on Hadlow people to grow a great surplus of grain. Mortality at the time of the Black Death in 1348 had dealt a heavy blow, and about half the population had died. The kingdom as a whole showed no sign as yet of numbers rising again and stimulating energetic agricultural improvement. But in an earlier period before the plague, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, strong efforts had had to be made to improve arable soils. A growing population had pressed hard on food supplies, and among the fertilisers that greatly

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Ploughmen.jpeg}
\caption{Ploughmen using oxen. Oxen, and certainly not horses, were needed on Hadlow's clay.}
\end{figure}
enriched arable land then was marl - a compost of chalky, mineral substances - that lay underground in many parishes on the fringe of the Weald including Hadlow. The effort devoted then to getting marl is reflected in the many accidents recorded in the Plea Rolls between 1241 and 1255 reporting the deaths of adults and children who fell into marl pits or were crushed by falling earth when marl was being dug out. The farmer at North Frith some five years ago found some splendid blue/ yellow marl when plunging his spade into a pit that he had always suspected was a marl pit; and one of Commander Dumbreck's historic maps now deposited in CKS shows a marl pit field next to Sole Street, i.e. Three Elm Lane. Our survey also shows in Kent the Hogg's tenement some land actually called marl pit, and in Somers tenement lay a Pit Lane, though that may have led to claypits rather than marl pits.

At all events, the past digging of marl was evident in the landscape in 1460, and the memory of it all was revived among Hadlow people when they began to take a fresh interest in agricultural improvement and the digging of marl around 1600. A fine account of various kinds and colours of marl and how to use it was published in 1625 by Gervase Markham, a writer on farming who had some kind of friendly connection with the Rivers family of Chafford and Hadlow, and dedicated his work to Sir George Rivers. In the public interest, Markham decided to publish the manuscript, though he had not written it; the land responded 'miraculously' to marl, he said. It is tempting to think that it had been written by one of the Rivers family, who were gentleman farmers here; at all events, it showed much practical knowledge, and experience of the way marl improved land, and it could easily have derived in part from farming in Hadlow. It is not at all fanciful to imagine Gervase Markham riding through Hadlow or hunting in North Frith. As for the Rivers family they are commemorated in Hadlow church by one monument on the south wall of the chancel, remembering Sir John Rivers who died in 1584 and his wife Joan, who died in 1618.

Fifteenth-century documents about Hadlow give almost no information about the keeping of livestock, and for lack of any probate inventories little more is found in the sixteenth century. Wills show that a common bequest consisted of a team of four or six oxen, the size of the team underlining the heaviness of the arable land. Cattle were more important than sheep, and cows came before bullocks, since cows were essential for household milk as well as for breeding. However, a clue to the potential for fattening bullocks in Hadlow is conveyed in a document of 1541 describing the condition of North Frith Park. Henry VIII was temporarily owner of Penshurst and was contemplating enlarging the Great Park there by buying more land. For some unexplained reason, his survey of Penshurst included Hadlow manor and North Frith, and it tells us that North Frith park was divided into three walks in the charge of three keepers, who in addition to receiving wages of 40s. each p.a. had the right to feed in the first walk 20 bullocks, 10 cows and 2 horses, in the second walk 24 bullocks, 6 cows and 2 horses, and in the third walk 8 cows.

The large size of the first two herds, belonging to two men only, gives some idea of the grazing potential in the parish, for these men who grazed such large numbers on the less than ideal herbage of the wooded Frith must have expected to fatten them in summer on the meadows along the Bourne or the Medway. The numerous small parcels into which the meadows on the Medway had become divided by 1460 have already alerted us to the value of grazing in that area. Men in the Frith with 20 and 24 bullocks apiece fit comfortably into an image of lush river meadows, and if those by the Medway were the ones selected, then perhaps Ashes Lane was the drove road, leading across the main road to Tonbridge to two paths (FPs MT141 and MT142) that led south to the Medway. One of these joins up with Blackmans Lane, and Blackmans lane in 1460 was called New Lane. The name may, in fact, have been tolerably old already, but it could have historic significance as a route that became much more frequented when the woodland of the Frith was opened up by commercial felling for timber, and glades were created where young cattle could graze before being sent down to fatten by the Medway.
Another source of food to Hadlow people came from their gardens which are named in almost all cases in the survey as adjoining their houses. Here they grew herbs and greenstuff for their daily food. They did not yet have fine lettuces, cabbages, turnips, and carrots, for improvements to those basic vegetables did not begin until the later sixteenth century. But they ate many more of the varied green leafy plants and roots that we now ignore; they ate a primitive cabbage that they called colewort, picking off the leaves individually, and many differently flavoured roots, including the roots of parsley. Their many plants taken from the fields and hedgerows as well as their gardens gave varied flavours to their pottage, which was their main daily dinner. It combined greenstuff with cereals, peas, beans, and a little bacon or other meat.

A herbery is named in the survey, which we have already mentioned when walking round the manor in Chapter 4. It is an old word for a fine garden, and could have contained treasured herbs for medicine and kitchen use. The actual names in the document appear as 'Herbery', 'Outer Herbery', and 'Inner Herbery', lying somewhere in the vicinity of Fishall and Hadlow Place. It arouses our curiosity in the former occupier who had made it, making us wonder whether it had perhaps been cultivated by a gentlewoman attached to the courtly circle that frequented Tonbridge Castle. No orchards are mentioned anywhere in the survey, though in the next century contemporary comments about plentiful fruit trees growing in the hedgerows of Kent make it clear that the climate had made a congenial home for wild fruit trees. So we cannot know how much hedgerow fruit grew in Hadlow, but because of the many gardens around the Hadlow houses, we may wonder what Hadlow contributed already to the later reputation of Kent as the garden of England.

The northern boundary of Hadlow manor was aligned with the hunting grounds of North Frith park, and several tenements cite the park pale as one boundary. We can be sure that the land on both sides of the boundary was shrubby woodland. Deer will have
tried to jump over the palings, wild birds flown in and out, plants and trees bearing berries and nuts spilt out through the fences. At all times it must have been a happy hunting ground for kindling, and in autumn was much valued for fattening pigs on the acorns, beech nuts, chestnuts, and berries in the park. But how many Hadlow people were allowed to drive their pigs into North Frith is unclear. Pigs were precious animals to all peasant families, and we can reasonably guess that they were numerous in the parish. (A significant study of a parallel economy in the Rockingham Forest, Northamptonshire, has recently commented on the advantages such people had in the numbers of cattle and pigs that they could feed in their woodlands when compared with common field countryside.\(^\text{11}\) Pigs in Wealden villages were also sometimes visible around the farmyard; they are depicted in a graphic account by Yalding people in 1600 when floodwater from the rivers encircled their houses (we saw it happen all over again in the year 2000), and they said they were driven to carrying their pigs into their bedchambers to save them from drowning. A picture of pigs roaming through the downstairs rooms is also conjured up in a case (\textit{circa} 1241-55, in Lordingden, its whereabouts unknown), of a small boy sitting at home near a fire over which an earthen pot of boiling water was hanging, when a pig brushed past, overturned it, and scalded him to death.\(^\text{12}\)

Official recognition by the lord of the pigs kept in Hadlow is best shown in our survey when it names, in the revision of 1581, the annual dues owing from some tenements, consisting of pigs or joints of pork. We normally interpret that obligation to mean that tenants were thereby paying their Hadlow lord, who was also lord of North Frith park, for the right to drive their pigs up there in the autumn to fatten on the nuts. But not all tenements paid this due. The 1460 text of the survey, describing only Jopes tenement, makes what may then have been intended as a general observation about joint tenants having the right to graze eleven sows in North Frith throughout the year. But it occurs only once, leaving its full implications unclear. If, indeed, all joint tenants on the manor had equal rights, then that allowed something over 100 tenants in 1460 to graze 11 sows apiece in North Frith. Not all of them will have availed themselves of this right, of course, but we can reasonably contemplate about a thousand pigs in the woods in the autumn, knowing also that it was not at all unusual elsewhere for owners to keep pigs in woods all the year round and take food to them in hard weather. The deep lanes that lead up to the further woodland in The Hurst in West Peckham certainly suggest that many animals once trudged that way.

In other parts of the country we are accustomed to find a considerable quantity of commons where all farmers had the right to graze cattle and sheep, abiding by the rules of the manor court. Our survey names several small pieces of common, but only one larger piece at Lonewood. It is likely that commons did not have the same significance for our tenants in the Weald as in common-field country, for all could lease land very freely in small pieces and large, and Hadlow had plenteous grazing. The problem is further discussed in Chapter 11.

We construct from all this a picture of the way Hadlow farmers got their living from the varied resources of their land. We do not expect to find rich people, and we know that the natural resources were not evenly distributed among them. But they were varied enough to provide a sufficiency, and they doubtless yielded something more to the most resourceful and energetic inhabitants, whose drive and enterprise is suggested by the large holdings that some of them accumulated in the manor.
It is usually said that the river Medway was not navigable from Maidstone to Tonbridge until after 1740 when the Medway Navigation Company was set up. But we can be sure that Hadlow people in 1460 found it navigable for their own purposes. How then did they use it? When more ambitious schemes to make it ‘navigable’ for larger vessels emerged in the early seventeenth century, reports were assembled about the river’s condition which give us some answers to this question. Thus we can begin to build up a picture of the scene in 1460.

Nowadays we are accustomed to seeing a river consisting of one main current with firm banks defining its course. In the fifteenth century, however, the Medway looked very different. Doubtless in some places it did have a recognisable main course, especially where the river valley narrowed or the water was channelled for strategic purposes at Tonbridge or Maidstone. But in Hadlow the floodplain was, and still is, wide and a multitude of subsidiary streams wound their way alongside. Farmers having land hereabouts naturally altered the course of the streams to suit themselves and where our survey touches on the Medway we are aware that the sluices and weirs controlling the watercourses are an important and integral part of daily lives. Indeed Thomas Fromond of Goldhill in his will of 1447 bequeathed to his son John ‘all rents, weirs, waters and fisheries in Hadlow’.

When the local parish representatives were asked to survey the river and make a list of obstructions and alterations in 1627-9 they could not always decide which was the main course of the Medway and which was a subsidiary stream. We can almost see them
scratching their heads, arguing with each other and then, in the end, shrugging their shoulders hopelessly when they failed to reach agreement. They left the Sewer Commissioners to decide, who, being local gentlemen and landowners, were in no better position than the villagers to give a definitive answer.

Nevertheless, the jurors put a lot of work into their report, and although it was drawn up more than a hundred years after our survey of 1460 (though only forty years after the survey was rewritten and revised in 1581), it gives us a rough idea of how Hadlow people had made their way across the river at many different points. Their report is not entirely crystal clear to us who look on a very different scene, so this interpretation contains quite a few question marks about its meaning. But one can appreciate all the work that went into it, including the endeavour to state at each point along the river who were the landowners and who were the occupiers.

Some farmers had land on both sides of the water, so there was a need to drive cattle across or take hay to their animals, possibly using a cart. Inevitably there would have been a need for heavier wagons carrying corn, wood and stone to cross the river, and equally travellers on foot or horse had somehow to cross the river at a convenient point. But now in 1627 the Sewer Commissioners were intent on stopping the locals from using any sizeable boats, because they were conferring monopoly rights on one individual to carry all heavy goods on the Medway in the future. In return he undertook to clear a passage for boats of 4 tons burden which included a need for sufficient headroom to pass under all bridges.

In their report the jurors listed the crossings that already existed. Any low-slung and rickety bridges, not designed to let a boat of 4 tons pass, would have to be rebuilt. Starting at Penshurst, the jurors moved through Tonbridge, which had five bridges across the Medway, and arrived in Hadlow parish. The ancient course of the river passed under what is now Little Bridge in Tonbridge High Street (presently called the Botany Stream). At Strawberry Vale lay 'a main carrying bridge called Wichenden Bridge', a 'horse bridge' (probably no more than 3 feet wide) was identified where today's Morley Road crosses the stream into Vale Road; Postern Bridge is then described as a 'carrying bridge'. David Willard, who had occupied the forge at Postern some 50 to 60 years previously, was blamed for having turned the course of the Medway 'for his own use for the passage of his iron by boats from thence down to Fishall'; with the passage of years it is difficult now to see how this was achieved but his activities were worthy of being mentioned twice by the jurors.

The ancient course of the river turned along what today forms the main stream (which runs below the castle walls and under the Big Bridge) near the site of the now defunct Child's Lock. Within a short distance the jurors found that the river 'divide[d] itself into two heads at a place called Walmsleys Wear', one arm 'running with his compass northwards and the other shooting forward'. The northerly stream led through 'an ancient Wear called Cranborrow's Wear' which had paid 'certain Sticks of Eels unto the Castle of Tonbridge'. The jurors were naturally doubtful as to the main stream and left it to the Commissioners! (See Topographical Problems, Chapter 14, where Hadlow Stair is discussed.) Next came a 'carrying bridge' and a 'footbridge' before 'one main carrying bridge called Hartlake Bridge in the late 1800s, its appearance was probably little changed from the time of the survey. RIVERS: THE MEDWAY AND THE BOURNE
Bridge was reached. The first carrying bridge was where the track from Fishall land to Somerhill crossed the river. The crossing was noted as being out of repair in 1800 and 'destroyed' by 1824. The footbridge lay at Porter's Lock where a 'lost' footpath once crossed the river. Hartlake Bridge was known to exist in 1460 as in 1451 John Tatlyngbery (who lived at Barnes Place) left money in his will for the repair of the road and bridge at Hartlake, as did Henry Fane in 1533.

At Hartlake the jurors were again confronted with a river which 'divideth itself into several branches'. Here they were more decisive and agreed that a 'horse bridge called Dean's plank' crossed the main stream. A bridge existed at this point until the mid-twentieth century called Lower Lake Bridge which gave access to a dairy farm south of the river. A past occupant of adjacent Hartlake Farmhouse recalls seeing the more recent iron bridge being taken downstream on a barge - where did it end up? Although the jurors seemed more convinced as to the course of the main stream, they continued to describe it as attended by subsidiary streams and 'islands', although these are little more than ditches today.

Between Dean's Plank and Ford Green Bridge lay another footbridge and a carrying bridge. The carrying bridge would have lain at what is now East Lock. Here the lane now called Kelchers crossed the river on its route from Goldhill (Golden Green) to Moat Farm and Five Oak Green, using midstream Weir Island as a stepping stone - the perfect place for a navigational lock. Definitive footpaths MT156/160/159 now mark this route. It is sometimes difficult to correlate stretches of water in our survey with that of the Commissioners' Report but Mrs White's Weir (1627) and Fromond's sluice (1460) are, no doubt, one and the same and Weir Island provides the clue. The 'footbridge called Ffoard' is where 'Watery Lane' (FP.MT158) from Barnes Street crosses at Ford Green Bridge also known as Booth Bridge.

Waines Hopes Bridge is likely to have been where the boundary between Hadlow and East Peckham parishes crosses the river at Oak Weir Lock. The crossing is described as a 'main carrying bridge' which indicates a public highway. Although a public crossing no longer exists at this point, the existence of the boundary, lock and an island ('Lord's Island' is mentioned in the text) appears relevant; a track is indicated on Twysden's Estate map of 1632 giving access from what is now Three Elm Lane to the river. The next bridge is Keysers and recalls the Cayser family which was prominent in East Peckham. This is well documented as being below Stilstead House, Little Mill, and still exists as footpath MR555 which eventually leads across the meadows to Whetsted. Two footbridges come next, one called Duck's Bridge, sometimes called Duke's Bridge (after the Duke of Westmorland). The river Bourne, which runs through Hadlow village falls into the Medway on the north side of the mid-stream island to the west of the bridge. Footpath MR545 from Snoll Hatch, East Peckham crosses here. Our reporters now arrived at an arm drawn from the river, they said, to serve Branbridge Mill and 'one main wear built upon the old river there penned up to turn the water course unto the said mill'. Beyond that point came an ancient stone bridge with two arches called Slades Bridge, also known as Branbridges,
over which ran the Kings Highway - today it is the old B2015 which ran from Pembury to Wateringbury. At the confluence of the Medway and the Teise the river was crossed via ancient **Twyford Bridge** at Yalding.

Along the way the jurors described innumerable logs in the river, willows growing on the banks and earth fallen in. At various places the water was unusually shallow and it was there that farmers led their cattle across and carried hay in dry seasons. The jurors made a general reference to these at the end but did not identify them individually. It is clear that they knew many different kinds of crossings, bearing different weights, and we can readily understand the seriousness of their statement at one point that these were not being reported as annoyances or impediments; they were passages and churchways that were essential in the workaday routines of the inhabitants. The jurors did not know who had originally constructed them; they were the work of long dead forebears working their land to their best advantage. But, plainly, people were constantly changing the landscape or allowing it to change in small ways. David Willard's cut for carrying his iron gave a vivid picture of the way another piece of the Hadlow scene was changed. Taking a wider view on the outside world, the locals, in their Report claimed to have knowledge of a time when a clear passage existed on the river as far as Maidstone, but it had decayed through neglect. This was surely an accurate memory from Yalding onwards, but whether from Tonbridge to Yalding, we cannot be sure.
The report on the Medway showed the whole river liable to yearly changes, though in 1460 they were still relatively small. It was lined with alders, willows, and tree stubs and required constant vigilance, which it did not get. Earth fell into the river and created shelves that settled firmly. These were probably some of the shallows that were used as crossing points in drier seasons. Even so, things were satisfactory enough not to arouse any movement for change, and we should not underrate the importance of the river, as it was to Hadlow people. Their farming depended on it as winter floods brought fertility to the grazing land, and so did their access to places west and east. Not least, it was important for its access to fresh food - fish, especially eels. Hadlow Stair was the major point of access for goods to and from Tonbridge, while our survey makes so many references to the roads to Yalding that we must assume that Hadlow people absolutely relied on getting there if they wanted to go eastwards towards Maidstone and so to the Thames estuary. The survey nowhere mentioned any road to Maidstone for the present one did not then exist. It was a totally different scene from today, Yalding is now a picturesque backwater on a commuter rat-run whereas Maidstone has retained its commercial importance and is easily accessible to all, thanks to the turnpike revolution.

THE RIVER BOURNE

It seems hard to imagine that today’s river Bourne once provided the power for twelve known mills, four of which lay in the parish of Hadlow although only two lay in our manor at the time of the survey. The river rises above Ightham and drove 4 mills between Borough Green and Plaxtol. Roughway paper mill was situated at Dunk’s Green, and Hamptons (formerly Puttenden) mill also manufactured paper during its working life. Oxenhoath mill just outside our parish is claimed to date from 1259 and was a fulling mill which later converted to grind corn; it was part of the Culpepers' Oxenhoath Estate. The river runs under a bridge in High House Lane which our survey alluded to as ‘the highway at Ashwood’ (in 1557 - it was the ‘high road from (West) Peckham to Tonbridge’). The river crossed water meadows at Larkhale before an arm was diverted to feed the mill pond at Hadlow.

Bourne Mill is situated off Carpenters Lane and in common with other surviving mills its wheel has gone, but the present building and its surroundings give us a good idea of what the scene would have been like in 1460. Documents in the possession of the current owners refer to it as Hadlow Mills, with the description of ‘three mills under one roof’ until the mid nineteenth century, when it was rebuilt.

Our survey tells us that the Mill Bourne (4½ acres in Fletchers tenement) was held by Lady Elizabeth Culpeper and an adjacent twenty-four acres were held by Richard Culpeper esquire (died 1484). The Culpepers lived at Oxenhoath which, in its present form, is a substantial, mainly Georgian house in an elevated position overlooking Hadlow village.

As today, the main road between Hadlow and Tonbridge crossed the Bourne at land known as Sedgebrookgate. Our survey tells us that John Symonds of Palmers Street held 2 acres here, and a half acre containing the Malt Mill, of which no trace remains. Sedge Brook, also known as Somings Brook, skirted land in Welshes tenement, on Palmers Street and formed the westerly boundary of Peckhams Manor. It now feeds into the Bourne just below the bridge. Although a bridge at this point was not noted in our survey, James Grosse, who
Looking west along the river to Bourneside Farm

held 13 acres in the manor, left money in his will of 1493 for the repair of the cross at Hadlow Bridge. In 1800 landowners below the bridge were ordered to remove stubs and other obstructions which stopped the flow of the Bourne. Judging by the Commissioners' report on the Medway it was a situation which was probably little changed from the time of our survey.

The river flowed on marking the boundary between Aleynslove tenement and the manorial demesne lands which were not included in our survey. At Bourneside Farm the river was crossed by Skeffe's Lane (now known as Dog Kennel Path) linking Victoria Road with Blackman's Lane. In 1656 it had a bridge called Deering Bridge, but this ancient crossing was lost in the 1970s when the footpath was diverted to a point further along the Bourne. Before reaching Rotford bridge the river turned the mill at Goldhill, part of Thomas Fromond's Manor, while the road was described as 'the highway from Goldhill to West Malling' (i.e. Victoria Road). Moving east, Hadlow Manor lands at Buntanhall lay to the north of the river, adjacent to Caustons Manor. Perys Mill (today's Pierce Mill) would have served Barnes Street and possibly Causton's manor; 18 acres of Lake tenement (1) lay close to the mill and at the furthest point east of our parish. Leaving our parish boundary with East Peckham the river reaches Little Mill where a mill house can still be seen. A short way across flood meadows the outfall into the River Medway is reached at Ducks Bridge.

No doubt fish weirs were constructed in the river Bourne as in the Medway. It may also have been navigable by small craft in its lower stretches and perhaps, in the upper reaches at Basted, there may have been a forge where the narrow valley above the mill was dammed at some time in the past to make two large ponds. In Hadlow village the river is still regarded as liable to flood. It is an old story as the Court Rolls show, for a stream that is now culverted used to pass down the High Street from Cemetery Lane (Durrants Cross) and caused many problems to local residents. More recently still, in living memory, this same stream flowing from the hills above the village, joined with the flood waters of the Bourne to put the centre of the village under water, probably not for the last time!
CHAPTER 10

ROADS

We know from flint implements dredged from the Medway and Roman remains along the valley of the river Bourne that, from the earliest times, the local Wealden landscape was attractive to hunters and settlers alike. When people began to open up the area by seeking pasturage for their pigs among the trees, our road network finally began to take shape and ancient trackways into the Weald have become part of the familiar infrastructure we use today by foot, horse and car.

Hadlow today lies on a main arterial road which crosses Kent from the Medway Gap at Rochester to Tonbridge and the A21 in the south-west; it experiences over 4 million traffic movements through the village every year. In 1460 the road connected the administrative and market town of Tonbridge to the west with the market town of West Malling to the east and these towns were possibly as far as most of the residents ever travelled. The importance of getting a living in the parish (see Chapter 8) and therefore getting about the lanes and fields was probably all that concerned the majority. Every resident needed access to the fields, the mill, the church, the forge, the common, the woods, the river and meadows, so a network of roads, lanes and commonways grew up in the parish.

The main grid of roads and tracks can still be identified, but some have simply lost their meaning in the intervening years as patterns of agriculture have changed. There is no longer the need for the many to reach fish weirs along the Medway and larger feeder streams, or commonways for cattle to reach the enriched water-meadows. Tracks once used to reach further destinations are no more than footpaths for leisure purposes, and routes which had a meaning and a purpose are often now cut short at adjoining parish boundaries.

Almost without exception the roads would have been poor by modern standards, the ubiquitous Wealden clay being responsible. Anyone who has walked the local footpaths after rain will appreciate the difficulties experienced by fifteenth-century travellers and farm workers.

Extract from Symonson’s map of 1596. Northfrith park is impaled; crossings of the Medway are shown at Tonbridge, Brandbridge, Twyford and Teston (on the coach road from Wrotham). Mereworth church is shown without a steeple, so it represents the old church before Mereworth Castle was built.
Symonson's map presents us with a global picture of Kent in 1596. To the west of Hadlow lay the highway from London to the port of Rye, crossing the Medway at Tonbridge. To the north lay the road from Sevenoaks to Rochester, roughly following today’s A25, which joined the Pilgrims Way near Trottiscliffe and crossed the London to Hythe road near Addington. A looping, more southerly, road from West Kingsdown to Lenham via Coxheath, passed, until the early years of the twentieth century, across the woodland and heath between Hadlow and West Malling (turnpiked in 1828), which now forms part of the new parish of Kings Hill and is lost forever amongst the new houses and high tech buildings on the old airfield. It crossed the Medway at the medieval Teston bridge.

The map shows the crossing of the river Bourne at Hadlow, and the nearest easterly 'highway' crossings of the Medway to our parish at Branbridges (Hale Street), which was originally a ford, and the medieval Twyford bridge at Yalding.

Hadlow in 1460 would certainly have benefited from travellers, traders and pedlars moving between the two market towns, on a road that we still enjoy today. Although there would have been considerable wear and tear on this main thoroughfare, its importance probably meant that more attention was paid to the condition of its surface than other manor ways and money left in contemporary wills for the repair of this and other main highways pays testament to this. The fact that indulgences from the church were granted for such piety was another encouragement.

The road to Tonbridge can be plotted through the manor by the description of the tenements. It follows the present day course, except for some modern straightening out here and there, especially at Hadlow Stair where a once important landing place is now a residential backwater.

The road to West Malling has suffered a fate similar to other main roads with turnpiking and modern straightening masking the original route. One other complication lies in the fact that Mereworth village was displaced by the building of Mereworth Castle and the old road system was disrupted.

The other important highway was that to Yalding. It was from this point that it was still possible to reach Maidstone by water. We can say with some degree of certainty that the route left the village via Court Lane, but after this point there are various possibilities. Apart from the way we might travel there today, i.e. via Snoll Hatch, Branbridges and...
Laddingford, it was also possible to travel via Goblands, Peckham Bush, Nettlestead Green and Twyford Bridge, or via Bell’s Farm, Addlestead, Nettlestead Green and Twyford. These last two routes lie on paths and tracks, some of which are either now lost or are no more than badly maintained footpaths. No doubt, the route one chose depended upon the weather and the state of the rivers, streams and ditches that one had to cross and whether it was by foot, horse or cart.

We only gain information about the ‘highways’, ‘lanes’ and ‘commonways’ because they are mentioned as bounds to the holdings and although today’s road and footpath network in the parish seems complete many paths have been lost or diverted within living memory so that it is likely that even more will have been lost in the intervening centuries. This would explain why we cannot always be sure as to the exact position of holdings. Survey descriptions of the various ways appear to be interchangeable, i.e. one tenant may describe the route as a commonway whereas the next may call it a highway. On later estate maps ‘landways’ and ‘footways’ are sometimes shown running parallel to each other (like roads and pavements today) which may furnish the explanation.

The road from Goldhill to Tonbridge (Three Elm Lane) forms the main east/west route across the southern half of the parish (and manor). This route continued westwards via the highway from Bredett Common (or Broads Plain) to Coiffe’s gate (Cuckoo Lane). In this case, ‘gate’ may indicate one of the ways into North Frith park as William Coiffe held North Frith meadow there. Turning south-west from the gate ran Coiffe’s gate to Pen Bridge (or Tonbridge) (Higham Lane). Access to the pits in Holman’s and Knight’s tenements was off Cuckoo Lane.

Palmer’s Street Cross to Northfrith described the present-day Ashes Lane from its junction with the Hadlow to Tonbridge road to the pale of Northfrith park (at Pittswood). Ashwood to Hoggett’s gate (High House Lane) ran along the park pale up to and beyond Stallion’s Green. Birchwoods Lane followed the public footpath west from Pittswood to the Poulth House and from thence to the junction of Higham Lane and Cuckoo Lane. It also defined the edge of the park.¹

From Three Elm Lane ran the access routes south to the Medway and the alluvial-rich flood meadows. Thomas Fromond’s Manor, later Godings (Hadlow Place) lay south of this highway, as did Crombury Manor and Barnes Place so this was an important route. Victoria Road, Cemetery Lane and footpaths MT128 and MR561 (Wilkins Lane) were described as the highway from Goldhill (Golden Green) to West Malling. It joined the highway from Hadlow Street to West Malling at Goose Green. Crossing the main road, it is still possible to continue to West Peckham village green via a public footpath, no doubt an access route to the Medway which was also used by residents of that village and parish.

Nearly every highway, lane or commonway in the survey was named, although the ambiguous ‘a certain lane’ was occasionally used. Routes were generally known by their destination, e.g. ‘highway from Hadlow Bourne to Little Loamwood’, or had dedicated names, e.g. ‘Skeyffe Lane’, related to the land owner, e.g. ‘Peter Fisher’s lane’, or were field names, e.g. ‘lane leading to Stony Field’. Interestingly Skeyffe Lane (aka Piper’s Lane, Park Lane and Roberts’ Went), now a footpath, still has a local name – Dog Kennel Path, and local oral tradition claims it as a Roman road; in places it is still possible to distinguish its original twelve foot width and drainage ditches.

¹ For further details see the footpath network on the later maps.
As well as money to mend the roads, some people left an amount in their wills for other repairs. It is clear that the causeways at Sedgebrook Gate (Hadlow College entrance) and Three Elm Lane (at the junction with the main road), suffered from water erosion, and bridges across the river Bourne at Hadlow and Golden Green (Rotford Bridge in Victoria Road) also received bequests. In 1456 Richard Bealde left money to ‘make a footpath’ between Longshots Cross and Monk Style (Monks Field lay at the junction of Blackmans Lane and the main road).

The Court Rolls give us further clues as to the difficulties encountered by travellers and locals alike. In 1479 the court was told that ‘Thomas Tewsnorth has broken the land in the King’s Highway over against Berhwys and there dug and removed gravel to the hurt of the neighbourhood’. In 1481 the ‘King’s highway’ was damaged in Palmer Street, Wells Street, Wyatt’s Gate and Castle Field. In the same year the pond at Goldhill was ‘weakened to the hurt of the neighbourhood’; no doubt it flooded the road. Two hundred years later the causeways at Sedgebrook gate and Three Elm Lane were still causing trouble!

We do not know whether Thomas Tewsnorth’s ‘hurt’ endangered anyone’s life but the story of a Leighton Buzzard glover’s fate illustrates the dangers which could befall a traveller. While returning home from Aylesbury market just before Christmas 1499, the man fell into a pit in the middle of the highway. The pit, which measured eight by ten feet on the surface and eight feet deep, had been dug during the day by the servants of an Aylesbury miller to obtain ‘ramming clay’ for the repair of his mill. Having filled with rain water the hole looked indistinguishable from the rest of the highway in the dusk and the poor glover drowned.²

In 1555 the first steps were made towards the formalisation of road repairs. An Act was passed which provided for two parishioners to be elected as Highway Surveyors, or Waywardens, to inspect roads, water-courses, bridges and pavements within their parish and report on their condition thrice yearly. Unfortunately it was up to the lord of the manor (whose own ditches were often neglected) and the local justices to do repairs; and as it only applied to highways, commonways and lanes, no doubt, remained as bad as before, as they were the responsibility of the landowner. Under the Act the better off landowners were required to supply labourers, horses or oxen and tools to do the work. The Act remained in place for nearly three hundred years.

² Addison, 1980, p.85
³ Addison, 1980, p.87
Our assumptions about the use and conventions associated with common grazing lands are based on clear evidence drawn from areas of England which had common fields, notably in Midland England. The court rolls of manors in those areas stipulate regulations, and show officials insisting that they be observed. The common was usually one or more substantial pieces of land lying towards the outskirts of the parish representing poor land that had not invited early cultivation. It yielded rough grazing, shrubs, underwood, trees and often some minerals like sand, gravel and stone.

Kent, however, was not a county of common fields, yet historians have found some evidence of commons (Blackheath is often cited), along with restrictions on the numbers of animals that could be pastured on them (i.e. stinted), and disputes about the unlawful use of commons by outsiders. They imply that the same conventions ruled commons in Kent as in common field country. But evidence from the Weald suggests rather that conventions ruling elsewhere were only creeping into Kent, probably under the influence of trained lawyers who often became stewards of manors, and were schooled to favour uniformity. Dr Chalklin, writing specifically on Kent, recognised that the Weald had many small heaths rather than large commons, and Helen Muhlfeld, publishing a survey of Wye manor on downland, 1452-4, showed no reference there to any common at all.\(^1\) Michael Zell, also concentrating on the Weald, emphasised how different was its agrarian regime from common field England, and made no reference to any commons.\(^2\) E.C.K. Gonner also pointed out a difference in Kent because the Weald was heavily wooded and land was taken into use only as the woods were cleared and the land was enclosed.\(^3\)

Commons did not, of course, pertain to manors but to parishes, and as Hadlow had several manors, we have to assume that tenants' use of commons was somehow agreed between all manors in the parish. All this prepares us for problems in interpreting the

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1. Chalklin, 1965, 19-21; Muhlfeld, 1933
2. Zell, 1994, 109-110
3. Gonner, 1912, 238-240

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Extract from Andrews, Dury & Herbert map showing the position and extent of Hadlow Common in 1769
Hadlow survey. A statement by William Lambarde in 1570 that 'it was tried by verdict that no man ought to have common in lands of gavelkind' is probably relevant here since pieces of land scattered among the lands of other tenants were likely to be held in gavelkind along with that of their neighbours. Five commons, excluding Lonewood, two of which were called small, are mentioned in the survey (Broads Plain, Tothe Hill, Fish hill, Slethe and Jordans) as adjoining eight tenements Fishland, Knights, Pococks, Tanners, Hoggs, Welshes, Birchwoods, Brooke and Lake; no acreages were stated. Were they lands held in gavelkind, and, if so, did it mean that local people gave the word 'common' a special meaning in these cases? We know well that customs and conventions governing enclosure differed between regions; we find, for example, in a lawsuit relating to Prestbury in Gloucestershire a statement that for the last forty years they had allowed enclosure 'by custom and tolerance'. Was it perhaps usual in the Weald to take a casual attitude towards the appropriation of small pieces of so-called commons by neighbours, without raising a great outcry about their robbing the whole community of its common rights? In any case, Lambarde also alerts us to a changing scene in his day. Having said that land in gavelkind could not be held in common, he added that, nevertheless, 'the contrary is well known at this day, and that in many places'.

Efforts have been made to locate the various small commons mentioned in the survey. Broads Plain Common, also known as Brodetisphayne and Bredett, mentioned in the descriptions of Hoggs, Knights and Pococks tenements, is on the junction of Cuckoo Lane and the A26. There is now a grain-drying business on the Tonbridge side with a small industrial estate, converted from former chicken sheds, on the Hadlow side. The 'small common called the Slethe' in Welshes tenement is at the junction of High House Lane and Ashes Lane. A smallholding with a few sheep is close by. To the Hill Common in Hoggs tenement was in the area now known as Hogswell, at the junction of the A26 and Three Elm Lane. A petrol station was built here in 1995. David Gurney researched the area for several years for his book 'A Small Kentish Hamlet through Four Centuries', but found no reference to a common.

Two other commons are now part of open farmland. They are Jordans, on land to the east of Hartlake Bridge, and a little common in Fishland tenement, which is to the south of Fish Hall. This latter area may only be reached by farm tracks and has a certain timeless atmosphere, perhaps an echo of earlier times.

The 1587 Rental for the Manors of Hadlow and Tonbridge also suggests a compliant attitude by the manorial lord towards the enclosure of commons, so long as rent was paid. It includes examples of individuals occupying pieces of the common and pieces of waste for which they paid the a lord a capon, a hen, or 2d. Pawley Paler and Thomas Lamparde both had a cottage and croft taken out of the common at Cage Green, and paid the lord 10s. in one case and 4 hens or 2s. in the other. Henry Fane held a piece of Jordans Common – this was in Brooke tenement. Others holding pieces of common where the location was not identified were George Colleyne, John Marten, Nicholas Miller and Widow Philpott. The lord's evident acceptance of enclosures of commons is in accord with Elton's statement in his Tenures of Kent that the lord could enclose lands in gavelkind at his discretion.

One large common in the parish was Loamwood (or Lonewood, later Hadlow Common), although it was not actually in the manor. Its size suggests that it must have played an important part in agricultural life. The name Lonewood appears in a perambulation of the Lowy of Tonbridge in 1259. It is mentioned several times in the survey as many pieces of tenemental land adjoined it. The area it covered in the fifteenth
and sixteenth centuries is not known. It is shown on old maps but no two depict the same boundaries and some give an indication of a general area, rather than an exact location. The 1769 map by Andrews, Dury and Herbert gives the clearest picture: a narrow strip bordered on the northern part of Carpenter’s Lane, the northern boundary followed the footpath at the side of Steers Place cottages, then ran in a north-easterly direction close to the Oxenhoath estate to the present Matthews Lane, turned south along Matthews Lane and returned to the southern boundary along the main Hadlow road. The western boundary from the Hadlow Road towards Carpenter’s Lane is suggested by a track on the same map leaving the main road at right angles, then veering left to Steers Place through the present Hayward Farm. Three tracks are shown crossing the common, but Common Road is of more recent construction. Present-day footpaths MT122 and MT123 and part of MT124 cross the former common.

The few surviving court rolls for Hadlow manors make no mention of the commons and so give no information on its management. An indication of local custom may be deduced from the common called the Hurst a few miles away where ‘the woods on the same belongeth to the lord of this manor, the pawnage (pannage) and harbegg (herbage) to the tenants’. A few odd pages at the end of the Hadlow survey referring to the manors of Mereworth and West Peckham include mention of ‘The common called Little Lomewood containing 30 acres and lying in Hadlowe the which the tenants saith that they have h(e)ard it shuld belonge to the Lord of this manor’. Several pieces of land in West Peckham are described as adjoining Little Lomewood or Lomewood, so it may well have separated Hadlow from West Peckham and/or Mereworth. No further reference has been found suggesting any dispute about ownership, although in the eighteenth century the manor of Lomewood alias Caysers/Kaysers was included with rentals for Wateringbury, East Peckham and Nettlestead.

The 1769 map shows three ponds on Lomewood Common, a few scattered trees and three houses on the edge, indicating that encroachments on the common had begun. The symbols used by the mapmaker were the same as those used to denote East Malling Heath and Cocks Heath; they would suggest scrubland. The soil is largely clay, particularly at the eastern end where brickmaking businesses are recorded as operating in the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By 1835-1848 many small and some larger enclosures dotted the common, although they still left substantial open land as confirmed by an 1835 survey of Hadlow Parish that listed 109 acres of unenclosed land there. A map dated 1858 showed that this had dwindled to 19 acres.

Today the only memory of Lomewood Common is a signpost to The Common, the comparatively new road called Common Road, and the cricket ground on former common land. Some bungalows built in the 1950s off the main Hadlow Road on land that became part of the Oxenhoath estate bear the name of Lonewood Way. Perhaps closer in spirit is the sight of horses grazing in a field off Carpenter’s Lane, formerly part of the common.
The earliest reference to a church in Hadlow is in the 'Textus Roffensis' c.975 – the Rochester Register – which records a contribution to Rochester Cathedral. The church is also mentioned in the Domesday Book entry for Hadlow. It stands close to the site of the former manor house, called Court Lodge (later replaced by Hadlow Castle). The present-day Church Place, known in 1460 as Lords Place and later as the Kings Head public house, stands on the northern side.

It is probable that the first church was a simple wooden building, rebuilt in stone in 1019 when the den was granted to Eddeva, the queen of Edward the Confessor. The lower part of the tower dates to this time, with long and short quoin stones visible in the outside north-east corner. The church was rebuilt and extended in the twelfth century, probably by Lord of the Manor, Richard de Clare, before he granted it to the Knights Hospitallers of St John of Jerusalem in 1166. The Knights had a preceptory in nearby West Peckham, surviving today as Dukes Place.

Late twelfth-early thirteenth-century lancet windows may be seen in the north and south walls, and a thirteenth-century south door was blocked up in 1853 but the archway remains. Above the present west doorway are traces of an earlier arch to a doorway. Stonework would also indicate that there was a small Saxon window just underneath the clock. It is thought that the upper part of the tower was added in the fifteenth century, together with a small spire. Windows would seem to have been inserted in the tower at various times, but there is one very small window high up on the east face of the tower which would appear to have been part of the original tower. Recent (August, 2005) work on the south wall has revealed rough stone work with dressed stones at the end of a wall underneath the Roman cement.

The interior of St Mary's has been altered many times over the centuries: the chancel was rebuilt in 1847, and the north aisle added in 1853. The late twelfth-early thirteenth-century chancel arch has survived. During alterations in 1936 the Saxon doorway at the west end of the church was exposed, and small crosses carved in the stonework were discovered. These are attributed to Nicholas de Hadloe and his son of Hadlow Place on their return from the Third Crusade (1189). The only monument to survive is that to Sir John Rivers and his wife Joan of Fishall, c.1619, Sir John dying in 1583 and Lady Joan in 1619 (see Chapter 13, on the Rivers family). None of the stained glass is older than Victorian.

The church played an important part in the life and well-being of the community. Dates of wills, etc., were normally identified by Saints' Days or other church festivals. Payments promised in wills were often made on church premises, as in the case of William Palle (Pawley is a surname in 1460) in 1465 who requested that an annuity be paid to his wife on the Wednesday after each Easter in Hadlow Church. Later, in 1543, Margaret Grenetre (the surname first appearing in 1581-3) left £7 to her son Thomas on
the condition that
'the legacy (to) be paid on day of St Michael the Archangel next ensuing
the date of making hereof within the parish church of Hadlow between
the howers of 9 and 12 of the clock in the forenoon of the same day.'

Clergy and staff involved with the church were often left money in the wills of local
people. The Sacrist, Thomas Gosse, was left money in several wills (1443-7), also his
successor John Knaght (1471-76). Parish clergymen named were Richard Blakehouse (1471),
John Bembin (1509), John Bedynnednyn (1512), John Mardeberry (1529) and Robert
Buttlar (1530). None of the Vicars who served during the time of the survey had local
family names. They were John Plumpton (1460), David Howell (1465), David Hewe
(1475), Thomas Benson (1496), Ralph Houghton (buried in the belfry) (1504), John
Turner (1513), Ralph Colcoff (buried in the chancel) (1514), Thomas Awland (1517),
John Crosse (renounced Papal authority) (1528), Henry Medow (1536), John Betson
(1540), William Pattenson (1545), John Best (1546), John Meer (1554), Thomas Snowe
(1555), Thomas Wyxe (1556), Thomas Snowe (1560), William Stace (1572), William
Leder (1587), John Starkey (1595).

Bequests for repairs or specific items for the church give an indication of its
interior. There would seem to have been two statues of the Virgin Mary, as some
bequests for wax candles were for the altar of Our Lady, while others specified the 'image
of Our Lady in the chancel' and 'Our Lady in the bodie of Hadlow church'. Reginald
Hadecher in 1516 instructed his executors 'to cause the image of Our Lady in the chancel
of Hadlow church to be well and sufficiently painted'. Other bequests included velvet and
a silver cope for the image of the Virgin Mary. Also mentioned were images of John the
Baptist, St Katherine (among the most popular saints in the fifteenth century), St Sight (St
Zita, patroness of maidservants at the same time) and the Trinity. Sir Ralph Colcoff, Vicar
from 1514 to 1517, left a 'best coverlet to be laid before the altar' plus 8d. 'to the altar
that I used to synge within church of Hadlow'. Henry Fane left two chalices to the value of
£4 in 1533 and was of sufficient status to have had his own chaplain, Sir James Baynes, to
whom he left four marks.

Many planned for their legacy to continue into future years, such as William Pall
leaving a cow in 1465, the profits to be used for the maintenance of a lamp in the chancel.
In 1514 John Walter instructed his wife to maintain a wax taper twice a year before the
Trinity and the image of Our Lady in the chancel, while in the same year John Brooke
asked his wife to give 1lb. of wax a year to keep tapers burning before Our Lady. The
sons of John Somer (a shopkeeper in 1460) were to find 'for their lives and the longest
liver of either' wax tapers before the image of Our Lady in the chancel and before St
Katherine twice a year.

The priest administered to the dying and often acted as a scribe and draftsman
of parishioners' wills, or acted as witness. This could well have meant that he was in a
position to suggest legacies. John a Barton evidently had a poor opinion of priests as in
1530 he left messuages to his son Thomas 'if he finds an honest priest to say masses'.
Burial instructions were frequently included in wills - Vicar Ralph Houghton requested
burial in the belfry (1513), William King 'to be chested and buried in Hadlow Churchyard
beside his first wife' (1576), while John Byshop asked that he be buried in St Olaves,
Southwark, or Hadlow depending on where he died (1516).
Several people left bequests to other churches, mainly to those in neighbouring villages. Richard Bealde in 1456 left 40s. each to Tonbridge, Tudeley and East Peckham (John Beald is in our survey, but not Richard). Thomas Lakk in 1527 left instructions for a gilded tabernacle to be made for the image of Our Lady on the Cross at Larkdle (Larkfield), together with a cote cloth of velvet. (The Lack surname first appears in 1581-3.) Vicar Ralph Colcoff left 20s. to St Giles, Newcastle under Lyme – perhaps an earlier parish – in addition to 6s.8d. and his best coverlet for Hadlow church.

The changes in Hadlow brought about by the Reformation can be traced through wills. If treated with caution the religious preambles to the wills provide a rough guide to changes in religious feeling. Peter Clark in a detailed study of religious trends during the period has divided these preambles into three categories: conservative, reformist and ‘committed Protestant’. The traditional, conservative, dedication was ‘I leave my soul to Almighty God, the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints in Heaven’. This phrase, with slight variations, was used in Hadlow wills up to the 1490's when the simpler 'I leave my soul to Almighty God' became increasingly common. Clark defines such wills as reformist as they 'omit all mention of intermediaries with the deity'. This is slightly misleading as often the 'Almighty God' is followed by 'etc.' and the wills sometimes go on to leave money for masses and/or lights before images, showing that the will maker was more conservative than first appears. However, there is little evidence of massive enthusiasm for the cults of the saints shown in the west country parish of Morebath.

Out of fifty-two wills written between 1500 and 1530 only fourteen contained bequests for lights or images. Many more wills contained specific requests for masses. In 1447 Thomas Fromond left 25s. for the Carmelite brothers of Aylesford to say 300 masses for his soul. He also arranged for a tenement to be sold and the money to be used to celebrate masses for the souls of his father and mother. Richard Bealde left 3s.4d. to the altar of Hadlow church for masses in 1456, plus 16s.8d. to the Carmelite Friars for masses for his soul, those of relatives and all deceased faithful. In 1461 Dionysia Ippenbury left 3d. for masses each year for twelve years, with land to be sold for masses in both Hadlow and East Peckham. Sir Raff Houghton, vicar of Hadlow in 1513, particularly asked for ‘the trental of St. Gregory' to be sung for his soul.

The last specific bequest for masses for the soul came in John Born's will of 1543 and soon after, in 1547, came the first ‘committed Protestant' will, that of Richard Harmon, a tanner, who left his soul to 'Almighty God, my Maker and Redeemer, desiring Him through the merit of Christ's Passion that I may be the child of Salvation'. After 1543 there were only five wills which mentioned the Blessed Virgin Mary, all the rest would be termed 'reformist' or 'Protestant' and bequests to the church, even for the obligatory 'forgotten tithes', always specified in earlier years, dried up completely. In 1559 an injunction instructed the clergy to discourage parishioners from religious provisions other than bequests to the poor. There had been some earlier provision for the poor; for example, Dionysia Ippenbury left land to her husband in 1461 on condition that he distributed 6s.8d. a year for twelve years to the poor of Hadlow at Quadragesima in bread, and James Gosse in 1493 left the profits of a field at Newy, called the Reade, for the benefit of the poor people of Hadlow. These bequests to the poor, including gifts of wheat, cash or clothing, increased from the 1540s and many, like John Holybone, left bequests for ‘foul ways’ (road repairs) and ‘poor mades marriages’ (dowries to help poor girls to marry).

The wills show no evidence of resistance to the extreme reforms of Edward's reign. The preambles were solidly reformist (5) or Protestant (5). There were a few bequests to the poor and one to Goldhill Bridge but it has to be said that the sums did not equal the sums formerly given for masses and lights. The people of Hadlow were taking the opportunity to save their money. What is very striking is that during Mary's reign there was no attempt to revive the old ways. Even the three wills which contain dedications to the Virgin Mary and the saints left nothing to the church. Of the other fourteen wills
written during Mary's reign, seven were reformist but seven were clearly Protestant. After the revival of the Heresy Acts in 1554, to advertise religious commitment in this way showed courage and possibly local protection and sympathy. John Barton (1554), John Wellar (1556) and Nicholas and Richard Somer (1557) were all prepared to use the formula 'I leave my soul to Almighty God my Saviour and Redeemer, whom I desire for the merit of Christ's Passion that I may be the child of Salvation'.

There is some evidence that the Hadlow/Tonbridge area was one particularly susceptible to Protestant ideas. Its position on one of the main routes between London and the Continent, and on the fringe of the Wealden cloth industry, had undoubtedly brought contact with Lollard influence. Lollards had at least one supporter in Hadlow, for Richard Hebard of Hadlow was brought to trial with Thomas Hellis of Brenchley in 1431. (A John Hebard was a shopkeeper in Church Street in 1460.) Richard Hebard owned English books containing heresy and had spoken out against the veneration of images. Both had to do penance in their parish churches, in Rochester cathedral, and also in Tonbridge and in Malling, suggesting they had been active in a wide area. Christopher Payn of Tonbridge admitted in 1496 that he had held meetings in his house and that he had been a Lollard for five or six years. On the whole the wills support the idea that Hadlow was, like the South East in general and the Weald in particular, ahead of the rest of England in its conversion to Protestantism.

The registers of St Mary's Church began in 1558. From these it can be seen that some of the families mentioned in the survey were still in Hadlow at the end of the sixteenth century. Among the names are Barton, Bishop, Fisher, Gooding, Honewold (Homewood), Johnson, Newman, Reeve, Simon and Stubbersfield, with Bourne, Burton, Colyn, Crud, Fane, Pawley, Salmon, Trice and Wells from those who took over tenements c.1581-3. No entries appear for Fromund, Nepaker or Pynchon, who were among the names of men who gave information at the original enquiry. Some may well have descendants in the village today, although family trees have not been checked.

The survey has entries referring to crosses at various places. Initially this was thought to mean crossroads, but bequests to repair the crosses at Goldhill, Hadlow Bridge and Palmers Street appear in Hadlow wills, suggesting that they were actual crosses. Reginald Hadecher left 20s. for the 'holing and reparation of Hadlow Cross' in 1516 (whereabouts unknown). It is probable that these crosses were visited during the traditional Rogationtide processions, and may also have been resting places where coffins were laid down while being carried to the church. (Older residents nowadays still refer to the path from Stallions Green to Bourne Grange Lane as the Coffin Path.) No trace of any of these crosses has survived and it is likely that they were destroyed in 1547/8.
According to Edward Hasted, the historian of Kent writing in the 1780s and 1790s, and having access to family archives, the Fane family was of Welsh origin. They had arrived in Kent in Henry VI’s reign, that is, some time between 1422 and 1461. Henry Vane had acquired Hilden manor in Tonbridge, part of what is now Hildenborough, and lived there. A will of one, Henry de Vane, shows his death in 1456 and burial in Tonbridge church, leaving a widow, Margaret. His donations of money for church repairs and references to land that he owned show a connection also with Leigh, Shipbourne, and Penshurst, and ownership of some Tonbridge land near North Frith. The family through the generations was plainly successful in raising children, including sons, so their relationships are not altogether clear, but this Henry Vane’s will shows that he had four sons, John (called John of Tonbridge), Richard, Robert, and Thomas, and a daughter, Joan, married to Thomas Reade. He also had a brother, William.

Hasted then turned his attention to the heirs of the eldest boy, John Vane of Tonbridge, dying in 1488. He had wide local connections, leaving money to Seal, East Peckham, Marden, Lamberhurst, Bidborough, Wittersham, and Snargate, and having land also in Ludlow, Shropshire. He too left four sons, Henry who settled in Hadlow, Richard who inherited Badsell in Five Oak Green, Capel parish, inheriting through his wife Agnes, daughter of Thomas Stidulph, Thomas of London, and John of Hadlow. These four boys introduce us to the generation that brought the Fanes (the spelling now altered from Vane to Fane) into Hadlow. He referred in his will not only to his brother John, having a son, Harry, but also to a Thomas Fane, without specifying the relationship. He should have been another brother. If he was, then Richard credited him with a son, John, and a daughter, Alice.
The Fanes' main family home came to be regarded as Badsells, which Richard, son of John of Tonbridge, inherited through his wife. It still exists, preserving fragments of a fifteenth or early sixteenth-century house, with a moat around it, in Five Oak Green, Capel parish. The family member who established the connection with Hadlow was the eldest son of John of Tonbridge, Henry (seemingly, the one called Harry in his uncle Richard Fane's will). Henry's date of birth is unknown but it may have been circa 1469, and according to Hasted he lived in Hadlow Place in Henry VII's reign, that is to say, by 1509.

No Fanes appear as occupiers of land in our 1460 survey, but it is perfectly possible that Henry Fane acquired Hadlow Place, which was a sub-manor, and was by 1509 a Hadlow resident. According to Hasted, he married Alice Fisher, who belonged to the Fisher family of Fishall, and, if this was so, it is quite likely that she became the heir to Hadlow Place and so had passed it to her husband. Fishall and Hadlow Place lie near each other, and the Fishers were of near-gentry status. That guess is strengthened by the fact that Henry Fane referred in his will to his brother-in-law, Richard Fisher, though he did not refer to Alice Fisher as his wife. She must have died already, for his wife at his death in 1533 was a Dering, and through her he had two step-daughters, Dorothy and Elizabeth.

Henry Fane achieved considerable standing in his lifetime, at court and also in the county; he was a gentleman usher at the funeral of Henry VII in 1509, JP for Kent from 1505, sheriff of Kent in 1507-8, and subsidy commissioner in 1523-6. His will when he died in 1533, depicted a sympathetic personage, for he left legacies, in some cases substantial, to over a dozen servants, an annual payment to a chaplain until he found a benefice, and a simple request for burial ‘as the body of a true Christian man’. He had had no children of his own, and presumably his step-daughters were well provided for by the Dering family, for the Derings were well-endowed Kent gentry. So he chose as his heir, Ralph Fane, the illegitimate son of his brother, John.

The Oxford DNB is in error, along with many other authors, in saying, that Henry Fane was father of Ralph Fane. He was not. John Fane made this clear in his own will in 1542. John recognised Ralph as his bastard son and bequeathed to him a house and lands in Southborough, with remainder to another bastard son, Robert, though of Robert nothing further has been found. John went on to marry, and referred to all his legitimate offspring in his will, expressing his last wishes in Catholic rather than Protestant, terms. He had married Joan, and by her he had had four daughters, not yet married, and two sons, Henry and Richard. He showed concern that Richard should be put to school and university, ‘if he had sufficient learning’; and he left him land in East Peckham and Nettlestead. Henry, the older boy, was to have lands in Tonbridge, Seal, Leigh, and Shipbourne, and was made executor of his father’s will along with Joan's wife, Joan. Henry Fane's will in 1533, bequeathed his ‘manor house at Hadlow’ and some small lands to Ralph Fane along with all his lands in Hadlow and Capel. So this was Hadlow Place, which had once been the house of Anne, Duchess of Buckingham, until her death in 1480. We have to guess that it came somehow to the Fishers after Anne died in 1480, and was in due course inherited by Alice Fisher. Therefore, at some date between 1533, when Henry Fane died, and 1540 when Ralph Fane married, Ralph moved into Hadlow Place.

Ralph Fane’s date of birth is unknown, but is thought to have been about 1510. He

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8. Hasted, V, 182
9. Hasted, V, 182
10. NA, Prob. 11, 29, 15
11. NA, Prob. 11, 25, 4
was later described as having rough manners, and he may well have had a deficient education, at least in foreign languages, for he later lamented his incompetence in French and German. But he had entry into governmental circles as a young man, for he served Thomas Cromwell from 1531 until 1538, and was commended by him to the king. In 1540 he became a Gentleman Pensioner at court, accepting the duty of attending Henry VIII on ceremonial occasions. He also accompanied him to war in France and Scotland, and was knighted at Boulogne in 1544. In the 1540s he received some considerable grants in Hadlow, Tonbridge, and Shipbourne of land that had been forfeited by the Duke of Buckingham, as well as acquiring Fishall from the Fishers.

In 1542 he was appointed Chief Governor and Keeper of Cage and Postern Parks, and we may suspect that as a Gentleman Pensioner he made good use of those parks and North Frith Park as well for the purpose of breeding fine horses. It became one of Henry VIII’s dedicated policies to improve the breed of English horses; they had proved so weak in bearing burdens when compared with Dutch horses.\(^{12}\)

Ralph did valiant service for Henry VIII between 1543 and 1546, being deputed to go to Flanders to hire mercenaries to fight for England in alliance with the Emperor against France. His letters back and forth to the king survive for these years, vividly showing what a harassing experience it was as he entered into a contract with the mercenaries, they milled restlessly and threateningly around the area of Aachen, and he waited for the money to arrive in Antwerp to pay them. These negotiations concerning the hiring of 4,000 footmen and 1,000 horsemen dragged on for months.

Subsequently, at the siege of Boulogne Ralph acquitted himself with honour, and was knighted by Henry VIII. He was back at home for the winter of 1544, in royal favour, and received a grant of lands in Shipbourne and Tonbridge. In 1545 he was promoted to be a Lieutenant of the Gentlemen Pensioners, and at some time in the same year he was ordered back to Flanders all over again, this time to muster German troops and lead them through France to Calais and Boulogne. Again he faced the agony of having settled to pay the soldiers for three months, and finding that they demanded four months’ pay, since they had been kept idly waiting for one month already. Three months’ pay left them with only one month’s campaigning and another month to get home; had they known how things would turn out, they said, they would never have agreed to such a short contract. At one stage Fane was threatened with mutinous men wanting to kill him: ‘God send us good riddance out of these wild beasts’ hands’, he wrote.

In the course of this correspondence, it is revealed that a Henry Fane, described as his cousin, was in company with Ralph in October, 1545. They were at Florines, and he is likely to have been Ralph’s half-brother; Lord Cobham’s son was also there. It gives us an insight into the way younger sons of gentry in Kent were introduced into adult life, getting access to a circle in which they might find a patron, and end up in court or in government service.\(^{13}\) Henry had been the executor of his father John’s will, when he died in 1543. He had inherited John’s main lands in Tonbridge, Seal, Leigh, and Shipbourne.\(^{14}\) John was, of course, Ralph’s father also. But by this time Ralph, by another route, had become a fairly wealthy man too; he was rated in the 1543 subsidy as owning lands to the value of £320. Ralph returned unharmed to England by early 1547, then fought in Scotland, and in the same year was recorded as a JP for Kent, and MP at Westminster.
the new reign of Edward VI, he looked to Somerset for patronage and favour, but when Somerset was overthrown by the Duke of Northumberland, Ralph was accused of conspiring against him. At the trial, he was said to have been 'answering like a ruffian',\(^{15}\) and was condemned and hanged in February 1552.

A vestige of Ralph's career survives in Hadlow Place which has a wooden frieze of carved heads over a stone fireplace. John Newman in Pevsner's Buildings of the Western Weald says that they are plainly German heads, dating from the period 1530-40. Ralph must have brought them back from the Low Countries, possibly when he attended on Anne of Cleves when she travelled from Düsseldorf to Calais for her brief, ill-fated marriage to Henry VIII, or, more likely, when Ralph was negotiating the hire of mercenaries in Flanders between 1543 and 1546. Perhaps the citizens of Aachen presented them to him, while begging him to take the mercenaries away from marauding their neighbourhood!

When Ralph Fane died in 1552, Elizabeth, his wife, did not continue living at Hadlow Place. She was Elizabeth Brydges, daughter and heir of Roland Brydges of Clerkenwell, Middlesex, and of The Ley, Weobley, Herefordshire, and had had no children by her marriage. She was a fervent Protestant who translated some of the psalms, and was deemed a 'liberal patronness' of Robert Crowley, a poet and cleric who insisted on the need to curb avarice and help the poor.\(^ {16}\) She was also 'a great and helpful supporter of imprisoned Protestants', persecuted under Queen Mary; she corresponded with them and was herself obliged at one stage to go into hiding. She moved to London at Ralph's death, and died in Holborn; she was buried in St Andrew's church on 11 June, 1568.\(^ {17}\) Scattered references to the earlier Protestant sympathies of some other Hadlow residents have been noted above in Chapter 7. Sir John Rivers and his wife, Joan, who moved into Hadlow when the Fanes departed, perpetuated the same tradition.

The next episode in the Fane story emerges from our Hadlow survey when analysing the additional notes that were inserted by the steward in 1581 when he copied out the survey of 1460. He inscribed in the margin the names of many of the new occupiers of the tenements. Now Henry Fane, Ralph's half-brother, featured noticeably, having acquired one fifth of a knight's fee of Hadlow manor, and holding sixteen named pieces of land, plus three that were shared with another. The total amounted to some 66 acres, that had been negotiated through some nineteen transactions with people occupying eight different tenements. An unidentified Colyer Fane also held a fragment of one acre. These two Fanes may, of course, have held land in other Hadlow manors also, but the Fanes were not destined to remain long in Hadlow, and as leading gentry in the parish, they would be replaced by the Rivers family.

The Fane story offers many insights into the fortunes of Kent's gentry, all of them starting modestly, but accepting the rules of gavelkind to provide for all their sons. Opinions about this system of inheritance would begin to change in the sixteenth century, and some gentlemen would procure acts to disgavel their land, enabling them to promote the eldest son at the expense of the rest. Families like the Culpepers, the Cottons, and the Fromonds were all agents and victims in Hadlow of this changing world. Some of their offspring would be content to be diligent, conscientious, local administrators without
aspiring to great heights in national life. Others had greater ambitions. Experience in the first half of the sixteenth century taught some sharp lessons about the fortunes that might be made, but also about the risks that they ran of premature death, if once they entered politics or found a footing at court. One branch of the Fanes prospered exceedingly, becoming landowners in Mereworth, building Mereworth Castle, and becoming Earls of Westmorland. The first earl was Francis Fane (1583-1628), son of Sir Thomas Fane who died in 1589. Hunton church has a fine memorial in the chancel to another Sir Thomas Fane who died in the same year as his wife, Helen (described on the tomb as Dame Helen Somerset), in 1606. It shows them recumbent alongside one another, with a figure in the front of their only daughter, Mary, who died in childbirth, and her son, Thomas, who died soon after her. As this Sir Thomas had no other children, he made Sir George Fane, second son of Sir Thomas Fane of Badsell and of Dame Mary, Baroness Le Despencer, his heir. A brass plate on the wall of the church also commemorates Francis Fane, grandchild of Baroness Le Despencer, and son of the above Sir George Fane. Another earlier monument of a George Fane is a tomb-chest with canopy, but without effigy, dated 1571 in Tudeley church (see photo on page 73), the church that also has several windows by Marc Chagall.


THE RIVERS FAMILY

The Rivers family were the leading gentry in Hadlow around 1600, having succeeded to the role that had been played by the Fane family until Ralph Fane was hanged for treason in 1552. They settled in slowly, but some members of the family remained to the end of the seventeenth century.

When the Rivers family arrived in Kent, their main home was in Chafford. According to Hasted they acquired Chafford Place, in the parish of Penshurst, in Henry VIII's reign, having come originally from River Hill in Hampshire. Richard Rivers was steward of the lands of Edward, Duke of Buckingham. As the Duke was executed in 1521, Richard Rivers could have been introduced to Hadlow early in the sixteenth century, visiting it as an official in charge of the Duke of Buckingham's lands. But no trace of the family is found in Hadlow documents until the 1580s, when a rental of Hadlow manor in 1586 mentions one Rivers, a widow, as a tenant, and also names the heirs of Sir John Rivers as having an interest in a piece of Hadlow land called Lowlings. In the same document, Sir John Rivers is also shown holding a knight's fee for Pechams manor, along with Henry Fane esquire. More than one member of the Rivers family was now settled in Hadlow, for in a subsidy list of taxpayers in 1589 Lady Rivers was paying more than anyone else in subsidy on goods (at 41s.8d.), and Richard Rivers, esquire, (relationship unknown) paid on 8s.4d; no member of the family at this date, however, was taxed on land.¹

¹. Hasted, 1798, III, 250; BL, Add MS 16279, f.383; CKS, U38/M1

The scattered places with which the Rivers family showed a connection included Leigh and Tonbridge in Kent, Chafford in Sussex, and London, suggesting that they had no overpowering attachment to Hadlow. But their loyalty increased over the years, and in the 1690s Clement Rivers was at Fish Hall. Around 1600 it is Sir John Rivers and his wife who attract most notice, for Sir John had been Lord Mayor of London in 1573, and a
member of the Grocers' Company. London port books in 1567/8 show him as John Rivers, alderman of London, importing ginger and pepper from Antwerp. A memorial commemorates both husband and wife on the south wall of the chancel in Hadlow church.

No family archives for the Rivers are known to exist, and no traditions of their living in Hadlow survive. But we learn something about them from their wills. Sir John Rivers's will was dated January 5, 1581 and he was buried on 17 March, 1584. Words in his last testament showed his strong Protestant beliefs, hoping to rise with the Elect at the end of a transitory life, and wishing to be buried in the chancel of Hadlow church on the right hand side, near the wall. He left money for preaching four times a year for five years in Hadlow church, and made similar provision in Little St. Bartholomew's church in London. Among bequests to the poor he gave sums to prisoners in Newgate prison and King's Bench prison in Southwark. He also provided for a dinner on the day of his burial for members of the Livery of the Grocers' Company, and allowed for innumerable black coats to be given to his relations, all his servants (but gowns for the women), and certain friends in Penshurst, and in Wityham, Sussex. Significantly, members of the Willard family, including David, the thrusting entrepreneur in the iron industry, received black cloaks rather than coats, while others, including closer relations, received gold rings. Sir John owned property in Tonbridge, Groombridge, Wityham, Ashurst, and London, and was owner of the manor of Chafford. In a codicil he arranged for his woodlands, without stating where they were, to be used to make coals, the profit going to his wife. (In 1559 John Rivers, not yet knighted, had bought from Sir Henry Sydney woodland in Penshurst in South Park 'to be taken and felled within 21 years', but he sold it back to him in 1569. The development of the iron industry in and around Tonbridge was clearly still in full swing in the 1580s and Sir John evidently had no qualms about his collaboration with David Willard. Was it perhaps David Willard who had nudged him into inserting this codicil?

Sir John's widow lived for another twenty-five years, being buried on 30 May, 1619. Her will was made when she was in good health, and had perfect memory, but it plainly showed how she had disapproved of her husband's expenditure on all those black coats and cloaks. She, in contrast, wanted to be buried 'in some convenient place without vain show of black or other extraordinary funeral expenses'. In their stead she gave away a number of gold rings. The preamble of her will was considerably more impassioned than her husband's in proclaiming her belief in an afterlife. The wording of her feelings towards local places was revealed in her bequest of £6 to the poorest and eldest people of Hadlow, £5 to the poor widows and the eldest poor of Westerham, and £4 to the poor of Penshurst. She also left £5 to build a stone porch at Ashurst church, when the parishioners 'shall go about the new building of it', and like her husband she left money for poor prisoners in three prisons in London. She had warm words for her husband, calling him 'most kind and loving', and asked for a monument to be erected in memory of them both and their children in Hadlow church, like the one erected to her own parents in St Bartholomew's church near the Exchange in London. She left quite a few pieces of silver ware to kinsmen, and in a way that was more characteristic of women than men, she listed many personal possessions, such as items of furniture, tapestry, and kitchen pots, and one long needlework carpet with arms that had once belonged to her father, Sir George Barnes. This property was evidently located at Chafford, which was clearly a substantial house with a great hall and gallery; it was pulled down in 1743. Echoing her husband, Lady Elizabeth expressed the hope that her family and friends would be contented with her will; it was certainly a detailed one that must have taken her much time and thoughtful consideration, for she had a large family of children and grandchildren to consider. She had given birth to at least six sons and three daughters.

Edward Rivers, one of Lady Joan's younger sons, was executor of her will, and in 1632 when he made a will, and was unmarried, he was described as a merchant; judging by his connections, he worked in London. He had become owner, seemingly, by inheritance from George Rivers, esquire, (see below) of what he called 'the manor of...
Fishall', though Fishall's status as a manor is not proved in any manorial documents, and he wished to be buried in Hadlow near his mother. He did not die until 1660, however, and no monument to him is visible in the church.6

The concern that Sir John and Lady Joan Rivers showed in the words of their wills to avoid disputes is reflected in the will of another member of the Rivers family. George Rivers, esquire, of Hadlow was a younger son of the late Sir George Rivers of Chafford, and was the owner of Fishall when he died in 1632. He lived, he said, 'in the messuage in Fishall', and he too deemed it a manor. Lady Joan was his grandmother, and it seems that she had exerted great influence over her family, for he wished to be buried in Hadlow church near her and his uncle, and he was as fervent a Puritan as she had been.7 His anxieties were expressed thus in his will as he lay on the brink of death, 'knowing how much it concerns every man in his life to settle his estate so that after his death it may be enjoyed by such to whom he intends it without controversy or suits, which otherwise often happen between persons near in blood, to the breach of all bonds of amity and the corruption of many estates'. A momentous story obviously lay behind those words, perhaps involving a local family, or stirring gossip in London. Significantly, he gave to his wife, Rose, in her widowhood his whole estate, rather than just the half to which she was entitled, though if she married he reduced it to a half, without, he said, wishing to restrain her from marrying, according to her 'good liking'. His prime concern was for the education and maintenance of his children.

The strong sense of kinship in this family permeated other wills, such as that of Sir Thomas Rivers in 1657, owner of a manor in Hadlow, which may have been Pechams because he held a farm called Peckham Place. He was evidently unmarried, without children, and all his property was destined for his brothers and sisters.8 In Hadlow's social hierarchy, the Rivers family replaced the Fanes, but only gradually did they establish a firm bond with Hadlow, and they left no elegant buildings in the village by which we might remember them.

### THE FROMOND FAMILY

The Fromond family was of near gentry status, at one time owning lands totalling only slightly less than a knight's fee. However, by the time of the survey some branches of the family were humbler and played their part in Hadlow life alongside families such as the Bishops, Bealdes and Fishers. Although they had connections with Tonbridge castle and business dealings with London, Maidstone and other areas of Kent, there is no evidence that they took any part in national politics.

The family name first appeared in the area in association with the 'Manor of Thomas Fromond in Hadlow'. Court Rolls for that manor, beginning 20 July 1294, cite Thomas as lord. In 1339 his son Nicholas succeeded him but by 1349 Nicholas's widow, Alice, was holding the court. In December 1350 Thomas Fromond junior was lord, but in 1352 the lordship passed to Richard at Weald and by 1378 it was in the hands of the Godyng family where it remained for more than a century. In spite of the change the court was still said to be 'held at Thomas Fromonds'. However, Thomas Fromond 'of Fishall' and his son Thomas Fromond 'of Goldhill', continued to owe suit of court in the manor, and court rolls and rentals of the manor continued to record members of the family holding land there.1

Numerous other documents, apart from the survey, refer to the family. The most useful of these are nine early wills, dating between 1447 and 1488. Because they cover a far shorter period than the Bishop wills it is more difficult to discover a line of descent, but more branches of the family are included. Members of the family appear as litigants in the manor court rolls and, in various capacities, in the wills of others. Perhaps because of their higher status there are also early references in the Patent and Close Rolls and among Kent Feet of Fines.

As early as 1320, a case between Thomas, son of John Fromond of Goldhill senior,
plaintiff, and John Fromond of Goldhill, defendant, shows that the branch of the family that called itself 'of Goldhill' as opposed to 'of Kempinghale', or 'atte Water', was established. The case also listed the property involved; one messuage, fifty acres of land, thirteen acres of meadow, and a weir in the water called Knokewere (Oak Weir), with its appurtenances. The lands were eventually granted by Thomas to John for life, 'for service of a rose', to be paid at the feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist.

Another document of 1320 demonstrates that the Fromonds were not only land owners but also shop owners and that their holdings extended beyond Hadlow. Gilbert Fromond owned one messuage, one shop, twelve acres of land and one of pasture in East Peckham, Hadlow, Tudeley and Maidstone. In 1337 Gilbert Fromond was in debt and in 1346 Johane Fromond paid 20s. in an aid to the Black Prince for a demesne in Hadlow.

In 1358 there was a reference to John Fromond Receiver, the Earl of Stafford's Lordship of Tonbridge. As Receiver, John would have come into the orbit of Tonbridge Castle and the family must have had connections with other minor and even major figures in the Earl's household. A payment by John in 1362 to the Prior and Convent of Tonbridge of 10 marks indicates a man of some substance. The Close Rolls have another reference to a John Fromond in 1398, the last of the century. He made a quit claim of all his lands in Hadlow, a way there called 'the Forde' and two bridges, to Thomas Sibseye, tailor, of London, again showing that the family had more than just local connections. The lands included pieces called Nuemede, Smeltes Meede, Warde and Bothegate.

Probably the most important early document which mentions the Fromond family is the Inquisition Post Mortem into the estates of Gilbert de Clare in 1315, after the death of Gilbert at the battle of Bannockburn. This shows that a John Fromond had half a knight's fee in Hadlow called Fromonds while Thomas Fromond held one fifth of a knight's fee called Goodmans (Godyngs?). A later Inquisition, on the death of Hugh de Audeley who inherited part of the Clare estates through his wife, Gilbert's daughter Margaret, updates the situation. At this time a John Fromond still held half a knight's fee while Gilbert Fromond held an eighth of a fee, and a sixth with John atte Weald, and a sixteenth with William de Pymp. Nicholas Fromond held a fifth of a fee. While John's fee was said to be 'held of the King in chief', the fees of Gilbert and Nicholas were presumably held through the Archbishop like other lands in the Lowy. By 1398 a Thomas Fromond was in possession of the half knight's fee and a John Fromond had inherited Nicholas's fifth. The fractions of fees which Gilbert held were no longer attributed to the family. In 1405 a list of the dower lands of Anne, late wife of Edmund, Earl of Stafford, included the fifth part of a knight's fee in the hands of Thomas Fromond.

An inquisition at the time of the death of Humphrey, Duke of Buckingham, in 1460 states that a John Fromond still held a half fee in Hadlow. However, our survey only assigns him, 'one sixteenth part of a knight's fee in his own capital messuage, with lands called Kings adjoining, formerly of Richard Bealde', in Hadlow Manor itself. Lady Margaret Fromond held a sixth of a knight's fee, formerly of Richard Broomfield, at Edmund, Fromonds and Collesstokes. At the same time Sir Richard Culpeper held half a knight's fee, 'lately of John Fromonde next Barns Street in Hadlow' and John Goding held a fifth part of a knight's fee formerly of Thomas Fromond'. This would indicate that the Fromonds were alienating as well as acquiring land and that the original half knight's fee did not remain the core of their holding. Thomas Fromond's will of 1447 mentions 'my capital tenement with garden adjoining, in total one messuage, garden and two pieces of land adjoining called Kings', which contained fifteen acres, about one sixth of his total holding of approximately eighty eight acres. The survey is quite clear about the obligations which came with a knight's fee, or part knight's fee. Lady Elizabeth Culpeper, for instance, 'owes castle guard in time of war in the fashion of a knight' and scutage and suit of court every three weeks. But the survey does not describe the lands which went to make up the parts of fees it mentions. Did they actually consist of lands or did lands already held create an obligation to knight's service, compensated for by some privileges and prestige? 2

2. Knights' fees are most helpfully discussed in Harvey, 1970.
By the time of the survey seven members of the Fromond family, four of them women, held land in Hadlow Manor. The holdings were in ten different tenements, most to the south of the Goldhill to Tonbridge highway, some bordering on the Medway, adjacent to, even interspersed with, land in the Manor of Fromonds. (See photo map on page 61 for orientation of Goldhill.) John Fromond of Goldhill was credited with a sixteenth of a knight's fee and approximately forty acres concentrated in Brook tenement. Lady Margaret Fromond held fourteen acres distributed between Lake, Brooke, Eastwosys and a tenement formerly of William at Lake that was held to be one sixth of a knight's fee. Gilbert Fromond held less than two acres in Brook tenement and his wife Alice four acres in Stoperfields. Another Alice Fromond, widow of Peter, held over five acres in Hamenets, over three in Alynslove, and four in Stoperfields. Joan Fromond atte Water held approximately sixteen acres distributed between Jopes, Fishland, and Odamys tenements. John Fromond of Kempinghale had just over sixteen acres in Lake and Lotewood.

Joan Fromond atte Water was left a fairly wealthy widow by the will of her husband Thomas. According to the survey she had two houses, 'a garden with a house built upon it called Hentlove' in Jopes tenement and 'her messuage in which she lives with a small piece of land adjoining' in Odamys tenement. Alice, the widow of Peter Fromond atte Water, Joan's daughter in law, does not appear to have lived in the manor as there is no house recorded on her lands there, unless she lived in one of Joan's houses. However, Alice, the wife of Gilbert Fromond, held, in her own right, a messuage and garden called Robards, near to the Goldhill to Malling highway. John Fromond of Goldhill, also had his 'capital messuage' within the manor but his mother, Lady Margaret Fromond, unless she shared his house, lived outside the manor, possibly outside the parish, as she had holdings in Tudeley, East Peckham, Hunton and Linton and even in Romney Marsh. The last member of the family to appear in the survey, John Fromond of Kempinghale, had a 'messuage in which he lives with a barn, land and garden' called Clob Croft, near to the lane to Gibbons Lake and also 'one parcel of land with a house built upon it, called Thomas at Grove, lately acquired of Richard Knight'.

The wills help us to make some sense of family relationships. The first of the wills is that of Thomas Fromond of Goldhill, written in 1447. This will firmly connects him to his son, John Fromond of Goldhill, and to his wife, Lady Margaret Fromond. In it numerous pieces of land are named, including the part knight's fee and capital messuage, which then appear in John's name in the survey. A piece of land ordered to be sold to pay for masses, 'Bounds', appears in the survey under Walter Martyn's name 'lately purchased of Lady

![Image of women digging in the herb garden](image-url)
Margaret Fromond'. Not only did both Thomas and Margaret acknowledge an heir, John, in their wills, but also a younger son Richard and a daughter Joan or Joanna. Provision was also made in Thomas's will for an unborn child with which Margaret was pregnant; if it was a girl she was to have 20 marks like her sister Joan, if a boy he was to share Margaret's dower lands with his brother Richard on her death. Margaret left nothing to this child in her own will, so presumably it died. Thomas is not given a title so perhaps Margaret's title was in her own right or that of her first husband. Thomas's will also takes us back a generation as he provided for masses to be said for the souls of his parents Thomas and Alice.

The next will, that of Roger Fromond in 1448, was that of a less affluent man if we can judge at all from his tithes. Whereas Thomas and Margaret each left 6s.8d. for forgotten tithes, Roger left only 12d. It was not that he was lacking in piety, he left many bequests to the church and pious causes as he did not seem to have had a wife or children. He did, however, leave bequests to the Watte family, particularly Julia and Robert, possibly a daughter or niece and her husband. Julia Watte is in the survey owning land close to the Fromond family.

Peter Fromond must have died shortly before the survey was made. In his will, dated 1462, he left only 12d. for forgotten tithes but also left money to pay for white bread to be made and distributed to the poor on the day of his burial. His mother (or stepmother perhaps as she is referred to as 'formerly my father's wife'), Joan Fromond atte Water, had been left well provided by his father Thomas. His own wife, Alice, the 'widow of Peter Fromond' in the survey, was in possession of fourteen acres. His will specified that on Joan's death the profits from all her lands, as set out in his father's will, were to go to Alice until their son Richard came of age to inherit, at twenty one years.

Katherine, Johane, Agnes and Margaret, his daughters, seem to have been left at the mercy of their mother and brother, only to inherit if Richard died without 'heirs of his body lawfully begotten'. In common with other testators, Peter indulged himself in pious fantasies of what should be done with his estate if all his children were to die without heirs, (somewhat unlikely even in the fourteen hundreds). His lands were to be sold and the money used for repairs to the church wherever most needed. However he provided that any member of 'the blood' (the family) would have first refusal at the sale.

In his will of 1468 John Fromond of Kempingle also left a modest sum of 12d. for forgotten tithes, and only 4d. for the priest and for each of his godchildren. His wife, Margaret, was to have half of all his lands, tenements goods and 'utensilium', if she chose to remain in the house. 'Utensilia' is variously translated as 'appurtenances' or 'looms' and in the context of 'dimidiam bonorum et utensilium meorum', looms would seem possible. John had only about seventeen acres of land, at least in Hadlow Manor, and may well have needed another occupation as well as farming. If Margaret died or if she chose to leave the house, then everything was to remain to his son Richard and his feoffees, who had to pay Margaret 20s. a year till the end of her days. Presumably the house in question, 'mansum' was the main dwelling house and not one he had 'lately purchased of Richard Knight'.

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**The Fromonds atte Water**

1. Thomas FROMOND atte Water
2. Joan
3. Peter FROMOND
4. Alice
5. Richard FROMOND
6. Katherine FROMOND
7. Johanne FROMOND
8. Agnes FROMOND
9. Margaret FROMOND
10. Alice PERYN
11. John PERYN

Katherine, Johane, Agnes and Margaret, his daughters, seem to have been left at the mercy of their mother and brother, only to inherit if Richard died without 'heirs of his body lawfully begotten'. In common with other testators, Peter indulged himself in pious fantasies of what should be done with his estate if all his children were to die without heirs, (somewhat unlikely even in the fourteen hundreds). His lands were to be sold and the money used for repairs to the church wherever most needed. However he provided that any member of 'the blood' (the family) would have first refusal at the sale.

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Joan atte Water also left a will dated 1468. The only named piece of land mentioned in it, Northmesteye, does not appear in the survey, making it difficult to place her in the family with certainty. However, it would seem likely that she was the Joan atte Water of the survey, widow of Thomas and owner of two houses and about sixteen acres of land. In Peter at Water's will, lands were referred to which his wife Alice should inherit on the death of 'my father's wife Joan'. Presumably these were dower lands and passed automatically back to the family and were therefore not listed in Joan's will. However, she made provision for the piece of pasture, Northmesteye, to be sold and from the proceeds £4 to be paid to Agnes Peryn on her marriage and 13s.4d. to 'John Peryn filium meum'. It is possible that John Peryn was a son-in-law, but more likely he was a son from a previous marriage and Northmesteye was either Joan's in her own right or inherited from this earlier marriage. Her executors were John Peryn and Richard Fromond of Kempinghale.

Gilbert Fromond who died in 1471, left 3s.4d. for his 'forgotten tithes'. This is slightly surprising as he held only two acres in the manor, in Brook tenement. Perhaps he held more land in other manors of the parish. His wife, Alice, held four more acres in her own right. His will was simple, all his lands were to be sold and after Alice had been paid ten marks, the rest of the proceeds were to be disposed for the health of his soul. Neither his executors, nor his feoffees were members of the Fromond family. This can perhaps be explained by a law case between him and Joanna Henley, née Fromond. She maintained that her uncle William had paid Gilbert for eight acres in Hadlow but that before ownership was transferred William, 'so visited by sickness that he doubted him to dye', willed the land to his brother Robert, Joanna's father. By the time of the case the said Gilbert had 'utterly refused and still refuseth' to give up the land.

Lady Margaret Fromond followed her husband Thomas to the grave in 1475. Like many wealthy widows, she indulged herself with numerous small bequests, which show a more human side of the society of the time. She left, in total, about fifteen marks to various churches, including the Friars at Aylesford, (popular beneficiaries among Hadlow donors), the prior and convent of Tonbridge, and Hadlow and Hunton parish churches, for repairs but mostly for funeral and memorial masses. She did not specifically mention her first husband among those to be prayed for but included her two sons, William and John Holden. She also left 12d. to each of her godchildren and 1d. to 'poor people' to pray for her soul. She used the phrase 'corpusque meum sepelendum et tumulendum in ecclesia de Hadlow' rather than the more usual 'sepelendum in cimiterio ecclesie de Hadlow,' possibly indicating a burial in a tomb in the church rather than outside in the churchyard.

After her soul, Lady Margaret's next most pressing concern seems to have been for her son, or more likely, grandson, John Holden. She left her younger son, Richard Fromond, all her lands, tenements, rents and services to him and his heirs in perpetuity, including lands in Yalding to which Margaret was heir on the death of Johanna Snell, her father's widow. But it was only on condition that 'Ricardus Fromond custodet… Johanem Holden, fratruum suum bene et honeste'. She obviously did not entirely trust Richard's good will and honesty towards his half brother's child because she spelt out the care and maintenance expected in equipment, clothing, bedding, food and drink. There were numerous legacies to others, not obviously family members, including two of her servants: 20d. to John Brown and a two year old heifer to Agnes Peneale to 'pray for my soul'. As a footnote, and as further evidence that family arrangements did not always go smoothly, Margaret and her son Richard went to law with Nicholas Stoperfield for the
release of lands he held of Thomas Fromond, Margaret's husband and Richard's father, and also with John Snell and Richard Cob for lands due to her from her first husband, Richard Holden.\textsuperscript{11}

The Margaret Fromond who died in 1482 does not feature in the survey as a tenant but the lands which she left in her will were there, held by John Fromond of Kempinghale. She was presumably his widow but she either remarried in the fourteen years following his death or she had been married previously as all the lands at her disposal on her own death were left to her son Robert Rigon. These lands totalled over nine acres out of the sixteen listed in John Fromond of Kempinghale's name in the survey, so his own son Richard either did rather badly or inherited land in another manor. Robert Rigon was also made her executor, but Richard Fromond, with John Fromond and Thomas Stoperfield, were her feoffees with Robert. She left Alice Fromond and John son of Thomas Stoperfield 12d. each, 12d. to the church for her tithes and 12d. to repair the road between the houses of John Fromond and John Polley. Robert Rigon was to pay 3s.4d. out of his inheritance for church repairs.\textsuperscript{12}

The last will of the series, that of John Fromond in 1488, is both interesting and tantalizing because it only mentions one piece of land by name and that is not in the survey. For this reason it is difficult to identify him positively. It seems likely that he was the John Fromond of Goldhill of the survey as he left his wife Joan four acres of land called Hawkynnys and land of this name appears in the will of Thomas Fromond of Goldhill, the father of a John Fromond. However, if he was the son of Thomas and Lady Margaret, he seems to have been less wealthy than his parents, who each left 6s.8d. for forgotten tithes while he only left 3s.4d. and far less in bequests to the church. As well as Hawkynnys, left to Joan in perpetuity, he also left her a life interest in all his other property. He listed the usual lands, tenements, rents and services, but added also waters, ponds, fisheries, ways, paths, weirs, banks and ditches. Clearly these constructions were an important part of his livelihood. After the death of Joan all his property was to go to his daughter Margery.\textsuperscript{13}

The Fromonds also featured occasionally in the Hadlow/Lomewood Manor Court Rolls. Usually John Fromond of Goldhill was fined for non-attendance at the court or paid in advance for remittance of his suit. Occasionally Richard Fromond paid a similar fine of 2d. or 4d. In November 1478 John was arbiter in a suit between John Symonds at Tanners and William Fletcher, while in November 1481 he was fined, with William Bealde, for failing to take part in an inquisition between Richard Wyks and John Newman in a plea of debt. In April 1480 he was elected to the office of beadle for the tenement of Brook. Finally in January 1482 Richard Kebbyll started proceedings in a plea of debt against John and his wife Joan but dropped the case the following month.\textsuperscript{14}

By 1512 the family name had disappeared from the Hadlow Manor Court Rolls and there were no further wills nor any record of the name in the church registers. However, a rental of 1490 shows that John Fromond of Kempynhale still held land in the Manor of Fromonds, rented from 'Richard Fromond of Barnstrete'. In 1561 Bartholomew Fromond was fined for not attending the court of that manor. It was presumably he who moved that branch of the family to Surrey, as when he died in 1579 his will (proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury) recorded him as 'of Cheam in the county of Surrey'. He still held lands in Hadlow and Hunton, however, which he left to his son William who in 1586 was paying Sir George Carey 2s.8d. rent for Barnes Place.\textsuperscript{15} The name did not appear in the subsidy rolls of 1589 for Hadlow or the nearby boroughs and there is no further reference to the name in the manor of...
Fromonds. William and, later, Bartholomew Fromonds do, however, appear in the Causton Manor court rolls, the last reference being in 1661. It is impossible to say whether the male line died out after this or if the family simply retreated to their Surrey estates.

THE BISHOP FAMILY

The Bishop family, while not of knightly or even gentry status, were certainly important landowners with considerable holdings and influence in both the manor and locality. Like the Fromonds and Fishers they were members of a closely linked group of local families with marriage and business connections, some of whom were prospering while others were ‘mouldering away’. Apart from references to the family in the survey itself, eight family wills date from the period relevant to the survey, and family members appear as beneficiaries, executors, overseers and witnesses in the wills of others. Bishops also feature in manor court rolls and other miscellaneous documents such as deeds and legal cases. From these materials it is possible to construct a rudimentary family tree and to gain some idea of family relationships and of the family’s influence in the parish.

Gervase Bishop was possibly the common ancestor of the various branches of the family which appear in the survey. He is recorded as the former holder of the tenements of ‘Freferdin’, ‘Peacocks’, and ‘Woodmaneyes’, which by the time of the survey were in the hands of John Bishop, son of Robert, and his associates. However, his relationship to John is not made clear. Another tenement, ‘Broomfields’, at the time of the survey held by John atte Stable and his associates, was ‘formerly of Walter Bishop’. Again there is no clear connection to the Bishops of the survey.

By contrast, William Bishop is mentioned in a way which implies that he is fairly recently deceased, and sons and grandsons are recorded as now holding his land in a way that links him to the next generation, the generation of the survey. His name is also recorded in a rental of the nearby manor of ‘Caustons’, dated 1406-7, holding jointly with William Coiffe, ‘land lately of John Bishop and the heirs of Richard Bishop’. These references, to Gervase, Walter, John and Richard Bishop, imply that the family was well established in the area before the beginning of the fifteenth century.

At least four Bishops appear in the survey, holding approximately 169 of the manor’s 1287 acres in nineteen out of the fifty-nine tenements. These were; Robert, son of William, Thomas, son of William, John son of Robert and John son of Richard (also William’s son but by this time dead). John, Thomas and Robert Bishop also feature without the qualification ‘son of’, almost certainly the same men, but it is impossible to be sure or to know whether it is John, son of Richard or John, son of Robert. Within the Manor of Hadlow, John, son of Robert, was the family member with by far the largest amount of land, and he is named as the chief tenant in eight tenements, but this may not reflect the situation in the parish as a whole. The survey also describes the location of some of the family’s houses. John, son of Robert and John, son of Richard, almost certainly cousins, had houses on the North side of the Hadlow to Tonbridge highway, at Stairbridge. The house of John, Richard’s son, is described as ‘his capital messuage with garden adjoining’. On the south side of the road, John, son of Robert, had another house called The Mill House, with a piece of land called ‘Seatons’. The survey does not state that he lived in either of these, but he does not appear to have owned any other house in the manor. Near by if not adjacent to the Mill House, Robert Bishop, son of William, held ‘one messuage in which he lives, formerly of John Kene, with a garden and three pieces of land’. (See map on page 10, and plan on page 12.) He also had another messuage ‘by the right of his wife Agnes, for the term of her life’ in the tenement of ‘Wekerylds’.

Unfortunately William Bishop’s testament, made in 1456, contains only details of charitable bequests to the church, repair of the road, and to various friends, or possibly servants. The rest of his appurtenances he left to his son Richard and his ‘goods
unbequethed' were divided between sons Richard and Thomas. Both were named as executors, so must have been adult by this date. No will is registered with the testament and therefore there is no mention of any land. Nor is there any reference to a son Robert, although Robert, son of William, is one of the Bishops who feature in the survey. Perhaps Robert was the eldest son and had already taken charge of the lands of an elderly father. It is safer to assume that custom and/or his wishes were well understood and a formal will was unnecessary or at any rate not registered. Conversely, there is no mention in the survey of a Richard, son of William, so presumably he had died by the time the survey was made and his son John had already inherited.  

Another problem is posed by a will of 9 August 1459, that of Robert Bishop senior. He had a son John, and grandsons Richard, John and Robert, fitting neatly with information in the survey and other family wills. However, if the dating of the survey is correct, he must have died before it was made and cannot be the Robert son of William to whom it refers. Perhaps he was a brother of William Bishop rather than a son.  

In 1483, John Bishop(1) senior made a will. It seems likely that he was the John, son of Robert, who featured in the survey, but apparently he had only one son John (2). The will shows that, as suspected, he had holdings not only outside the manor of Hadlow, but outside the parish. He left his wife Alice ‘for term of her life’, two pieces of land in Hadlow, ‘Larkhale’ and ‘Buntanhale’. Although neither of these pieces of land was listed among the Bishop lands noted in the survey, the names appear attached to other occupiers in tenements, ‘Lark’ and ‘Buntings’, on the edge of the manor. ‘Buntynhale’ was bordered by John Bishop’s piece of land called ‘Vicars Field’, which lay within the manor. In the next tenement (Lake) there is a reference in the survey to land bordered by ‘Katherine Bishop’s land’. Presumably this lay in the next manor as she does not appear in the survey holding land in Hadlow manor.  

John also left his wife ‘all his lands and tenements in Bitberea’ (Bidborough). His son John was to inherit all his other lands in Hadlow, Tonbridge and elsewhere in Kent. In his will he made arrangements for his executors, Alice and John, to pay heriots to Henry, Duke of Buckingham, Richard Culpeper, knight, and George Chown of Leigh. It was a quirk of Kentish tenure that freehold land was burdened with the payment of a heriot, unlike customs elsewhere, requiring it only from unfree land. His feoffees were John Pympe, knight, Richard Tutesham, John Welard, William Cayser and John Godyng.  

In 1512 another John Bishop(2) made a much more helpful will. He was apparently a fairly young man at the time of his death as he left at least two unmarried daughters. He left his wife all his goods, ‘moveable and immovable’, and all land in corn ‘until it be
Perhaps the most interesting part of the will is the light it throws on the size and arrangement of his house at Stair. Originally a simple hall house, it would have been timber framed with a central hall open to the roof with a kitchen at one end. The wills add a great deal to this basic information. John's widow and executor, Joan, was to have ‘the east part of my house with the parlour chambers and kerchyn with free comyng and goyng to the well, oven and garden lying over the east-side of the parlour’, so some extension and modification had already been made. Reasonably enough she was to leave the house if she remarried and ‘release the keepyng of her keene’. The will does not mention giving up her annual supply of kitchen wood, however, nor her lands.

These lands included 23 acres in ‘Buntinghale’ which suggests that this John Bishop was the son of the John Bishop(1) who died in 1483, and that he had inherited them on the death of his mother, Alice Bishop. If so John Bishop(1) was almost certainly the ‘John son of Robert’ of the survey as he was then the occupier of the other pieces of land left to Joan, widow of John(2). These included ‘Richetts’, ‘Brodfield’, ‘Steyre Barn’, ‘Mottes’ and land in ‘Jopismede’. The fact that John(1) also left 6s.8d. to ‘Johane, uxore Johii filii mei’, would seem to confirm the relationship as Joan was the name of John(2)’s wife.

John(2) left all his tenement at Stayre and all other lands in Hadlow to his son John(3). On Joan's death his son Robert was to have the 'lordship of my lands Sharynden in Capel and Tudeley', (Sherenden Farm still exists) and his lands in Bidborough plus 'five acres of meadow I had of John Cayser'. From this inheritance he was to pay his sister Joan ten marks unless she died before her marriage in which case it would revert to him and his heirs.

There were bequests to two married daughters, Margaret and Elizabeth, provided their husbands fulfilled certain conditions. John(3) was to deliver five marks to another unmarried daughter, Marion, ‘within a year of my decease’, and she was also to receive ten marks from her mother ‘if she be ruled by her’. Presumably she was more troublesome than her sisters. John Fisher, John Chown and John Berde were his feoffees, charged with delivering ‘a state’ in the croft ‘The Bear’.

The next John Bishop(3) who made his will in 1515 was certainly John(2)’s son. He was still a young man and left his brother Robert the ‘custodie and rule’ of his son John(4), and of his lands, ‘to fynde hym to scole for to have his lernyng’. John(3)’s mother, Joan, was still alive and presumably still in occupation of the parlour chambers and kitchen of the Bishop house at Stair (her will was made in 1530 and probate granted 1541). His wife, Margaret, was to have 13s.4d. a year above her jointure and occupation of the ‘new chamber’ over the kitchen. This was probably because chimneys had been built, as the end of the use of an open hearth meant it was possible to insert an upper storey. Like her mother in law Joan, she too had access to the oven and keeping of two cows 'so long as she remain widow'. It is to be hoped the two women got on well as Joan did not die until 1530.

Margaret's unborn child was to inherit twenty marks at twenty one, if it lived so long. If 'God defend', John(4) should die before the age of twenty one, the lands were to go first to his uncle, John(3)'s brother Robert, for his life time, then to Robert's son Richard for his life, then Robert's son Thomas for his life time. On Thomas's death the lands went to 'the next heir male lawfully begotten of the bloode of the foresaid Bishops'. Presumably this would include his own unborn child if it survived and if it was male. Failing a male heir, his land was to be divided between his four sisters and we are given their married names: Elizabeth Goldsmyth, Margaret Cokks, Joan Lane, and Marion.
Basset. His witnesses included John Cokkes, parchment maker, Simon Goldsmyth (his brothers in law?), and Robert Hampton, notary. He must have spent time in London on business because he stipulated that he should be buried in St.Olave in Southwark 'if I die there', otherwise in the church yard in Hadlow. There is a note in the register that he was in fact buried at St.Olave.  

Unfortunately, we do not have his son John(4)'s will, but we do have his mother Joan's, made in 1530. She distributed personal possessions, pots and pans, kertles, caps and gowns to god daughters, Johane Bishop, Elizabeth Bishop, Margaret Bishop, Eme Forman, Joane Harman and 'post wife', and two other women. No jewellery was mentioned and only three gowns, so she does not appear to have been very rich.

By contrast the last will of the series, that of Richard Bishop in 1559, was the will of quite a rich man, but although five pages long it does not mention any land. Richard, apparently, had only goods and the proceeds of a house in Tonbridge to distribute among his friends and relations. He was almost certainly the nephew of John(3) which would explain why land was not mentioned, as by the terms of his uncle's will the land automatically passed to his brother Thomas Bishop.

Although Richard had a wife (her best gown was left to Margaret Inge, so presumably she was dead by 1559), no children were named in the will. His brother Thomas and cousin Hugh Sydene were the main beneficiaries, but twenty one people, including Robert Bishop the 'the tyler', received bequests. The furniture left gives us some idea of the interior of a Bishop house. It was very simple consisting of chests, 'my great chest' and two others, and four feather beds with their bedding and hangings. But Thomas's meal table was elegant. He left pewter dishes, basins, platters, saucers and candle sticks, what must have been a handsome set (called a 'garnish') now divided among his nieces. His brother Thomas received a silver salter with a cover, two masers, and nineteen silver spoons. The odd number was probably because he left a silver spoon to each of his godchildren. Women, including Hugh Sydene's wife Margaret, and Mary, Margaret, Elizabeth and Dorothie Bishop, his sister Turner, Alice Turner and Margaret Inge, also received considerable quantities of brass, wool, cloth and animals. George Bishop was to have his mare, Stagg and Hugh Sydene his grey mare, and they were to share four flitches of bacon.

The link between the will of John Bishop(3) and that of his nephew Richard is provided by the will of John's brother, and Richard's father, Robert Bishop, in 1535. Although he had lands in Hadlow, Capel and Bidborough he was 'of the parish of Tonbridge' and that is where he was buried. The relative value of the lands he held in the four adjacent parishes is probably indicated by the amount he left to the high altar of each church; 12d. to Tonbridge, 40d. to Capel, 4d. to Bidborough and 12d. to Hadlow. He had inherited the lands in Capel (the 'lordship of Sharynden') and Bidborough from his father John Bishop(2) after the death of his mother Joan, but the lands in Hadlow he must have inherited on the death of his nephew John(4) before the latter was able to produce an
heir. By his will Robert passed on these lands in Hadlow to his own son Richard, as had been ordained by his brother John(3)’s will, but all the rest of his lands went to his son Thomas. In the end, Thomas inherited the Hadlow lands as well when Richard died in 1559, although they were not actually mentioned in the will.*

This fairly complicated series of wills shows many features in common with the wills of families of a similar status. There were several branches of the family, some wealthier than others. The main concern was to provide for wives and children. Where children were concerned the male line (‘the bloode of the Bishops’) was important and there was an effort to provide adequately for younger sons. Daughters fared worse although the obligation to provide marriage portions for sisters must often have been quite a drain on an inherited estate. In some wills, for instance those of Robert Bishop in 1534 and Richard in 1559, considerable quantities of ’chattels’, including animals, wool, food, clothing, bedding, brass, pewter and silver were distributed among the wider family, friends and even servants. Richard Bishop left ‘Hilles, my man, my cote, a payre of hose & a two monthling bullock’ and ‘to Skynner, a bushell of wheat’.

John Bishop also features in the manor court rolls of both Lomewood (1478-82) and, later, Hadlow (1512). Between October 1478 and June 1482 the Lomewood court was held at Stair on five occasions and on each of these John Bishop was either a member of the Grand Inquisition or an Assessor or both. On the other hand, John Bishop, John Bishop junior and the heirs of Richard Bishop paid fines for the remittance of their suit of court at Hadlow on several occasions. Apart from these routine fines John Bishop was also involved in a plea of debt against John Symonds at Tanners which was never settled, the defaulting Symonds eventually being ordered to be distrained by the beadle. John Bishop senior (the same man?) made fidelity to the Lord for two acres of land and four dayworks alienated to him by Thomas Fisher and Henry Walter. John Bishop, Richard’s son, was not such a pillar of the community, appearing twice in the rolls, once to be amerced for non-attendance at an inquisition into debt, and once fined for not repairing his ditches and thus making the highway unsafe in Well Street. Robert Bishop was similarly fined for his ditches on Palmer Street. Even less reputable was Thomas Bishop, fined twice, once that he ‘offered insult to John Galton with a binculus called a stick and thrashed him contrary to the king’s peace’, and once that he offered insult to Nicholas Taylor with a round staff contrary to the king’s peace’. On the first occasion Thomas Fisher and Richard Kebyll stood sureties for him but on the second he placed himself on the favour of the court and was fined 2d.

In the Hadlow manor court roll of 1512 John Bishop senior and John Bishop junior are mentioned in connection with the transfer of land from John senior to John junior through the older John’s feoffees, John Chown and John Berde. They were ordered to pay 2s.8d. half a penny and half a farthing, as relief. This ties in with the appointment of John Chown and John Berde as feoffees in John Bishop(2)’s will of 1512.

In the wider world beyond the manor, the Bishops also became involved in several court cases and a pardon. John Bishop, yeoman of the Lowy of Tonbridge, who was pardoned for his part in ‘the recent risings’ of 1471 may have been a younger, more hot headed John(1) or (2) or merely a relation. A law case earlier, in the first half of the fifteenth century, between Robert Torkesey of Lingfield on the one part and Robert and John

* CKS, DRb / PWr 11
Bishop, his father and brother in law respectively on the other, add two small pieces of information. Robert Bishop had a daughter as well as a son, and also he had sufficient status to marry that daughter to a man outside Kent who held land in at least three counties (Kent, Surrey and Sussex) and this land was in dispute between them. Another case in the early sixteenth century features Richard and Thomas Bishop, plaintiff and defendant, in a case of seizure of crops. Richard Bishop had leased some land to Thomas Somer who 'set it in coppice'. Thomas Bishop took exception to this and 'with divers riotous and ill disposed persons', eight in all, 'arrayed with divers weapons, swords bucklers, staves and pitchforks', entered the premises and did damage to the value of twenty marks. The bellicose Thomas of the court rolls was in trouble again.9

Church registers and rentals continue to record the Bishop name well into the seventeenth century but as with the very early Bishops it is difficult to connect these individuals directly to the families of the survey.

**THE BEALD FAMILY**

The Bealde holding in Hadlow manor totalled less than fifteen acres suggesting a modest family of the husbandman class. The family was typical of many, with inconveniently scattered holdings over several manors of the area showing evidence of the past effects of inheritance by gavelkind. However, there is no hint in the wills that they had any wish to depart from that custom and the arrangements they made were typical of the age. By the time of the survey we know that one of the members of the family was a carpenter and others were involved in the manor court, one elected as a reeve. They were also part of a group of families, linked by ties of marriage and friendship, which supported and trusted each other, acting as executors and witnesses to wills and as feoffees to ease the transfer of property. They also went to law with one another, showing that the trust was not always justified.

In his Kent Surveyed and Illustrated of 1659, Thomas Philipott pointed out that the family had had more exalted origins. He looked on 'Goldhell' as a manor and 'a place of some importance since some Families of Estimate have been possessors of it; so first it was the possession of the Beals; ... and when this Family began to moulder away the Title by sale shifted itself to the Fromonds'. This manor was later known as Fromonds and it is here, not in Hadlow manor itself, that we first find a specific reference to the Bealde/Beal/Bele family in the parish of Hadlow. John Beald at 'Skoclyns' is said in the court roll to owe fealty for his lands there to the lords of the manor, William Goding and John Lawrence. The family is also recorded in a rental of another of the parish's manors, Caustons, in 1407. John Bealde, junior, and John Tanner owed 18d. for land formerly belonging to Johanna daughter of Lawrence Tanner. John Bealde on his own owed 3½d. and half a hen for land 'late of Emme Bealde'. In 1432 'John Beald of Skoclyns' was in default of his attendance at the Fromonds manor court, and a rental for the same manor the following year records lands held by 'Richard Beald, brother of John' and 'John Bealde, senior, brother of Richard'. Some of these holdings, for example, Skoclyns and Newmede, appear again at a later date,
helping us to identify a line of descent. Deeds of 1453 referred to land 'late William Bealde's', and to lands conveyed from John Kinge to Richard Bealde, among others, and a rental of Caustons manor in 1446 credited 'John Beald, carpenter' with four acres in 'Le Greteberne field'.

In the Hadlow manor survey of 1460, two John Bealdes are recorded. John Bealde of Wrotham held just over seven and a half acres of land in two pieces, one in Lockbridge and one in Grove tenement. John Bealde, sometimes referred to as 'carpenter', and unlikely to be the same man, owned just over three and a half acres in five small plots located in Wells/ Bowlere, Holmans and Tannerys tenements. Neither had a house in the manor, though John Bealde did own a garden in Hadlow Street called Walters Haugh. This piece of land appears in the will of the John Bealde of Hadlow who died in 1475 and who was therefore almost certainly the same man. From this will we know that he had a house in Hadlow Street, presumably on land of another manor, and that he owned land in Goldhill including the previously mentioned 'Skoklyns'. Unfortunately, John of Wrotham did not leave a will which might have made clear his relationship to the rest of the family but Jane Semple, in her work on Wrotham, makes several comments about him and the Bealde family. As in Hadlow the family disappeared in the early sixteenth century, between two rentals, one of 1495 and one 1538. She considers the most likely reason to have been failure of the male line in a time of severe epidemics.

However, not only John Bealde of Hadlow but two Richards, a William and a Lawrence also left wills and these make clear that the Bealdes were richer than would be guessed from their holdings in Hadlow manor alone. We have already seen that they held land in the manors of Fromonds and Caustons, but other evidence shows the family had connections with Sevenoaks, East Barming, Speldhurst, Shipbourne and Hoo. While one of the survey's John Bealdes is said to be 'of Wrotham', the wills themselves show the family had an interest in the churches of East Peckham, Tudeley and Tonbridge as well as Hadlow.

Nevertheless, even in Hadlow the Bealdes were quite influential. Like the Bishops, Fishers and Fromonds they appear frequently in the wills of others, as executors, witnesses, beneficiaries and feoffees. Feoffees enjoyed considerable power and those chosen must have been well trusted and well-to-do. Most wills were made to either supplement or diverge from the normal customs of inheritance. 'Feoffment to uses' was a device by which the will maker could enjoy greater control over the disposition of his property. It was a form of trust, not unlike the trusts formed by those seeking to avoid inheritance tax today. The feoffor, the landowner, could transfer the title of his property to a person, or more usually more than one, known as 'feoffees to uses' who legally owned the property but held it for the 'use' of the feoffor or his heirs. After the death of the feoffor, the feoffees could transfer the property back to his heirs in accordance with his wishes which might not be in accordance with the customary laws of inheritance. If the heirs were minors, the transfer often took place when they reached twenty one. In most areas of the country it was a way to avoid the inequities of primogeniture (when the eldest son inherited all the land) but in Kent, where gavelkind was the norm (land was divided equally between all sons) this problem was less pressing. It was often used when there was no immediate family, or a widow was left alone or with under age children. Such children and their lands would otherwise come into the wardship of the lord of the manor, and so many landowners preferred to appoint friends and relatives as their feoffees.

The testament of Richard Bealde written in 1456 is that of a wealthy but apparently childless man. He was also a very pious one in the orthodox tradition, leaving large amounts of money for his funeral and for masses in Hadlow and Aylesford for the health of his soul and those of his relations and benefactors. Considerable sums also went towards the repairs of various churches; Hadlow itself, Tonbridge, Tudeley and East Peckham. He only mentions two members of the Bealde family in his will, Agnes, widow of William Bealde, and Agnes, daughter of John Bealde at Tanners. 'Our' John Bealde of

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1. CKS, Stoneley Documents, U309 / T1; Maidstone Museum, Larking Transcripts
3. Jean Fox, CD Rom, Index to West Kent Wills
4. Judith Ford, Open University, Internet article

BEALDE WILLS

SOME FAMILIES

The testament of Richard Bealde written in 1456 is that of a wealthy but apparently childless man. He was also a very pious one in the orthodox tradition, leaving large amounts of money for his funeral and for masses in Hadlow and Aylesford for the health of his soul and those of his relations and benefactors. Considerable sums also went towards the repairs of various churches; Hadlow itself, Tonbridge, Tudeley and East Peckham. He only mentions two members of the Bealde family in his will, Agnes, widow of William Bealde, and Agnes, daughter of John Bealde at Tanners. 'Our' John Bealde of
the survey and will of 1475 owned land in Tannery's tenement but there is no reference to a daughter Agnes. Other female beneficiaries like Larete Rabette and Agnes Maysterer who, like Agnes, each inherited five marks, may well have been family too. There were several other smaller, but still significant bequests, mostly to women. He also left money to several of the gentry of Hadlow, John Berton, Nicholas Stoperfield, John at Stable and Thomas Fisher and, at the other end of the social scale, to his servant John Salams. No will exists to show the disposition of his lands. Perhaps he had already sold them or perhaps they had been or were to be divided among his sons according to custom. However, it would be unusual not to make adult sons executors and his 'supervisors' were John Berton, Thomas Fisher, John at Stable and Nicholas Stoperfield, none of them obviously family members, so probably he had no children. One section of the will suggests that his affairs were in some confusion, possibly with lawsuits pending or claims against him still unresolved. If the prosecution of these cases involved them in expenses, his executors could claim up to a tenth of the money left for the church tower, provided proper accounts were submitted.

John Bealde, by contrast, showed himself very much a family man. When he made his testament in 1475 the only bequest he made to the church was 12d. for his forgotten tithes, an unavoidable impost rather than a generous donation. There is nothing in his will for masses at his funeral or 'month's mind' or for lights to burn before the images of the saints. He made his wife Margaret and son Lawrence his executors and, after his debts had been paid, the residue of his goods were to be divided between them. In addition, Lawrence was to have two oxen. His son Richard was not included at this stage. The division of his lands, 'in Hadlow or Hoo', was also rather unequal. Margaret was provided with a messuage in Hadlow Street, purchased from John Colyn, and a piece of land, Cattysbrayn, which were to revert to Lawrence on her death as was a garden, Gandycaugh, which they were to share during her life. Lawrence was also to inherit the family land 'Skoklys'. John had enfeoffed James Gosse in this land, perhaps because he did not want it divided between Lawrence and his brother Richard as custom would dictate. But it came on a condition; that he look after his sister Johanne for life. Perhaps the unfortunate girl was handicapped in some way. Richard was to inherit the garden, Walters Haugh, in Hadlow Street, which appears in the survey in John's name. All John's other lands were to be divided equally between his two sons. His witnesses were the vicar of Hadlow, Brother David, John Somer his neighbour in Hadlow Street, and John Goding.

Richard Bealde was the father of a younger family when he died in 1476. Whether he was John's brother, as recorded in the rental of 1432, or a younger cousin or nephew is impossible to say. Like John he left no money for lights and only 2d. to the priest. His wife Margaret and John Gates were his executors. He left 26s.8d. to his daughter Johanna on her marriage to be paid by his son John 'if he lives then'. He had three feoffees, James Gosse, John Berton, and Peter Fisher. His will states that immediately after his death they should 'devise and grant' to his wife half of a messuage in Hadlow and that John Berton and Peter Fisher should deliver five virgates of meadow (This seems too much.) which they held. It makes no mention of when the rest of his lands were to be delivered to his son, implying that he was young and the feoffees would have to be responsible for the lands for some time. Richard also seemed to be rather dubious about whether John Berton and Peter Fisher would be willing to hand over the meadow when it came to the time, as he made
provision for his other feoffee to see that, if necessary, lands of a similar value were substituted. That such arrangements did not always go smoothly is attested by the number of law cases involving feoffees. He may have hoped for safety in numbers because he had no less than six witnesses to his will.

William Bele also had under age children when he made his will in 1483. He left all his goods to his wife 'that she may dispose of them in legacies better than I'. The only specified bequest to the church was for his forgotten tithes, though at a later stage in the will he arranged that, after his wife's death, lands should be sold and the profits devoted to works of charity. These included 'necessary warkes of the sayde church of Hadlow' and 'prestys syngyng', but also 'fowel weys and maydynes maryages'. Foul ways, or bad roads, and dowries for poor girls became increasingly popular objects of charitable bequests while, in the Beald family at least, elaborate funeral arrangements and masses for the dead no longer featured.

By the time he made his will William's lands were already in the hands of feoffees, Thomas Gerthe and William Marnyes esquires and John Wettenstall and Walter Mildmay. These men, after his death, were to pass the lands they held to Thomas Fisher and John a Borne, presumably to administer for his sons. The sons, John and Thomas, were to enjoy 'the resnabill yssues and profettes above al charges and reprises'. In other words Thomas Fisher and John a Born were expected to charge reasonable 'expenses' for their work, more or less according to their commitment to, or affection for, their charges. The lands were to be equally divided between his two sons when they came to the age of twenty one, or if one died the 'overliver' was to inherit.

Apart from inheriting all his goods no specific provision was made in the will for his wife Joan. By custom, in Kent, she was entitled to half his lands for life as long as she remained 'chaste'. Probably lands were already set aside for her as part of a marriage settlement. His daughter Johan, however, was left two pieces of land, Bunyards, 'wen she comyth to marriage'. If all the children died without issue, his wife was to inherit everything, and on her death the lands were to be sold and the money disposed for charity.

We do not know what happened to John or Thomas Bealde. No wills were registered in their names and they do not appear in any subsequent court rolls or rentals in the area, although the mention of 'land purchased of Thomas Bele', in the will of John Somer of 1529, indicates that at least Thomas survived to adulthood. He may have moved to a neighbouring parish where we know the Bealds also held land. We can, however, surmise what happened to Johan. In the will of John a Born, dated 1544, he leaves 'my mansion Scokkls als Scokkllis or Bealde', with other lands in Hadlow, to his son Thomas. His wife was called Johan and it seems too much of a coincidence for her not to be the daughter of William Bealde and for him to have inherited that piece of Bealde land through her. He may have been William's feoffee, John a Born, but more likely John a Born exercised his influence as feoffee to marry the heiress Johan/ Johanna to one of his relatives. The other possibility is that the Joanna concerned was the sister of Lawrence Bealde and that he had used the family mansion as her dowry.

The last will of the series, that of Lawrence Bealde in 1491, appears to be that of a relatively poor man. He left the bare minimum to the church for his tithes and 'a light for the herse'. If all his heirs were to die without issue, his lands were to be sold and the money devoted to works of mercy. No mention was made of elaborate funeral ceremonies or masses for the dead. His wife was called Mercy, again perhaps an indication of reformist sympathies. He left Mercy a messuage and three pieces of land and 'an
Eylonde late purchased of Thomas Crudd'. The island was to be sold by his feoffees to pay his debts but Mercy was to enjoy the rest of his property for life. On her death it was to be equally divided between his sons, Richard and John.

Three members of the Bealde family appear in the Hadlow/Lomewood court rolls. The William Bealde of the will of 1483 was almost certainly the William Bealde who appears in the court roll where he is last mentioned in an entry for November 1481. He was twice fined 2d. for not attending the court and twice 6d. for failing to take part in an inquisition, once between John Newman, maltster, and John Wyks in a plea of debt and once between John Crud and Richard Haycher in a plea of trespass. On July 20, 1479, he was elected reeve for the tenants of Palmer and in the View of Frankpledge of October 1481 he was a member of the Grand Inquisition. Lawrence Beald and Margaret Beald, probably his mother and the widow of the John Beald who died in 1475, were both fined for not clearing their ditches. In Margaret's case her failure resulted in the obstruction of 'the common water course in Hadlow Street' where we know she was left a house. Lawrence's ditches were along the New Way, beside his land 'Long Field'.

After Lawrence's will of 1491, the Bealde name seems to disappear from Hadlow. There is no reference to them in the later manor court rolls, nor in the parish registers when they begin. We know that other members of the family had land in nearby parishes, so perhaps Lawrence's sons moved, probably to East Peckham. Perhaps the family known variously as Beald, Bealde, Beal, Beale, Bele, and Beel, finally became Bell.

THE STOPERFIELD/STUBBERFIELD FAMILY

The Stubberfields first appear in documents in Kent in the Lay Subsidy roll of 1327/9, when they were living in Brenchley Hundred, perhaps in East Peckham parish, and in the Lowy of Tonbridge, possibly already in Hadlow parish. No other record for a century shows the family continuing there, whereas many were in Brenchley Hundred. But plainly they had a continuing connection with Hadlow for in 1446 and 1447 a William Stopferfield was named in two wills of people belonging to Hadlow and Tonbridge, and in the second case, he was mentioned as having land near one of the Fromond family who certainly lived in Hadlow.

In our survey of 1460 the same man's name was given to a Hadlow tenement, though he was not then occupying any of its land. Stopferfield tenement as it was called, unusually, said to have belonged formerly to two men, Hugh Coustone and William Stoperfield, though this did not necessarily refer to the William Stopferfield then living. The holding had become considerably subdivided, into twelve pieces among seven people. But its original composition gives the impression of having been put together in a somewhat makeshift fashion at some time in the past, for the details showed that it had consisted of five separate units when Coustone and Stopferfield acquired it, namely, 4 acres from William Usserey, 3 acres from Nicholas Tanner, 6 acres formerly of Geoffrey at Grove, one messuage and 2 acres, formerly of Robert Pudding, and a fourth part of half a ferling, lately of Nicholas Tanner. None of these surnames was current on the manor in 1460, suggesting that this history went back into a somewhat distant past. The land described amounted to only 19 acres plus the fragment of a ferling which, theoretically,
since a ferling was about 10-13 acres, should have meant about one and a half acres. Did the tenants in 1460 know what a ferling was, since the term had fallen into disuse by the mid-fifteenth century, and is hardly used anywhere else in our document? At all events, this made just over 20 acres put together from five lots, whereas the current tenants showed themselves to be holding 36 acres, which was the size of a standard holding. It must at some time have been increased in size. The present tenants claimed to hold by an old charter granted by the Earl of Stafford, and the holding was evidently referred to in an old rental; the surveyor seemed to view all this with scepticism, but as he had not seen the old rental, he could not dismiss their claim.

One is tempted to think that this holding's history sheds some light on disordered circumstances at the time of the Black Death, though that is pure guesswork; one piece of land bordered Cotlands, a name which designated land that in the past was allotted to serf-like labourers working mainly on the manorial demesne. Cotlands itself by 1460 was now distributed among tenants like most of the rest of the manorial land, and the existence of cottars as a class of tenants was nowhere suggested in the survey or in any other documents of the time. The rest of the land lay in the vicinity of Robards Went, Skeyffe Lane, and the road from Goldhill to West Malling, in other words Victoria Road. Some of it lay near Caustons manor, the main Causton property in Hadlow that had also been partly dismantled by 1460. In short, we may here catch a glimpse of a part of Hadlow parish that had undergone more than usual turmoil in the fourteenth century when compared with the eagerness for land already hinted at down by the Medway. Perhaps the first William Stoperfield had arrived on the Hadlow scene at an opportune moment, and with Hugh Causton assembled a new tenement from vacant bits and pieces at a time when the lord was grateful to find tenants for unoccupied land, of which some lay amid the lord's own demesnes.

Two descendants of the Stoperfield family feature in Hadlow documents from the 1440s onwards but only one had land in this Hadlow manor. This was Nicholas, with a wife called Alice, and a daughter, Margaret. He was then the principal occupier of Gibbons tenement. He held just over 33 acres, which included the house and garden where he lived plus two other pieces of land, making nearly 42 acres in all. It lay on the north side of the main road from Tonbridge to West Malling in the neighbourhood of the vicarage, rectory land, and Fullers Field; in addition he held 6 acres in Coswyns tenement. This was evidently not all the land that he occupied, however, for he held some in other manors bordering on pieces of Coiffe's tenement. (Eight manors in Hadlow meant that the manor lands were somewhat intermingled.) So his name appeared as a neighbour of people in Coiffe's tenement, and that holding lay at the centre of the village among the shops, and bordered the high street leading to West Malling. Altogether Nicholas Stoperfield held 48 acres on our manor, plus more in other manors, giving him sufficient land for a decent living for his family, and conceivably enough to claim the status of a yeoman. One daughter Margaret was his only recorded descendant, and she either died childless or married and lost her family name; so we cannot follow that branch of the family any further.

The other Stoperfield in Hadlow at this time was Thomas, though he did not occupy any land of our Hadlow manor. But he was the one whose offspring maintained the connection with Hadlow for another two generations. He had three sons and one daughter. His daughter, Katherine, had an illegitimate son, called Thomas, for whom the older Thomas, his grandfather, made provision in his will. Two of his three sons were Richard and John, but their history has not been traced. The third son was Nicholas, (his first name suggesting that his father, Thomas, was the brother of the Nicholas occupying Gibbons tenement in 1460 - see above). Nicholas II became a conspicuous member of the Hadlow community, witnessing wills, and signing documents in which, significantly, Henry Fane, gentleman, was often also a signatory. The Fanes were gentry, having their main house at Badsells in Tudeley, a next door parish, and Nicholas evidently established a sufficiently close relationship with Henry Fane for Fane to become godfather to his son,
Henry, (probably explaining also the choice of the baby's first name). Nicholas Stoperfield, the father, lived in Sole Street, i.e. Three Elm Lane, and died there in 1528. This was close to Hadlow Place where Henry Fane lived until his death in 1533. So they were close neighbours, and Henry Fane, who had no children of his own, left some land to young Henry Stoperfield when he died. (For more on Henry Fane, see pages 71-5 on the Fane family)

Nicholas Stubberfield died in 1528, but the connection of his son Henry with the Fane family surfaced again when the nephew of Henry Fane, was involved in the Wyatt rebellion in 1554. This was a protest against Queen Mary's planned marriage to Philip of Spain. The younger Henry Fane was involved but he was pardoned, and in a pardon roll of 12 January, 1559, pardon was also granted to Henry Stubberfield (the surname having been changed to this form around 1550). This suggests that Henry Stubberfield had Protestant, rather than Catholic sympathies. Yet in 1559 Henry married, as his second wife, Elizabeth, the widow of John Procter; and John Procter, a schoolmaster at Sir Andrew Judd's newly built school in Tonbridge, had been the pro-Catholic author of a book about the Wyatt rebellion. So Catholic sentiment had brooded in the Procter household in 1554, whereas we know that Protestant loyalties were strong at Hadlow Place. Ralph Fane's widow Elizabeth, née Brydges, succoured some of the radical Protestants when they were persecuted and imprisoned by Mary, and she herself had to go into hiding near Reading. Henry Stubberfield's pardon after the Wyatt rebellion hints at his Protestant loyalties, so perhaps we stumble on former religious disagreements in the Procter family when we find John Procter's widow marrying Henry Stubberfield. Moreover, she did so somewhat speedily, two days before her first husband's will was proved, in July 1559.

Elizabeth Fane's husband, Ralph, had been charged with high treason in 1551 and was hanged in 1552. (See under the Fane family.) So his home at Hadlow Place was inherited by Henry Fane, the nephew of the first Henry Fane, and Elizabeth Fane probably moved out when Henry moved in. She granted to Henry Stubberfield Tonbridge rectory and its lands in 1556. London thereafter became Elizabeth Fane's home, and she died in Holborn in June 1568.

Henry Stubberfield's five children found their way into trade in Tonbridge, into law, teaching in Sussex, and into the church. But one of the occupations of their descendants that extended Hadlow's links with the fish trade was as rippers, transporting sea fish swiftly from Rye and Hastings on the coast to London. Rippers stopped to change horses, and sell some of their fish to the locals, in this case, at Goudhurst in the Weald, and then at Chipstead in Chevening parish, Surrey. So Stubberfields are found at Chipstead in the 1540s, (they must have passed through Tonbridge en route) and one Stubberfield lived intermittently at Chipstead and Southwark, while another lived at Goudhurst. In short, this family tree shows a far-flung network of kin in one trade, exactly like those found in the horse trade. Branches of the same family cooperated with each other, formed partnerships, and some became wealthy men.

Among the new faces appearing in Hadlow after 1550 were members of the Playne family. They possibly have some significance in the Protestant history of the Weald, but absolutely nothing is proven about the Tonbridge branch; it is simply worth bearing them in mind should other evidence turn up.

No one having the Playne surname appears in the 1460 survey, nor has anyone of that name been found in other Hadlow documents before 1550. But the family lived somewhere in the vicinity, probably in Tonbridge, and more than one of them were friends of the Fanes, for Henry Fane's will in January, 1456 shows Thomas A.Plane as a witness. Another will, of Thomas Fane, gentleman, of St Peter the Poor, London, and Tonbridge (for he had lands there) was made on July, 1532, leaving a gelding to Thomas.
Plane, yeoman, his feoffee. We see many connections in the sixteenth century linking Tonbridge and Hadlow people with traders in London, and this is another example.

On a cold day in December 1570, several Hadlow men and others were called to a meeting at South Frith to inspect its timber, furnace, and finery for the iron mill, and asked to judge the value of any future lease, for the existing lessees were minded to surrender theirs now that the area had been shorn of its timber for burning charcoal. Among those called to this task were Wyatt Playne, and two Michael Playnes, senior and junior. In a Hadlow rental of 1586 Wyatt Playne is shown occupying Court Lodge and farmland. It is the first intimation that Hadlow manor had a manor house, evidently something considered apart from Lord’s Place in Church Street. It probably lay somewhere on land that was later occupied by Hadlow Castle, for a document of 1856 says that the Castle was built near Court Lodge, but we have no information on when that first house was built. As Wyatt Playne also had farmland, it may mean that he was the lessee of the home farm of the manor; in other words, he had quickly achieved the status in Hadlow of an inhabitant commanding authority and respect.

The first name, Wyatt, prompts speculation. Did it indicate friendly connections or kinship with the Wyatt family of Allington? Sir Thomas Wyatt had been a leader in 1553-4 of the Wyatt rebellion, sparked off by opposition to the planned marriage of Queen Mary to another Roman Catholic, King Philip of Spain. She married him, the rebellion failed, and Wyatt was executed for high treason. The first name, Wyatt, was preserved in this family until at least 1638 when another Wyatt died whose burial is recorded in the Hadlow parish register. Was anti-Catholic feeling expressed in the forename Wyatt, or was it just a popular name at this time?; the Hadlow parish register shows ten children given the name of Wyatt between 1561 and 1611.

Opposition to a Spanish Catholic marriage might also betoken a stout devotion to Protestant beliefs, and certainly those are shown in the preamble to Wyatt Playne’s will in 1599. He married Rebecca Jones on October 6, 1570, and she proved to be a strong and healthy wife after her first child, Henry, died in 1572. After that, she produced children almost every year, Thomas in 1574, Wyatt in 1575, Francis in 1577 (he died in 1619), Rebecca in 1579, Mary in 1580, and at an unknown date two more, Michael who died in 1599, and Agnes who became the wife of Wyatt Paule (possibly intended as Pawley, another Hadlow surname). Rebecca’s many pregnancies, following so soon after one another, suggest that she did not breastfeed her children but employed a wetnurse, a practice of gentlefolk rather than yeomen. Other information about Wyatt Playne is meagre, apart from words in his will in 1597 describing him as a yeoman, showing him to have been literate, since he signed his own name, and being concerned for the upbringing of his six younger children. He entrusted this task to his wife ‘according to the trust I have always placed in her, and as she will answer before God at the day of judgment’. His property comprised land in East Peckham that included 5 acres at Chidley Cross and a messuage in Hale Street, where the butcher lived, though Wyatt kept its orchard for himself; in Hadlow he held 8 acres ‘beneath Branbridges’, 8 acres ‘above Branbridges’, and 2 houses in Hadlow Street.

It is tempting to wonder if this Playne family was in any way related to the William Playne who was persecuted for his association with fervent Protestants in Mary’s reign. The story of this other William Playne was told by John Foxe, the martyrologist, because he died three years after being tortured, imprisoned in the Tower of London, and having his health ruined. He had delivered a message from someone else to a Dr Crone urging him not to recant in public for strong words uttered against Papists when he was preaching in his London church. For this simple, message-carrying service William Playne received the harsh punishment that brought on his death. The records found so far do not reveal any connection between this William Playne and Tonbridge or Hadlow. He was a member of the Skinners Company, and his will and that of his wife show only a home in London, and a son, Apollo, living in Suffolk. The fact remains that the Skinners Company had some distinguished members around Tonbridge, including Sir Andrew Judd who was

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5. We are most grateful to Catharine M.F.Davies and Professor Susan Wabuda for information about William Playne.
six times Master of the Company and founded Tonbridge School in 1553.

Many Playnes lived in the Tonbridge area: wills exist for John Plane of Tonbridge (d.1511), Thomas, senior of Tonbridge, and Thomas, senior, yeoman of Tonbridge. The Hadlow parish registers continue to record baptisms for seven Planes between 1572 and 1582, and another six between 1610 and 1692. Seven marriages of Playnes were celebrated between 1570 and 1622, including one in 1605 of Mary Playne to Thomas Stubberfield (a separate account here deals with the Stubberfield family). So it would be worth keeping watch for a family relationship that might link the persecuted William Playne in London with the Protestant network known to exist in the Weald of Kent.
In analysing the Sewer Commissioners' report on the Medway it becomes clear that although they mention the branch of the river that runs 'with its compass northwards' from Walmsley's Weir, there is no mention of a landing place at Hadlow Stair. The report tells us that this course passes through ancient Cranborrows Weir which had paid 'certain Sticks of Eels unto the Castle of Tonbridge' but nothing more. It therefore seems likely that this 'stair' or landing place had long since fallen into disuse. The word (de Steghere) is first found in a document of 1327, but that does nothing to prove when the stair was actively in use as a landing wharf. However, in a manor document of 1334 Walter at Steyre was said to be aged 50 or more - thus taking the name back to at least 1284.

There are no clues as to the exact position of the landing place on any available maps so some imagination has to be used. However, geographically this is the one place in the parish (and manor) where the contours guarantee that the landing of goods would still be possible at high water.

In Kenes tenement we are told that the Medway lies south of Robert Bishop's messuage at Stair Bridge (the bridge where the highway from Hadlow Street to Tonbridge crossed over the Pen Stream) and in Freferding tenement it lay north of his 'cott in the Payne of eyland'. Dumbreck tells us of two names for this land - 'Fishers Lease' or 'Paines Island' - so it is possible to identify its position. In the Tithe map apportionment it is reduced to the mundane 'Five Acres' - the acreage being 4a.1r.30p. Robert's part lay on the west side of the field, the larger part was held by his neighbour Thomas Crudd, their joint holdings adding up to 4a.1r. Thomas Crudd was bequeathed the land, including his messuage, by Thomas Walter in 1448 and Paynes Island was said to lie next to the land of the Duke of Buckingham. In 1476 Thomas Crudd bequeathed Paynis Eyland to his wife Alice and thence to his son John.

Reconstructing the layout of holdings at the Stair from our survey we can establish the position of the 'lane to the Medway' and therefore state with reasonable confidence the rough position of a landing place. Although we cannot say what the structure was like and whether constructed of wood or stone, the illustration above is an attempt to portray its possible appearance.

From the Dumbreck maps we are able to establish the old course of the ancient Medway which gives us a better idea of the orientation of tenement holdings in this part of the manor. It seems reasonable to believe that Cranborrows Weir must have belonged to the sub-manor of Crombury. A document of 1590 tells us that Thomas Barton held Coulton Mead with one island and a weir 'sometime in the tenure of David Willard' and we can be sure he knew the best navigational stream! Coulton Mead lay adjacent to Weir Meadow and can be identified on the Tithe map.
Seven 'crosses' are mentioned in our survey. Wayside crosses were a common feature in the medieval landscape although only 350 are now known nationally and these are principally concentrated in the south-west of England in Cornwall and on Dartmoor and a small group on the North York Moors. There are plenty of examples in Eire but it was during the Reformation and the Commonwealth that the majority in England were lost.

Crosses had several origins and functions. The original 'preaching' crosses pre-dated churches and indicated meeting places for the preaching of Christianity in Anglo-Saxon times. Hunebere (the Anglo-Saxon nun) said '... on the estates of the nobles and good men of the Saxon race it is the custom to have a Cross, which is dedicated to Our Lord and held in great reverence, erected on some prominent spot, for the convenience of those who wish to pray before it.'

Holy crosses were placed by the sides of roads especially in wilder places as an indication of the way to a church, and probably some were related to pilgrimages along routes such as those to Canterbury and Walsingham. Boundary crosses marked the limits of monastic and other estates and guide posts were known as crosses when they stood at cross-roads. In any case we can safely assume that their presence reinforced the Christian faith and reassured the traveller.

It may be, of course, that our 'crosses' were merely where two pathways crossed - a perfectly feasible explanation, and they may well have had standing stones as well. It is only through the monies left in wills for repairs that we can be sure that an upright cross existed; Agnes Gambon gave money for the repair of Goldhill cross as did John Symond, and Thomas Fisher and Reg Hadecher left a bequest for the Palmers Street cross.

Following the path of our survey, one acre called The Dene (in Freferdine tenement) was 'next to Longshots Cross' and lay on the south side of the Hadlow Street to Tonbridge road. The cross must have been close to the land called Longshots which lay in the same tenement and was probably next to the junction of the highway and Longshots Lane. A 'commonway to Longshots' was mentioned in Kene's tenement and when the north lodge to the present Stair House (formerly the site of William Homewood's dwelling) was built, the first part of the path was moved further east next to the tin church on the main road. Thomas Walter left monies in 1448 for the repair of the road between Longshots cross and the mansion of Stephen Frutar. In our survey Stephen's widow Joan was living in what is now called Hogs meadow, Hoggs tenement, at the corner of Three Elm Lane and the main Hadlow road.

In Wills tenement a highway led 'from the cross called John at Stable's cross as far as Jopis mead'. John left monies in his will of 1476 for the repair of the road at 'Shroppstyle and Malyncrowch'. Shropsfield was in Tanners tenement which lay between Three Elm Lane and the Hadlow to Tonbridge Road, 6½ acres called Malynred lay in Pococks tenement on the opposite side of the road, but neither piece was held by John in our survey although he held 1½ acres in the adjacent 'Broadfield'. The will alludes to 'step stones', so was this a crossing of the highway or a standing cross? Many years later the Hadlow court rolls of 1844 stated that the bridge at the end of the Causeway at Three Elm Lane required repair; perhaps a quick prayer was required after all. Curiously, in Hoggs tenement, the survey speaks of 'the common way... leading from John at Stable's dwelling house towards Fish Hill' and John Bishop, in his will of 1483, gave money for the repair of the King's highway 'from Le Cage Gate to the cross adjoining the mansion of John at Stabyl'.
John had a messuage called Parrocke's in Fletchers tenement which is mentioned in his will but the survey gives no hint of his house in this part of the manor. However, there is land here which is not measured in our survey and John's house may very well have been near the site later known as Greentrees, one of the gates to which was opposite the lane leading to present day Little Fish Hall. This would fit in nicely with our mapping.

In W ells tenement a common way is mentioned 'leading from Revecocks Cross as far as Fish hill' but whether this is the same cross is not clear.

The survey indicates that Palmers Street Cross was on the junction of Palmers Street (the present day Ashes Lane) and the Tonbridge Road. Ashes Lane continues across the road as a track to Three Elm Lane to the south. The survey, at this point, mentions a messuage and land called 'Bacris Cross or Barris Croft' (now The Ashes) next to Palmers Street cross. On the opposite side of the road six acres in Crouchland tenement are identified as being next to Palmers Street cross. In 1509 Thomas Fisher left monies for repair of the cross.

Dorants was a house and 8 acres of land held by William Hogett in Coswyns tenement, now called James House and farm. 'The highway from Dorants Cross to Goldhill' ran to the north of the farm and described either the present day Cemetery Lane or a footpath that runs from the main road by the cart pond over towards Goblands Farm. The pond is the northern vestige of the watercourse that ran down the main road from Lonewood Common through the village to the River Bourne. It is where the traveller left the village to cross the common and had another 2 miles to go before the next village - Mereworth. Perhaps another swift prayer was called for! In 1461 Denise Ippenbery left money for the repair of the footway between Dorant's bridge and Lonewood.

'Robards went' marks the point where 'Skeyffes Lane' (now known locally as Dog Kennel Path) crosses the highway from Dorants cross to Gold Hill (Victoria Road) and leads to Caustons Manor and lands at Buntanhall. Robert Wotton, who held Caustons Manor, held 8 acres in Stoperfield tenement called 'the field at Caustons cross' to the east of the highway. In the adjacent 'Crouchlands', in Puddings tenement, he held another 8 acres. John Robards' messuage lay on the third corner of the crossing and on the fourth lay 'Park Field' part of Hadlow Court lands belonging to the lord of the manor.

Borne cross is the last cross to be mentioned in the survey. This is a puzzle. The first clue to its position is in Fishland tenement where Joan Fromond 'formerly Thomas Fromond At Water's wife holds for the term of her life two pieces of land lying together at the Borne called the Cross at Borne' (3a.2r.). It could be thought that 'Borne' refers to the local river Bourne. However, the survey tells us that the land lay south of the highway leading from Goldhill towards Tonbridge (Three Elm Lane) and, by definition, south of that river. It could, of course, relate to a smaller brook but this seems unlikely. The word 'borne' is French for 'boundary marker' and so could well refer to the limits of an estate or manor. By piecing the tenement together, it appears that the 'cross' lay on Three Elm Lane at the junction of what is now a footpath leading to Fish Hall. To the west of the path is a ditch and bank which may have delineated the boundary. To the west of the bank lay John at Stable's 'Croft at the Borne' in Hogg's tenement. References to lawdays are quite common in medieval records, and the word could mean any meeting at which a parish or manorial population assembled to discuss common
matters, including the three-weekly meeting of the manorial court. In other cases, a ‘lawday’ refers to the views of frankpledge, that were held only once in six months. A Statute of 27 Henry VIII also refers to ‘lawdays’ twice a year, and at Wateringbury, along the Maidstone Road, the locals expected them twice a year.\(^1\) Another Kent document, relating to Sturry, equates ‘the lawday’ with ‘a view of frankpledge’; and at Hunton, the parish next door but one to Hadlow, the business on a ‘lawday’ lasted all day and people complained because the lord offered no food. Apart from holding a view of frankpledge on lawdays, other august occasions might be so deemed. Professor Duffy has described one in Morebath, Devon, at the beginning of Mary’s reign, when a new lord had taken charge, following the death of the old lord in 1551, and there the parish debts were examined, a collection was agreed to pay them off, and since Catholic ritual was also about to be restored, he implied that the occasion was a notable one for the community, conveying a sense of a meeting in order to make a fresh start.\(^2\) Another special occasion is implied in a notice about a lawday feast in 1497(?) in Huddersfield at Cutthorne Cross (the word ‘Cross’ could also have significance here), when a perambulation of the boundaries was undertaken.\(^3\)

In a place like Hadlow having eight manors, meetings to discuss contentious issues must frequently have been necessary, and so it is no surprise to find an open-air site actually allocated for such discussions, allowing room for many people to assemble. That is the meaning to be attached, then, to a piece of land in Hadlow called Lawday Place, mentioned in the survey on folio 64. To the south Richard Nepaker of Lomewood had a house in which he lived, with a piece of land called Swaynes, which formerly belonged to the Fromonds. Lonewood common lay on the west and north, land of John Elliott (formerly John Mounssey) on the east. Although we cannot fix firmly on the exact site, we know enough to say that it lay towards the boundary of Hadlow parish, and furthermore at a point where the three parish boundaries of Hadlow, West Peckham, and East Peckham met. In a much later document of 1815, Lawday Place was named again, but now shown to the west of Swaines, then belonging to the Hon. Catherine Fermor, widow of the late Rev. I. S. Fermor (compare Swaynes above in 1460), with Lonewood common on the east and north sides.\(^4\) Such a site, almost surrounded by commonland, and near the junction with two other parishes, was certainly appropriate. The site that we authors favour for it even has a slight mound!

Sites for common assembly meetings have long been known through place names, though the subject has not recently received the attention of many scholars. In 1999 a researcher, writing from St Hugh’s College, Oxford, Aliki Pantos, published a list of some thirty such medieval assembly places in Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, and Rutland. She described them as hundred and wapentake meeting places, adding some further sites that were identified through field names. She was then compiling a photographic and documentary record.\(^5\) Much earlier than that, in 1880, George L. Gomme wrote a wide-ranging book on the subject of Primitive Folk Moots: or Open Air Assemblies in Britain, and traced such assembly places back into antiquity. Indeed, he argued that all human societies across the world started in this way, beginning with examples from the North American Indians, African tribes, and India, and moving across Europe through Scandinavia, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, and France, before focusing on English examples in shire moots, hundred moots, forest courts, courts of dens, evolving locally into manorial courts.\(^6\) These meeting places were ‘under the light of heaven’ and often at distinctive sites like an oak tree, a lime tree, an ancient burial place, a river ford, stone circle, churchyard, or at a boundary point between parishes. A notable one in Kent was Pennenden Heath.\(^7\)

We shall continue to search for more evidence on Hadlow’s more modest site.
North Frith in 1460 was a hunting park, much larger than now, which had long been in the possession of the Clare, and then the Stafford, families. Much of it lay in Hadlow parish, but it spilled well over into the parishes of Shipbourne, West Peckham, Tonbridge, and Hildenborough, and its full extent is never estimated by contemporaries. One document referred to its extent as seven miles but did not make clear if this meant seven square miles or seven miles in circumference. In Hadlow parish, we may perhaps guess at somewhere around fifteen hundred to two thousand acres, but Mick Rodgers, farming at North Frith Farm, reckons its full extent to have been nearer five thousand acres. Towards Tonbridge it stretched as far as Cage Green, so that courtiers at Tonbridge Castle had a readily accessible entrance into the park at Cage Gate. It extended north-west to Trench Wood, Coldharbour, and Kiln Wood, getting near to Shipbourne village, then turning east (the place-name Claygate seems to suggest another entrance), then veering south of Oxenhoath back to High House Lane, along a boundary with Hadlow manor.

Both North Frith park and Hadlow manor were in the hands of the same owner, so while North Frith lay outside all Hadlow's sub-manors, it must have lain within our chief Hadlow manor. So long as it belonged to the Clare and Stafford families, nothing about it has been found in their archives for they became scattered and are meagre when compared with the size of their great estate. But when once the Duke of Buckingham was executed...
for treason, and all his lands were surrendered to the King in 1521, more about its management is learned from the national records. Grants of North Frith were made by Letters Patent, and one additional document records Thomas Culpeper, esquire, holding courts in Hadlow. Moreover, some Hadlow manor tenants, as our 1460 survey shows, had rights of pannage in North Frith (i.e. rights to graze pigs there); also Richard Fisher, being lessee of Hadlow manor for 21 years from 1543 onwards, claimed for himself pannage for thirty swine.\(^1\) North Frith must have been part of Hadlow manor.

The first grant of the hunting park after 1521 was made to Sir Henry Guildford, who was Master of the King’s Household and also Master of the Horse. At the dissolution of the monasteries, it is noticeable how often parks were granted to gentlemen who had some obligation to produce horses to ride with the king, either to war or on formal occasions; this last obligation was laid on Gentlemen Pensioners, and Sir Ralph Fane of Hadlow was one of them. So many grants of parks savour of official policy, designed to encourage gentlemen to breed better horses in them, thereby supporting one of the king’s campaigns at this time to improve the breed of English horses.\(^2\)

Sir Henry Guildford held North Frith until his death in 1532, and his widow sold it back to the Crown in 1541.\(^3\) Then Hadlow manor and North Frith passed in Edward VI’s reign to John Dudley, later Duke of Northumberland, a powerful figure in the young king’s reign who exchanged it for properties in other counties.\(^4\) He himself lost his life for resisting the succession of Catholic Mary. North Frith now passed through an unsettled period of grants, forfeitures, and re-grants, leaving us to speculate on how Hadlow people experienced it all, for they undoubtedly picked up the gossip about the standing of local gentlemen at court. In Chapter 15 below we note some of the banter passing among the poachers in 1538 about local gentry, in that case, the Boleyn family, when they were in bad odour with the king. The herbage and responsibility for the deer were bestowed on various local gentlemen until they, one by one, fell from favour, and were attainted, some forfeiting all their property. Thus Sir Edward Neville at Mereworth (whom we encounter in 1538 reporting on deer poaching in many nearby parks (see Chapter 15)) had been made keeper of North Frith park at some unknown date, and was then attainted. Thomas Culpeper, esquire in 1541 held the grant of the herbage of North and South Frith, and in his turn too was attainted.\(^5\)

Thomas Culpeper’s accounts shed some further light on the management of North Frith, for he was paying two men £3 for ten weeks to watch an eyrie of goshawks, as well as repairing the park pales and gates, and making a hedge about the ‘hawksege’, costing him 3s. 2d. He held courts for the manor, and paid three keepers of North Frith £10 for their year’s wages.\(^6\) We noted above in Chapter 8 the generous rights given to these three keepers for grazing a number of their own bullocks in the Frith. As the Tithe map of 1842 shows, some meadow land by the Medway was actually called North Frith Meadows; we may wonder if the keepers routinely took them down there to fatten in the summer.

Culpeper’s responsibilities in North Frith seem to have arisen out of the grant made to Sir George Harper, in 1542, for he and Thomas Culpeper were partners. A lawsuit in Chancery reveals a tangle of family relationships and influences exerted at court that bound together many of the beneficiaries of Crown grants in the sixteenth century when they scrambled for favours; their personal ties were crucial for success.\(^7\) So Sir George Harper who got the grant of South and North Frith was married to a Harper kinswoman.

\(^{1}\) L. & P., Hen. VIII, XVIII, ii, 59

\(^{2}\) Thirsk, 1984, 384-6

\(^{3}\) L. & P., Hen. VIII, XVI, 499

\(^{4}\) Hasted, 1798, V, 180

\(^{5}\) L. & P., Hen. VIII, XVII, 30

\(^{6}\) L. & P., Hen. VIII, XVI, 622

\(^{7}\) NA C3 / 42 / 83
who was also the sister of Alexander Culpeper; Alexander Culpeper went to Spain in the
service of 'the prince', while two other Culpeper brothers of Thomas acquired a material
interest in North Frith, one as a solicitor handling Alexander's affairs when abroad, the
other by inheritance. Unfortunately, we lose sight of the way that dispute was settled.

Going back to Henry VIII's reign, Sir Henry Isley of Sundridge became keeper of
the park of North Frith, master of the hunt, and chief steward and bailiff of Hadlow
manor in place of Sir Edward Neville, who was beheaded in 1538 for conspiring with the
Pole family. Isley was the next to be attainted for being concerned in Wyatt's rebellion,
1554-5. Finally, in 1558, Elizabeth granted the park, with the manor, to her first cousin,
Sir Henry Carey, without requiring him to pay any rent. Sir Henry Carey (1524-1596)
was the son of Anne Boleyn's sister, becoming Lord Hunsdon in 1559. In 1587 he set to
work to find out what rents were owed him, raising the rent paid by David Willard for his
furnaces, foundries, iron mill, and a pond for his ironworks. But he had no personal
connection with Kent, and his descendants in James I's reign sold their interest.

For over a hundred years of the fifteenth century Hadlow people had had a rich
nobleman (living at home in Thornbury, Herefordshire), as the lord
of North Frith. It must have been very
different when the park came to the
Crown under the Tudors, and
numerous different grantees took over,
appointing their own sub-lessees, and
all no doubt taking their pickings from
the woodland. The lease given to Sir
George Harper and Thomas Culpeper,
esquire, in 1553, allowed them for
forty years to take timber freely for charcoal to make iron. They paid £500 p.a. for the
right, but by 1570 the woodland had been stripped and it was no longer worth the rent.
They surrendered the lease in 1574, after only 21 years, and when Hadlow people were
summoned to revalue what was left, they counted South Frith and North Frith together,
and reckoned it to be worth no more than £33 16s. 8½d.

Two generations of Lord Hunsdon's heirs held North Frith and then sold it to a
London physician, who conveyed it to the Rivers family, gentry whose story is told in
Chapter 13 among local families since one branch of the Rivers settled in Hadlow. They
have left no estate archive, so the subsequent history of North Frith is not easy to follow.
Ironworking in the Weald declined in the first half of the seventeenth century when such
industrial activities moved to the West Midlands and South Wales in search of better
quality iron and more timber. Early in the 1600s, a growing enthusiasm for improving
land in the Weald for agriculture was made clear in the published work of Gervase
Markham (discussed in Chapter 8), and some of North Frith's land that had been
irredeemably cleared of wood was accordingly laid out in farms. Dr Chalklin has written

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about the changed layout of farms in Tonbridge parish that resulted between 1650 and 1750, and although he does not separately describe the reshaping of the parkland of North Frith, one of the large farms newly created in 1674-6 was Old Trench Farm, which must have been part of the hunting park since Trench Park of North Frith was listed in 1586 as part of the manor.\(^{15}\) The farm was measured at 275 acres, and was sold at first to a syndicate of eleven local people, but then it was immediately resold to one yeoman tenant. Dr Chalklin's tabulation of farm sizes on the demesne land of the manor in South Frith shows other large farms being laid out by this time, 24 per cent of holdings being between 100 acres and 320 acres apiece.\(^{16}\) In short, some large farms appeared in this part of the Weald which had formerly been the more congenial home of smallholders.

As for the woodland, we can reasonably guess that some of North Frith's trees began to be more carefully coppiced again, for experience shows how a revival of interest in coppicing regularly returns after a long period of neglect; it is happening today. Sir Roger Twysden at Roydon Hall in the next door parish of East Peckham showed extreme concern for preserving woodland by coppicing, after his estate suffered severe despoliation during the Civil War. Replanting must have taken place at some time since some woodland in North Frith survives to this day.\(^{17}\)
The history of early settlement in Kent, especially in the Weald, is distinctive, and has left a deep impress on its history, some of it visible still. So in this last chapter, the broader Wealden context in which Hadlow lay is the focus of attention. Subjects discussed here could alert those who study other Wealden parishes to identify more evidence, which may strengthen some of the observations made here about Hadlow.

We are accustomed these days to reading about ‘the panoramic beauty of the Weald, unsurpassed in any part of England’, and some descriptions of it are lyrical; for Peter Brandon, it ‘delights the eye, warms the heart and feeds the soul’. But the Weald was not always seen in this attractive light. Professor Richard Bradley in 1729 printed a sobering story of a man from the Weald of Kent accused of poisoning several wives. In less than twenty years, he buried fourteen of them, and with each one gained a fortune. He went for trial, and said that he married women from hilly countries, but the difference of air and diet probably explained their deaths. Physicians confirmed that view, and he was acquitted. In other words, the Weald was not an alluring countryside in the past when compared with the downs and vales in the east and north of the county. Our understanding of its early history owes much to the careful work of Kenneth Witney in his book of 1976 on The Jutish Forest, studying the Weald from AD 450 to 1380. Kenneth Witney’s parents were missionaries in India, and he spent much of his childhood and his holidays in Kent, going on to live during his working life in Tonbridge until his death in 1999. He knew Hadlow and the district very well indeed.

The Weald of Kent in Witney’s book starts off as a primeval forest, though bearing traces of ironworking and associated tracks from Roman times. The new settlers in the fifth century were a Frankish people from the Middle Rhine, who brought a different culture from that of the Anglo-Saxons who settled elsewhere. Their ordinary freemen enjoyed great freedom, and they followed the gavelkind custom of inheritance, not passing property on death to the eldest son alone but dividing it equally between sons, or, if no sons, then between daughters. They were accustomed to settling in scattered farms or small hamlets, not in villages. Even when the invaders later had to submit to Anglo-Saxon rule, they preserved these old customs and tenures.

Kentish territory was divided into lathes, each lathe being headed by a royal vill, situated on the more readily cultivable land north of the Weald; in the Hadlow case this royal vill was at Aylesford, extending over a very large domain which would subsequently become divided between many manorial estates. Hadlow lies on the outer rim of the Weald, and benefited from the fact that the continuous forest belt of the Weald running from west to east was broken by the Medway. This river deposited alluvium on the terraces and so ameliorated Hadlow’s soils at its southern end. Each lathe at the beginning owned a corridor of land running into the forest along which farmers drove their swine in autumn for fattening on acorns and beechmast. The drove roads became settled routes into the forest’s recesses, and in the vicinity of Tonbridge and Hadlow, used two ancient crossings over the Medway at Branbridges and Twyford.

In every lathe the king had a scattered demesne, of which some land was let to
tenants, known as 'inmen', owing suit of court and some labour services to their lord. Other land in the lathe, known as 'outland', was let to freemen, and gave them individual farms, scattered singly or in small hamlets, out of which they created their arable, meadow and pasture. In the pannage season all drove their swine into the forest, sharing its resources with the king and his 'inmen'. As time wore on and the settled population increased, a distinction developed between woodland belonging to the crown and the common woodland, the king holding on to places on the northern margins of the Wæld - Witney names the Mereworth woods and Oxenhoath, in West Peckham, as two such areas - while leaving the deeper woodland to the freemen.

Further adjustments and changing usages to accommodate yet more people resulted in the king granting substantial estates to courtiers around him, and such landholders in turn let smaller estates to their retainers which became submanors. In providing some Wæld common to all such grantees the chief lord broke up the continuous woodland into a series of dens, and so single manors acquired a chain of such halting and feeding places, necessarily lying at a distance from their parent base.

The resulting topography became a tangle of intermingled manors, dens, and farms, whose farmers enjoyed great freedom without accepting any strong necessity for the regulation of common assets such as evolved in areas of Anglo-Saxon settlement. In course of time, manorial conventions hardened and moved people increasingly towards an administrative conformity in Anglo-Saxon territories, and inexorably these trends exerted influence in Kent too, for manorial stewards trained in the law were bound to promote notions of conformity wherever they took office. But in some respects, though not all, people in Kent succeeded in resisting these tendencies. It is true that Kent's distinctive lathes, and the lesser units, called hundreds, adapted to accommodate manors, while the church everywhere divided Kent communities into parishes. But the pattern of farms and communal usages remained different in Kent, and continue to be difficult for us to disentangle and explain.

As Hadlow lies on the edge of the Wælden forest, and not on the more fertile soils around Aylesford, where lay the original royal vill of the lathe, the improvement of ploughland and the making of self-sufficient farms with adequate cornland to feed a family was doubtless a slow process, carried out over many generations as the population gradually increased in the neighbourhood. Until the Norman Conquest, we know almost nothing in detail about the shaping of that landscape. We first learn the name of a grantee of land in the Tonbridge area in the time of William the Conqueror, when Richard, son of a Frenchman called Gilbert, Count of Eu or Brionne of Normandy, received a major grant. He was known sometimes as Richard of Tonbridge, for that strategic place on the Medway was already important, though Gilbert actually founded his fortunes on a larger estate at Clare in Suffolk, from which he took his surname. Some land appendant to Tonbridge was called a lowy, granted to him in an exchange arrangement, and as it extended into Hadlow, Richard Clare was lord of Hadlow's land. After that the Clare family rose in wealth, estates and influence, building up a strong presence around Tonbridge, and taking increasing pleasure in the use of the surrounding woodland for hunting.

Early in the twelfth century North Frith and South Frith woodlands and all the land between were turned into a large hunting chase with deer parks in Postern and Cage. It stretched over some forty square miles from Shipbourne to Tunbridge Wells. The Clares' attachment to Tonbridge may be gauged by the fact that Richard Clare who died in 1263 gave instructions for his body to be buried at Tewkesbury, his bowels at Canterbury...
and his heart at Tonbridge. It was surely the hunting around Tonbridge that had captivated him. When Richard Clare died in 1263 the land around Hadlow was taking on the appearance of a farmed countryside. Kenneth Witney judged that the balance had tipped during the twelfth century from pannage (using the woodland to feed swine) to crop cultivation and the exploiting of timber, but the absence of documents prevents us from tracing out the process until the thirteenth century. Nevertheless, something of the zest for owning land around Hadlow, which offered access to courtiers at Tonbridge castle and hunting facilities round about, may surely be detected in the existence of seven sub-manors in the parish of Hadlow, all in place by 1460.

Manors in the parish that are named in the documents are Hadlow Place, Goldhill, Crombury, Fromonds, Caustons, Fish Hall (called ‘a reputed manor’ in 1694, but almost certainly never a recognised manor, and not counted here), Lomewood and Peckhams. They are likely to have been small, at the very most 200-300 acres apiece, and some perhaps smaller still (a historian of Meopham in Kent identifies one manor there of only 50 acres). But if they were all manors, we have to assume that they all held manorial courts. The court rolls of some do survive, although they are fragments only, and they exhibit a conformity with conventional procedures. (Discussed in Chapter 6 above).

THE SUB-MANOR OF CAUSTONS

Among the sub-manors, Caustons calls for special mention for Hadlow was one of the homes of the Caxton family, and Hadlow, may have been the birthplace of William Caxton. The evidence is circumstantial and certainly not proven, but it deserves attention.

The Caupton family's origins are thought to lie in Cawston, North Norfolk and possibly in Causton, West Norfolk. The family is then found in Cambridgeshire, associated with Causton, which lies west of Cambridge, with London, Kent, and Suffolk. The Clare family were prominent landowners in Suffolk, and it is guessed that a Causton arrived in the Weald of Kent in the service of the Clares, at a time in the later twelfth century when they were developing their estates along the Medway. The one Causton who was best remembered around Hadlow was Hugh de Causton, and he features in our Hadlow survey as a past owner of Caustons manor. The fact that the same first name was borne by more than one generation, however, makes for difficulties in establishing any firm chronology.

Documents in the National Archives show a William de Causton in 1291/2, having a son called Hugh de Causton who granted away land in Causton, Norfolk. Then, a Hugh de Causton, who could well have been the same person, having sons Francis and Roger, was engaged in land transactions relating to West Peckham, Tonbridge, and Mereworth in 1306, 1310 and 1324. So a landed interest in Kent had been established, and in an Inquisition Post Mortem of 1315 the same Hugh was also shown holding the manor of Causton in Hadlow, deemed to be one-eighth of a knight’s fee and held from Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester. At the same period another family in Hadlow, who would show a significant connection with the Caustons, bore the surname atte Berne or Barne, and in 1306 Richard atte Berne was mentioned in connection with woods in West Peckham that had come into the possession of Hugh de Causton. A second connection between the Atte Bernes and Caustons was the marriage of William de Causton, who died in 1354, to Cristina, who then took John atte Berne as her second husband. In 1352 Hugh de Causton of another generation sold the manor because his eldest son, John, had become a friar in 1334 (his brother William attended to the sale. Was this perhaps the same William who had married Cristina?

The date of birth of William Caxton, the printer, is unknown, but it is reckoned at somewhere between 1415 and 1424. This is some sixty years after the last firm evidence of the Caustons in Hadlow. But he nevertheless clearly said that he was born and learned his English in the Weald of Kent, and that must mean that he went to school there.
William Caxton was then apprenticed to a London mercer, and turning to the records of the Mercers' Company we find that the first warden's accounts in 1347 name no less than eight Caustons as members. The William de Causton, mentioned above as the brother of the friar, could well be the mercer who died in 1354, for he showed a Hadlow connection by naming his late apprentice, John atte Berne, as his executor. This John atte Berne evidently remained in Hadlow for he owned, and possibly himself built, Barnes Place, a fine medieval house existing still in the parish at Barnes Street, east of Golden Green. It is listed Grade 1. In a much later document in James I's reign, in 1613, this John Barnes was again mentioned as a mercer and an executor of William Causton's will; he set up a chantry in London for him. In 1393 a John atte Berne (the same man possibly or, more likely, a descendant) bought some of the Causton manor lands in Hadlow adjoining his own.

It might seem that the Caustons, arriving around 1300, had severed their connection with Hadlow by 1352 when selling the manor. Yet their second link with Hadlow survived, namely, as owners of that one eighth of a knight's fee in Hadlow, mentioned in 1315. In 1403 it still belonged to heirs of Hugh de Causton, though we are not told that they still bore the Causton name, nor are we told where they were living. A Richard atte Berne also held one sixth of a knight's fee in Hadlow. Thereafter, some of the Causton family members are found in West Wickham, Kent. The wills showing this are dated considerably later, between 1490 and 1560. More on William Caxton, the printer, came to light in 1922, when Richard Holworthy found deeds fairly certainly showing that William's father was called Philip, and his wife, Dionisia, and they had two sons, William and Philip.

One of the missing links in William Caxton's connection with Hadlow, then, is evidence that any members of the Causton family continued to live in Hadlow when Hugh sold up in 1352. He had first received the agreement of his sons, John, the friar who went to Dover, and William, the mercer who worked in London. But William, the mercer's offspring, could well have kept a home in Hadlow for many important and influential members of London companies in the sixteenth century did exactly the same, maintaining connections with their native places; two of those doing so in Hadlow, while making their livings in London and abroad, were the Fanes, remaining in the parish registers until at least 1616, and the Rivers until, at least, the 1660s. Their histories are discussed in Chapter 13.

So evidence about William Caxton's early years eludes us still, but Hadlow people preserved a vague oral tradition about the family, and an old house in the High Street, now gone, was said to have belonged to them. A further link may yet be found, when pursuing the Caxton surname in public archives, or when exploring the Causton association with the mercers. The link with mercers in trade seemed to endure into the printer's youth for William was apprenticed in 1438 to Robert Large, one of the influential and rich members of the Mercers Company, who in due course became sheriff and mayor. The recognised authority on Caxton, N.F. Blake, has written the most recent account of Caxton's life for the Oxford DNB, and expressed the opinion that views on his birthplace 'lack conviction'. But he did guess that William's father 'may have been a prosperous merchant, since it

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15. Larking, 1859, 231-3
16. NA E178 / 4118
17. Duncan, 1924
18. Tenterden Exhibition of Books Catalogue, 22 July-4 August, 1951, 7-10; on Caxton's father, see also Blake, 1962
19. Dumbreck archive, CKS TR 1335 / 3, 1336 / 6A; Lambert Larking, 1859, 1862-3
cannot have been easy to apprentice a son to an important man like Large'. So it might well be fruitful to look for other influential mercers around Tonbridge who could have helped William Caxton into his apprenticeship. Meanwhile Hadlow people cling to the story that William was born in Hadlow, since the circumstantial evidence makes it the most reasonable suggestion so far.

Returning to our survey, we note that Hugh de Causton was well remembered in 1460 as the one-time lord of Causton manor, while we have to assume that those other pieces of land occupied by him in our survey belonged to the principal manor of the Staffords, for we are not conversant with any convention whereby one manor's land could be severed and passed to another manor. However, it is not inconceivable that it happened at the time of the Black Death, causing part of Caustons manor after 1352 to be joined with the principal manor of Hadlow. A Caustons manor remained in existence, its centre being known to have lain in the vicinity of the present Style Place. Houses recently converted from the old nineteenth-century maltings and brewery buildings of Style Place have been given the name of Caxton Place.

Hadlow manor was unusual in having seven sub-manors in the parish along with the main manor of the Clares and Staffords. Many practical questions come to mind concerning the way they co-existed peaceably. Their lands were intermingled; so disputes between them were bound to arise, particularly about boundaries. How were they settled? In some counties like those in the Midlands, where one manor often extended over a whole parish, it is possible that disputes with neighbouring manors were rare. Even where two or three manors co-existed in a parish, problems might be amicably settled by gentlemen owners conferring with each other. But eight manors in one parish suggest problems on a quite different scale; yet we find no documents to suggest how they were dealt with. One place-name only in our survey prompts speculation about the existence of a possible meeting place in the manor where contentious issues could be thrashed out, for it was called Lawday Place. Nothing has been found in any Hadlow documents explaining its use, but it is briefly discussed in Chapter 14, as a Topographical Problem.

What is made clear in this puzzle about practicalities in a parish with so many manors is the unceremonious way in which the manors themselves were created. If that impression is correct, then we should not be surprised to find unceremonious administrative procedures being followed thereafter. The records of manors usually studied by historians relate to great landowners served by stewards, bailiffs, reeves, beadles, and others; but educated and trained administrators were not always at the disposal of our small Wealden landowners or their manorial lessees. An episode in 1598 at Hunton (a parish next door but one to Hadlow, with Yalding parish lying between) illustrates this situation. The tenants took to the Exchequer Court in Westminster a complaint about their manorial lord. He was not the owner but the lessee, but he did not occupy the manor house, did not relieve the poor, did not keep a bull or boar for the use of the tenants, did not allow them hedgebote or stackbote, and did not give them a dinner every lawday. When they attended court on one occasion from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., they were offered neither meat nor drink, had to assemble under some trees, and the steward was obliged to write his notes sitting on a log. The tenants knew the correct manorial procedures but the practice could be somewhat different.

In Hadlow, we come close to similar makeshifts in 1587 relating to Fromonds sub-manor. In a dispute about whether Fromonds was held by knight service, all seventy-year old witnesses agreed that 'they took Fromonds to be a manor,' for it 'had demesnes and services'. They were also aware of how the manor had descended by inheritance. But they also knew that the demesne lands had been sold away from the services, so that the lord, Mr William Cotton, 'left not any piece whereon he might hold a court'. Notwithstanding this difficulty, Sir Thos Cotton, his son, held divers courts for the manor 'in a part of the
highway near the same. The rents of Fromonds were known to another witness, Walter Trice, a mercer of Hadlow; they consisted of 9s. in money, certain peppercorns, certain hens, and one red rose. A rickety manorial structure comes into view, though it was held together by the tenants recognising their duty to gather the lord's rents and uphold the customs. To that end, they said, a customary book had been produced in 1464-5, more than a century before, to show what they owed, and after the death of Sir Thomas Cotton (evidently a recent occurrence) the homage of the manor had made a presentation of the rents and services. Testimony in this lawsuit is shot through with some knowledge of court procedures, and an awareness of ancient customs. Indeed, it goes further, showing deep respect and obedience to the customary book. The testimony of Walter Trice brings us face to face with a peaceable community, accepting their manorial duties, while also very carefully watching their manorial rights, yet content to let the customary book (of 1464-5) have the final say. We learned from other evidence that Walter Trice occupied Court Lodge; that suggested that he possibly cultivated the home farm as well. He was 72 years old in 1586 and had held a copy of the customary book for some thirty years, having had it 'faithfully' copied for him by Stephen Austen; he believed it to be an exact copy of the one held by George Bishop, once of Hadlow, now of Tonbridge. The customary book, he said, 'was of very great credit amongst all tenants of the manor, in somuch that upon any question arising about the rights, rents, and services of the tenancies there, they used to repair to him for search in the said book of his, and did hold themselves quieted and satisfied with that which was found there, as he hath very often known and seen'. The episode conveys a sense of people's contented adherence to very old practices though without the bureaucratic efficiency and consistency expected of a chief manor. Small sub-manors often changed hands; in such circumstances, they might, or might not, long endure.21

Professor Nellie Nielson contributed an extremely well-informed and perceptive essay on this question in 1928-9, having closely studied the medieval manors of Bilsington in Kent, Fleet in Lincolnshire, and others more cursorily. She was very conscious of the diversity of manorial forms across the kingdom, and in what she called 'desultory reflections' she protested against 'the somewhat insidious temptation' to cover England too generally with the types of manorial organization described by Frederic Seebohm. He was the authority writing in the 1880s, much respected in her day. Such types were common in parts of the Midlands and the south, but not necessarily elsewhere. Professor Neilson was well aware of all the past discussions about racial influences on manorial forms, but she herself gave more weight to agricultural explanations, and was inclined to give priority to Continental influences since Kent lay so near to the European mainland, and contacts could have conferred 'an early self-consciousness and entity that enabled her (i.e. Kent) to withstand the equalizing and standardizing influence of the Norman conquest'.

Professor Neilson was familiar with unusual manorial practices like the coalescence of small manors to make larger ones, and the fission of vills to make new manors. She expected newly created manors to adopt tenurial styles, like gavelkind, to match the practices of neighbours, thus strengthening the drift towards ever more local conformities. But she harked back also to an older, pre-Norman past when the manor had not been the vital administrative unit but the village had reigned supreme, so that where village boundaries met, it was the village that claimed rights over common alongside other villages, thus explaining the widespread existence of non-manorial commons. She looked forward to someone writing a 'great work on early commons' which would differentiate between commons within manors and inter-village commons, and would also establish a chronology relating to the status of tenants, starting with ancient tenants all of whom turned onto the commons all their cattle throughout the year, while tenants coming later had to pay for the right, and were restricted to a certain number of animals only. A varied array of individual rights and privileges would accumulate, which she found embedded in the names used for classes of tenantry. She gave some examples from widely scattered

21. NA E134, 29 Eliz., Hil. 19
22. Neilson, 1928-9
documents, embracing sub-tenants, and, seemingly, transhumant people, i.e. those bringing their animals, like pigs into woodland, for only one season of the year, a group to which other historians pay no attention; all would require explanation.  

Similarly, Professor Neilson scrutinized the varied terms given to tenemental units, mentioning yokes and dayworks, though she did not refer to the ferlings that appear in our survey. Labour services were yet another subject for infinite variation; these obligations in course of time would take on subtle, fresh meanings in identifying status. In short, Professor Neilson depicted an extremely fluid manorial scene in time and space in the Middle Ages, helping us to adjust our vision when confronting, for example, all the puzzling mismatches of rents, dues, and services that were owed in Hadlow in 1460. Perhaps, they did constitute one layer piled on another and another of changing practices, without any attempt at spring-cleaning ever having taken place. So in remarking finally on the ‘far from conventional manorial type’ found in Kent, and while allowing, even so, for some conformity of procedures, she enables us to consider the possibility of conformities in the Weald that were unique to the region and identify a distinctive Wealden type. Significantly, Professor Neilson recognised with other medievalists how little embarrassed were our forebears in accepting the co-existence of pre-feudal and feudal custom.  

We are prompted to wonder if this prepared them mentally for the new age in the sixteenth century when a fresh administrative revolution would descend. 

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

We take it for granted that administrative routines throughout the kingdom were profoundly disrupted by the calamity of the Black Death. The population of the kingdom was reduced by about a half, and manorial officials died along with tenants. The bulk of our estate records in the Middle Ages relate to religious houses, nobility or richer gentry, and such landowners kept the best records. Those lying in the most fertile areas of the country show vacant holdings being speedily filled. But this did not necessarily happen in the Weald. It did not have the attraction of loamy soils in sheltered valleys. Rather, its residents were more likely to move elsewhere if other districts offered more alluring prospects. So we may reasonably assume that different circumstances in the farming routines and the social structure of the various provinces of the kingdom constrained landowners, and demanded some flexibility rather than producing a uniform adherence to standard rules. So what variability emerges?

Eleanor Searle, studying the estates of Battle Abbey in Battle in the High Weald of Sussex, shows the lord seeking fresh tenants in the 1450s and still accepting low rents and low entry fines. The abbey allowed a variety of tenures in its efforts to get tenants at all costs. But gradually, everyone’s spirits lifted, and a more optimistic phase of economic development came into view, causing landlords to value their land afresh, and to take more trouble to check what they owned. In support of these propositions, we notice in Kent, among more considerable landowners in the mid-fifteenth century, an interest in compiling fresh surveys. A fifteenth-century terrier of priory lands (not more closely dated than that) survives for Bilsington, situated on both Weald and marsh. A survey of Wye on the downlands was taken in 1452-4. The Hadlow manor survey in 1460 reflects the same economic mood. A rental and survey for the archbishop’s manor of Wrotham, next door to Hadlow, taken in 1495, but on downland rather than in the Weald, represented yet more local stocktaking; and in the course of the sixteenth century a much more commercial attitude towards landownership would spread all over the kingdom.

The Wealden evidence encourages the notion of a drive towards greater efficiency in manorial management, building up steam from the 1580s onwards in this area. Looking at the kingdom more generally, historians have identified a slow build-up of the desire for instruction in record-keeping, starting from the thirteenth century but positively surging in the early sixteenth century. The written treatises about managing
Courts were first written by monks and laymen, and historians have dated them by the legal precedents that they cited, starting around 1265, with more following around 1307 and 1342. Consonant with Professor Neilson's arguments, different local conventions were acknowledged by contemporaries. A treatise dated to 1269-80 instructed officials to know the customs of the county, the hundred, the court or manor, and the franchises, 'for laws and customs differ in divers places', it said. When printing four such treatises, F.W. Maitland concurred by seeking clues to the regional affiliations of authors, saying that the literature was at an early stage of growth and was of a novel kind.28

As time passed, more and more of the people needing to know the rules for the governing of manors were trained at the Inns of Court in London, and so policies and conventions began, to some extent, to converge across the kingdom. But the compelling logic of that situation means that change will have been gradual, rather slower in the W eald than elsewhere for it was a late settled area, and we have already suggested that some of its manorial lords were modestly endowed, with short experience and limited means for managing their lands efficiently. Even our Hadlow manor survey, belonging to a great lord, does not shine as a model. When it was made in 1460, it was markedly careful in some respects, but markedly sloppy in others. It took much trouble to give the names and enumerate the location north, south, east, and west of every piece of land, but it entirely failed to define the tenures, whether free or unfree, by which it was held.

The arrival of the printing press made it possible to publish in book form treatises on manorial administration, and they appeared thick and fast. F.W. Maitland listed their dates of publication as 1510?, 1515?, 1520?, 1530?, 1534?, 1539, 1542?, 1544, and 1546. From the 1540s they could be securely dated. Another significant contribution was made in 1523 by John Fitzherbert (almost certainly helped by his lawyer brother, Anthony), urging the more assiduous surveying of estates by lords.29 That these words were heeded is borne out by the many manorial surveys that survive from the sixteenth century, and furthermore by the many lawsuits set in train to adjudicate on disputes that broke out about the ancient customs of manors. Wrotham, having been surveyed in 1495, was surveyed again in 1538 and again in 1568. But we should remember that that manor belonged to the archbishop of Canterbury, so we would expect administrative zeal in that quarter. The many changes in ownership of Hadlow manor, following the confiscation of the Duke of Buckingham's estates in 1521, precluded fresh surveys there, though elsewhere by mid-century they were numerous all over the kingdom.

The timing in 1581-3 of a fresh copy of the 1460 Hadlow survey fits well into a late phase of the new era when a review of tenancies, rents, and land use had come to be recognised as an essential tool of manorial administration. We can further illuminate the background to this development in the W eald by recording what happened at Wrotham at much the same period. George Segars became the steward of the manor there in 1618 and remained in that office until 1631. He had been resident in Wrotham since at least 1600, recording the births of his seven children there between 1600 and 1623. He was also evidently a man with a long-standing interest in historical matters, for when he came into possession of the 1495 survey of the manor, presumably as steward, possibly before 1610 and certainly before 1618, he wrote a note on the cover saying: 'This book I wrote with my own hand out of an old rental of Mr Richers long before I was steward of Wrotham. George Segars'.

Of the 1538 survey of Wrotham two copies survive, one being a roughly written copy that is incomplete, and another a good copy. The good copy contains on its cover yet another note by George Segars, saying: 'This book I bought of Robert Wybarne, senior, and paid a valuable consideration for the same, before I was steward of the manor of Wrotham divers years'.30 The Wybarne family were gentry of old standing in the neighbourhood; John Wybarne, esquire, featured in our Hadlow survey, though holding only a small piece of land of less than one acre on the main street in Ralph Kene's tenement. But Anthony Wybarne appeared in Henry VIII's reign in a list of rentals and surveys, holding Duke of Buckingham lands in Tonbridge; he also held a knight's fee, and

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28. Maitland, 1888, 3-18, 68
29. Fitzherbert, 1523
30. Semple, 1962, 3-4, 53-4; CKS U55, M59; U55, M60 / 1 / 2
We begin in the sixteenth century to assemble the surnames of gentlemen living in and around Hadlow with a more conscious interest in its landed potential. Quite certainly it was sparked by the forfeiture of the Duke of Buckingham's great estate in 1521, coming at just the time when economic hopes were reviving more generally. Within a couple of decades after 1521, we find evidence of ironmasters exploiting iron at Somerhill and casting greedy eyes on Hadlow's timber. Gentry like the Fanes and Culpepers had official duties in caring for the hunting in North Frith, and were picking up land in the parish at the same time. It all builds up into a social image on this fringe of the Weald of a countryside becoming well populated with up-and-coming gentlemen, whose activities deserve closer scrutiny. The most illustrious and best known was William Lambarde, a leading antiquarian, who prepared a Perambulation of Kent, which he finished in 1570 and published in 1576. For this he had scoured the archives for legal documents about the county. He married in 1570 Jane Multon of Ightham, a parish next door but one to Hadlow, where she died in 1573. When Lambarde remarried in 1583, he moved away to Halling, near Rochester, where his new wife held property, but his continuing connections with the Hadlow neighbourhood may be assumed since his first son by his second wife was called Multon, thus honouring his first wife's father in Ightham, and one of his twin boys born in 1587 was called Fane, thus connecting the Lambardes with the Fane family who became conspicuous in Hadlow in the first half of the sixteenth century. Retha Warnicke suggested that this denoted friendship with Sir Thomas Fane of Badsell, in Capel parish next door to Hadlow parish. But the Fanes had other branches, in Mereworth, Hadlow, and later at Fairlawn in next-door Plaxtol. In short, the network of interconnected families hereabouts spread widely. It further encompassed the Cotton family who held Fromonds manor in Hadlow, and the Culpepers at Oxenhoath in West Peckham. In 1586 one document listed Hadlow's gentry as Dorrells (= Darrell?), Fishers, Fromonds, Keyser, Multons, and the Whettenhalls of East Peckham. We are entitled to conjure up a picture of many meetings between local gentry, not only socially but in connection with their duties in local government, when they freely discussed with each other the problems of estate management, and among other things urged each other to keep good records.

At this period, then, we may expect a steady movement towards more uniform procedures in manorial administration, especially since gentlemen sent more and more of their sons to be educated at the universities and, for legal training, to the Inns of Court. But we should also remember that a district almost overflowing with modest gentlemen was not characteristic of the whole Weald. In the later eighteenth century parts of the deeper Weald were still deemed to be lying in a wilderness, and in the kingdom generally gentrification was patchy, very noticeable in some places, but not in others. A conjuncture of special circumstances are to be expected wherever many gentry congregated. We do not find it happening in, say, Romney Marsh. We know that it would begin to happen in the fens of East Anglia in the seventeenth century, but not yet. The forest country of east Northamptonshire invites comparison in this respect with the vale land of west Northamptonshire, next door. Indeed, a more questioning, investigative enquiry into the social structure of regions all over the country could one day produce an instructive social atlas. It would almost certainly shed light on gentrification in a certain explicable chronological order. Its beginnings in the Hadlow area should surely then be traced back to the existence of the castle at Tonbridge, the build-up of enthusiasm for hunting in the later Middle Ages, and the comparative ease with which kings and courtiers could ride there from Greenwich Palace. The custom of gavelkind in Kent nurtured a more than usual number of young gentlemen of birth and breeding, having only modest...
The impressive gateway of 
Tonbridge Castle

estates that needed somehow to be augmented. The grand opportunity came their way with the forfeiture of the vast estates of the Duke of Buckingham in 1521; a swarm of bees was soon buzzing round that honeypot, receiving grants, selling on the land, issuing profitable leases to traders in iron and dealers in timber. A splendid illustration of the trend is given in a note at the end of a survey in 1587 concerning rents 'increased upon agreement' with Sir George Carey on June 25, 1587. The settlement pertained to the lease of the iron mill, the pool of the mill (lying either in Tonbridge or in Hadlow - it is not made clear where they lay), and some land in Shipbourne next to the paling of North Frith park. It showed the Queen's cousin, marshall of her household, having received from this friendly patron a grant of Hadlow manor, immediately seizing the opportunity to collect some of the profits from David Willard's commercial operations. We have mentioned him already, heavily engaged in shipping iron down the Medway while other confederates were felling timber in North Frith for iron smelting.

The social consequences of gentrification round Hadlow were evidently still conspicuous in the early eighteenth century, for in a work of 1720 entitled Magna Britannia et Hibernia Antiqua et Nova, or a New Survey of Britain its author laid emphasis on the many gentry originating and still living in Hadlow and Mereworth parishes. Mereworth parish, next door to Hadlow, he said, was filled with gentry, 'who dwell thick for ten miles around, and often have their meetings here for business and diversion'. By that time, of course, another magnet was attracting and holding gentry in the area, namely the spa at Tunbridge Wells, fostering a fashion for taking the waters and joining in the social round.

Our documents tell most about the life of rich people for they kept records. Working people are mostly invisible, and women especially. Only one woman comes to life in these pages, namely, Anne, Dowager Duchess of Buckingham; others in the shadows were those women brewing ale in their kitchens for sale to the locals, while all the rest are unseen. But a precious insight into men's lives is vouchsafed in 1538 when Thomas Cromwell took action to crack down on poaching.

This district of the Weald was a countryside of many parks. We have already referred to Postern and Cage parks, but there were many more. Poaching deer in the parks of the Weald was evidently a joyous male pastime. Men undertook it as casually as we would go for a walk. We cannot be sure that the same carefree attitude prevailed everywhere in the kingdom; it depended on how effectively lords and parkwardens guarded their parks and deer. We know of the harsh attack on poachers in the later seventeenth century and early eighteenth centuries, when tough legislation was enacted against poachers. But in the first half of the sixteenth century, Wealden evidence, at least, strongly suggests a tolerant, lax attitude, and it may have existed there for so long that local people had almost forgotten that it was against the law. Around Hadlow, we find people, who in other respects would have valued their public reputations, happily joining in. So much hunting country lay around that visits by courtiers and kings were routine experiences; Henry VIII was a visitor at Hever Castle, doubtless hunting there as well as courting Anne Boleyn at Hever. For the gentry living in the vicinity, parks were a conventional adjunct of the house. For a brief period, then, poaching enjoyed a heyday,
though it did not last; when William Lambarde was writing in 1570, he claimed that within memory deer parks had been reduced by almost a half. But the parks themselves did not disappear; rather, the commercial aspirations of landowners resulted in their being turned into grazing pastures for cattle.

A sharp shock was administered to the locals when Thomas Cromwell suddenly cracked down on poaching in 1538. Many poachers were caught and questioned, and a long account of their examinations, running to 31 pages, survives among Cromwell’s papers giving their answers. An accompanying letter suggests that the prodding to prosecute came from Sir Thomas Boleyn, the Earl of Wiltshire at Hever Castle, father of Anne Boleyn. He would die in the following year. Nor shall we be surprised to discover that he was much hated locally; perhaps gossip in the neighbourhood had already made everyone aware that he was instigating their prosecution.

Those conducting the investigation included Sir Thomas and Sir Edward Neville, brothers of Baron Bergavenny, who was lord of Mereworth; members of the same family would become Earls of Westmorland at Mereworth and build Mereworth Castle. The Nevilles were already influential men in Kent: Sir Thomas Neville was MP for Kent and Speaker of the House of Commons, deeply embroiled in the enforcement of the law against small men since he was a member of the Council of Star Chamber; Sir Edward was a courtier who attended the marriage of Anne Boleyn to Henry VIII, but was found guilty of conspiracy, along with the Pole family, in opposing Henry’s divorce from Catherine of Aragon, and was beheaded in 1538. The Nevilles collected together the examinations of the poachers and submitted them to Cromwell in 31 pages in what they termed only an Abridgement of the Evidence. Would that we had it all! This makes plain that it only required one man to knock on the door of his crony and suggest a night out for word to spread like wildfire among a whole gang who then met at a prearranged park, muffled, hooded, or enveloped in cloaks. Some brought nets (one admitted to having 4-5 small nets and one other long net, 40 ells long and a fathom deep), others carried bows or deer harness, a reference being made to one man who actually made the deer harness in his own house. Because of their disguise few men admitted to recognising anyone except their immediate friends. Yet they did not seem to be too scrupulous about concealment, for they brought their dogs as well, and some raids were carried out in broad daylight. Few could remember how many deer they caught on any particular occasion, but the number of bucks caught ranged from two to ten, and their parties (15 or 16 people on one occasion, 20 on another) gathered together a motley assortment of local men, including parsons and schoolteachers, even a keeper of North Frith Park, George Penhurst, who went hunting in Knole park with the poachers, and stood guard for the rest. ‘Keeping the lodge’ seems to have been a euphemism for keeping watch for the others. The parks that were named in the depositions were North Frith, South Frith, Cage, Postern, the North Park of Leigh, Knole, Otford, Wrotham, Penshurst, Heyvenden (= Heverham, part of the Boleyn estate at Hever?), Ashore (called Eshores by Hasted), Wallers (of the Waller family in Groombridge and Speldhurst?), and Frankams (Frankfield, SW of Ightham?) – the last four not as yet positively identified. Those known to have been Hadlow men were Thomas Symonds, Thomas Godfrey, husbandman, Richard Fisher, Thomas Boucher of Hadlow, labourer, (though in one place his name was crossed out), Thomas Meyrick of North Frith, and Thomas Plane, probably of Hadlow for that was a Hadlow surname, though he was also described as a serving man at Knole, and by someone else as a servant of Sir Thomas Wroth (perhaps a visitor at Knole on that night?). Familiar Hadlow surnames in addition were Willard, Bishop, Fisher, Somer, and Rivers, while other poachers came from Tudeley, Birling, Leeds, and Yalding. Some identified by occupation or place were John Walker, who was nevertheless keeper of Otford park and disguised himself with a nightcap, Richard Potter, deemed a gentleman, Henry Somer now gone to Ireland, Thomas Atwood, a schoolmaster of Sevenoaks, William Denman of Seal, yeoman, one Garbett of Birling, also called a keeper, Birling being somewhat distant beyond West Malling, George Wekes now a paler at Hampton Court, John Basset of Tonbridge.
yeoman and servant of Sir Edward Neville, Thomas Price, vicar of Frant, Edward Hart
yeoman of Pepinbury, and John Domewright of Chevening, brasier. For each park, lists of
names was given of those who confessed, those who were detected, and those newly
detected but not yet examined.

These men had some firm views about the local gentry which coloured their
attitudes towards the poaching of the deer. Edward Rivers's master was Lord Wiltshire
himself. Another man referred to Queen Anne and her brother, Lord Rochford, both
having lately suffered, he said (Viscount Rochford was executed two days before his
sister). He also added that my lord of Wiltshire was not beloved in the country, so he was
'gladder' to hurt his park. Another was 'the more willing to make those huntings because
my lord of Wiltshire was so extreme a man among them and was supposed then to be out
of favour with the king's grace that men might also perceive that he had no love of the
country neither'. It is illuminating to realise how much gossip people in the Weald picked
up about the feuding and conspiracies at court in the reign of Henry VIII.

Finally, and indirectly, this record of poaching tells us how dramatically life
changed for ordinary folk in Hadlow when once North and South Frith were turned into
farmland. The deer made way for cattle in the parks. Our Hadlow menfolk lost a pastime.
The women lost all the venison that had varied the bacon in their pottage for family
dinner.
ABBREVIATIONS

AC  Archaeologia Cantiana
BL  British Library
CKS  Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone
KAS  Kent Archaeological Society
NA  National Archives, Kew

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