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KENT
HEARTH TAX
ASSESSMENT
LADY DAY 1664

[*HEARTH TAX SERIES VOL. II*]
[KENT RECORDS VOLUME XXIX]

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With a General Introduction to the Series
by Nesta Evans

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PREFACE

We have much pleasure in introducing this, the second of the series of Hearth Tax volumes to be produced by the Roehampton Hearth Tax Centre and the British Record Society, in association with county record societies. There may well be some twenty volumes in the series. The Roehampton Centre is also, with the assistance of a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, having microfilm made of the Hearth Tax listings in the Public Record Office, which is, in turn, making copies of the relevant portions available to every appropriate local record office in the country. This should be completed in 2001. The work of transcription of Hearth Tax records from microfilm is already progressing in a considerable number of counties.

It is also intended to provide the volumes with scholarly introductions complete with maps and tables so that the volumes can be of the greatest use to social and economic historians working on a national canvas as well as to the local historians of the counties concerned. We have a particular interest also in stressing that the Hearth Taxes should throw light on the buildings about which they give such austere information. It is a long time now since the work of Fox and Raglan on Monmouthshire housing followed by Maurice Barley's *English Farmhouse and Cottage*, W. G. Hoskin's essay on the 'Great Rebuilding', and Bob Machin's corrective to it, made historians aware of vernacular housing as part of the evidence they should use. In the 1970s contemporary housing seemed to be accepted as part of the historical vocabulary. However, this part of the dictionary of historical tools seems to have been forgotten again. It is our hope in this series to focus attention once more on housing as necessary evidence in interpreting the past. We are also certain that these volumes will be greatly used by family historians since the Hearth Taxes and their indices are ideal for finding lost ancestors.

Since the population of England had reached five and a quarter millions by the mid-seventeenth century, the number of heads of households to be listed for taxation purposes was enormous. The Hearth Tax records of the 1660s and the 1670s are therefore so huge that their wholesale analysis has been beyond the scope of even the most enterprising individual, although much historical research has already been based on them. After the pioneering work of C. A. F. Meekings, Tom Arkell has done most to make the tax accessible to us. Professor Keith Wrightson, who is writing the introduction to the Durham volume in this series, has already used Mr Arkell's material on the Hearth Taxes for as many types of settlement as possible to establish the abnormality, in terms of extreme poverty, of his

coal-mining *Whickham 1560-1765*. Dr Christopher Husbands, who has also done much to make the Hearth Taxes accessible to us, wrote in 1992, 'much of the potential of the Hearth Tax to provide a general framework for the socio-economic history of the later seventeenth century still remains to be exploited at both local and national levels'.

It is this potential which we are now exploiting in these volumes. We hope to end with maps showing the distribution of population, in terms of the density of households taxed and exempted, and of wealth in terms of the number of hearths, for the whole of England and Wales.

We are therefore very pleased that Mr Duncan Harrington has been generous enough to release his gigantic transcript of the Quarter Sessions assessment of Kent for Lady Day 1664, checked against the Exchequer duplicate. We thank him for many hundreds of hours of work. Our interest in revivifying housing as a necessary tool for historians makes us particularly glad that Sarah Pearson, formerly of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, and past President of the Vernacular Architecture Group, has been willing to write the historical introduction. We hope the volume will be a model for the series.

Margaret Spufford, Director
Susan Rose, Computing Editor

Centre for Hearth Tax Studies
University of Surrey Roehampton

Michaelmas 2000

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This volume could not have been produced without the work of a great many people. The transcription was undertaken over a period of years by Duncan Harrington, who also wrote an introduction to the manuscripts, and compiled the indices. A general introduction to the hearth tax, to be included in all the hearth tax volumes, was written by Nesta Evans. The introduction to the hearth tax in Kent was contributed by Sarah Pearson, who also compiled the parish-borough list. Mike Shand of Glasgow University digitised the computerised base map of hundreds, and Phillip Judge drew the regional and parish maps. The transcript was turned into a database by Paul Ell and his colleagues at Belfast University, and Susan Rose turned the database and base map into the tables and proportional maps. Finally, Terry Lawson had the unenviable task of making the work of so many people consistent. Margaret Spufford oversaw the whole project from beginning to end, encouraging and advising all the contributors.

Duncan Harrington would like to acknowledge some financial assistance from the Marc Fitch Fund and from the estate of Sidney H. Titford towards computerising the text. He would also like to thank the staff of the Public Record Office and the Centre for Kentish Studies for their help during the research for this paper, especially Aidan Laws who kindly facilitated some editorial desk space during the time-consuming task of checking the Exchequer duplicates and constables' returns and to Kath Topping who, in the very early days provided photocopies of the Quarter Sessions document, and in more enlightened times facilitated a microfilm being made at his expense.

Sarah Pearson would like to thank the many people without whom it would have been impossible to undertake a rapid survey of so many seventeenth hearths in the county. In the first place, nothing could have been achieved without the willingness of so many owners to show her their fireplaces. Work on the three case study parishes would not have been possible without the detailed local knowledge of several people who generously made their research available and arranged access to many buildings. In Charing, Pat Winzar and the Palaeography Group of the Charing and District Local History Society provided transcripts of numerous wills and probate inventories relating to people in the parish. In East Peckham, Margaret Lawrence made available a wide variety of documentation and organised visits to many buildings. In Goodnestone, Julian Plumptre and Frances Smith helped to arrange access to a number of properties, and Jane Andrewes and David Eaves kindly lent copies of their unpublished theses, which were invaluable in placing the Goodnestone material in context. The

rapid survey of Boughton Monchelsea, undertaken partly with this project in mind, was arranged by Paul and Olive Hastings and members of Boughton Monchelsea parish council. Peter Guillery was extremely helpful in discussing the building of small houses in the new towns of north-west Kent, and Charles Bain Smith arranged a day looking at seventeenth-century houses in Deal. Elizabeth Parkinson patiently answered innumerable queries on the administration of the hearth tax; Paul Cullen and Anne Reeves set the author right on various place-name matters; Jill Eddison assisted in sorting out Romney Marsh boundaries; Frank Panton helped to unravel the difficult ward, borough and parish situation in Canterbury; and Anthony Poole discussed a number of problems in correlating the hearth tax with other documentation in the Benenden area. An earlier version of the introduction benefited greatly from the perceptive and constructive comments of Jane Andrewes, Nesta Evans, Peter Kidson, Margaret Spufford and Joan Thirsk, and the final version has been much improved by Terry Lawson's sharp eyes.

The British Record Society gratefully acknowledges financial assistance from The British Academy and The Aurelius Trust.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

By Nesta Evans

This volume is part of a series of county hearth tax returns which are being published jointly by the British Record Society, County Record Societies and the University of Surrey Roehampton, under the direction of the Roehampton Centre for Hearth Tax Studies. The aim is to publish at least one hearth tax return for every English and Welsh county which has not already one in print. The purpose of the series is to make available a major original source for late seventeenth-century economic and social history for anyone interested in this period. All the results will be tabulated and mapped. At the same time, a re-examination and re-listing of all the E179 documents in the Public Record Office is being undertaken, and those counties currently available in the search rooms will also become available on the P.R.O. web site. This introduction is intended to point out some of the ways in which hearth taxes can be used by historians of all kinds.

The best recent guide to the hearth tax returns is in Kevin Shürer's and Tom Arkell's *Surveying the People*.[1] Arkell's clear exposition of the hearth tax legislation is essential reading for anyone wishing to come to grips with this complicated source. His chapter includes the printed instructions issued to collectors of the tax in 1664, followed by a specimen return for Old Windsor.[2] The originals are in the Public Record Office.[3] There are also excellent introductions to several published returns, especially that to the Nottinghamshire returns.[4]

In order to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort, it is intended that the background to early modern taxation and following description of the administration of the hearth tax should be used in the introduction to all volumes in the series. It first appeared in the volume to Cambridgeshire.[5] Where local circumstances vary, this description has been modified.

Early modern taxation

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1 *Surveying the People*, ed. by Kevin Shürer and Tom Arkell (Oxford, 1992).

2 Arkell, 'Printed instructions for administering the Hearth Tax' in *Surveying the People*, pp.38-64.

3 PRO: E179/265/30; *Calendar of Treasury Books*, VII, pp. 1362-7.

4 *Nottinghamshire Hearth Tax 1664:1674*, ed. by W. F. Webster with an introduction by J. V. Beckett, M. W. Barley and S. C. Wallwork, Thoroton Society Record Series, 37 (Nottingham, 1988). Other examples are: *Derbyshire Hearth Tax Assessments 1662-70,* ed.by D. G. Edwards, Derbyshire Record Society, 7 (1982); C. A. F. Meekings, *Dorset Hearth Tax Assessments, 1662-1664* (Dorchester, 1951); T. L. Stoate, *Cornwall Hearth and Poll Taxes 1661-1664* (Bristol, 1981), and *Devon Hearth Tax Return, Lady Day 1674* (Bristol, 1982); P. Styles, 'Introduction to the Warwickshire hearth tax records', *Warwick County Records: Hearth Tax returns*, 1 (1957).

5 *Cambridgeshire Hearth Tax, Michaelmas 1664,* ed. by Nesta Evans, British Record Society, Hearth Tax Series I (London, 2000).

Regular direct taxation in the form of income tax did not exist before the late eighteenth century. In the Tudor period two medieval taxes, the fifteenth and the lay subsidy, were still in use. The former was a quota tax raised from communities, while the latter was levied on individual wealth usually assessed on land or goods, but also on wages in 1523-4.[6] Both medieval and Tudor subsidy records have been analysed by historians.[7] Until the hearth taxes of the later Stuart period no other taxes were sufficiently comprehensive to be as useful as the Lay Subsidy of 1523-4 for the study of economic and local history.[8] Dr Husbands wrote in 1987 that 'alone amongst the mid and late-seventeenth century taxes, the hearth tax allows historians to draw general comparative conclusions about local economies'.[9] Subsidies continued to be used in the early Stuart period. Charles I introduced the much disliked Ship Money, but, as its threshold was high, its records are much less full than those of the subsidies. Taxation was heavy during the Civil War and Commonwealth, but its records are few. Another new tax at this time was the Excise, first introduced in 1643 and revived at the Restoration to compensate the Crown for the loss of taxes such as feudal dues and the revenue from the Court of Wards. Between 1641 and 1702 a number of poll taxes were levied. The first, in 1641, was raised to enable Charles I to pay off the Scottish army occupying parts of northern England. The next poll tax, in 1660, was similar in that its purpose was to pay the arrears due to the army and navy as a necessary step to their disbandment.[10] Two useful studies of seventeenth-century taxation are C. D. Chandaman's study of the post-Restoration public revenues, and M. J. Braddick's research on the rise of the 'tax state' based on the two counties of Cheshire and Norfolk.[11]

The Administration of the Hearth Tax

The English hearth tax was a major source of government revenue levied twice yearly at Lady Day and Michaelmas from 1662 to 1689. Between 1666 and 1669 and from 1674 to 1684 the collection of the tax was farmed out, and from 1684 to 1689 it was carried out by a Commission which managed both the Excise and the Hearth Tax. Very few returns of named taxpayers survive from these three periods, although some lists of the sums of money

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[6] Richard Hoyle, *Tudor Taxation Records* (London, 1994), pp.1-3.

[7] R. E. Glasscock, *The Lay Subsidy of 1334*, British Academy Records of Social and Economic History, n.s. 2 (1975); John Sheail, *The Regional Distribution of Wealth in England as Indicated in the 1524/5 Lay Subsidy Returns*, ed. by R.W. Hoyle, List and Index Society, Special Series, 28. 1 and 28. 2, and 29. 1 and 29. 2 (Kew, 1998).

[8] Unfortunately, as discussed below, p. xxxiii, the lay subsidy returns for Kent are very imperfect.

[9] C. Husbands, 'Regional change in a pre-industrial economy: wealth and population in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 13 (1987), 348-49.

[10] T. Arkell, 'An examination of the Poll taxes of the later seventeenth century, the Marriage Duty Act and Gregory King' in *Surveying the People*, p. 142. Pre-1660 tax returns are listed in J. Gibson and A. Dell, *The Protestation Returns 1641-42 and other contemporary listings* (FFHS, 1995), and for 1660-on in J. Gibson, *The Hearth Tax and other later Stuart Tax Lists and the Association Oath Rolls* (FFHS, 2nd edition, 1996).

[11] C. D. Chandaman, *English Public Revenue 1660-1688* (Oxford, 1975), and M. J. Braddick, *Parliamentary Taxation in Seventeenth-Century England* (Woodbridge, 1994).

collected exist.

Most of the surviving returns for 1662-66 and 1669-74 are to be found in the Public Record Office. It was only during these years that the documents had to be returned to Quarter Sessions and central Government. The hearth tax was administered county by county, and two copies of each return were made, one of which was enrolled for Quarter Sessions while the other was sent to the Exchequer. It is the latter which are now in the Public Record Office. Far fewer of the Quarter Sessions' copies have survived, and those which do, like the assessment published here for Kent, are to be found in county record offices and other local archive repositories.[12]

Initially the returns consisted of the assessment lists of taxpayers with the number of their hearths, and a separate return of the sums actually collected.[13] However, from Michaelmas 1664 to Lady Day 1666 and from Michaelmas 1669 to Lady Day 1674 the returns generally combined the assessment with the return of money collected. The returns were made to the Exchequer for auditing, and all those which survive in the Public Record Office are catalogued under E179, together with the records of other taxes. Since 1995, a major relisting of all taxation records held in this class has been in progress, and many documents, which previously were not easily identifiable, have been made accessible.

Meekings and Styles[14] agreed that Sir William Petty was 'one of the progenitors'[15] of the new tax, but the former pointed out that the idea was not original, for similar taxes were already being levied in France and the United Provinces. Petty, who was one of those supporting the introduction of new kinds of taxes, set out the arguments in favour of the hearth tax in his 'Treatise of Taxes and Contributions', written in 1662.[16] Petty's 'Treatise' provides evidence of contemporary discussion of the principles and theory of taxation. The events of the years leading up to the Civil War had shown that reform of taxation was a necessity. After the Restoration, the three main sources of ordinary revenue were customs and excise, and the hearth tax. Direct taxation was reserved for extraordinary expenditure such as financing war. Petty regarded the hearth tax as a form of excise, on the grounds that the number of hearths in a house could be seen as a reflection of the occupier's purchasing power. Householders, on the other hand, saw the hearth tax as a levy like the poll tax, but a permanent one.

Samuel Pepys wrote in his diary on 3 March 1662: 'I am told that this day the Parliament hath voted 2s per annum for every chimny in England, as a constant Revenue for ever to the Crowne'.[17] The Act did not

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[12] The Irish hearth tax returns have survived for the 1660s for about half the counties, but the rest are lost. In 1691 the Scottish Parliament introduced a hearth tax which, like the Irish hearth taxes, continued to be levied until the late eighteenth century.

[13] Arkell, 'Printed Instructions' in *Surveying the People*, p. 41.

[14] Meekings, *Dorset*, and Styles, *Warwickshire*.

[15] Meekings, *Dorset*, p. xii.

[16] *Economic Writings of Sir William Petty*, ed. by C. H. Hull, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1899).

[17] *The Shorter Pepys*, ed. by Robert Latham (London, 1985), p. 183.

receive the royal assent until May. The hearth tax was introduced in 1662[18] as part of the financial settlement of the Restoration and continued to be levied twice a year at the rate of one shilling per hearth each six months until 1689. Like the Excise, this new tax was intended to finance the conduct of normal government business by the king.

Macaulay propagated the traditional Whig view of the hearth tax as oppressive, but this was not entirely accurate. William II ordered its abolition as a political move to gain popular support, but a few years later he found it necessary to replace it with the almost equally obnoxious Window Tax. On 8 March 1689 John Evelyn wrote in his diary 'The Hearth Tax was remitted for ever: but what intended to supply it, besids greate Taxes on land: is not named'.[19] It is ironic that at the point when the hearth tax was abolished, it was at last being efficiently administered and producing the long hoped for yield.[20]

The 1662 Act made existing local officials responsible for the collection of the tax under the supervision of justices of the peace, the clerk of the peace and the sheriff. Householders were given six days notice to make a written and signed return of their fire hearths and stoves. Kilns, blowing houses, stamps, furnaces, and private ovens in houses already charged were exempted from the tax, but blacksmiths' forges and bakers' ovens were not. No instructions were given about returns from illiterate householders, a fact which caused difficulties in Kent.[21] These returns were collated by the petty constables before being enrolled at Quarter Sessions as the assessment for the tax. The high constables were only involved in the collection of the money raised by the hearth tax, which remained a separate process from the assessment until the revising Act of 1663.

Within four months of its introduction Pepys was writing, on 30 June 1662, about the discontent created by the new tax: 'They clamour against the Chimny-money and say they will not pay it without force'.[22] One of the chief reasons for the dislike of the new tax was the right given to constables to check the returns by entering houses, although only in the day time.

The collectors of the tax were permitted to subtract a poundage from the money they collected: twopence in the pound for petty constables, a penny for high constables, and fourpence for sheriffs, from which a penny had to be paid to the clerk of the peace. This was an inadequate reward for the amount of work involved, and probably goes some way to explain the disappointing financial returns from the first collection at Michaelmas 1662. Meekings mentions a memorandum criticising the manner in which the tax was levied under the 1662 Act. It can be found in PRO E179/159, and

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[18] 14 Charles II, c.10.
[19] *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. by Guy de la Bédoyère (Bangor, 1994), p. 364.
[20] *Derbyshire Hearth Tax Assessments, 1662-70*, ed. by D. G. Edwards, Derbyshire Record Society, 7 (1982), p.xiii.
[21] See below, pp. civ-cv.
[22] *Shorter Pepys*, p. 210.

although undated 'may be safely placed in June or July 1663'.[23] It is particularly critical of the arrangements for collecting the tax, recommending the use of 'constant receivers' in the place of local amateur officials. The lack of control over these is a major reason for the low returns in the early years of the tax. In the seventeenth century there was no means of accurately forecasting the yield of taxes, and in 1662 the House of Commons overestimated the yield of the hearth tax.

The 1663 Act 'for the better ordering & collecting the Revenue arising by the Hearth Money'[24] concentrated on under-assessment rather than on failures in collecting the tax. The checking process was supposedly tightened, and petty constables were instructed to write their assessments in a book or roll in two columns headed 'chargeable' and 'non-chargeable', giving the names and hearths of both those liable and not liable to the tax and identifying the owners and hearth numbers of empty properties. An extra check was introduced at hundred level, as these books or rolls had to be checked by the high constable before being signed by the justices of the peace. The clerk of the peace had to make a county copy of the enrolled new assessment, as well as the Exchequer duplicate. This new assessment was generally used for the Lady Day 1664 collection. No attempt was made to reform the sheriff's administration of the tax and this led to the failure of the 1663 Act.

When Charles II opened the new session of Parliament on 21 March 1664, he pointed out that the revenue from the hearth tax had declined and added 'Men build fast enough'. The King asked Parliament to 'let Me have the Collecting and Husbanding of it by My own Officers; and then I doubt not but to improve that Receipt, and will be cozened of as little as I can'.[25] The new Act became law on 17 May 1664.[26] Clarendon was impressed by the new Act and in his autobiography called it 'a very good additional bill for the chimney money, which made that revenue much more considerable'.[27]

One of the principal features of the new Act was the replacement of the sheriffs by specially appointed receivers. Their salary was one shilling in the pound, but this included the payments they had to make to sub-collectors. They had to deposit bonds as security against default in the King's Remembrancer's office; the amount of security was based on the value of the 1662 assessment.

The receivers were appointed by the Exchequer Commission set up to administer the 1664 Act; it also instructed the Exchequer auditors to make copies of the 1662 assessments for the receivers and to send them a set of printed instructions setting out the procedures for the assessment, collecting and accounting.[28] These instructions show that the government

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[23] *Surrey Hearth Tax 1664*, ed. by C. A. F. Meekings, Surrey Record Society, 17 (1940), pp. xxv-xxvi.
[24] 15 Charles II, c.13.
[25] *Lords Journals*, XI, p. 583.
[26] 16 Charles II, c.3.
[27] Meekings, *Dorset*, p. xviii.
[28] Arkell, 'Printed instructions' in *Surveying the People*, pp. 41-54, 55-64.

was determined to tighten Exchequer control over the administration and collection of the hearth tax with the aim of improving its yield. With a few exceptions there was one receiver for each county and most county towns were joined to their county. A number of military men were appointed to receiverships, and it is probable that this was intended as a compensation for their losses in the Civil War.[29] A discussion of the complex situation in Kent can be found below under the introduction to the manuscript.[30]

It was intended that the new officials should use the Lady Day 1664 assessment as a working document, but in fact it was the original assessment made in 1662 which was used. It was realised too late that the most recent returns would not reach the Exchequer in time for them to be copied out and sent to the receivers for the Michaelmas 1664 collection. The instructions sent with the 1662 assessment urged the receivers to 'endeavour to procure ... Copies of the Taxation for the half year ended 25th of March 1664'.[31] Most of the receivers failed to do this and were faced with using instructions which referred specifically to the Lady Day 1664 return. Not surprisingly, this led to the failure of the attempt to achieve national uniformity in the returns, and accounts for the variations found in printed returns from different counties. A further difficulty for the receivers resulted from their late appointment, which led to them being unable to make their first assessment until after the date when the Michaelmas 1664 collection was due. As a result they had to collect the money retrospectively, and their assessments became a combined assessment and return.[32]

The system of collection was stricter under the 1664 Act than it had been under the two earlier Acts. Self-assessment by occupiers was replaced by collection by the Receiver's officers, often called 'Chimney Men'. They were to collect the tax from each house, and could levy the duty by distress on the goods of anyone who refused to pay after one hour. When a distress was made the petty or parish constable had to be present, and an appeal against taking a distress could be made to one justice of the peace. Anyone who violently resisted the chimney men could be sentenced to a month's imprisonment by a single justice. Although the constables were no longer the collectors of the tax, they, and the chimney men, were given the right to search every house once a year to find 'what Fire Hearthes or Stoves are increased or decreased since the former Certificate'.

One of the intentions of the Hearth Tax Act of 1664 was to prevent landlords from escaping payment of the tax by dividing a house into tenements, and then letting them to poor tenants. In 1663 this had been seen as a problem in some parts of Kent.[33] The 1662 Act had stipulated that if a house was worth not more than twenty shillings a year on the full improved rent, the occupant was exempt from paying the tax unless he

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[29] Calendars of Treasury Books, 1667-8.
[30] See below, pp. cviii-cx.
[31] Arkell, 'Printed instructions' in *Surveying the People*, pp. 51-3.
[32] *The Glamorgan Hearth Tax Assessment of 1670*, ed. by Elizabeth Parkinson, South Wales Record Society (Cardiff, 1994), pp. xiv-xv.
[33] See below, pp. l, lii-liii.

owned land or tenements worth over twenty shillings a year, or land, tenements, or goods of the value of at least £10. Sir William Petty saw it as essential to the success of the hearth tax that landlords should be made responsible for its payment when their tenants were excused through poverty. Petty called the tax 'an "Accumulated Excise" levied on a necessary commodity closely related to a man's general consumption and not "a particular Excise upon but one onely commodity, namely Housing"'.[34] After the new Act of 1664 there are many references in the fourth column of the return to landlords who have let the land away from the house, or have divided a house into several dwellings occupied by tenants exempt from the tax. Where this happened the landlord had to pay the tax. The owners of empty houses were also named, as were absentee owners of land or houses. A few owners lived outside the county.

Further modifications to the earlier Acts were concerned with liability to pay. Although this does not concern the Lady Day return published here, after May 1664, everyone with more than two hearths had to pay even if otherwise entitled to exemption. If the owner had let the land away from the house, so reducing its value to under twenty shillings, or if he sublet to poor tenants exempt from the tax, it was he who paid; and anyone moving into a new house was liable for the whole six months tax due at the succeeding Lady Day or Michaelmas. Beckett mistakenly stated that all houses with *two* or more hearths were to be taxed, regardless of the standing of their occupants.[35] This led him to suggest 'a social acceptance that the less prosperous members of society were generally to be found in one-chimney houses'.[36] It is true that the majority of those exempt from paying hearth tax lived in one-hearth houses, but by no means all did so, particularly in Kent where, before the new Act of 1664, exempt households often included those with three, four, or even more hearths. It is therefore likely that there are regional variations in the proportions of taxpayers and exempt living in households of different sizes.[37]

In spite of the reforms it appears that the tax continued to produce less than was expected. On 3 September 1665, Pepys was worrying about where the money would come from to pay the fleet should the Dutch attack: 'it is said that at this day our Lord Treasurer cannot tell what the profits of Chimny money is; what it comes to per annum - nor whether that or any other part of the Revenue be duly gathered as ought'.[38] The Lord Treasurer was Thomas Wriothesley, second Earl of Southampton.

The new administration of the hearth tax did not achieve what had been hoped of it, for the receivers took even longer than had the sheriffs to clear their accounts. The effects of the plague outbreak in 1665-6 and the Dutch war of 1665-67 may also have had some bearing on these delays. This

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[34] Hull, *Economic Writings*, I, p.94.
[35] Webster, *Nottinghamshire*, pp. ix, xi.
[36] Ibid., p. xxv.
[37] See below, pp. li-lii.
[38] *Shorter Pepys*, pp. 520-1.

is probably one of the main reasons why the hearth tax was farmed out in 1666. The farming out of the collection of the tax from Lady Day 1666 to Lady Day 1669 'proved to be a total failure', and was made worse by the destruction of the Hearth Tax Office in the fire of London.[39] These three years are the period of what Braddick called 'hearth tax disorders', marked by riots against the tax in a number of counties.[40] From 1670 the administration of the tax was far more efficient than it had been earlier. The receivers, who administered the tax from Michaelmas 1669 to Lady Day 1674, and their sub-collectors, were under the firm control of the office of the Agents for the Hearth Tax.[41] The final period of the hearth tax, from Michaelmas 1684, was the most successful in terms of sums raised. Hitherto, the annual return had averaged £150,000 a year, but in its final years the yield rose to £216, 000 per annum.[42] Its continuing unpopularity led to its abolition early in the reign of William and Mary, who were anxious to win support for their rule.

One major change in the instructions for 1684 was the requirement to list the names of inhabitants, and empty houses, in topographical order.[43] This was rightly seen as the best way of preventing evasion of the tax and omissions from the lists. Had this been done when the Exchequer was in charge of administering the hearth tax, modern historians could use the returns to follow the collectors' routes. These are exceptions, for this was already possible in Warwickshire in the early 1670s, as well as for the 1678 return for the City of Worcester, which is 'virtually a gazetteer of all the households in the city in 1678'.[44]

The hearth tax lists need to be used with care, for the deceptively simple information contained within them is full of inconsistencies. Some of these arise from the changing administration of the tax, together with the differing interpretations of the rules within the separately administered counties and cities. By the fifth collection at Michaelmas 1664, the rules had been changed twice, together with a change of officials and some change of administrative areas. By the time of the Michaelmas 1670 collection, the increasing standardisation was not necessarily reflected in the county lists, which still showed an inconsistency in recording those not liable. In addition, the surviving documents represent different stages of the collection procedure: assessments of taxpayers, returns of those who had paid, and fair copies of working papers compiled by many individuals, to name but a few. A discussion of the changing administration of the tax with its resultant effect on the recorded data is the subject of a forthcoming

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39 Arkell, 'Printed instructions' in *Surveying the People*, p. 43.
40 Braddick, pp. 252-66.
41 Ibid., p. 44.
42 Ibid., p. 44.
43 Tom Arkell (pers. comm., 1999) suggests this may not be an innovation, but a continuation of the innovations mentioned below. Elizabeth Parkinson (pers. comm.) has found evidence that topographical listing was a pre-1684 innovation in Middlesex.
44 Arkell, 'Printed instructions' in *Surveying the People*, p. 53, quoting Meekings and others.

thesis.[45]

[45] E. Parkinson, 'The Administration of the Hearth Tax 1662-6', forthcoming doctoral thesis, the University of Surrey Roehampton. We are grateful to Elizabeth Parkinson for providing this paragraph.

THE KENT HEARTH TAX RECORDS: CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS

By Sarah Pearson

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Administrative Boundaries used for the Hearth Tax in Kent

Since pre Conquest times the administrative unit in Kent for judicial and taxation purposes was the lathe. By the seventeenth century their number had been reduced to five: Sutton at Hone in the west, Aylesford and Scray, running north-south, across the centre of the county, St Augustine in the north-east, and Shepway in the south-east, covering much of Romney Marsh and adjoining areas. The lathes were divided into hundreds, of which, in 1664, there were sixty-four. Below the hundreds were the parishes or boroughs (Map 1). But some of Kent lay in separate jurisdictions. The major one was the group of Cinque Ports and their associates, which had always claimed exemption from county taxation, and are seldom included in county returns. In addition there was the City and County of Canterbury, and several liberties, including the liberty of Romney Marsh, which spread over the eastern half of the marsh, incorporating the whole hundred of Worth. These are mapped and identified on Map 1. A few of the smaller liberties were included in the hearth tax for Lady Day 1664, but the majority were not, and have therefore not been published here. However, Tenterden and Canterbury City and County, which were separately assessed, have been published here as appendices.[46]

The partial nature of the coverage means that the 1664 returns do not provide a complete picture of the county.[47] In addition, there are considerable problems in correlating the information with known places. The unit for collection by the borsholder or petty constable was either the parish or the borough. Where the final division was by parish, the boundaries can probably be determined with some accuracy. But in many hundreds the smallest unit was the borough, and neither hundreds nor boroughs were necessarily coterminous with ecclesiastical parishes.

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[46] The list of jurisdictions which were not included in the assessment for Lady Day 1664 can be found in Appendix II. For the Tenterden and Canterbury City and County assessments, see Appendices III and IV.

[47] In 1664 the Exchequer received payment for 8944 hearths in the Cinque Ports, and for 2695 in the City and County of Canterbury (see below pp. cix-cx and Appendix V). Together these covered most of the missing areas. Calculating the number of hearths which were not charged, and the number of households overall, cannot be precise. But on the basis of the figures from other older towns in the county (see p. xxxii, n. 61 and Table 1), it is likely that approximately 15,519 hearths in 5000 households, or 18 per cent of hearths and 16 per cent of households in the county, were not included in the Quarter Sessions returns.

Ecclesiastical parishes may extend into two or more hundreds (compare Map 1 with Map 13), and a borough may cross a parish boundary. The boroughs have nothing to do with ecclesiastical administration but are related to the earlier manorial pattern of the county, in which the centre of the manor tended to lie in the earliest settled region in the north, with outlying properties elsewhere, notably in the marshes and Weald to the south. The result was that medieval manors in Kent were seldom compact, but held parcels of land in a number of places. The history and complexity of the landholding pattern need not concern us here,[48] but it had repercussions for taxation, for some of the outlying lands became boroughs which were taxed with the hundred in which the original manorial centre lay. An example is the borough of Kingsnorth, which physically lies in Ulcombe parish south-east of Maidstone, in the hundred of Eyhorne, but as late as 1664 was accounted part of the hundred of Faversham several miles to the north. Another case, very typical of the Weald, is the parish of Headcorn, which was divided between the hundreds of Barkley, Calehill, Cranbrook and Eyhorne, and included a detached portion of the hundred of Tenham, which also lies on the north coast. Since the boroughs were used for administering taxes, what mattered was not so much their boundaries, which are seldom precisely known, but who lived within them.[49] Thus correlating parishes with hearth tax units, and mapping the county for purposes of analysing the tax, is extremely difficult.

The problems created by the use of hundreds and boroughs were apparent even in the seventeenth century, for by that time these administrative units were already all but obsolete. In the mid seventeenth century, Sir Roger Twysden of *Roydon Hall* in East Peckham parish was one of the justices of the peace for the southern half of the lathe of Aylesford, and in September 1663 and January 1664, in the notebook which he kept relating to his activities as a J.P., he grumbled bitterly about the necessity to collect the tax in boroughs,

[48] See K. P. Witney, *The Jutish Forest* (London, 1976); A. Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization: the Evolution of Kentish Settlement* (Leicester, 1986); F. R. H. Du Boulay, *The Lordship of Canterbury* (London and Edinburgh, 1966); Michael Zell, *Industry in the Countryside* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 10-15.

[49] The only early borough map so far discovered for Kent is a 1742 map of Headcorn borough which lies in Headcorn parish, but is accounted in Tenham hundred (CKS: U390 P). This, like many other boroughs forming detached portions of hundreds, is mapped on the 1st edn 6in. O.S. map.

and claimed he had tried, to no avail, to get the tax collected by parish in a more logical fashion. He was particularly concerned about the borough of Oxenhoath in West Peckham parish, which physically lay within his jurisdiction but was to be collected by the Commissioners for the northern half of the lathe since, despite lying seventeen or eighteen miles away, it was accounted part of the hundred of Hoo. In his view the taxpayers might very well escape paying, just as they often escaped watching and warding and other duties - though in fact the twenty-one households in the borough paid up, and did not escape on this occasion.[50] In the tables and distribution maps in this volume information from detached boroughs, such as Oxenhoath, have been recorded and totalled within the hundred in which they physically lie, for only then can any sense be made of the pattern of hearths across the county.

Collection by hundred and borough makes it extremely difficult today to publish the information from the Kent hearth tax in meaningful tabular or map form. One problem is that it is not easy to locate all the boroughs. Many of them have names which are no longer used; not only are they missing from modern maps, but they were also not mentioned by Hasted in the late eighteenth century, and are not found in sources for place names in Kent.[51] A second problem is that even if the boroughs could have been mapped, they are too small for purposes of statistical analysis, while the hundreds, which have therefore been chosen as the main working unit, are often on the large side. Thirdly, although the hundreds have been shown on maps since the seventeenth century, most of the early maps are somewhat schematic in outline and do not include the detached portions, which are critical in analysing the hearth tax. Thus the hundred boundaries used for the base map in this volume have been taken from the first edition six inch Ordnance Survey maps, surveyed between 1853 and 1870, preceding the rationalisation of the later nineteenth century when the detached portions of both ecclesiastical parishes and hundreds were reassigned.[52] Even so, it should be noted that by this time there had already been changes to both hundred and parish outlines. Some places are shown in one hundred on the map, but are included in another in the hearth tax, and some detached boroughs could not be found at all. To help the modern reader, a list correlating boroughs, parishes and hundreds and noting the most obvious discrepancies is

[50] Notebook of Sir Roger Twysden as justice of the peace, 1635 -72, CKS: U47/47 01, pp. 59-60.

[51] E. Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, 12 volumes (1797-1801, 2nd edn reprinted Canterbury, 1972); J. K. Wallenberg, *The Place-Names of Kent*, (Uppsala, 1934).

[52] These changes are discussed in the Victoria History of the Counties of England, *Kent*, III (London, 1932), pp. 356-70.

Map 2 regions

included as Appendix VII.

The Regions of Kent

The historic county of Kent had just under 1,000,000 acres and was the ninth largest in England.[53] It is a county of contrasts and all writers remark upon the diversity and variety of the landscape.[54] Its geology and soils form east-west bands (Map 2), each influencing the pattern of agriculture, industry and society. The long coastline and various estuaries provided opportunities for fishing and harbours from which produce could easily be transported to feed the growing city of London. The north coast is fringed by good grazing marshes, to the south of which lies excellent agricultural land: to the east, and on the Hoo peninsula further west, rich loams produced some of the best grain growing conditions in England, with large open fields separated by few hedges. In the middle of the north coast the soils were eminently suited to growing hops and fruit. Further south, the land rises to the North Downs, the soil remaining suitable for arable cultivation almost to the top, where surface clay-with-flints makes agriculture difficult. Here poorer grazing was mixed with woodland, much of it coppiced for a variety of purposes. Descending from the scarp of the Downs, a string of settlements lay on the spring line bordering the narrow and fertile Vale of Holmesdale floored with gault clay. This in turn is quickly succeeded by the sandstone of the greensand ridge, known as the ragstone or Chart hills. To the south east of Maidstone quarrying was an important industry, and in this central section of the county the greensand ridge and its southern slopes have some of the best soils in the South-East for mixed arable, fruit and pastoral farming; to east and west the land is less productive, and was more likely to be pastoral. In places there were heathy commons, or the deer parks of the wealthy. To the south again, the heavy clays of the Low Weald were primarily pastoral, although all areas grew some crops. The High Weald beyond is a region of woods and small streams, studded with small enclosed fields, both its timber and water power being turned to advantage in the cloth and iron industries which developed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Finally, Romney Marsh lies in the south-east corner of the county, an

[53] C. W. Chalklin, *Seventeenth-Century Kent* (London, 1965), p. 7; VCH, III, p. 358.

[54] Chalklin, *Seventeenth-Century Kent*, pp.73-109; S. G. McCrae and C. P. Burnham, *The Rural Landscape of Kent* (Wye College, 1973), pp. 52-6, 113-20; A. Everitt, 'The making of the agrarian landscape of Kent', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 92 (1976), pp. 1-31; J. Thirsk, 'The Farming Regions of England', in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales,* ed. by J. Thirsk, 4 (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 55-64; and B. Short, 'The South-East: Kent, Surrey and Sussex' in *The Agrarian History,* 5 i (1984), pp. 270-313.

Map 3 Houses per 1000 acres

unhealthy area which nonetheless provided superb grazing for fattening the livestock of farmers living in other parts of Kent.

The Hearth Tax as an Indication of the Density of Population

The early settlement history of the county, and the landholding patterns to which it gave rise, were inextricably woven into determining how population and employment developed in the various regions. In the early Middle Ages the manorial centres in the north were characterised by large and closely managed arable farms which, despite many changes, in essence survived into the seventeenth century. Initially the northern manors had extended their lands southwards to take advantage of abundant pasture and woodland. But gradually the south was permanently settled, and as lordship in the Weald was always light, this became a landscape of independent pastoral farmers, many of whom came to be engaged in various aspects of cloth production centred on Cranbrook in the High Weald (Map 2). The rise of prosperity in the Weald, brought about by the cloth industry in particular, can be seen in the changing distribution of population and wealth between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Comparison of the population figures, gleaned from the 1377 poll tax and mid sixteenth-century surveys, shows how the distribution of the population changed over two hundred years.[55] In the fourteenth century, population was densest along the north coast and around Maidstone. Central Kent and Romney Marsh had their fair share of people, but the least densely populated regions seem to have been the High Weald, west Kent, and the grain growing area to the east. The mid sixteenth-century figures are partial and difficult to interpret, particularly as no returns survive for the diocese of Rochester, west of the Medway. In the rest of Kent, population was still dense along the central section of the north coast and in the vicinity of Maidstone, while the north-east remained sparsely populated. But big changes had occurred in Romney Marsh, where few people were living by then, and in the High Weald, which by the mid sixteenth century was among the most densely populated areas of all.

In line with the rest of the country, the population of Kent grew rapidly during the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. From around 80 - 90,000 in the mid sixteenth century it had risen to an estimated 130,000 in 1603, and to around 160,000 by the 1670s.[56] The sources for these figures are various. The 1664 hearth tax is among

[55] S. Pearson, *The Medieval Houses of Kent: an Historical Analysis* (RCHME, London, 1994), pp. 14-15, where full references are given.

[56] M. Dobson, 'Population, 1640-1831', in *The Economy of Kent, 1640-1914,* ed. by A. Armstrong, (KCC, Woodbridge, 1995), p. 11.

Table 1 Hearths in towns

them, but given its incomplete nature, it cannot be used on its own. By the later seventeenth century the population had ceased to grow, and the next estimate, for 1700, shows a drop to 150,000. Although the 1664 hearth tax only records a moment in time, it can be used to illustrate some of the changes which were taking place during the seventeenth century. Map 3 shows the density of households per 1000 acres in 1664. The lowest population densities, with fewer than fifteen households per 1,000 acres, lay on the fringes of the county, in the marshes and their hinterlands. In addition, the rural areas of east Kent were generally thinly populated, as they had been since the Middle Ages. In contrast, a central band running from the north coast to the Sussex border had over thirty households per 1000 acres. The northern half had always been densely settled, but the population of the southern half had grown during the sixteenth century as people flocked into the High Weald to work in the cloth industry. Although by the later seventeenth century the industry was in decline and people were moving away to find work elsewhere, it is clear that many still remained.[57] At the same time, the population along much of the north coast had increased as the London fringes expanded and the naval and dockland towns began to employ more and more people, so that some of the northern hundreds further west had over forty-five households per 1000 acres.[58]

Kent has normally been considered an agricultural county, and in the Middle Ages there were few towns in the county apart from Canterbury, Maidstone, Rochester and the Cinque Ports. But during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the situation changed. Proximity to London and the Continent, and the opportunities for ports and docks provided by the extensive coastline, gave rise to significant urban growth around the Thames and the Medway. By the end of the century one third of the population lived in towns, both old and new, and this is where the highest population densities of all are to be found.[59]

The northern towns have not been distinguished from their hinterlands in Map 3, but the urban population has been shown in more detail in Table 1. This indicates that the largest concentration in the 1664 hearth tax occurs in Deptford, where many of those living in the 999 households found employment connected with the Royal Naval Dockyard and a number of private yards involved in overseas trade. If, as has been suggested, each urban household averaged 4.25 persons, then the population of the town was somewhere in the order of 4246, a number which is estimated to have risen to 6625 by 1676, when it was not much

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[57] P. Clark, 'Migration in England during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries,' *Past and Present*, 83 (1979), 57-90; M. J. Dobson, 'The last hiccup of the old demographic regime: population stagnation and decline in late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century south-east England', *Continuity and Change*, 4 (1989), 395-428.

[58] D. C. Coleman, 'Naval dockyards under the later Stuarts', *Economic History Review*, Ser. 2, 6 (1953-4), 134-55; Dobson, 'The last hiccup'.

[59] Chalklin, 'The towns', in Armstrong, *Economy of Kent,* p. 206

lower than the 7431 estimated for Canterbury at that date.[60] Unfortunately, the figures for Canterbury in 1664 are incomplete, but the density of households in Westgate hundred, which included parts of the City, is one of the highest in the county, with sixty-six households per 1000 acres. In 1664 the next most populous town was Maidstone, with 802 households, and this was followed by Rochester, with 712. Maidstone was the centre for business and trade for a large part of central Kent, while Rochester was a cathedral city of long standing, and also benefited from the growing naval dockyard at Chatham. Chatham had 437 households and Gravesend, which likewise had a flourishing port, had 553. Greenwich, with 659 households, was rather different from the other northern towns, for it not only had a number of private docks, but it had a palace and became an attractive and fashionable place of residence for the many wealthy people who were moving out of London at this time. The older ports of Dover and Sandwich, although not included in the 1664 figures, were probably of much the same size, with between 500 and 700 households.[61] Cranbrook, meanwhile, had only 287 households. The 1664 hearth tax seems to catch the moment when the older urban centres were being overtaken by the new towns,[62] for by 1700 not only Deptford, but also Chatham and Greenwich, had overtaken Maidstone, Rochester, Dover and Sandwich.[63] A number of smaller towns, made up of 100 - 300 households, are scattered throughout the county.

The Hearth Tax and the Distribution of Wealth

Population density and wealth are often considered to be closely related, and up to a point the relationship can be demonstrated in Kent. In 1334 the lay subsidy shows that the wealthiest part of the county was the most densely populated central section of the north coast, in the hundreds of Milton, Tenham and Faversham. This was followed by the central part of the county around Maidstone, and by the north-east, which was relatively wealthy despite the low density of population. West Kent and other parts of the east came third; while most of the High and Low Weald were classed among the poorest areas of England. Two hundred years later, the Tudor subsidies of the early sixteenth century show that the wealthiest part of the county,

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[60] 4.25 is the multiplier used for the towns in Armstrong, *Economy of Kent*, Appendix IIIA, from which the 1676 figure for Deptford and Canterbury are taken. But see this volume, Appendix V for alternative figures for Canterbury.

[61] The numbers are based on the 1676 population figures in Armstrong, *Economy of Kent*, Appendix IIIA. However, alternative figures may be arrived at from the total number of hearths charged in these towns in 1662 (see below, p. cx). At that date, 2208 hearths were charged in Dover and 2033 in Sandwich. On the basis of the figures in Table 1 it appears that on average 25 per cent of hearths (not households) in the older towns were not charged, so that the chargeable hearths, multiplied by 4/3, suggest total hearth numbers of 2944 and 2711. Table 1 also suggests that in towns as a whole the average number of hearths per household was 3.1, from which it may be inferred that there were roughly 950 households in Dover, and 875 in Sandwich. The disparity between these figures and those arrived at using the Compton Census could be accounted for by the fact that the areas covered by the two calculations were different. Thus great caution should be taken in using any of these figures.

[62] The 'new' towns as used here, in which the number of hearths exempted averaged only 15 percent, are Chatham, Dartford, Deptford, Gravesend, Greenwich and Woolwich.

[63] Armstrong, *Economy of Kent*, Appendix IIIA

returning over 60 shillings per square mile, was a broad swathe across central and north-east Kent, between Maidstone and Thanet, stretching in the centre as far south as Tenterden. The High Weald to the south-west of Tenterden hundred, the downland area south of Canterbury, and most of the north-west, returned over 50 shillings per square mile, leaving only the western Weald, together with Romney Marsh and the eastern half of Shepway lathe, in the vicinity of Folkestone, returning less. The greatest change was in the situation of the High Weald. By the 1520s, despite the fact that some documents are lost and there are no figures for the Cinque Ports (which seriously distorts the figures for the east), Kent was among the wealthiest counties of England.[64]

Map 4, which illustrates the number of hearths per 1000 acres, should give some idea of the distribution of wealth in 1664, and it would certainly be the aspect which concerned the Exchequer. One might expect that hearth numbers would reflect the agriculture of the county. But whereas the agriculture largely follows the topography, as illustrated in Map 2, changing from arable and fruit in the north, through corn and sheep, to corn and cattle, to the primarily pastoral land of the south,[65] these east-west bands are hardly reflected in the distribution of hearths shown in Map 4. Instead the county is divided into zones which run from north to south rather than east to west, very much in line with the distribution of households shown in Map 3. The west is the most varied area, probably because urban and rural regions were undergoing very different experiences. The developing

[64] The 1524/5 lay subsidies, which are usually used to indicate wealth, are very incomplete for Kent, and it is only possible to get an idea of the overall amounts of tax paid in the different regions. For the details see Sheail, *Regional Distribution of Wealth*, 28 (1998), pp. 105-08, 159-67. For comparison of the subsidies, see summary and references in Pearson, *Medieval Houses*, pp. 12-14.

[65] G. Mingay, 'Agriculture' in Armstrong, *Economy of Kent*, fig. 5; B. Short in Thirsk, *Agrarian History*, 5 i, pp. 270-313 and fig. 9.i.

MAP 4 Hearths per 1000 acres

towns of the north and north-west, which unfortunately are not here distinguished from their hinterlands, had the greatest density of hearths, with the whole of Blackheath hundred registering over 144 hearths per 1000 acres, and several others having over 72 hearths per 1000 acres. The same high numbers apply to the region between Maidstone and Chatham. This is followed by parts of the south-west, and again by a striking north-south swathe in the centre of the county. In these areas the high number of households shown in Map 3 is mirrored by 48 - 72 hearths per 1000 acres. The change to both population and wealth in the central High Weald since the Middle Ages can be almost wholly put down to the rise of the cloth industry, which began in the fifteenth century, and peaked in the sixteenth. At the top, it produced a number of wealthy clothiers, at the bottom it provided a living for a growing and dependent population. By 1664 its heyday was over and considerable poverty was reported around Cranbrook, but there was still a very high density of houses and hearths in the region.

To either side of the central section are large areas with 36 - 48 hearths per 1000 acres, again stretching from north to south. Apart from the Hoo peninsula and the Isle of Sheppey, the lowest density of hearths lies in east Kent. Lowest of all are the Downs behind Dover and Folkestone and the fringes of Romney Marsh, which had never shown much sign of wealth, largely because the good grazing for which the area was famous tended to be owned by those who lived away from the unhealthy marshes. However the downland, dipslope and lowlands further north, which had returned 50 or more shillings per square mile in 1525, also had under 36 hearths per 1000 acres. Of course, the map would not be quite the same if the Cinque Ports were included, for there would be high numbers in Dover, Sandwich and the more urbanised parts of the Isle of Thanet. But rural east Kent, both north and south, is marked by fewer hearths per 1000 acres than most of the rest of Kent. This seems to reflect the disparity of wealth and population noted in earlier periods, although comparison of Maps 3 and 4 indicates that a few of the rural hundreds in the east, such as Downhamford, Kinghamford and Loningborough, had a low density of hearths despite a relatively high density of households;[66] a situation which was probably accounted for by a high proportion of single-hearth houses. Thus in this region, in 1664 as at earlier periods, wealth and population did not necessarily go hand in hand.

[66] M. Dobson, *Contours of Death in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1997), fig. 2.3, illustrates a relatively high population in the same part of east Kent in 1676.

Map 5

20+ hearths

If one breaks this down a little further, it begins to make more sense. Soils in Kent are extremely varied, and the east-west bands of the topographical map do not give rise to uniform agriculture across the county: there is, in fact, generally less high-quality agricultural land to the west of the Medway than to its east; the Chart hills and High and Low Weald all divide into three, with better quality soils in the centre than to either side; the central area, particularly north of the Downs, became famous for its good fruit-growing soils, and much of the best arable land in the county lies in the north-east. These factors, allied with the effects of industry and differences in landholding, probably lie behind the patterning visible in Map 4. As early as the Middle Ages, analysis of surviving houses suggests marked differences between the west, centre and east of the county, with the greatest number of large, high-quality, dwellings lying in a north-south band across the centre of Kent.[67] Although the sixteenth-century growth of industry in the High Weald and the seventeenth-century urbanisation of the north-west meant that the distribution had changed to some extent, hearth numbers, which reflect the size of the houses they heat, show a very similar pattern.

To explore these issues further, Tables 2 and 3, on pages lix – lxi, tabulate the numbers of households and hearth numbers by hundreds, and Maps 5 - 10 plot their distribution across the county.

Houses with Twenty or more Hearths

The number of people with more than twenty hearths was never great. Map 5 illustrates eighty-five households with twenty or more hearths listed in the returns.[68] The symbols on the map have been placed in approximately the correct positions within each hundred, and they show a reasonably even spread, with noticeable gaps only round the north, east and southern borders, where there may have been a few more in the areas for which there is no data. Of these large houses, ten were owned by peers, and as Kent was never a county of aristocratic landowners, this represents nearly all the properties they owned in the county. They range from the eighty-five hearths belonging to the Earl of Dorset at *Knole*, on the edge of Sevenoaks, and the sixty of Viscount Strangford at *Westenhanger Castle* in Stanford parish, to the Earl of Leicester's more modest twenty-one hearths at *Penshurst Place*,

[67] Pearson, *Medieval Houses*, pp. 123-25

[68] The 85 excludes Sir Nicholas Crispe (Eltham) who had 27 hearths in tenements, Mr Thomas Browne, Warden of the College, or Trinity Hospital, in East Greenwich, who had 30 hearths, and also the 27 hearths of Dr Turner, Dean of Christ Church Canterbury (Westgate), since the Christ church precincts physically lie in the City and County of Canterbury. For discussion of the Canterbury situation see Appendix V.

Map 6
10+ hearths

Penshurst. Both Leicester and Strangford also had second homes within the county. Thirty-five houses belonged to knights and baronets, or their widows. These included the homes of many of the older county families, among them some of the most notable figures in county politics during the seventeenth century, such as Sir Roger Twysden of *Roydon Hall*, East Peckham, Sir Edward Dering of *Surrenden Dering* in Pluckley and Sir Thomas Peyton of *Knowlton Court*, Knowlton.[69] Sixteen belonged to esquires or their widows. A few of these likewise came from well-established, if slightly less prominent, families, such as the Digges of *Chilham Castle*, Chilham and the Harts of *Lullingstone Castle*, Eynsford; but they also included a number of new men, some of whom had played prominent roles in the events of the 1640s, like Thomas Blount of *Wricklesmarsh* in Charlton, or held important posts after the Restoration, like Philip Packer of *Groombridge Place*, Speldhurst. However, many were virtually unknown. Below these lay nineteen properties belonging to the families of mere gentlemen or officers, plus three houses whose occupants are untitled, and two more which had no named occupant.

The geographical distribution of these groups varies. While the homes of the peers are spread across the county, those of the baronets and knights tend to be grouped in the region around Maidstone and on the northern edge of the Downs in east Kent. In 1640 the eastern part of the county together with the Weald were the heartlands of what Everitt has termed the 'indigenous gentry' whose families were established before 1485, and at least 50 per cent of those around Maidstone belonged in the same category.[70] Only a few of the more prominent members of these old county families had mansions with twenty or more hearths, the majority making do with between six and eighteen. William Boys Esquire of Hawkhurst, with twenty-one, was the only member of his extensive family to exceed twenty, and Sir Henry Oxinden, of the senior branch of the Oxinden family, lived in Wingham in a house with only seventeen hearths, his relatives having even fewer. In contrast, one of the mere gentlemen had as many as forty-eight hearths, and one officer had forty. The majority of the large gentry houses lay in the western lathe of Sutton at Hone, where over half the gentry families, including knights and baronets, had arrived since 1603.[71] Many of the largest houses are clustered in Blackheath hundred, reflecting the arrival of gentry and merchants who had moved from London into Deptford and Greenwich, with another

[69] A. Everitt, *The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion, 1640-60* (Leicester, 1966), pp. 323-4, Appendix VI.
[70] Ibid., p. 37.
[71] Everitt, *loc. cit.*.

Map 7
5-9 hearths

little group further down the Thames in Milton-next-Gravesend. Apart from these concentrations in the north-west, houses with twenty or more hearths were not a feature of the towns. Five lie within Canterbury City, but there was only one house of this size in both Maidstone and Rochester.[72] The majority of the larger houses outside the north-west were country seats, and their location reveals the whereabouts of the lands of the aristocracy and wealthier gentry.

Households with Ten or more Hearths

Map 6 is based on 589 houses, or 2 per cent of the total number of houses listed in the tax. It illustrates houses with ten or more hearths, and includes the information about the larger houses plotted in Map 5, so the pattern of distribution is not markedly different. The emphasis on large houses in the western lathe of Sutton at Hone on the fringe of London is clear, likewise their relative paucity in all three eastern lathes, although there are reasonable numbers in the parishes between Canterbury and Dover where many of the older county families had their seats. The region around Maidstone also has a fair proportion of houses with more than ten hearths. The only area where there is a significant difference between the two maps is the southern part of the Weald along the Sussex border, where Map 6 has concentrations not present in Map 5. In fact, the actual number of houses here with between ten and nineteen hearths is small: only four in Little Barnfield, and six each in Selbrittenden and Tenterden. Likewise the high proportion in Littlefield, to the north-west of the Weald, represents only seven houses which may be seen as part of the general scattering of larger properties in the Maidstone area. In contrast, several hundreds in the east of the county had only one or two houses this size (see Table 2), and some, indicated by a zero on the map, had none at all.

Many of these houses were owned by people with titles, and it is worth considering what the hearth tax reveals about the gentry and their homes in 1664. Just under 1700 names listed in the tax returns are titled, from peers down to mere gentlemen and officers. There is, as might be expected, a variation in the average number of hearths in the dwellings of peers, knights, esquires, and gentlemen and officers. Some of the names are repeated, for many wealthy individuals owned houses for rent, and paid tax for their tenants or when the house was empty. The following calculations have therefore left out obvious repetitions, houses that are marked as empty, and those with four hearths or less,

[72] For Canterbury see Appendices IV and V. In Faversham, there was not a single house of this size in 1671 (P. Hyde and D. Harrington, *Hearth Tax Returns for Faversham Hundred 1662-1671* (Lyminge, 1998), pp. 50-7.

Map 8
3-4 hearths

which are often empty or clearly not main residences. On the other hand, in order to increase the statistical sample the widows of each rank have been included. On this basis, peers had an average of 34.9 hearths, knights an average of 18.2 hearths, esquires, 13.1, and gentlemen, including officers, 8.5. The general downward trend is not surprising, but the Kent figures are interesting when compared with those from other counties.[73]

Knights in seven other counties had average hearth numbers ranging from 23.6 - 14.4, with the Kentish knights, at 18.2, coming towards the bottom of the scale, surpassed by those of Norfolk, Oxfordshire, Surrey and Derbyshire, and on a par with those of Dorset. Esquires had an average ranging between 14.9 and 9. The Kent esquires, with an average of 13.1, were nearer the top, although they were surpassed by those in Surrey, Oxfordshire and Norfolk. Finally, the gentry of the seven counties had on average between 8.1 and 4.8 hearths, so the average for the gentry of Kent, at 8.5, exceeded those found elsewhere.[74] This impression, of relatively few men of high rank and outstanding wealth but many men of the middle sort, is not only apparent in the returns for the gentry, but is indicated by the fact that 120 of the 589 people charged on more than ten hearths had no title at all.

Households with between Five and Nine Hearths

In many ways the map of houses with ten or more hearths needs to be viewed in relation to both of the next two. Map 7 illustrates the proportion of houses with between five and nine hearths, which accounted for 11 per cent of houses in the county. The naval and dockyard towns of the north coast, and the ports which carried Kentish produce to London, all had their share of these properties. They were again numerous in the extreme north-west, but also formed over 12 per cent of houses in towns such as Gravesend, Chatham, Rochester, Sittingbourne, Milton-next-Sittingbourne and Faversham and their environs (see Table 1). In most of central Kent, except for

[73] The comparison is based upon the list published in N. Cooper, *Houses of the Gentry, 1480–1680* (New Haven & London, 1999), pp. 6, 347-50. Cooper excludes all houses with four hearths or less, on very much the same grounds as those used here. This was also the figure used by Gregory King in the 1690s when calculating the number of gentry in England. Cooper's counties are Derbyshire, Dorset, Norfolk, Oxfordshire, Surrey, Warwickshire and Westmorland.

[74] Cooper, *loc. cit.*, excludes men designated 'Mr', basing his figures solely on those termed 'Gent'. But to do so in Kent would mean excluding the majority of the gentry in the north-west of the county. In Blackheath hundred, for example, 218 men are termed 'Mr', and only four are designated 'Gent'.

Map 9
2 hearths

one or two hundreds in the Medway valley and Low Weald where larger houses had predominated, 6-12 per cent of houses were of this size. The cloth making region around Cranbrook had a number of larger properties, and Zell has suggested that when the traditional, high-quality and expensive broadcloths of the Kentish Weald fell out of fashion during the seventeenth century, the wealthy clothiers simply turned their attention to their other source of income: their farms. Cattle rearing was an important business in the region, and those who had a stake in the land could continue to prosper, shielded from the worst effects of the collapsing cloth industry.[75] The surnames of wealthy sixteenth-century clothiers in the Cranbrook, Staplehurst and Biddenden areas, such as Buckland, Gibbon, Sharpe, Sheffe and Taylor, turn up in 1664 paying tax on eight, nine, ten or even eleven hearths. Whether these families were still in the clothing trade or not, they were certainly still able to live in high-quality houses. Houses with between five and nine hearths also formed between 6-12 per cent over most of the north-east, but were rarer further south where several hundreds had under 6 per cent. Newchurch hundred in Shepway and Preston hundred in the lathe of St Augustine had only one house each in this category. In both cases this was the largest house in the district.

Some entries with sizeable numbers of hearths were inns. These are seldom identified by name, but where they are they tend to have between five and nine hearths, as in Tonbridge where Richard Rootes had nine hearths at the *Crowne*, and in Beckenham where Richard Kinge had seven at the sign of the *George*. Innholders were often gentlemen, and some gentry with ten or more hearths may have run particularly large establishments. This is perhaps especially true in the northern ports where inns must have been numerous.[76] However, the only gentleman who is readily identifiable as a landlord is Robert Knowler, gent., with six hearths at the *Maypole* in Haw borough in the parish of Herne.

Households with Three or Four Hearths

Over the county as a whole the proportion of households with three or four hearths is 22 per cent (Map 8). The highest proportions lie in the centre of the county. In the central lathes of Aylesford and Scray they form 20 per cent or more of the properties in the majority of hundreds, with between 31 and 35 per cent in some of the southern hundreds, such as Oxney and Street (see Table 3). However, it does not

[75] Zell, *Industry in the Countryside*, p. 245.

[76] Chalklin in Armstrong, *Economy of Kent*, p. 209, notes the exceptionally numerous inns in Gravesend, where the hearth tax shows there were plenty of sizeable properties but not a single named inn.

Map 10

1 hearth

follow that these proportions necessarily indicate high numbers in absolute terms, for by and large they represent the largest dwellings to be found, and thus form a higher proportion of the total than in hundreds where larger houses were commoner. Along the central part of the north coast the percentages tend to be between 21 and 29, but they need to be combined with the higher proportion of larger houses with between five and nine hearths to indicate a much more widely distributed high standard of living. In Sutton at Hone to the north-west, where there were so many larger houses, the number with three or four hearths is proportionally lower. The lathe of St Augustine in the north-east is the only lathe to have a below average figure for three and four hearths, at 21 per cent, and if the hundred of Westgate, which includes part of the city of Canterbury, is removed, the overall average for the lathe drops to 18 per cent, giving a more accurate picture of the small number of larger houses in the rural areas of north-east Kent. In some hundreds, such as Kinghamford in the Downs, and the small hundred of Preston, only 12-13 per cent of houses have this number of hearths. Nonetheless, no part of Kent drops below 10 per cent, a figure which has been included in the key to facilitate comparison with other parts of England.

Households with One or Two Hearths

While the maps of houses with three or more hearths may be taken to indicate where the better-off members of society predominated, those illustrating one and two hearths, and the people who were exempted from paying the hearth tax, tell us more about the less well off. In many counties two-hearth houses are already accounted as the homes of the relatively well-to-do. The question of their wealth, and of the sort of houses they actually lived in, will be dealt with later, but in a general sense we may take it that they lived in less favourable circumstances than those with more fireplaces. Over the county as a whole 29 per cent of households had two hearths and 36 per cent had one.

Map 9 shows the distribution of two-hearth houses. The pattern of distribution is not very different from those showing more. There is the same concentration in the west and north: over 30 per cent of houses in most hundreds along the north coast from Chatham and Gillingham westwards had two hearths, and similar percentages occur in some of the western hundreds further south. Much of the rest of central Kent, around Maidstone, along the central section of the north coast, and in the High Weald around Cranbrook, had proportions between 25-30 per cent. Only the areas bordering Romney Marsh, and most of north-east Kent, had under 25 per cent, with many of those

Map 11

Exemptions

hundreds having only 10-20 per cent. Again, nowhere in Kent falls into the 'under 10 per cent' category.

Map 10, illustrating the proportion of households with single hearths, is almost an inversion of Map 9. In the north-west, where the number of two-hearth households was highest, the number with single hearths is lowest, with under 30 per cent in many hundreds: in other words, there were fewer houses with single hearths than with two hearths. The situation in central Kent is more mixed, with many hundreds having only 30-40 per cent of houses taxed on single hearths, although four hundreds to the south-west of Maidstone returned 50-60 per cent in this category. In east Kent, 50-60 per cent of houses in the majority of hundreds have just a single hearth, and two, Preston and Ringslow in the far north-east, have between 60-70 per cent. In terms of the nation as a whole it may be significant that so few hundreds have such high percentages of single hearths, but within Kent what these maps bring out clearly is the contrast between the well-heated properties of the north-west, and the simpler and colder houses of the north-east.

Exemptions

Map 11 shows the distribution of those people who were exempted from paying the tax. This is a tricky area to understand. In theory, in accordance with amendments to the original Act, exemption from the tax was granted to all who did not contribute to church or poor rates by reason of their poverty or the smallness of their estates; or to tenants who lived in houses worth less than twenty shillings a year, unless they owned land, tenements or goods valued at £10 or more. Arkell, working in Warwickshire, found that in practice the closest correlation lay between those who were exempt from the tax and those who paid £1 or less in rent. In addition, hearths of an industrial nature, including private ovens or furnaces in kitchens, brew houses, bakehouses and wash houses, were not charged.[77] From 1663 the exemptions were to be listed separately, and this was clearly done in a 'Not Chargeable' category in the Lady Day 1664 return for Kent.[78] From May 1664, after the Lady Day collection published here, no one with more than two hearths was supposed to be exempt, a ruling which must have caused further complications in Kent.[79]

The difficulties faced in administering the tax are illustrated by comments in the notebook Sir Roger Twysden kept of his activities as a J.P. In 1662 he was concerned about whether or not poor people who did not pay church or poor rates, yet lived in houses valued at anything up to £13 a year, should be charged. He thought the problem was particularly acute in the Weald, in places such as Goudhurst where rich men, including clothiers,

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[77] For more details see above, pp. xvi-xvii.

[78] 15 Charles II c.13; Arkell, 'Printed instructions', in *Surveying the People*, pp. 39-41. For the Warwickshire evidence see T. Arkell, 'The incidence of poverty in England in the later seventeenth century', *Social History*, 12 (1987),. 23-47.

[79] See above, p. xx. I am grateful to Elizabeth Parkinson for help in clarifying some of these tricky areas.

had engrossed farms and left poor carders, weavers and spinners in the former farmhouses. In his opinion the tenants should not be charged, for by taking away their land, the landlords were making these people into cottagers and thus exempt from the tax.[80] The problem was clarified in 1664, when a new Amendment made the landlord liable,[81] but again this was not until after the return for Lady Day.

A second problem in analysing the returns is to distinguish one kind of exemption from another. In the borough of Bredgar, in the eastern division of Milton hundred, four inhabitants were charged for the hearths in their dwellings, but were specifically exempted for their brew house chimneys; and in Bobbing in the same hundred, Mrs Sanford, who was charged on twenty-two hearths, was exempted on her three brew house, wash house, and bake house chimneys. It is obviously important to establish how often such exemptions occurred without explanation before considering the distribution of exemption as an indication of poverty. In fact, random checks throughout the returns suggest this is not a major problem except in Shepway lathe, in Loningborough and Stowting hundreds, and the lower half hundred of Folkestone. In these instances the duplicate names have been omitted from Table 2 and Map 11. Elsewhere, very few names are repeated in the charged and exempt lists for a single borough or parish.

A third and more intractable problem lies in understanding what lies behind some of the entries with high numbers of exempted hearths. Some may relate to the issue discussed by Twysden. Others may reflect the condition of the houses. In Goare borough, in the eastern division of Milton hundred, 'two old empty houses ready to fall down' have seven hearths between them and are listed as exempt, while in St Augustine's borough nearby, Mr Pagett had 'a new house with six chimneys the hearths not yett layd', which appears in the chargeable section but with no charge against it since the hearths were not yet in use. It is possible, but not provable, that elsewhere some exempt properties with high hearth numbers were not charged because the building was not yet complete and the hearths were not taxable. Finally, there is the problem of almshouses, hospitals and free schools. These were charged only if they had annual incomes of over £100. Thus Mr Broadnax was charged for fourteen hearths in the wealthy St Nicholas Hospital at Harbledown outside Canterbury, and Mr Thomas Browne was charged on thirty hearths as Warden of the College in Crane South, Greenwich.[82] On the other hand, the hospital in Harrietsham had twelve hearths which were exempt from payment. It is more appropriate for analysis to list these as thirty, fourteen or twelve one-hearth households, rather than include them in the ten-plus category, even though the warden of the larger establishments probably had more than a single hearth in his own apartment. However, many other almshouses or hospitals appear not

[80] CKS: U47/47 01, citing a law of 1588/9, 31 Eliz. c.7.
[81] 16 Charles II c.3, published in Arkell, 'Printed instructions', p. 58; see above, p. xix.
[82] This was the Trinity Hospital, founded by the Earl of Northampton in 1613.

to have been identified as such. Between 1572 and 1660 at least forty-six such establishments were endowed in Kent, which together with twelve more surviving from an earlier date provided accommodation for 492 poor people - more than was spent in most other southern counties.[83] Yet apart from the institutions mentioned above only seven almshouses for between two and six residents in Brasted, Godmersham, High Halden, Lenham, Linton, Luddenham and Tenterden, none of which was charged, are named in the returns. There must have been many more, such as those known to exist in Pudding Lane, Stone Street, Week Street, and East Lane in Maidstone town,[84] but none is readily identifiable in the hearth tax; they probably lie among the large number of exemptions, which are unfortunately not properly divided by street, and it is not clear whether each occupant was listed separately with a single hearth, or whether the almshouses are represented by some of the larger entries for three or more hearths. Without detailed work on individual parishes it is impossible to clarify this, but it is a potential problem which needs to be borne in mind when considering the extent of exemption and the large number of non-chargeable properties which had three or more hearths.

Over the county as a whole, 32 per cent of houses were exempt, the average for the five lathes ranging between 30 and 33 per cent. But this masked considerable local variations. In the Isle of Oxney on the edge of Romney Marsh, as few as 7 per cent of the inhabitants were not charged, while at the other extreme, in Downhamford to the east of Canterbury, 54 per cent were exempt. One caveat which should be borne in mind when interpreting the figures, is that around seventy boroughs in the county have no exemptions listed at all. Many are very small boroughs, but it is suspicious that that there were virtually no exemptions in Oxney or in the upper half hundred of Eastry, and none at all in the whole lower half hundred of Wye. In Cambridgeshire, analysis of later returns indicated that some parishes for which there were no exempt in 1664 had sizeable numbers who were not charged in 1674, suggesting that the earlier returns are not complete.[85] The same may be the case in Kent, but the necessary comparative work on later returns has not been undertaken. The highest proportions of rural exempt, as Map 11 illustrates, lay in Downhamford in the far east, and in the Wealden hundreds of Cranbrook, Little Barnfield, Marden and Tenterden. In general, leaving aside the High Weald parishes where the declining cloth industry was causing problems, central Kent had fewer exempt households than the areas to east and west. Towns were always rather different, and the numbers for these can best be seen in Table 1. Cranbrook, with its failing cloth industry, had 57 per cent, and Maidstone and Westerham were not far behind with 50 and 53 per cent respectively.[86]

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[83] W. K. Jordan, 'Social institutions in Kent, 1480-1660', *Archaeologia Cantiana,* 75 (1961), 32-56.

[84] P. Clark and L. Murfin, *The History of Maidstone* (Stroud, 1996), p. 56; description of Maidstone in 1650 by Nicholas Wall, mapped by Allen Grove and Robert Spain, 1974-5, CKS: 17/270.

[85] Evans, *Cambridgeshire Hearth Tax*, p. xxvi.

[86] See Appendix V for the suggestion that much of Canterbury may have had an exemption rate of

Elsewhere, the inland market towns tended to have between 40 and 50 per cent exempt, while the developing coastal towns of the north had around 30 per cent or less.[87]

It is clear that unlike many other parts of England, exemption before the revised Act of 1664 did not just affect people with single hearths. It was confined to those with single hearths only in four hundreds in the eastern lathes of Shepway and St Augustine. In other hundreds in these lathes 80-90 per cent of exempt households had single hearths. Elsewhere in the countryside single-hearth households were more likely to account for only 50-80 per cent of exemptions, and in the towns of central and western Kent, as well as in Westgate hundred on the outskirts of Canterbury, they fell below 45 per cent. Where single-hearth exemptions were rare, two was the norm, although up to 10 per cent of entries might have more, the proportion rising to nearer 20 per cent in one or two urban hundreds such as Blackheath, Rochester and Westgate. Thus far more households with two or more hearths were exempted in the towns than in the countryside.

Since Twysden specifically referred to the problems encountered in Goudhurst and surrounding areas, it is worth looking at Cranbrook, Marden and Tenterden, three of the hundreds in the clothing district where exemption was highest. In all three, exemptions formed 47 per cent of households. Of these, 69, 71 and 59 per cent had single hearths; 25, 26 and 30 per cent had two, while the rest lived in properties with three or more hearths. In Tenterden, where 10 per cent had three or more hearths, the exemption column is headed by a note that the following 'are exempted by reason of their poverty from the usuall taxes to church and poore and are not worth five pounds and soe are not chargeable by the Act'. Thus the high proportion with three or more hearths would appear to have lived in far larger houses than their wealth would warrant, and they may illustrate the situation described by Twysden. The same may also have been true in Rolvenden, where 38 per cent of households were exempt, 17 per cent of whom had three or more hearths.[88]

Empty Houses

The fact that exempt households in towns were more likely to have two or more hearths, and those in the country to have single hearths, is almost certainly not just a matter of degrees of poverty; it also reflects the type of property. But before turning to the houses themselves, there is one other

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around 50%.

87 That approximately half the inhabitants of Kentish market towns were exempt was noted by P. Clark and P. Slack, *English Towns in Transition* (London, 1976), p. 21, but they thought (p. 114) that lower exemption rates were normally only found in social capitals and stagnant market towns.

88 Work by Anthony Poole (pers. comm., 1999) on the Churchwarden's accounts for Benenden parish in Rolvenden hundred has revealed that ten of the forty-five male exemptions were labourers (one of whom had 4 hearths), and others were poor weavers, shearmen or tradesmen. However, among their number are some who appear to have been far too wealthy for exemption in normal circumstances: e.g. Richard Sharpe, gent., who had lands valued at £40 p.a. (although he may have been charged on another property in the parish) and Richard Burden, yeoman, with lands valued at £29 p.a.

category in the returns which needs to be examined because it has a bearing on the same issue. This is the number and distribution of empty houses at the time of the tax. Most of these were taxed, although a few, such as those which were falling down in Goare borough in Milton hundred, escaped. Over the whole county 497 empty houses were listed

Although isolated cases might occur anywhere, the majority of empty houses were concentrated in well-defined areas. Only ten hundreds had more than ten empty houses each, eight of them lying along the north coast, plus the town of Ashford, and Westgate hundred, which lies within and on the outskirts of Canterbury.[89] The highest numbers occurred in Blackheath hundred (191), in the towns of Deptford, Greenwich, Woolwich, Lewisham and Eltham, and in the lower, or northern, half hundred of Toltingtrough (48), which included Gravesend and Northfleet. These of course were largely the developing naval and dockyard towns and their surroundings.

Few of the empty houses were small. In the ten hundreds where the majority lay, only 11.5 per cent had single hearths, while 27 per cent had five hearths or more. In the Deptford, Greenwich, Woolwich area this is particularly noticeable, for 126 (66 per cent) had at least three hearths, twenty-two of them having ten or more. Furthermore, many of these houses were owned by gentlemen or officers. In some cases the houses may have been empty because their owners were abroad, but in other cases they were obviously intended to be let. Many of them may have been large properties aimed at the wealthy market, but others were probably meant to be subdivided. In Mottingham, Sir Anthony Batteman had twenty hearths in his own house, but also paid on six in an empty house. In Strood, Francis Wansall had eight hearths, plus two empty houses with eleven more hearths; and in Rochester Mrs Cripse, widow, seems to have lived in a house with three hearths, but had three empty houses with six hearths between them. Sir Nicholas Crispe, a wealthy royalist, overseas merchant, slave trader, and farmer of the duty on sea coal, who lived in Bread Street in the City of London and in Hammersmith,[90] had twenty-seven hearths classed together as 'tenements' in an empty property in Eltham, as well as an empty house with six hearths in Deptford. These instances could be multiplied. They seem to show the local landowning class realising the advantages of owning property to let - a common enough occurrence at all times. The fact that so many were empty at the time of the hearth tax may mean that short-term lets were normal, or since these were growing towns, that the houses were newly-built and had not yet been rented out.[91] That landowners were closely

[89] The hundreds with ten or more empty houses are Blackheath (191); Little and Lesnes (19, mostly in Erith); the upper (southern) half hundred of Ruxley (15, mostly in Bexley); the lower (eastern) half hundred of Shamwell (18, mostly in Temple borough, Strood); Toltingtrough (48); Chatham and Gillingham (18); Rochester (35); Westgate (20); the eastern half hundred of Milton (21, mostly in Milton town and Bredgar) and Ashford (11).

[90] DNB, 5 (1973 edn).

[91] The popularity of investing in property is also revealed in probate inventories, A. F. Dulley, 'People and homes in the Medway towns: 1687-1783', *Archaeologia Cantiana,* 77 (1962), 170-1.

involved in the growth of the towns is clear from the case of John Evelyn, the diarist. He owned *Sayes Court*, Deptford (which had nineteen hearths) and between 1654 and 1692 provided land on the west side of what is now Deptford High Street for the erection of nine houses, although in his case he was not directly responsible for either building or leasing the properties.[92]

Many of the larger houses were probably intended for officers and gentlemen, though these formed only a small proportion of those who were moving into the area. The one or two-hearth houses were no doubt for lesser folk, but there is unlikely to have been enough accommodation for the workforce which surged into this area in the late seventeenth century. In 1663, 238 men were employed in the Royal Naval Dockyards in Deptford; in 1664, 302 were recorded in Woolwich; and in 1665 there were 800 in Chatham, including 440 shipwrights, 129 labourers, 47 house carpenters, 41 joiners, 23 scavelmen, 18 bricklayers, 17 'ocam boyes', 15 boat makers, plus plumbers, pump makers, coopers and pitch heaters.[93] Given that there were private docks as well as official ones, and that many people in service industries will have been no wealthier than those in government employ, there must have been very large numbers of craftsmen and labouring poor in these towns. By 1686 Chatham claimed that its population had trebled in forty years, and in the 1680s and 90s both Chatham and Deptford were complaining of the excessive charges landowners had to bear to cope with poor relief. The problems were compounded by the fact that employment was irregular, with periods when the workers in the dockyards were laid off, and there were long arrears in the payment of wages.[94] Given that some of the poor of the cloth working district of the Weald, where birth rates are known to have been declining and migration was clearly in progress from the 1640s,[95] are likely to have moved to the northern towns in search of employment, one might have expected to find a high proportion of exempt and of one-hearth houses in the northern towns.

Up to a point, that is what we do see, as Table 1 shows. In Deptford, 337 households, forming 34 per cent of the total, were exempted from paying in 1664. In Chatham, 134 households, or 31 per cent were exempt. But in Woolwich the number was only 35 or 12.5 per cent. In the first two cases the percentage of single-hearth houses: 115, or 11.5 per cent of the total in Deptford, 43 or 10 per cent in Chatham, and 48 or 17 per cent in Woolwich, falls far below the percentage of exemptions. But, as discussed above, the proportions of both exemptions and single-hearth houses tend to be higher in the inland towns, notably in Maidstone and Cranbrook, but also in Westerham, Tenterden, Tonbridge, Sevenoaks and Ashford. This suggests that poverty in the older towns was worse, and the

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92 P. Guillery and B. Herman 'Deptford houses: 1650 to 1800', *Vernacular Architecture,* 30 (1999), forthcoming.

93 Coleman, 'Naval dockyards', pp. 140-1, quoting *S.P. Dom.* Charles II, 29, no 69.

94 Ibid., pp. 141-5; the problems and progress of the shipyards is discussed in more detail in D. C. Coleman, 'The Economy of Kent under the later Stuarts', (University of London unpublished Ph.D. thesis 1951), pp. 245-53.

95 Dobson, 'The last hiccup', pp. 408-10; *Contours of Death*, pp. 59-65.

influx of labour and the problems caused by the non-payment of wages did not result in a higher proportion of exemptions in the northern towns.

In the new towns it seems likely that many of the newly arrived workforce would have been too destitute, at least on arrival, to have been able to afford to rent the empty houses which were available. So it seems probable that a proportion of the poor were lodgers in other people's houses, and thus hidden from the hearth tax altogether.[96] Whether the sort of people who took in poor lodgers were themselves able to pay the tax is beyond the scope of this essay. Probably some were, some were not. Secondly, and most important of all, most of the houses in the northern towns will have been new houses, put up during the second half of the seventeenth century. Among the work force noted in Chatham in 1665 were forty-seven house carpenters and eighteen bricklayers, and in Deptford it is known that many of the new late-seventeenth and early eighteenth-century houses were erected by enterprising artisans, some of whom worked in the dockyards as well.[97] The contrast between the relatively small number of exemptions and single-hearth houses in Chatham and Deptford, and the larger numbers in the older towns, is almost certainly as much to do with the age of the houses and the way the poor were housed, as it was to do with absolute numbers of people in various social or occupational categories. Before this can be pursued further, it is necessary to look at the evidence of the buildings themselves, and see whether the survivors shed any light on how the figures in the hearth tax might be interpreted.

[96] This conclusion was also reached by Dulley in his analysis of slightly later probate inventories from Rochester, Chatham and Strood, 'People and homes', p. 163.

[97] RCHME unpublished survey report, 'Deptford houses: 1650 to 1800' (1998), pp. 23-4; Guillery and Herman, 'Deptford houses', forthcoming.

HEARTH TAX TABLES FOR KENT FOR LADY DAY 1664

Table 2 sets out the data included in the transcript of the Quarter Sessions Returns, as used for the percentage bands of Table 3 and the distribution maps. The data is arranged by hundred, with the numbers in physically detached boroughs included with those of the hundred in which they lie. For further information about the location of boroughs, see Appendix VII.

The column of '20 or more hearths', which forms the basis for Map 5, is a sub-set of the previous column of '10 or more hearths'.

It will be found that the figures in the columns of hearth numbers in Table 2 do not always add up to the figure in the 'total entries column'. There are a number of reasons for this:

Where the manuscript has no hearth total against a name, the entry is included in the 'total entries' column, but omitted from the detailed columns.

Where a single entry with a large number of hearths is clearly labelled as an institution, e.g. a hospital, or a grouping of tenements, a single entry has been placed in the 'total entries' column, but in the detailed columns the total has been divided into single-hearth households.

Where a person has been charged on two houses together, these are counted as a single overall entry, but are split in the detailed columns.

Where one or more names have been repeated in both the 'chargeable' and 'non-chargeable' sections, indicating that householders with ovens or furnaces in their kitchens, brew houses or wash houses have been listed twice, the entries in the 'non-chargeable' section have been omitted from the tables.

Since they could not be included on the distribution maps, the figures for the parts of Westgate hundred which lie within Canterbury City (the precincts of Christ Church and the Archbishop's Palace, St Gregory's borough and Staplegate borough) are not included in Tables 2 and 3. These figures are tabulated and discussed in Appendix V.

Table 2
Susan's total table

Table 2
Susan's total table

Table 3

Susan's percentage table

Table 3
Susan's percentage table

Figure 1
Total households in LD 1664 by hearths

THE EVIDENCE OF THE HOUSES

Rural Houses

Many of the largest houses in the county were medieval in origin, even though they had been substantially added to and rebuilt by 1664, and the families which first owned them had usually long gone. This is not the place to unravel the complicated histories of buildings like *Knole* or *Westenhanger Castle*. It is, however, worth mentioning that the hearth tax is often an extremely useful corrective when studying such buildings, for it frequently indicates that they were far better heated than can be deduced today. This is the case at *Westenhanger*, where very few of the sixty hearths on which Viscount Strangford was charged, can be identified,[98] not to mention more modest gentry residences such as *Pett Place*, Charing (Sir Robert Honywood, 20 hearths), and *Ford Place*, Wrotham (John Clerke, Esq., 15 hearths) (Plate IB).[99] Such houses vary enormously in date and plan, but by 1664 most of the polite rooms, together with many of the service rooms, would have been heated.

Sir Robert Barnham, who lived at *Boughton Monchelsea Place*, a house built in the third quarter of the sixteenth century, was charged on twenty-four hearths in 1664. The positions of fifteen of them can be identified in his probate inventory when he died in 1685; ten lie in the best rooms, such as the parlour, dining room and various chambers, including the nursery, but others are in the chambers over the wash house and the gate house, which were more likely occupied by servants.[100] At *Roydon Hall,* East Peckham, Sir Roger Twysden paid for thirty hearths. No doubt the majority lay within the house itself, but the sixteenth-century walled garden includes two little heated rooms built into the walls to either side of the main gate, and also a delightful garden house, situated on an eminence, with two heated rooms looking out over the Weald. All four fireplaces must have been included in Sir Roger's total. The question of whether all the hearths listed, particularly at this social level, lay within the main residence, or whether some were in houses on the estate, is difficult to decide. In theory, all the hearths should have been in the main house or grounds, with the tenants paying separately, but in practice it is possible that hearths in estate cottages and the home farmhouse were sometimes included as well.

In addition to earlier houses which were up-dated, there were handsome new properties of the seventeenth century, mostly built by the new gentry out of their newly created wealth. The twenty-plus category includes houses such as *Broome Park*, Barham (20 hearths) (Plate IA), built

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98 Information from David Martin.

99 Information from Jayne Semple.

100 Hasted, *History of Kent*, V, 339-40; J. Newman, *West Kent and the Weald*, 2nd edn (The Buildings of England, Harmondsworth, 1980), p. 176; PRO: PROB 4/6343.

between 1635 and 1638 by Sir Basil Dixwell, recently arrived from Warwickshire; *Hall Place*, Bexley (29 hearths) rebuilt in the 1640s and 50s by Sir Robert Austin, baronet, who had risen from obscure gentry origins to become sheriff of Kent in 1637/8*; Groombridge Place,* Speldhurst (20 hearths) built between 1652 and 1674 by Philip Packer Esq, clerk of the Privy Seal to Charles II; and *Yotes Court*, Mereworth (21 hearths), with chimneys dated 1656 and 1658, built by Mr James Masters, son of a London merchant and son-in-law of Sir Francis Walsingham of *Scadbury*.[101]

From the fifteenth century onwards brick chimneys had been incorporated into all houses of any size and status, and during the sixteenth century the stacks were often a status symbol, marked on the exterior by decorated gables and chimneys.[102] Kent was late in its adoption of brick, and never as whole-hearted as parts of East Anglia, but ornamental stacks of the sixteenth century occurred on gentry houses such as *Roydon Hall*, East Peckham, *Ford Place*, Wrotham (Plate IB), or the smaller *Wickens* in Charing (Highslade) (Plate IIA). Occasionally there were more shafts than the number of fireplaces. This was a notable East Anglian feature, but can be found in some gentry houses in Kent, e.g. *Wickens*, where the kitchen fireplace originally had two flues, so that there were six shafts for five fireplaces.[103] Although chimneys of that sort were no longer built by the 1660s, houses where this occurred might have been over-charged unless the assessors went inside to check the number of hearths. In Hertfordshire it has been suggested that this may explain instances where the number of hearths drops by one between the hearth tax assessments of 1662 and 1663.[104]

But what sort of stacks were used by the far more numerous people below the level of the gentry? In the Middle Ages almost all houses were heated by a single hearth in the open hall, although many had a second fireplace in a detached kitchen where cooking took place. Even after 1500, when open halls were ceiled over and enclosed fireplaces were introduced, very few houses had hearths in any other room. One reason for this was the nature and construction of many of the earliest enclosed fireplaces. Although brick was not unknown, and was certainly used by some wealthy peasants for chimney stacks from around 1500, the majority of the earliest enclosed hearths were of timber construction.[105]

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[101] For details of all these houses see Everitt, *Community of Kent;* Hasted, *History of Kent*; Newman, *West Kent and the Weald*, and *North East and East Kent*, 3rd edn (1983), and A. Quiney, *Kent Houses* (Woodbridge, 1993).

[102] See J. A. Wight, *Brick Building in England from the Middle Ages to 1550* (London, 1972), pp. 87-102. Illustrations in Quiney, *Kent Houses*, figs 26 and 27; K. Gravett, *Timber and Brick Building in Kent* (London and Chichester, 1971), figs pp. 102-13.

[103] The kitchen fireplace rose through two flues, but another fireplace was added later, apparently before 1664 when Anthony Aucher, gent., who was probably the tenant, was charged on 6 hearths (Highslade borough, Calehill).

[104] J. T. Smith, *English Houses, 1200-1800: the Hertfordshire Evidence* (RCHME, 1992), p. 188.

[105] The details of the various kinds of enclosed fireplaces are discussed in Pearson, *Medieval Houses*, pp. 108-15 and P. S. Barnwell and A. T. Adams, *The House Within: Interpreting Medieval Houses in Kent* (RCHME, 1994), pp. 130-5.

These took a number of forms. The crudest way of confining the open hearth was to construct a smoke bay in which a small part of the hall remained open to the roof, the rest being ceiled over, allowing space for a chamber above. At *Little Bursted Farmhouse*, Lower Hardres, the house was built this way,[106] but usually open halls were adapted to this form in the early sixteenth century, e.g. *Burgoyne's*, Chilham, or *Hever Brocas*, Hever. [107] It was also a layout used for many smaller new houses until well into the second half of the century, as at *White Cottage*, Boughton Monchelsea. Another method was to build a tapering stack of framed timbers, lined with plaster; this did not form part of the main structure, and could be removed later without leaving any trace. Only a few survive, as at *Nightingale Farmhouse*, Yalding, and *Dormer Cottage*, Petham, but it is likely that many such timber chimneys once existed.[108] Finally, there was the brick stack. All three solutions were in use from the late fifteenth century, the decision to use one or the other probably depending upon money, the kind of house involved, the sort of fireplace required, and the availability of materials. Fireplaces were chargeable in the hearth tax whether they were open hearths or were confined within a stack of timber and plaster or brick. But the timing of the transition from open hearth to smoke bay and timber stack, and from them to brick stacks is relevant to the interpretation of the tax, for normally only brick stacks had fireplaces on the upper floors. While in theory there is no reason why several smoke bays or timber chimneys could not have heated a number of ground-floor rooms, in practice it is rare to find more than the hall, and perhaps a kitchen, heated in this manner.[109]

It is often assumed that the change from open hearth to enclosed fireplaces and chimney stacks was well under way by 1577 when William Harrison, in *The Description of England*, refers to 'the great multitude of chimnies lately erected'.[110] However, what is meant by this statement, and what difference it might have made to the number of fireplaces within a house, is ambiguous. In the first place, although the hearth might be built in a fireplace with a chimney, this could be a timber chimney, which usually did not serve more than a single hearth. Secondly, although by and large the upper strata of society had made the change to brick stacks by then, many sizeable houses retained their open hearths well into the seventeenth century.

In exceptional cases this may have been deliberate policy on the part of high status gentry who kept their open hall for show and ceremonial.

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[106] Barnwell and Adams, *House Within*, p. 130.

[107] For *Burgoyne's* see ibid., p. 131; at *Hever Brocas*, Hever, the open hall was only built in 1532, and was half-floored shortly afterwards (Pearson, *Medieval Houses*, p. 115)

[108] Barnwell and Adams, *House Within*, p. 134.

[109] No timber chimneys with upper fireplaces are known to the author in Kent and they are, in fact, extremely rare anywhere. One survives at the *Old Medicine House*, formerly from Wrinehill, Staffordshire, but now re-erected and restored at Blackden, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire.

[110] W. Harrison, *The Description of England* (Dover edn., Washington and New York, 1998), p. 201. For recent comments see J. Hatcher, *The History of the British Coal Industry. Vol I, before 1700: Towards the Age of Coal* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 409-18; C. Platt, *The Great Rebuilding of Tudor and Stuart England* (London, 1994), pp. 4-6

A good example in Kent is *Penshurst Place*, whose aristocratic owners never ceiled the fourteenth-century great hall, although there were plenty of other heated rooms in the house. But discounting these, it is likely that some medieval halls still remained open to the roof as late as 1664. A number of terriers indicate that the process of change from open hearth to enclosed stack was still in progress during much of the seventeenth-century. In 1630 the parsonage house at Harbledown near Canterbury is described as having a 'hall without a chimney or a loft', although there was a brick chimney in the parlour.[111] In West Malling in 1640 the mansion house had 'one old hall without a chimney, one parlour with a chimney, a back kitchen without a chimney only a flue to evaporate the smoke' (which almost certainly refers to a smoke bay), plus two chambers with chimneys.[112] In Chislet in the late 1640s 'an ancient mansion house called Chislet Court' was 'built of stone for the most part open to the roof, and the other part two storeys high with a great kitchen'.[113] Finally, as late as 1662 and 1663 the vicarage at Hadlow was described as having a 'hall without any ceiling, being open to ye top, two lower chambers within ye hall over which one high chamber. One kitchen open also to ye top, one parlour with an upper chamber over it'. This sounds like a description of an unadapted open-hall house, the two lower chambers within the hall being the service rooms lying in the classic medieval position beyond the screens passage in the hall, with a chamber above. The actual heating in this house is not described, and it has not been identified in the hearth tax; but by 1765 this same vicarage was built in brick, which implies that the medieval house had been replaced.[114] Where a vicar or rector held several properties and the house was used by a curate, the dwelling might easily become out-of-date. What happened to church livings was just as likely to occur to secular dwellings, particularly to those let to tenants. At *Hurst Farm*, Chilham, for instance, although parlour and chamber fireplaces were introduced in the seventeenth century, the hall of this large medieval manor house of *c.* 1300 seems to have remained open until the present ceiling was inserted in 1714.[115]

The upgrading of some medieval houses went through two stages. In many houses there is evidence for a sixteenth-century smoke bay which was later succeeded by a brick stack. When a smoke bay was created, the house would normally have only had a single hearth, unless a kitchen was added at the back with its own smoke bay, as occurred at *Hale Street Farmhouse*, East Peckham. Only when the smoke bay was replaced by a brick stack was it possible to heat both the hall and the chamber above it, and not until this stage did the majority of farmhouses have second fireplaces to heat the parlour. Brick stacks in a number of examples are dated in the first three decades of the seventeenth century, e.g. *The Blue House*, East Sutton, of

[111] CCA: Glebe Terriers, DCb/D/T H10.
[112] CKS: Terriers, Rochester Diocese, DRb/At 53.
[113] Lambeth Palace Library: XIIa/22, Parliamentary Survey of Archbishop's Lands.
[114] CKS: Terriers, Rochester Diocese, DRb/At 34.
[115] Pearson, *Medieval Houses*, p. 115

1610, *Lower Newlands*, Teynham, of 1611, *Swallows*, Boughton Monchelsea, of 1616, and *The Old Manor House*, Chiddingstone, of 1638. All these are large, four-bay medieval open-hall houses, the largest in their neighbourhoods and certainly attached to sizeable farms. It may be argued that, while no doubt of considerable standing in the Middle Ages, they had become nothing more than tenanted farms of no great importance by the seventeenth century, and cannot be used as evidence of a wider trend among yeoman farmers. But this seems unlikely, for the mere fact that the alterations are dated, and often include gabled oriel windows and moulded ceiling beams, is an indication of wealth and pride. Both the physical and documentary evidence suggests that the process of replacing single enclosed fireplaces by chimney stacks with multiple fireplaces was spread over a long time even at this relatively high social level.

Lower down the scale, smoke bays lasted even longer. In Boughton Monchelsea, in an area south-east of Maidstone where houses tend to be above average in size and quality, a recent survey disclosed a number of relatively small mid or late sixteenth-century houses with two main ground-floor rooms, the smaller divided into two, and two first-floor chambers. These were manifestly inferior to the larger medieval houses mentioned above, such as *Swallows* in the same parish, which were still heated by inserted smoke bays, or contemporary larger and smarter houses which by then were being erected with multiple brick fireplaces, as in the rebuilt hall range of the *Cock Inn*, dated 1568. In these smaller houses the only fireplace was in a short smoke bay at one end of the ground-floor hall. Later, brick stacks were built into the smoke bays. Most examples are undated, but one of them, *White Cottage* on the Green, seems to have acquired a stone and brick stack, with two fireplaces heating the hall and its chamber, in 1670, this date being scratched on the rear of the new stack. Dating the undated examples is not easy, but narrow chamfers to the surrounds suggest that in many smaller houses brick stacks were inserted only late in the seventeenth century. Thus a number of them, like *White Cottage*, may have had single hearths in 1664, but two or three hearths a few years later. *White Cottage* and its peers are unlikely to have been the smallest and poorest houses in Boughton Monchelsea, and their occupiers were almost certainly not among the 25 per cent in that parish who were exempt in 1664; but they probably were among the 27 per cent who were charged on single hearths. What we are looking at here is not poverty, but the slow process of updating at a modest social level.[116]

The replacement of timber chimneys often took place even later. At *Stone Hill and Old Forge Cottages*, Sellindge, the open hall of what was formerly a single house had a timber chimney inserted in the sixteenth century which was apparently not replaced by a brick stack with three fireplaces until 1657, the date carved on the gable of a contemporary oriel window (Plate IIB). At

[116] S. Pearson in P. Hastings, *Upon the Quarry Hills: a History of Boughton Monchelsea Parish* (Boughton Monchelsea, 2000), pp. 163-71.

Hoggeshaws, Milstead, on the Downs of central Kent, the same process was only completed in 1700, the date inscribed on the brick chimney. At *Dormer Cottage*, Petham further east along the Downs, it is unlikely that the ceiling of the open hall and insertion of the timber stack took place before the mid seventeenth century. That chimney still survives, and it is possible that there was only one fireplace until the nineteenth century.[117] This is only a small house, and by the nineteenth century it had probably sunk to cottage status, but in the seventeenth century it would have been a house of medium quality - *retardataire*, but not necessarily an index of poverty.

The reason this discussion has concentrated on what happened to fireplaces in older houses lies in the fact that in Kent few of the surviving farmhouses or smaller dwellings were built during the middle years of the seventeenth century. In Boughton Monchelsea parish in central Kent, a survey of thirty-two listed buildings of eighteenth-century or earlier date indicated that the largest houses tend to be either medieval or early seventeenth century in origin, the smaller to be sixteenth or eighteenth century, with only one completely new late seventeenth-century house.[118] In east Kent, as we shall see later, there was a major late seventeenth-century rebuilding, but it took place after the time of the 1664 hearth tax.

Three Case Study Parishes

To put flesh on the bones of this general account of houses, isolate some of the regional differences, and discover to what extent houses below the level of farmhouse can be identified in 1664, three parishes have been examined in more detail, with the hearth tax evidence considered alongside surviving buildings and other documentation (Table 4). The parishes of Charing and East Peckham were chosen because research had already been done there, and Goodnestone-next-Wingham was added to provide evidence from east Kent. Unfortunately, it was not possible to include any of the large parishes in the clothing district of the High Weald. Three parishes are far too few to provide a general picture of the county. They must not be taken as typical of the areas in which they occur, for every parish has its individual characteristics stemming from its soil and farming, landholding patterns, and accessibility to resources such as markets, woods, and marshland grazing.[119] Despite this, the maps show that there were general differences in hearth numbers in different parts of the county, and the case studies provide a glimpse of some of the underlying detail which accompanies the figures.

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[117] The date is suggested by the seventeenth-century decoration of the small post standing on the fireplace bressumer and supporting the main beam of the inserted ceiling. Since half of this small cottage was rebuilt in the nineteenth century, it is impossible to be certain that there never was another fireplace.

[118] Pearson in Hastings, *Upon the Quarry Hills*, p. 165.

[119] A survey of medieval houses in sixty parishes across Kent began to identify the regional distribution and characteristics of medieval houses (Pearson, *Medieval Houses*, chapter 10), but it was not possible to undertake work on that scale for this volume.

TABLE 4

Comparison of Hearth Tax Data in Three Case Study Parishes

	CHARING				EAST PECKHAM				GOODNESTONE			
H	**C**	**NC**	**Tot**	**%**	**C**	**NC**	**Tot**	**%**	**C**	**NC**	**Tot**	**%**
1	30	29	59	35	37	46	83	62	12	18	30	46
2	38	16	54	32	34	3	37	28	12	1	13	20
3-4	37	3	40	23	10	-	10	7	16	1	17	26
5-9	14	-	14	8	2	-	2	1.5	2	-	2	3
10+	3	-	3	2	2	-	2	1.5	3	-	3	5
Tot	122	48	170		85	49	134		45	20	65	
NC		28%				37%				31%		
	4681 acres[120] = 36 houses per 1000 acres				3403 acres = 39 houses per 1000 acres				1865 acres = 35 houses per 1000 acres			

Charing[121]

Charing is a large parish in Calehill hundred in the lathe of Scray. It lies in the centre of the county, stretching across several topographical regions and containing 4681 acres in the nineteenth century. To the north, a small sector lies on the chalk uplands; just below the scarp of the Downs, the main village, called Charing Town in the hearth tax, is situated on the spring line, where a small market settlement had grown up outside the gates of one of the residences of the archbishop of Canterbury. By the seventeenth century the market had ceased to function, replaced by a street of shops. To either side of the village, large arable fields characterised the valley between the Downs and a line of Gault Clay; to the south, numerous small farms and a couple of commons lie on the low hills and sandy soils of the Lower Greensand.

The ecclesiastical parish of Charing was divided between five boroughs: Charing Town, which encompassed the nucleated settlement; Acton and Highslade, lying to west and east both above and below the scarp of the Downs, and Sanpett and Field on the Greensand to the south. Parts of Highslade and Field are known to stretch beyond the parish boundary,

[120] Acreages taken from the VCH, III, 358-70. These are the acreages of the ecclesiastical parishes in 1844, and therefore no more than an approximate guide to the acreages in the seventeenth century.

[121] Research on the history of Charing has been undertaken by Pat Winzar, helped by the Palaeography Group of the Charing and District Local History Society. I am extremely grateful to her for identifying relevant documentation, and discussing the problems of seventeenth-century Charing with me.

but the taxpayers have here been counted in total since we do not know how many lived outside the parish. In 1664 (Table 4) there were 170 households in these five boroughs, giving a density of thirty-six houses per 1000 acres. Of the 170, fifty-seven had three or more hearths, with seventeen having five or more; fifty-nine had single hearths, and forty-eight households, with between one and three hearths, were exempt from paying the tax at all. Exemptions were highest in the town (43 per cent), but there were proportionally more single-hearth households in the rural area (37 per cent) than in the nucleated settlement (30 per cent). Surviving houses and probate inventories give a general picture of the parish over time. About fifty houses of seventeenth-century date or earlier survive, and of these twenty-six have clear signs of medieval origins. Most of the rest are of sixteenth-century date, although a few were not built until the seventeenth century.[122] In the rural areas most of the medieval dwellings are large, four-bay, houses, with an open hall between two-storeyed ends, often with high quality detailing to the timberwork.[123] In the town, some fourteen late-medieval buildings survive, eleven of them lying in the High Street; some are of normal four-bay design, but at least a couple have a tiny medieval open hall and a single two-storeyed bay at one end. Two medieval shops dating from the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries have been positively identified, and several others are suspected.

Eighty-five probate inventories with room names survive, one is dated 1495, the rest were drawn up between 1565 and 1698. Of these, seventy-five give information about hearths, listing fire implements within various rooms, from which one may deduce the presence of a fireplace. However, from the 1660s to the 1690s, when inventories of individuals who paid the hearth tax a few years before can be identified, these often fail to register the presence of every hearth, so that several people who paid tax on three or even four hearths appear to have only one from the goods in their inventories. This did not just affect Charing, but can be observed, for example, at Sevenoaks in Kent, and elsewhere in England.[124] Thus the value

[122] Figures taken from the survey by the RCHME and from personal observation, augmented by information from the DoE List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.

[123] For the details see Pearson, *Medieval Houses*, Barnwell and Adams, *House Within*, and Pearson et al., *A Gazetteer of Medieval Houses in Kent* (RCHME, London, 1994).

[124] As discussed by M. Spufford, 'The limitations of the probate inventory', in *English Rural Society, 1500-1800* , ed. by J. D. Chartres and D. Hey, (Cambridge, 1990), pp.144-5, moveable goods (among which one may include hearth furniture) were sometimes not listed in an inventory because they had either been removed before the inventory was made, or formed specific bequests in the will, or belonged to the widow rather than to the deceased. In Sevenoaks, where forty-eight inventories can be correlated with the hearth tax, 73% had fewer hearths in the inventory than were charged, and in one instance, a tailor who died in 1668 declared in his will that ' the Jacke [in the hall], and the plate behind the fire thear and the furnace in the Cichen shall not be Aprized to the Executrix but bee and Remayne to the House'; not unnaturally there is no evidence for either the hall fireplace or the kitchen furnace in the probate inventory, see *Sevenoaks Wills and Inventories, in the reign of Charles II*, ed. by H. F. C. Lansberry, Kent Records, 25 (Maidstone, 1988), pp. 70-3. Possibly this sort of arrangement was common, even when not specifically mentioned in the will. In other cases the appraisers may simply not have thought it worth itemising the bellows, creepers, tongs or andirons which would indicate the presence of a parlour or chamber fireplace; or, because it was summertime (50% of the inventories in Sevenoaks), the hearth furniture may have been stored, accounted for in a service room or attic under a general

of probate evidence is limited. Nonetheless, one or two points can be made. Prior to 1625 not one of the twenty-one inventories with hearth information has any reference to a chamber fireplace; but between 1625 and 1664 ten out of twenty-three, or 43 per cent, refer to fireplaces in chambers, and between 1664 and 1698 fifteen out of thirty-one, or 48 per cent, have upstairs fireplaces. The increase in references to first-floor fireplaces ties in well with the fact that dated fireplaces in surviving buildings only start appearing in the first decades of the seventeenth century, for those who built brick stacks with multiple hearths during the first two decades of the seventeenth century are unlikely to have died before 1625. A second point is that the actual numbers of fireplaces also increased, although, as indicated above, the inventory figures are not very reliable. Thus no inventory prior to 1625 lists hearth furniture for more than two fireplaces, between 1625 and 1664 13 per cent seem to have had three or more, and between 1664 and 1698 the figure rises to 19 per cent.

The surviving houses range considerably in size and quality. At the top end of the scale is *Pett Place*, a major gentry house, of medieval and sixteenth-century date, with twenty hearths charged to Sir Robert Honywood, Kt. Five minor gentry had between four and twelve hearths, including the vicar, Mr Henry Ridgeway, (6), Anthony Aucher, gent., (6), and Mr Gabriel Pierce or Peirce, (8). The vicarage was formed by the amalgamation of a medieval 'wealden' house and a sixteenth-century church house; Anthony Aucher was probably leasing *Wickens* (Plate 3), a house built around 1600 with decorative chimney stacks, in which the five original fireplaces using six original shafts, had by then been augmented by the addition of a fireplace in the kitchen chamber;[125] Gabriel Pierce lived in *Peirce House*, an early fifteenth-century building in the village centre, which had been considerably extended in the early sixteenth century. Nearly all the gentry properties lie along the spring line below the Downs, but to them one might add *Brockton Manor* on the greensand, owned by George Withick, an aspiring rather than a recognised gentleman, possibly from a family of clothiers, who had six hearths in one of the few seventeenth-century houses in the parish.[126]

Twenty-three probate inventories dating between 1664 and 1700 can be correlated with the hearth tax. Among them are seven for yeomen, five from the rural part of the parish and two from Charing Town. Their inventory values range from £29 to £1489 (median £141); they had between

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and unrevealing heading.

[125] See above p. lxiv. *Wickens* belonged to a minor gentry family named Dering, but was not occupied by them at the time ('Autobiographical Memoranda by Heneage Dering' in Yorkshire Diaries and Autobiographies, *Surtees Society*, 65 (1875), pp. 334-5).

[126] In the early seventeenth century George Withick bought the manor of Brockton (Hasted, *History of Kent*, VII, p. 440), and in a rent roll of the manor of Charing in 1629 George Withwick, gent., was charged 12 shillings for 'his Mannor of Brockton'(CKS: U55 M125). It is probable that this house was *Brockton Farmhouse* on the edge of what was Brockton Heath. It had hall and parlour fireplaces in a double stack, with heated chambers above; and it is likely that a heated kitchen, perhaps with a heated chamber above, was replaced when a 19th-century service wing was built at the back. The house survived until 1999, when it was demolished for construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link.

four and eleven rooms in their houses, and paid tax on between two and four hearths. The wealthier among them are likely to have lived in the large medieval farmhouses with seven or eight rooms which are scattered across the parish.[127] However, only the home of one, Anthony Baldock, can be definitely identified, and he occupied the rather smaller than usual *Little Swan Street* in Sanpett borough. He was a modest yeoman, charged on two hearths, and when he died in 1679 his inventory goods were valued at £81.[128] His house dates to the sixteenth century. It was always two-storeyed, and when built had a hall, heated by a smoke bay, and a second room on the ground floor, with chambers over. By the mid seventeenth century the smoke bay had been replaced by a brick stack with fireplaces heating the hall and chamber above, with an unheated parlour and best chamber over. Only one fireplace can be deduced from the inventory, plus a furnace which probably lay in a lean-to at the rear.

Three husbandmen, two with three hearths and one with only one, had inventories valued at £25, £38 and £83. One of them, Robert Rayner of *Barnfield* in Field borough, with an inventory value of £38, lived in part of a large medieval open-hall house (Plate IIIA). He was only charged on one hearth in 1664, although in his inventory of 1668 goods were itemised in six rooms, and we know that the house itself had three hearths by this date. The open hall at *Barnfield* went through the classic development: i.e. a sixteenth-century smoke bay was inserted heating only the hall, followed in the early seventeenth century by a central brick stack which served three fireplaces in the hall, kitchen and chamber over the hall. The reason that Robert lived in only part of the house was the result of partible inheritance. In 1626 his grandfather had divided his property between two sons, one inheriting the kitchen and six other rooms at the north end of the house, the other getting the rest, only the 'new loft' being specified as it contained a special bequest. It is likely that the brick stack had been inserted shortly before, and that the new loft, which must be the present attic room above the hall chamber, was created at the same time. This half of the house contained the hall and parlour with chambers over them, plus the loft, and thus had at least five rooms. The north end, with the kitchen, was the part which descended to Robert. It had only the kitchen fireplace, although by *c.* 1700 the extra rooms in the house mentioned in 1626 had been rebuilt as a rear wing with a new stack to heat it. When Robert died in 1668 his inventory lists six rooms: hall, milkhouse, drinkhouse and parlour, with chambers over the hall and parlour. In his will the only property he had to leave was 'the moyty and north end of the house called Barnfield', which

[127] The land attached to two surviving large medieval houses, each with three later hearths, can be identified on a map of 1639 when they formed part of the Calehill estate, owned by the Darrell family (CKS: U386 P1). Newland had just over 301 acres in 33 parcels, and Sandpett had just over 112 acres in 20 parcels.

[128] Identification from the map of the Calehill estate. Baldock was not a tenant of the Darrells, but his land adjoined theirs and his house is named and illustrated on the map. Inventory, January 1678/9 CKS: PRC 27/27/206.

went to his eldest son, the younger ones receiving only money.[129] Thus *Barnfield*, one large dwelling when built, and one large dwelling today, was divided for at least most of the seventeenth century. No other surviving house split by partible inheritance has so far been identified, although there is documentary evidence of properties being divided in similar fashion.

Only a few surviving rural houses may have had single hearths in the late seventeenth century. One is *Hunger Hatch Cottage*, a small medieval dwelling of three rooms with no chambers or lofts above. A smoke bay was inserted in the sixteenth century, and in the seventeenth the hall and parlour were ceiled over, creating two low upper chambers, and a brick stack was built within the smoke bay; it had only a single hearth until the nineteenth century when the service bay was also ceiled over and the house was turned into two cottages. In 1639 the house is shown on the map of the nearby Calehill estate, tenanted by one John Myles who rented just over six acres in two parcels. Thus, this five-room house seems to have been home to a smallholder.[130] Another equally unusual survival is *The Thatched Cottage*, Church Hill. This is a three-bay dwelling of late seventeenth-century date, one of several buildings which were erected on the edge of Brockton Heath. It was a purpose-built version of the type to which *Hunger Hatch Cottage* had been adapted. It too had five rooms: two of the three ground-floor rooms having lofts above, the third being open to the roof. Again, at first only the hall was heated. Although this particular house was probably built after 1664, its somewhat earlier neighbour, *Church Hill Cottage*, of similar size but with two hearths, may be one of two shown on the 1639 map lying on the edge of a plot belonging to George Withwick, whose six-hearth house lay on the other side of the heath. The fact that two houses appear in one plot so near the edge of the heath suggests that the occupants may not have been farmers, but supported themselves by a trade or craft, or by labouring for others.

Between 1600 and 1700 a variety of sources name over a hundred craftsmen and tradesmen in Charing, including those involved in the textile industry, building trades, purveyors of food and drink, makers of wearing apparel, smiths, metalworkers and leather workers. Probate inventories show many of them to have been relatively wealthy men, and seven, who died shortly after 1664, have inventories which can be correlated with the hearth tax.[131] Three lived in the rural part of the parish. Thomas Simmons of Acton borough, was a tile maker and a man of substance with an inventory value of £186; he had eight rooms in his house, with fine furnishings and linen, even a silver bowl; and a farm with cattle, pigs and crops sown on seventeen acres, as well £20-worth of tiles and £15-worth of bricks. He was charged on three hearths in 1664 and the site of his house

[129] Robert Rayner, will, February 1626/7, CKS: PRC 32/50/91; Robert Rayner, will, October 1668, PRC 32/53/554; inventory, December 1668, PRC 27/20/126.
[130] See map reference in note 127 above.
[131] Thomas Simmons, May 1669, CKS: PRC 27/21/88; Symon Beeching the elder, December 1670, PRC 27/22/28; George Burwash, April 1689, PRC 27/32/3.

can be identified, although the building was rebuilt in the eighteenth century. Simon Beeching, a blacksmith, lived in Sanpett borough; his inventory was valued at £67 and he was charged on two hearths. The third man, George Burwash, a linen weaver whose inventory totalled £42, cannot be precisely identified in the hearth tax as there are two men with this name, one with a single hearth, one with two.

A lime burner, two fell mongers, a butcher and a grocer's widow lived in Charing Town. Richard Rade, butcher, had an inventory valued at only £38 in 1683, but he had eight rooms in his house and four hearths; his house is not identifiable, but was obviously among the larger in the High Street.[132] Alexander Burwash was a wealthy grocer, who died in 1662 with goods worth £308. He had a hall, kitchen and shop, all with chambers over, plus a chamber over the entry, a buttery, cellar, brewhouse and warehouse. The hall, kitchen and kitchen chamber were heated, and in 1664 his widow was charged on four hearths.[133] Richard Beeching, a fell monger who was sometimes termed 'gent', had five rooms and was charged on three hearths. He was seventy-six when he died in 1690, and his inventory was only valued at £26. Since only one hearth is identifiable in the inventory it is possible that he lived with younger members of his family and that his inventory does not include the whole house nor all the goods in it.[134] Francis Speede, lime burner, whose inventory was valued at £60, had nine rooms and was charged on two hearths.[135] Finally, Thomas Kilham, another fell monger, died in 1674 with an inventory value of £96, £70 of which was in wool, skins and pelts, indicating that he was still working at his death and that he did not live in great style. In fact, he almost certainly lived at *30 High Street*,[136] one of the smallest medieval houses in the street, originally with a tiny open hall, and two rooms beyond the screens passage with a single chamber over them, although by the seventeenth century the hall had been ceiled, providing an extra room upstairs. Until the early eighteenth century only the hall was heated, and Kilham was charged on only one hearth in 1664. His inventory of 1674 lists a heated hall, a buttery, a shop by implication, and chambers over the hall and shop; there was also a wash house with a furnace which probably lay at the rear.

None of the occupiers of identifiable houses in Charing parish was exempted from paying the hearth tax. But in 1670 the inventory of Mr Gabriel Peirce of *Peirce House* included various not very expensive items in the house in Ms Creswell's occupation, and 'in the outhouses where Ms Wolfe and Sarah Harte live'.[137] Unfortunately none of these women figures in the hearth tax, although men with the same surnames paid on three and

[132] Richard Rade, January 1682/3, CKS: PRC 27/29/273.
[133] Alexander Burwash, April 1662, CKS: PRC 17/14/10.
[134] Richard Beeching, born in 1613; inventory: July 1690, CKS: PRC 27/32/104.
[135] Francis Speede, August 1667, CKS: PRC 27/19/139.
[136] Thomas Kilham, September 1674, CKS: PRC 27/26/61. Certain identification, from privately owned deeds, begins with Kilham's son in 1701.
[137] Gabriel Peirce, January 1669/70, CKS: PRC 27/21/78; published by P. Winzar, 'Peirce House, Charing: the house and its owners', *Archaeologia Cantiana,* 111 (1993), 190-92.

four hearths in the town, suggesting the possibility that they had been among the higher status residents of the parish, and that their circumstances were greatly reduced by the death of their menfolk. Twelve of the forty-eight people who were not charged in 1664 were women. Whether some of those who were not charged lived in larger buildings which had been divided into tenements, rather than in outhouses or complete small houses, is not clear from the documentary evidence. By the end of the century divided properties in the town start to be mentioned, but the references come from the 1690s rather than earlier.[138] Analysis of the parish registers suggests there was a slight increase of births and decline in deaths in the 1680s, which might indicate that by the end of the seventeenth century pressure on the existing stock of houses in the town was beginning to mount, and houses which had formerly been in single occupation were starting to be split up. No evidence has been found to suggest that this had begun by the time of the hearth tax.[139]

The impression of Charing in the late seventeenth century is of a parish of large and medium-sized farms, with a bustling centre where most of the necessities of life could be obtained. It had its quota of poor, although the documentary evidence does not illuminate their circumstances. In fact, in terms of the hundred of Calehill, or even the lathe of Scray, it was a prosperous parish, for it had fewer exemptions or houses with single hearths (28 and 35 per cent as opposed to the hundred figures of 33 and 41 per cent), a higher proportion of two-hearth houses, and a few more gentry than the average. Those who lived in single-hearth houses were not necessarily poor, and their houses were often well-built with at least five rooms.

East Peckham[140]

The parish of East Peckham covers 3,403 acres in the hundreds of Littlefield and Twyford. It lies on the edge of the Low Weald, and its soil, although considered by Hasted to be 'deep and miry',[141] is largely a fine and fertile loam. Agriculture was mixed, featuring both cattle and corn, with hops and fruit becoming increasingly important from the late seventeenth century onwards. It lies outside the area covered by Zell in his study of industry in the Weald,[142] but documentary evidence suggests that textiles played an important part in the local economy in the sixteenth and early

[138] Will of Robert Weekes, August 1692, CKS: PRC 32/56/137; will of Thomas Davies, May 1690, CKS: PRC 32/56/181; inventory, December 1693, PRC 27/33/96. Will of Samuel Davies, July 1706, CKS: PRC 32/58/79, and privately owned deeds of 48 High Street.

[139] That towns in Kent in the later seventeenth century, including market towns, experienced less severe demographic decline than the countryside and at least maintained their population levels has been discussed by A. D. Dyer, 'The market towns of south-east England, 1500-1700', *Southern History,* 1 (1979), 123-34, and Dobson, 'The last hiccup', p. 407.

[140] I am extremely grateful to Margaret Lawrence for sharing so much of her knowledge of East Peckham with me, for giving me access to unpublished documents, and arranging for me to visit many of the houses in the parish.

[141] Hasted, *History of Kent*, V, p. 92.

[142] Zell, *Industry in the Countryside.*

seventeenth centuries, and two new fulling mills were recorded in 1624.[143] The Medway runs through Stockenbury borough at the southern end of the parish, crossed by Brandt bridge which linked parts of the Weald to the north of the county. There is no large settlement, although many of the houses are grouped in small hamlets. For taxation purposes the parish was divided into three boroughs, with Upper and Lone boroughs to the north in Littlefield hundred, and the larger Stockenbury borough to the south in Twyford hundred.

In 1664 the two northern boroughs had twenty-nine names between them, charged on a varying number of hearths. The church, vicarage and parsonage lay in Upper borough, as did *Roydon Hall*, home of Sir Roger Twysden, baronet, who has already figured as a J.P. administering the hearth tax: he was charged on thirty hearths. Thomas Whetnall Esq. was charged on thirteen hearths at *Hextall Court*, now *Peckham Place*. One gentleman, and the parsonage, occupied by Thomas Summers, both had six hearths, while ten other people were charged on three or four. Only fifteen had one or two hearths, six of whom were exempt. In contrast, in the southern borough of Stockenbury, where 105 names are listed, seventy had one hearth, thirty-three had two, leaving only one person charged on three. Forty-three, mostly single-hearth dwellings, were exempted. Given these striking figures, one might expect few of the Stockenbury houses to have survived. Yet this is not the case. In the whole parish, nineteen medieval houses survive in whole or in part, and forty-two houses in all would appear to date to the seventeenth century or earlier, the majority lying in Stockenbury.[144] Forty-three probate inventories for the period 1664 to 1700 have been identified for the parish, twenty-two of which can be connected with people listed in the hearth tax; several of them can also be linked to surviving houses.

Two seventeenth-century or earlier houses have been identified in the small borough of Lone (eight households in 1664), and in Upper borough nine of the twenty-one houses survive. *Roydon Hall* has a sixteenth and seventeenth-century core, and evidence for several of the eight three- and four-hearth houses remains. The rectory and its six hearths no longer survives, but when Thomas Somers [*sic*] died in 1675 he had a house of twelve rooms, and an inventory total of £325 8*s*.[145] In 1664, *Court Lodge*, a large medieval wealden house, was lived in by John Parkinson, charged on three hearths,[146] and *Forge Gate Farmhouse*, with a large medieval hall and cross wing, probably also had three or four hearths, although demolition of part of the building means that only one survives today. *Paris Farm* has a handsome wing, its parlour fireplace dated 1598, with a heated chamber

[143] CKS: U838 T303.

[144] Thirty-two houses have been examined in detail, either for this publication or by the RCHME in 1989 (Pearson et al., *Gazetteer*), nine more seventeenth-century or earlier houses are included in the DoE List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.

[145] CKS: PRS 1/19/104.

[146] In 1679, Thomas Whetnall of Hextall sold *Court Lodge*, 'late in the occupation of John Parkinson', CKS: U48 E6.

above, and a similarly heated hall range dated 1699, which is almost certainly the rebuilding of a medieval hall. The house was owned by the Barton family, but was probably leased in 1664.[147]

Two surviving houses in Upper borough which are likely only to have had single hearths in 1664 are *Little Moat*, a large fourteenth-century base-cruck hall, formerly an important dwelling which had probably descended the social scale by the seventeenth century; and *Forge Gate Cottage*, a sturdy two-bay, two-storey dwelling of the late sixteenth century, probably built with four rooms, although an outshut was soon added, and heated by a timber chimney which was only replaced by a brick stack with two fireplaces around 1700. James Hunt, a blacksmith, who was charged on a single hearth, died in 1667.[148] He had a house with three rooms on the ground floor, two chambers, and a shop which was clearly a smithy. His inventory totalled £49, plus £13 in bonds and £42 in debts owing to him. It would be nice to think he lived at *Forge Gate Cottage*, but this cannot be proven. Arthur Cheeseman also lived in a house charged on a single hearth, and when he died in 1669 his goods, valued at £13 6*s*., were listed in a hall, milk house, buttery and backside, and a single chamber.[149] Both his house and his wealth suggest someone much poorer than Hunt.

In terms of the number of hearths, Stockenbury borough had none of the variety found in Upper borough. Only one house, possibly identified as *Little Mill*, had as many as three hearths. The rest had one or two. Despite this, not all the surviving houses are small. *Beltring Green Farmhouse* is large by any standard, with a finely detailed medieval hall of 50 sq.m., formerly with two projecting cross wings at either end. Other sizeable medieval houses were *Pinkham* (demolished in the 1970s) and *Hale Street Farmhouse*. Not only were several of the earlier houses large, but some of their seventeenth-century inhabitants were wealthy yeomen farmers. John Stanford of *Beltring Green Farmhouse* was charged on two hearths. We know little about him, but he had two brothers, Henry and Richard, who also lived in the borough and were each charged on two hearths. When Henry died in 1673 his goods were valued at £548, mostly tied up in cattle and corn, and his house contained eleven rooms. When Richard died in 1699 his inventory totalled £241, and he lived in a house of ten rooms.[150] Five other wealthy yeomen farmers were charged on two hearths, but had inventories valued between £136 and £333, and between six and thirteen rooms in their houses.[151] Although one or two less wealthy individuals can also be linked to two-hearth houses, it appears that at the upper end of the scale there was little, except the small number of their hearths, to distinguish the farmers of

[147] CKS: U119 T13 1593-1746.
[148] CKS: PRS I/8/121.
[149] CKS: PRS I/3/34.
[150] CKS: PRS I/19/116; PRS I/19/117.
[151] John Barnes died in 1677 with an inventory valued at £136 and six rooms in his house (CKS: PRS I/2/39), Thomas Bishop (d. 1687, £250, 10 rooms, PRS I/2/98), John Cheesman (d. 1678, £254, 10 rooms, PRS I/3/36), John Keble (d. 1686, £333, 13 rooms, PRS I/11/3), and John Stone (d. 1695, £298, 8 rooms, PRS I/19/14.

Stockenbury from those of Charing, or the northern boroughs of East Peckham itself.

Not all the houses in Stockenbury were as large as these, and not all the inhabitants as wealthy. In the Middle Ages, East Peckham was notable for the small size of its houses, and many of the smallest lay in Stockenbury. It can be shown that the size of medieval halls is normally in proportion to the size of the rest of the house, so that comparisons of house sizes can be made across the county, using hall sizes as a guide. In some parishes in the Low and High Weald, such as Staplehurst and Benenden, the median size of open halls is over 40 sq.m. In the rural part of Charing parish, the median size is 38 sq.m., but in Stockenbury, despite the survival of a handful of larger houses, the median size of medieval open halls is only 27 sq.m.[152] Smallest of all are *23 Smithers Lane* with a hall of 17 sq.m., and *Bullen Cottage*, in which the hall is only 15 sq.m. After the Middle Ages, small houses, consisting of a hall and two little rooms on the ground floor and two chambers above, continued to be built in the borough. *Hale Street Cottage* is a sixteenth-century smoke-bay house of this kind.

What sort of people lived in these smaller houses? Only a few of those charged on single hearths in 1664 can be identified in other documents, and not all of their houses were small. Richard Hatch, who lived at *Old Well House*, a surviving medieval building which had a smoke bay built in the hall in the sixteenth century, had nine rooms and goods valued at £179 when he died in 1671. Thomas Cheeseman, who was a husbandman, had seven rooms and goods totalling £77 in 1673.[153] However, two men who left probate inventories lived in smaller houses and were exempted from payment. When John Webb, miller, died in 1671 his inventory was valued at £20 12s. and his house had five rooms, with a heated hall and a furnace in the brewhouse, plus old and little butteries, a hall chamber and a men's chamber. [154] John Day, husbandman, whose goods were only valued at £14 when he died in 1675, seems to have had a house of four rooms: a heated hall, a drink buttery, a further chamber and a chamber on the stairs. The most obvious room lacking from both inventories is a parlour.

Although not identifiable in probate records, Stephen Cheeseman, who was also exempted from payment on a single hearth in 1664, can almost certainly be associated with a surviving house: *23 Smithers Lane* (Plate IIIB). He appears, from the evidence of deeds, to have leased this from Thomas Whetnall Esq. of *Hextall Court* in Upper borough.[155] The original building of *c.*1500 had a tiny hall of 17 sq.m., with two small service rooms at one end and a parlour at the other, both with chambers over, but with upstairs partitions which did not go right up to the apex of the roof,

[152] Pearson, *Medieval Houses*, pp. 123-4 and Fig. 139.
[153] Richard Hatch, CKS: PRS I/8/37; Thomas Cheeseman, PRS I/3/35.
[154] William Pattenden, CKS: PRS I/16/21; John Day, PRS I/4/21; John Webb, PRS I/23/29.
[155] A few years ago, a receipt for rent in 1784 was found within the house. It was possible to relate this to private deeds which took the ownership and occupation of the house back to 1691, when it was 'now or late in the occupation of Stephen Cheeseman'. The deeds have been transcribed by Margaret Lawrence.

allowing the smoke from the open hearth to drift across to either end.[156] In the sixteenth century, a timber chimney to heat the hall was constructed within the parlour, reducing that room to little more than a closet. The house was still heated by its timber stack in 1664, the present brick stack probably not replacing the timber one until the early eighteenth century. In the late seventeenth century the house had six or seven rooms, and although not large was extremely well built, so Cheeseman's poverty must have resided in his circumstances, not the quality of his dwelling. Thus it seems that some of the people who had single-hearth houses, sometimes even being exempted from the tax, may have lived in sturdy, but plain and small, medieval or sixteenth-century houses with two to four rooms downstairs and two or three chambers above. In these buildings the single fireplace was probably still set within a timber chimney, which survived into the eighteenth century, if not longer.

Some of the earlier houses in East Peckham were originally very low in height. *Little Mill*, possibly owned by John Butler who was charged on three hearths in 1664, has fragments remaining of a very low medieval building which was either wholly open to the roof or had no more than lofts above the rooms at the ends of the open hall; it was heightened and enlarged around 1600.[157] The earliest part of *123 Snoll Hatch Road*, possibly lived in by John Keble, was an equally low house, built in the first half of the sixteenth century with a loft over the ground floor, its hall probably heated by a timber stack; in the early seventeenth century a new parlour wing with a brick fireplace was added, and then around 1700 the old range was heightened. These houses may be the tip of an iceberg, with other low houses remaining in use in the late seventeenth century. When such houses came to be heightened or rebuilt, their timber chimneys were replaced by brick ones.

Change and upgrading in East Peckham took a long time, and was still taking place at the very end of the century. Thomas Bishop was charged on two hearths in 1664, but the hearth furniture for three fireplaces and a kitchen furnace were listed in his inventory of 1687; Henry and Richard Stanford were also charged on two hearths each, but their probate inventories indicate that by the time they died, in 1673 and 1699, their houses were both heated by four fireplaces. *Old Well House* in Hale Street, is a medieval house of medium size which had a smoke bay created within the hall during the sixteenth century. In 1660 a twenty-one year lease on the house and forty-three acres was granted to Richard Hatch, and in 1664 he was charged on one hearth.[158] His inventory of 1671, as discussed above, still only has evidence for a single hearth in the hall, plus a furnace in the

[156] In Pearson et al., *Gazetteer*, p. 50, the house was interpreted as having a two-bay hall, its parlour end having been demolished. But recent investigation indicates that it actually had a single-bay open hall between two end bays of two storeys each, as described above.

[157] The Butler family certainly had the mill and adjacent property in the immediate vicinity, CKS: U55 T314.

[158] CKS: U48/T1.

kitchen. Yet analysis of the building shows that by 1700 at the latest the smoke bay had been superseded by a double brick stack with four fireplaces.[159] *Brook Farmhouse*, owned by the Marten family, had two hearths in 1664, but the present house has four fireplaces in a brick stack which is also unlikely to date from later than 1700. Thus it looks as if many of the smoke bays and timber chimneys of the older houses in the borough were being replaced just after the time of the 1664 tax. John Butler's house, which may be *Little Mill*, had already received new fireplaces, but in other buildings the brick stacks were inserted a few years later. The earlier houses had not reached the end of their useful lives, for many of them survive today, but by the late seventeenth century they were in need of considerable updating.

Probate inventory evidence substantiates the suggestion that the wealth of testators and size of buildings in East Peckham may have been less than in Charing. Whereas the median wealth of testators in Charing was £78, and the average number of rooms in inventories (34 examples) was 4.9 on the ground floor and 3.3 above, the median wealth of the forty-three East Peckham inventories was £54, and the average number of rooms (31 examples) was 4.9 on the ground floor and 2.9 above. In other words, testators of East Peckham tended to be poorer, their houses on average having the same number of ground-floor rooms, but fewer chambers upstairs. Stockenbury borough, with its high number of single-hearth and exempt households, is virtually unique in this part of Kent. Twyford and Littlefield hundreds, in which East Peckham lies, have higher proportions of single-hearth housholds (51 and 55 per cent) than the 33 per cent for Aylesford lathe as a whole. But in Stockenbury borough, as many as 62 per cent had only one hearth. The 134 households in the parish in 1664 is equivalent to thirty-nine houses per 1000 acres, indicating that, despite having no nucleated settlement, houses were more densely distributed than in Charing parish. This suggests that there may have been an unusually large number of small farmers, whether called yeomen or husbandmen, who were rather different from the large-scale yeoman farmers predominating in Charing and probably in many other parishes in the centre of the county. Work on deeds reveals an extremely active land market, with a lot of property owned by people living outside the parish, often Londoners.[160] Whether this was common throughout Kent, or was unusually prevalent in East Peckham, and what effect it might have had on the housing stock, is not at present clear.

Goodnestone-next-Wingham

The small parish of Goodnestone-next-Wingham covers 1865 acres in the Downs of east Kent. It lies within the hundred of Wingham in the lathe of St Augustine. In the Middle Ages most of the parish formed part of the

[159] Barnwell and Adams, *House Within*, pp. 142-3.

[160] For example, Addlestead in Stockenbury was sold by a man from Hammersmith to John Cheeseman in 1659 (CKS: U47/17 T53) and Pierce Mill, formerly within the parish although now in Hadlow, was sold by several London owners in 1672 (CKS: U36 T 1832).

archbishop of Canterbury's manor of Wingham. This comprised the large parish of Ash, with fertile arable land and marsh on the levels to the north, Wingham itself, with its sizeable nucleated settlement, and three smaller southern parishes on the rolling downland where the soil, although inclined to chalk, was good and there was also extensive woodland.[161] Most of the demesne land of the manor lay around the village of Wingham and in Ash. In Goodnestone, as in other downland parishes, several resident minor gentry families became the major landowners as the archbishop's estate broke up. Much of the land in this part of Kent remained open and unenclosed as late as the late eighteenth century, although the occupiers' scattered parcels were not subject to communal regulations as in the Midlands. Throughout the area arable farming was of primary importance, although all farms had livestock as well, the larger ones with grazing for cattle on the marshes north of Ash.

In 1664 the hearth tax lists sixty households in the parish, distributed between the boroughs of Goodnestone and Rowling, plus at least five in the borough of Twittham.[162] In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the main gentry families were the Enghams of Goodnestone, who moved into the district in the early sixteenth century from Woodchurch on the edge of Romney Marsh, and the Boys of Bonnington, the senior but minor branch of a well-known family in the county. A third estate, Rolling or Rowling, was partly owned by the hospitals of St John Northgate, Canterbury and St Nicholas, Harbledown, and was leased to various gentry and yeomen families. In the seventeenth century *Rowling Court* was held by the Richards, an aspiring yeoman family which achieved gentry status during the seventeenth century. In 1664 Sir Thomas Engham at *Goodnestone Court* had twenty hearths and Sir John Boys of Bonnington and Gabriel Richards, gent. of Rowling, both had ten. Below them, two people had five and six hearths, leaving seventeen with three or four hearths, thirteen with two, and thirty with one. Twenty people, or 31 per cent, were exempted from payment. Thus there were proportionally greater numbers of exemptions and households with single hearths than in Charing, but fewer of both than in East Peckham (see Table 4).

As will be discussed below, the hearth tax figures do not suggest that Goodnestone is necessarily typical of east Kent. The reason for choosing this particular parish for detailed study is its unique return for the Compton Census in 1676. The Census, compiled by the local clergy, was intended to list all communicants, recusants and dissenters in each parish in

[161] The following brief resumé of the history of Goodnestone is largely taken from Jane Andrewes, 'Land, Family and Community in Wingham and its Environs. An Economic and Social History of Rural Society in East Kent from *c.*1450 - 1640', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Kent, 1991. I am grateful to her for allowing me to read and use her work.

[162] A small part of Twittham borough lay within the parish and five names listed in 1664 are identifiable in the 1676 Compton Census. The modern civil parish of Goodnestone also includes Chillenden, but in the seventeenth century this was a separate ecclesiastical parish and borough, lying in Eastry hundred, so it has been excluded from this discussion.

England. In most cases the returns are little more than lists of numbers.[163] But a few clerics put down more, and the return for Goodnestone is one of the most detailed in the country.[164] Everyone in the parish is entered by name, in families, together with the station and occupation of the head of the household. Thus married couples are followed by their children in order of birth, and servants if there were any. The list is divided into gentry, yeomen, tradesmen, labourers and poormen. Although this list was compiled twelve years after the 1664 hearth tax, a number of names occur in both sources, and when used in conjunction with probate documents and other contemporary records, something can be inferred about the people who had particular numbers of hearths in 1664. In addition, the buildings of the parish have been briefly surveyed to give some idea about the houses themselves. In 1676 the Census lists 281 inhabitants in sixty-two households, plus four hospitallers, who lived in almshouses. Twenty-nine of the sixty-two households are almost certainly identifiable in the hearth tax, so we have information concerning just under a half of those named in 1664.

At the upper end of the social scale, all three gentlemen listed in 1664 had died or left the area, and the families of Sir Thomas Engham and Sir John Boys do not occur in the Census. The Engham's house may have been tenanted by Edward Hales Esq., who is listed with his wife, six children and fifteen servants at the head of the Census.[165] Only the last two children were baptised in the parish, in 1674 and 1675, which suggests that the Hales had only recently arrived.[166] Sir John Boys of Bonnington had died in 1664, leaving his property to three daughters, who had sold it by 1676.[167] Gabriel Richards of Rowling had died in 1672, but *Rowling Court* was occupied by Mrs Elizabeth Richards, her niece and one servant.

Twenty-seven yeomen families were listed in 1676, of whom fifteen are identifiable in the 1664 hearth tax. Laurence Neame is perhaps the son of Margaret Neame who had five hearths in 1664; he lived with his wife, two small children and eight servants, which implies that he was a farmer of substance. Six other yeomen, four of them with servants, lived in houses

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[163] For the Compton Census see *The Compton Census of 1676: a Critical Edition,* ed. by Anne Whiteman, British Academy, Records of Social and Economic History, NS 10 (Oxford, 1986). The Census for Kent has also been published by C. W. Chalklin, 'The Compton Census of 1676 - the dioceses of Canterbury and Rochester', in *A Seventeenth Century Miscellany*, Kent Records, 17 (1960), pp.153-74, and M. J. Dobson, 'Original Compton Census Returns – The Shoreham Deanery', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 94 (1978), 61-73.

[164] The complete return for Goodnestone is reproduced in Whiteman, *Compton Census*, pp. 636-44, and discussed by Peter Laslett in *The World We Have Lost* (London, 1965), pp. 64-76.

[165] Laslett, *World We Have Lost*, p. 65, says that Hales rented from the Penningtons, but this is because he confused Goodnestone-next-Wingham with the north coast parish of Goodnestone-next-Faversham.

[166] Goodnestone Parish Registers, transcribed by Kenneth V. Elphinstone, 1933. I am grateful to Frances Smith for lending me a copy of the baptismal register, which indicates how very young many of the children named in the Census were.

[167] Goodnestone was alienated to Brook Bridges Esq., who rebuilt the house and died in 1717. Hasted thought this took place in the reign of Queen Anne (*History of Kent*, IX, pp. 242-3). Whenever it happened, it is clear that by 1676 the Enghams were no longer living in the parish. Boys died in 1664 leaving three daughters who sold the estate in 1666 to Thomas Brome Esq., whose son William, of Farnborough, sold it to Brook Bridges in 1710 (Hasted, *History of Kent*, IX, pp. 245-7).

with three or four hearths. Probate inventories of the very late seventeenth century include four for yeomen, with goods valued between £250 and £450, living in houses of eight or nine rooms, three of them including servants' chambers. Among them was Thomas Wanstall, who died in 1701. It appears that he was too young to be included in either the hearth tax or the Census, but three Wanstalls with three and four hearths clearly belonged to the village elite in 1664. Only Edward, who died in 1680, has left an inventory which survives. In 1676 he lived with his wife, four grown children and two servants in a three-hearth house, and his inventory shows that he had at least eight rooms.[168] Somewhat less well-off yeomen included David Court, also charged on three hearths, who died in February 1674/5 leaving a widow with four young children and a servant; his inventory totalled £57, and his goods were only listed in three rooms, although he must have had more in his three-hearth house - an indication of how unreliable inventory evidence may sometimes be. Five more yeomen had two hearths, among them Stephen Church who lived in Twittham borough with a wife, six under-age children, and two servants. When he died in December 1692 only four rooms were listed, although there appear to have been fireplaces in both the hall and chamber above; however, lack of service rooms in this inventory may again mean that some rooms were left out. His inventory was valued at £46.[169] Three yeomen had only a single hearth. William Pain and his wife lived with their grown-up son, and when William died in July 1689 six rooms were listed in the house, only one of these definitely being upstairs, over the heated hall. Despite this, his inventory totalled £106, of which £64 was in thirty-three acres of wheat and barley.[170] The less wealthy in this group are likely to include husbandmen, for which there is no separate category.[171]

Goodnestone is now little more than a hamlet. It was never large, overshadowed by its much larger neighbour, Wingham, only two miles away. Nonetheless, nine tradesmen were listed in 1676, and seven of these can be identified in 1664. They were a butcher, a weaver, a shoemaker, a carpenter, a grocer, a brickmaker and a 'kempster', all with only a single hearth in their houses. The butcher, John Manvell or Menvile, had a young family and a servant, and was charged on one hearth; he was the only tradesman in the parish to have a servant. The weaver, Christopher Clarke, was also charged on a single hearth. The other five were exempted from paying. James Dixon, the shoemaker, had two children who were old enough to take communion, but Richard Saffrey or Safry, the carpenter, William Selden the brickmaker and Henry Webster, the 'kempster', had under-age offspring. Margaret Tucker, widow, was a grocer and lived alone. She is the only tradesman in the parish for whom there is an inventory, made in October 1679. Three rooms were listed: a hall, chamber over the

[168] Unfortunately the inventory is not complete and has no total. CKS: PRC 27/28/251.
[169] CKS: PRC 27/33/22.
[170] CKS: PRC 27/31/259.
[171] Laslett, *World We Have Lost*, p. 65.

hall, and a shop, and her goods were valued at £16, those in the shop amounting to £1.[172] Thus the general impression is one of rural tradesmen barely able to scrape a living.[173]

The final group for which correlations can be made between the hearth tax and the Compton Census are the labourers. In 1676 there were twelve labourers in the parish. Five of them can be identified twelve years earlier. Symon Tucker was charged on a single hearth, while John Hart, William Gray, Thomas Cox and Thomas Holmes were exempted. It is easy to see them as men at, or near, the bottom of the social scale. But one could be mistaken. One of the labourers listed in 1676 is John Nash, married to Aphrey. A John Nash was exempted from paying the hearth tax in Rowling in 1664, and it is possible that this was his father.[174] Research into the Nash family of Goodnestone indicates intriguing twists to this family's fortunes. In the early seventeenth century the Nashes owned a farm of fifty-sixty acres in Rowling. By the later seventeenth century the property had passed by marriage to a Canterbury family, although it is possible that members of the Nash family continued to farm it as tenants. The John Nash who was not charged for his single hearth in 1664 is likely to have been one of this family. A second John Nash, possibly his son, married Aphrey Court in 1675 and was certainly the 'labourer' listed in 1676. His descendants apparently became relatively prosperous maltsters in Goodnestone in the eighteenth century.[175] Although a link with the hearth tax is not certain, it is clear that both earlier and later members of the family were reasonably well-off, while in the third quarter of the seventeenth century the only two known representatives in the parish were exempted from paying tax and classed as labourers. In 1676 most of those classed as labourers either had no children, or only very young ones, giving the impression that being a labourer may sometimes have been a stage in a man's life rather than the status he would retain for ever. Likewise, it is possible that a decade earlier those who were exempted from paying the hearth tax were not always poor, but were either beginning or ending lives which were more prosperous at other times.[176]

None of those classified as 'poormen' in 1676 can be identified in the 1664 hearth tax. There were twelve families in this category, ten of which were headed by women, at least two of whom appear to have been newly widowed with young children born in the previous few years. At the end of the list are four hospitallers who lived in almshouses endowed in

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[172] CKS: PRC 27/28/107.

[173] The occupations of the exempt, including many labourers, are in line with those identified in Warwickshire, see Arkell 'Incidence of poverty', p. 37 and Table 7.

[174] David Nash Mills, *The Nash Families in Goodnestone-next-Wingham*, Faversham Papers, 55 (1997). The family also owned property in the next parish of Woodnesborough, and a John Nash is charged on a single hearth there in 1664, suggesting either that the same John was responsible for two houses, or that the family tree was somewhat more complex than Mills suggests.

[175] Mills, *Nash Families,* pp. 45-9.

[176] The possibility of social mobility and the varying stages of the life-cycle in Goodnestone is discussed by Laslett, *World We Have Lost*, pp. 66-7, and in general by Husbands, 'Hearth, wealth and occupations', in *Surveying the People*, pp. 74-5.

1672. As discussed below, the almshouses may have been there in 1664, and if so, this is another instance of hidden almshouses in the 1664 tax. The surnames of seven of the 'poormen', and all of the hospitallers are new to the parish in 1676, not occurring in 1664. This suggests that at the lower levels of society the population may have been extremely mobile, as those writing about the poor in Kent have noted.[177]

What kind of houses did the people of Goodnestone inhabit in the late seventeenth century? Unfortunately, we know little about the twenty-hearth house of the Enghams. The estate was bought by Brook Bridges Esq. in the early eighteenth century, and he rebuilt the house, leaving no trace of the previous one. When an earlier Sir Thomas Engham died in December 1620 his inventory listed goods in twenty rooms.[178] It is not a particularly full inventory and the only certainly heated room was the kitchen, although the house must have had a number of fireplaces. In the grounds of the present *Goodnestone Park* lies the so-called *Dower House*, illustrated in an engraving of 1719 alongside Brook Bridges' new mansion.[179] This is a late fifteenth-century wealden house, with an open hall between two-storeyed ends, all set under a single roof. The engraving shows three chimney stacks: a single one over the hall, a double one at the parlour end, and another in a rear extension. In the house itself only the hall fireplace remains from before 1664. While the house had four or five fireplaces, it clearly never had twenty, and cannot be the Engham's seventeenth-century mansion. In 1664 it is likely that it was inhabited by one of the seven yeoman farming families who had four or five hearths in Goodnestone borough.

When John Boys Esq. of Bonnington died in 1618 his inventory listed nineteen rooms,[180] and in 1664 Sir John Boys was charged on ten hearths. The mansion house they lived in is now no more than a building platform in a field, in front of which lies a large medieval open-hall house and, a few feet away, a curious narrow range of early sixteenth-century date, jettied on both long sides and originally unheated. By the 1660s the medieval house seems to have had four fireplaces, but the jettied range was still not domestic.[181] Both buildings now face south-east, but formerly faced north-west towards the drive to the mansion house behind. Thus the present *Bonnington Farmhouse* may, like the *Dower House* at *Goodnestone Park*, have been the home farm, inhabited in 1664 by one of the yeoman families, while the jettied range was probably a non-domestic estate building, only later turned into cottages. The third gentry house, *Rowling Court*, was occupied by the Richards family who had ten hearths in 1664. It survives, at least in part. It is a complex house, built of brick in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and seven or eight of the early fireplaces can still be

[177] Clark, 'Migration', pp. 57-90; Dobson, *Contours of Death,* p. 65.
[178] CKS: PRC 28/8/80
[179] J. Harris, *The History of Kent*, I (London, 1719), p. 132.
[180] John Boys Esq., October 1618, CKS: PRC 28/9/80
[181] The farmhouse had two more fireplaces, in an angled stack, added by the end of the century, and the jettied range had and end stack and a Dutch gable added at about the same time.

identified. Elizabeth Richards, who occurs in the Census of 1676, died in 1678, and her probate inventory refers to ten rooms in the house, although it does not list all the service rooms that are likely to have existed.[182] She had two parlours and a painted chamber with no evidence of hearth furniture; but there were fireplaces in the hall, kitchen, best chamber and the chamber where she died. As so often, fewer hearths appear in the inventory than were charged in 1664.

Not many other early houses survive in the parish. There may be early remains at *Uffington Court*, an estate once owned by the Boys family,[183] and probably leased to one of the yeoman farmers. Otherwise the only other early timber-framed buildings appear to be *Rowling House*, and the *Old Post Office* in the village centre. The latter is the medieval wing of a once larger building, the open hall of which has been demolished. The hall had probably gone by 1664, the wing becoming a house in its own right, heated by four fireplaces in a back-to-back stack. The number of hearths indicates that this was again the home of a wealthy yeoman family. *Rowling House* is probably sixteenth-century in date; it was heated by a stack with two flues serving the hall and chamber above. The rest of the house has been rebuilt, but as no house in Rowling borough other than *Rowling Court* had more than three hearths, there can only have been one other at the most, and it was probably one of the three three-hearth houses which can be correlated with yeoman families in 1676.

All the other houses are built of brick. Only *Hop View* at Sadler's Hill, *Little Twitham Farm Cottage*, and the almshouses are likely to precede 1664. Both the former are of one-storey, with attics set partly in the roof. *Hop View* has three ground-floor rooms, with back-to-back fireplaces heating two of them. In 1717 this was part of the property purchased by John Nash (thought to be the son of John, the labourer of 1676). Nash called himself a yeoman when he married in 1712, and later, while living here, he became a prosperous maltster.[184] *Little Twitham Farm Cottage* has only two rooms per floor, with fireplaces heating the hall and attic chamber above. Despite its small size the house has a decorative Dutch gable at the fireplace end and elaborate brick pilasters along the front, while an early barn indicates that it was an independent farm. It could have been the four-room, two-hearth dwelling of Stephen Church, yeoman, who died in 1692. The brick almshouses for four people, with two rooms down and two up, heated by four fireplaces in two projecting stacks and embellished with another fancy gable end, was endowed by Gabriel Richards when he died in 1672, ie. later than the hearth tax (Plate IVA). However, as Newman points out, the decorative brickwork is not far removed from that at *Broome Park*, Barham, of 1635-8 (Plate IA), and the monument to Richards in the church suggests the almshouses may already have been in existence when he

[182] CKS: PRC 27/27/145.
[183] Andrewes, 'Land, Family and Community', p. 80.
[184] Mills, *Nash Families*, pp. 39-47.

died.[185] Apart from these last, no surviving early houses in the parish are incontrovertibly in the single-hearth category so, unlike Charing and East Peckham, we do not have direct evidence of what houses with single hearths were like.

In both Charing and East Peckham approximately 30 per cent of the houses implied by the figures in the 1664 tax returns survive today. In Goodnestone, where only nine houses have been identified as having earlier remains, the proportion of survivors is only 14 per cent. That Goodnestone is not unique is suggested by the fact that pre-1664 houses are just as rare in the large parish of Ash on the levels to the north, where about six medieval buildings and seven or eight later ones form only 13 per cent of the dwellings required by the households listed in 1664.[186] In all parishes in east Kent most of the early houses are sizeable, and only a few smaller ones survive. In Nonington, further into the Downs to the south of Goodnestone, *Southdown Cottage* is a rare medieval example with a tiny open hall and two end bays, one open to the roof, one with a loft over it. Other small houses remain in Wingham, including *113 High Street*, a low house of one storey and attic, with only two rooms on each floor and a single fireplace in the hall (Plate IVB).[187] Despite its apparent meanness, the initials and date TB 1667 are proudly inscribed in the dormers, indicating that as late as this the owner clearly thought his dwelling was worth drawing to people's attention. Throughout east Kent, and in contrast to the centre of the county, the general scarcity of pre-1664 houses and the reasonable size and quality of most which remain make it likely that they were of relatively high status, occupied by yeomen in the late seventeenth century. The few surviving smaller houses with single hearths may have been the homes of husbandmen, but for this we have no positive evidence.

After 1664, in the very late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, rebuilding in east Kent took place on a scale unknown elsewhere in the rural parts of the county. In Goodnestone itself, several small, low brick houses were erected, perhaps under the improving eye of the new landlord, Brook Bridges.[188] In the large parish of Ash at least thirty-six brick houses, both in the village and on the surrounding farms, were built between 1670 and 1730. Some are as small as the Goodnestone houses, others have two full storeys, sometimes with attics above, providing seven or eight rooms, heated by three or four fireplaces, set either in a large central stack, or in end stacks, the gables often being decorated in the fashionable 'Dutch gable' style. Similar brick farmhouses can be found elsewhere on the

[185] Newman, *North East and East Kent*, pp. 335-6.

[186] Pearson, *Medieval Houses,* and *Gazetteer*, and DoE List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest

[187] David Eaves, 'Wingham: Its Vernacular Buildings pre 1700', unpublished Diploma thesis in Local History, University of Kent, 1982, believes this to be a medieval building updated, but the timbers look very late, and it may be a late seventeenth-century dwelling replacing a medieval house on the same site.

[188] Three formerly low dwellings in the centre of the village have ground-floor beams and fireplaces of *c.* 1700, the upper parts having been rebuilt again in the nineteenth century. In one the outline of a low roof in one gable wall indicates that in *c.*1700 this house had only a ground floor and low attic above.

levels, in parishes such as Ickham, Sarre and Worth.

The surviving houses, both in the Downs and on the levels, suggest that on the whole only the homes of the well-to-do survive from 1664 or earlier, and that there was a massive rebuilding of smaller and poorer dwellings in the years that followed. But one must be careful not to generalise too much, for the documents show that standards of living were not uniform throughout the region. The distinction between rich and poor in the Goodnestone hearth tax, where 46 per cent had single hearths and three houses, forming 5 per cent of the total, had ten or more hearths, is even more apparent in the neighbouring parish of Nonington. There 77 per cent of households had single hearths and 60 per cent were exempt, while two houses, again forming 5 per cent, had ten or more hearths, leaving even fewer households in the middle bracket.[189] In contrast, in Ash, there was far less polarisation, for although 49 per cent had single hearths, no-one had more than seven, so a far higher proportion of the population fell into the middle bracket.[190]

A general correlation between numbers of hearths and personal wealth has been remarked on in other parts of England,[191] and can be seen in Kent as well. Although the differences are not as marked as one might expect, the few inventories that relate to Goodnestone also give the impression that in the Downs of east Kent testators may have been proportionally poorer than testators in the centre of the county and those who lived on the larger farms on the lower land to the north. In Charing the median wealth of testators was £78, in East Peckham, £54, but in Goodnestone it was only £45 (16 inventories). Figures for Ash and Nonington help to put this in perspective: in Ash, on the flat, the median for fifty-five inventories between 1665 and 1685 was £117, but in Nonington, up in the Downs, fourteen inventories produced a median figure of only £25. Thus although we know there were a number of wealthy yeomen living in sizeable houses in the Downs, the inventories suggest that even people prosperous enough to have inventories were in general somewhat poorer than those who lived on the levels in east Kent or elsewhere in the county. In Goodnestone, the homes of those too poor to make wills cannot be identified in documents, and do not survive today.

Generalisations are treacherous from such small numbers, but all the forms of evidence combine to suggest that society in the Downs, whose healthier climate attracted many of the gentry, was polarised between the rich and poor. At the top were the gentry living in large houses, below them a small band of relatively prosperous farmers, and below them sizeable numbers of very much poorer folk. This polarisation had been a feature of

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[189] Boroughs of Nonington and Easole, both in Eastry hundred. Hasted, *History of Kent*, IX, p. 251, places Nonington in Wingham hundred, but in the 1664 hearth tax it is difficult to see which borough in Wingham hundred could include householders from this parish.

[190] Boroughs of Chilton and Overland in Wingham hundred.

[191] H. M. Spufford, 'The significance of the Cambridgshire hearth tax' *Proceedings Cambridgeshire Antiquarian Society*, LV (1962), 53-64, esp. table 6.

east Kent in the Middle Ages,[192] and is perhaps characteristic of corn-growing areas, where large arable farms required a labour force, either living-in as servants, or dwelling separately in houses too small and poor to have survived. However, on the levels, over which most of the gentry estates extended, those below gentry level, many of whom were tenants of the gentry, could more easily make a living. By the time of the hearth tax some already lived in substantial houses with between five and nine hearths, but many more must have been on the verge of replacing their old ill-heated medieval dwellings with up-to-date brick ones.

As discussed above, the hearth tax evidence suggests that houses in Goodnestone were rather better heated than some in east Kent, and the number of people exempted is lower than elsewhere. In fact, from the Exchequer's point of view, Goodnestone did not compare unfavourably with Charing, for on average there were 2.5 hearths per household in Goodnestone, and only 2.3 hearths in Charing, a situation caused by the higher proportion of large houses and the relatively small number of two-hearth households in relation to the total. East Peckham, with its small farms, and unusually high number of single-hearth households and exemptions, had only 1.8 hearths per household, producing far less revenue than either of the others. Nonetheless, whatever the yield to the Exchequer, both the physical and documentary evidence suggests a very real disparity in wealth and housing standards between east Kent and regions further west.

Town Houses

Towns and their houses varied considerably, but for purposes of analysing the hearth tax they fall into two categories: towns which were growing rapidly in the later seventeenth century, in which most of the houses were new; and medieval towns which had a substantial quota of old buildings. In 1664 all the old centres: Canterbury, Rochester, the Cinque Ports, and the inland towns, contained large numbers of early houses, but a handful of them appear to have been more prosperous than the rest. Canterbury, Rochester and Maidstone were still flourishing. Each was strategically placed to serve a wide area of Kent; the first two were cathedral cities, Canterbury was the largest urban conglomeration in the county and the centre of east Kent, and Maidstone was the assize town for the west.[193] All had a fair number of gentry and professional residents requiring suitable accommodation. The result was that just over 20 per cent of the houses in Maidstone and Rochester had five or more hearths, and under 60 per cent had only one or two (Table 1). Unfortunately, we cannot accurately calculate the figures for Canterbury City, but the suburban parishes of St Dunstan's and Longport have very similar profiles.[194] The Cinque Ports and the

[192] Pearson, *Medieval Houses*, p. 137.

[193] For a general discussion of towns in the seventeenth century see Chalklin, 'The towns', in Armstrong, *Economy of Kent*, pp. 205-13.

[194] See Appendices IV and V for Canterbury. Within the city as a whole, including the urban areas of Westgate hundred listed in Appendix V, 29% of those charged (the exempt in Westgate have been left

smaller inland towns also retained much of their medieval fabric; but for a variety of reasons most of them were no longer prospering. In 1664 we have almost no information for the Cinque Ports, but the inland towns had few large dwellings, in most cases only 7-13 per cent of houses having five or more hearths, and well over 60 per cent having one or two. In all these towns a few new houses were built in the later seventeenth century, but the timber-framed and jettied buildings which distinguish them are largely of the early seventeenth century and earlier. Where money was no object, such houses could have had as many hearths as new dwellings, but houses erected before the mid seventeenth century were built with fewer hearths than later ones, and even when updated, they were seldom as well endowed.

The following examples are largely taken from the Cinque Ports of Sandwich and Faversham, since this is where fieldwork has taken place. Neither were included in the 1664 hearth tax, but Faversham, although small, was still a prospering port, and the profile of its hearths in the 1671 tax suggests it had affinities with Maidstone and Rochester.[195] Sandwich, on the other hand, was noticeably in decline. In 1697 Celia Fiennes described it as 'a sad old town all timber building ... run so to decay that ... its just like to drop down the whole town'.[196] While the types of medieval house found there are quite unlike those in the failing broadcloth town of Cranbrook, one suspects that its hearth tax profile would not have been all that different from the latter, which had the highest number of single hearths (47 per cent), and the lowest number of houses with five or more hearths (7 per cent) of any town in the county.

The medieval houses in all these towns were originally heated by no more than a single hearth in an open hall, perhaps with detached kitchens in larger properties, although the evidence for these has usually gone.[197] By the early seventeenth century, the open halls in Faversham, which normally ran along the street frontage, had largely been replaced by storeyed ranges with fireplaces on both the ground and first floors. The stacks were either placed externally to the hall and cross wing, as at *39-40 Court Street*, so that two stacks provided four fireplaces heating key rooms, or, as at *1-4 East Street*, a single large stack was inserted to heat both the hall and adjacent wing. In these houses four or five rooms out of eight or ten were provided with fireplaces, leaving a number of unheated ground and first-floor rooms and attics. In Sandwich, where the open halls usually lay to the rear of a storeyed street range, more medieval halls survived, simply having upper storeys and chimney stacks inserted in them, and in some cases only one seventeenth-

out of this calculation) had 5 or more hearths, and 41% had only one or two. The similar figures for Maidstone, again excluding the exempt, are 30% and 24%. These proportions, together with the suggested total of exempt as around 50%, indicates that Canterbury probably had similar, if not greater, extremes of rich and poor than Maidstone.

[195] The 1671 hearth tax for Faversham is published in Hyde and Harrington, *Faversham Hearth Tax*, pp. 50-7.

[196] *The Illustrated Journeys of Celia Fiennes*, ed. by C. Morris (Exeter, 1982), p. 123.

[197] In some late-medieval houses there is evidence for timber smoke bays in rear wings, probably used as kitchens. Examples are *4-5 Best Lane*, Canterbury, *Archaeologia Cantiana,* 110 (1992), 378-80, and *5-6 Market Place*, Faversham, *Archaelogical Journal*, 126 (1969), 249-52.

century stack was introduced to heat the newly-ceiled hall and the room above. This occurred, for example, at *5 Strand Street* in 1615, and at much the same time in *3* and *41 Strand Street*. The result was houses of six or even eight rooms with only two, or at the most three, seventeenth-century hearths. At *39 Strand Street*, a rather larger medieval house with eleven or twelve rooms after the hall had been ceiled, two chimney stacks provided four fireplaces, although by the early eighteenth century another stack had been built with two more fireplaces.[198]

Early seventeenth-century houses in the older towns were often given much the same provision. *No. 25 Court Street*, Faversham, was built by a wealthy mariner, John Trowtes, in the second or third decade of the seventeenth century; in his inventory of 1635 eight rooms and a cellar are listed: a shop and a hall at the front and a kitchen and buttery at the rear, all with chambers over. It is clear that the hall, kitchen and chambers over them were heated, but the shop and buttery and their chambers were not. His successors were charged on four hearths, and the house conforms to the same pattern today.[199] By the time *28 Palace Street*, Canterbury, was built in 1647, good quality houses had begun to be rather better heated. It is two rooms deep, with three storeys, cellars and attics. The shop at the front was unheated, but the other five main rooms all had fine fireplaces within a single stack, leaving only the attics and cellars unheated.[200]

How these houses were occupied is another matter. Not much work has been done on the way earlier houses were used in later periods, and the situation is usually complicated by drastic nineteenth and twentieth-century alterations. In Sandwich the physical evidence suggests that many of the deep, narrow houses in the town centre may have remained in single occupation, and it is likely that some of the rooms were used for storage or commercial rather than domestic purposes. But in Faversham, where houses were shallower and street frontages wider, they tended to get divided, so that one original house now forms two or three separate dwellings. Both physical evidence, as at *57-8 West Street*, and rentals, suggest that this trend began during the seventeenth century, probably among rather smaller houses than those described above. At the same time purpose-built pairs, like *91-2 Abbey Street*, made their appearance. They tend to have single stacks with two fireplaces heating the main room and the chamber over, any rear service accommodation remaining unheated until the nineteenth century. In the 1671 hearth tax return for Faversham there were 107 two-hearth entries, forming 25.5 per cent of the total, and it seems likely that these included both subdivided older houses and purpose-built pairs. Identifying the eighty-three single-hearth houses which formed 20 per cent of the total is

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[198] These comments are based upon recent fieldwork by the author in these towns. See also, S. Pearson 'Heating and houses in Faversham town' in Hyde and Harrington, *Faversham Hearth Tax*, pp. 4-7, and E.W. Parkin, 'The ancient Cinque Port of Sandwich', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 100 (1984), 189-216.

[199] M. Laithwaite, 'A ship-master's house at Faversham, Kent', *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 2 (1968), 150-62; Hyde and Harrington, *Faversham Hearth Tax*, pp. 128-40.

[200] Canterbury Archaeological Trust, *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 106 (1988), 185-6; 107 (1989), 366-7; 109 (1991), 323-7.

much more difficult. They may have been subdivided buildings, but if they stood alone then probably few, if any, survive.

By the second half of the seventeenth century new types of town houses were being built. Not only had the gables and jetties of the earlier buildings gone, but the internal layout was changing, and even at a low social level it seems that nearly all rooms, apart from shops, were provided with fireplaces. It is this, above all else, which led to the marked differences apparent in the hearth tax between the expanding naval and dockyard towns of the north coast, and the older towns in central and eastern Kent. London was the yardstick here. At the high end of the social scale new houses are likely to have been built in brick. In Stoke Newington, north of the City of London, two houses, two-rooms deep, built in 1658 with three storeys, cellars and attics, have been identified in the 1674 hearth tax as having ten hearths each. In 1664, six four-storey houses with two rooms on each floor were erected in Bloomsbury Square; each room was heated, and the houses were charged on eight hearths in 1672-3.[201] In appearance these were modest terrace houses, the precursors of the ubiquitous Georgian houses of London; they show that by the 1660s some of the better-built medium-sized houses in London and its suburbs were extremely well-appointed, with fireplaces expected in every room. The houses themselves were no larger in floor area than many of those in the older towns of Kent, but they were far more up-to-date in plan and in the amenities provided. Do they indicate greater wealth on the part of the occupier? It is impossible to say this on the basis of the hearth tax alone.

At a lower social level a similar distinction prevailed, and it is here that we have some evidence from Kent. Brick was available in the Deptford area, but although most of the remaining early houses in Deptford survive because they were built of brick, the majority of houses in the town continued to be built of timber until about 1750. The earliest houses to have been identified are *144a-162 Deptford High Street*, a row of twelve brick houses built around 1680, at least in part by a potter, who may have had easy access to local brick. *No. 150*, an isolated survivor from this early period, has two full storeys, plus attic and cellar, with a single room on each floor, the three upper ones having fireplaces.[202] Thus a small house of this sort might have three hearths. In the 1740s the occupants of the terrace included shipwrights, a sailmaker and a house carpenter. The earliest timber houses to survive are *19-31 Tanners Hill*, not built until around 1728, but almost certainly reflecting the arrangements of earlier timber buildings in the town. They were all of two storeys with attics, some having only a single room on each floor, others two rooms deep. The smaller houses had two or

[201] A.F. Kelsall, 'The London house plan in the later 17th century', *Post-Medieval Archaeology,* 8 (1974), 80-91.

[202] RCHME, Survey Report, *Nos 144a-162 (even) Deptford High Street*, Deptford, NMR index no. 96631 (1998). The development of Deptford housing is discussed in an RCHME unpublished report, 'Deptford Houses: 1650 to 1800', 1998, and in Guillery and Herman, 'Deptford Houses', forthcoming. I am grateful to Peter Guillery for showing me this in advance of publication.

three fireplaces, the larger had at least four and sometimes more. The occupants in this case are known to have included dockyard watchmen or labourers, a shipwright, a carpenter, a porter and a fisherman.[203]

New buildings of this sort were not confined to the north-western towns, although they were probably more prevalent there. In the east of the county new houses were also being built in Deal, which grew during the seventeenth century from a small fishing settlement to a town with 1,500 inhabitants in 1676.[204] In 1679 the archbishop of Canterbury leased out two tenements and a wash house at *8-10 Chapel Street.*[205] *No. 10*, which may date back to this time or may be a little later, has a two-room plan of two storeys, attic and cellar, with six fireplaces heating all but the attic rooms. *No. 4 Brewer Street* is a smaller version of the same plan, without cellars, and with four fireplaces to six rooms. At the lower end of the scale *138 Middle Street*, is a single-cell house of two storeys and an attic, both of the lower rooms being heated. These houses are probably later than 1664, but it is likely that they represent the various types which were being constructed from the 1660s onwards.[206] A final example of what might be expected at a low social level comes from Folkestone, where a number of stone and brick houses dating to the second half of the seventeenth century were recorded before demolition in the 1940s. They too had a single heated room on each of two floors, with an unheated attic above.[207]

These Kentish examples are in line with contemporary town houses going up elsewhere, as in Whitehaven, Cumberland, where two-storey, single-cell houses with two heated rooms were owned and built by masons and carpenters and occupied by artisans.[208] In Shadwell in East London, working only from documentary sources, Michael Power has demonstrated that the average number of rooms in the small houses of this relatively poor area was 3.7, while the average number of hearths in 1664 was 2.7. Houses in this part of London were small, and 44 per cent of households were exempt from the hearth tax, yet even so it seems that the ratio of hearths to rooms was high.[209] Thus while in the older towns, houses of all sizes tended to have had a mixture of heated and unheated rooms, it appears that by the late seventeenth century nearly all the rooms in a new house could be expected to have a fireplace: a house of eight rooms would probably have six to eight hearths, and one of two rooms and an attic would have two, or

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[203] RCHME, Survey Report, *Nos 1-31 (odd) Tanners Hill*, Deptford, NMR index no. 96635 (1998).

[204] For the growth of Deal, see C. W. Chalklin, 'The making of some new towns, c1600-1720', in *Rural Change and Urban Growth, 1500-1800,* ed. by C. W. Chalklin and M. A. Havinden (London, 1974), pp. 229-52. I am grateful to Charles Bain-Smith for arranging to show me some of the many seventeenth and early eighteenth-century houses surviving in the town.

[205] Lambeth Palace Library: TA 188/1-19 Chapel Street.

[206] Houses such as *19 Farrier Street* and *146 Middle Street* have external features of somewhat earlier date, and appear to have been heated by stacks with three flues.

[207] B. H. St J. O'Neill, 'North Street, Folkestone, Kent', *Antiquaries Journal,* 29 (1949), 8-12.

[208] S. Collier, *Whitehaven, 1660-1800* (RCHME, London, 1991), pp. 44-5, 85-6.

[209] M. J. Power, 'East London housing in the seventeenth century' in *Crisis and Order in English Towns, 1500 - 1700* ed. by P Clark and P. Slack, (London, 1972), pp. 237-62; idem., 'Shadwell: The development of a London suburban community in the seventeenth century', *The London Journal,* 4 (1978), 29-46.

possibly even three. It is in this light that one should look at the hearth tax figures, which show Deptford and Chatham with few single-hearth houses, and over 70 per cent with two, three and four hearths. It is likely that these latter were small houses of the sort discussed above.

The provision of extra fireplaces in the houses of the coastal towns may have gone hand in hand with the availability of relatively cheap coal, shipped into the Kentish ports from the north east. It was certainly the main fuel of seventeenth-century London, and provided an alternative to the increasingly expensive coppiced firewood which was otherwise available, although whether the poor could afford coal is open to question.[210] It is likely that the northern ports followed the London trend, but at this date in Deal the fireplaces themselves were still quite large, often with rounded backs, and were probably still designed with wood in mind.[211]

If surviving small houses in the newer towns are likely to have had two or more hearths, the question arises as to what single-hearth houses were like. The evidence at present is sparse. In Deal, the outlines of one or two very low ornamental Dutch gables remain embedded in the walls of later buildings, implying the former existence of one-storey-and-attic houses, and such houses might only have had a single hearth.[212] In the inland towns, where the incidence of single-hearth houses was much higher: 47 per cent in Cranbrook, and between 25 per cent and 35 per cent in Ashford, Sevenoaks, Tenterden, Tonbridge, West Malling and Westerham, it is likely that many of the poor lived in earlier houses in which only the main room was heated, perhaps by a fireplace in a timber stack, as discussed above in the section on rural houses. However, single-hearth households in the hearth tax may not always represent houses *per se*, but divided properties, occupied by two or more families. In due course, when the documentary evidence has been examined with this sort of question in mind, it may be possible to find the answer.

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[210] Hatcher, *Coal Industry*, pp. 40-55, maps 1.1 and 3.1.

[211] The high cost of transport almost certainly meant that coal did not penetrate far beyond the ports, while the scarcity of timber in eastern Kent by this date may partially explain the slow introduction of extra hearths into smaller houses in the countryside.

[212] E.g. next to *13-14 Griffin Street*.

CONCLUSION

The hearth tax has frequently been used to indicate the size of houses, and this in turn has been taken as a reflection of wealth. Although it is obvious that houses with twenty hearths are likely to have had wealthier occupiers than those with under five, it was not necessarily the case, as Husbands points out, that those with three or four hearths had wealthier owners than those with one or two, so direct correlations of this sort can lead to questionable conclusions if based on too small a sample. We have seen individual cases such as Henry Stanford, yeoman, of East Peckham who lived in a house with two hearths, but died with an inventory valued at £548, and on the other hand craftsmen and labourers in Deptford who occupied houses with as many as three fireplaces. Nonetheless, both Husbands and Spufford have amply demonstrated a general correlation between hearths and wealth in different parts of the country.[213] It is hoped that the discussion of hearths and houses in Kent has likewise shown that hearths and wealth may be related, but that it is also critically important to bear in mind the type of buildings with which the hearths are associated. Husbands suggests that architectural style might have made a difference to the number of hearths a house had. In fact, at least in Kent, it was not so much style, or even plan form, as the age of a building and the form and physical structure of its hearths and chimney stacks which influenced the number of fireplaces a building might have.

It is fashionable when discussing the hearth tax to relate it to the 'Great Rebuilding', a phrase coined by W.G. Hoskins in 1953 to describe a period of major alterations to existing buildings and the erection of new houses between 1570 and 1640.[214] Regional and local research has subsequently shown that the situation was more complex than Hoskins allowed, with houses in different parts of the country being updated at different times. Machin[215] suggested that rather than one rebuilding there were cycles of rebuilding continuing into the nineteenth century - and beyond. One may, indeed, ask whether a blanket term of this sort helps to clarify what actually took place, or tends to mask the real situation. In Kent, which was particularly rich in high-quality medieval houses, the best of them in all localities were retained for as long as possible, and were usually lived in by those with the greatest wealth. From the early sixteenth century onwards they were upgraded by ceiling over the hall and inserting enclosed fireplaces

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[213] Husbands, 'Hearths, wealth and occupations', in *Surveying the People*, pp. 66-8; Spufford, 'Cambridgeshire hearth tax', table 6.

[214] W. G. Hoskins, 'The rebuilding of rural England, 1570-1640', *Past and Present*, 4 (1953), 44-59. For recent works which still use the concept, see C. Platt, *Great Rebuilding*; P. Williams, *The Later Tudors, 1547-1603* (Oxford, 1995).

[215] R. Machin, 'The great rebuilding: a reassessment', *Past and Present*, 77 (1977), 33-56.

of increasing sophistication. Although this led to houses being used in a different way,[216] it hardly constituted rebuilding in any meaningful sense. Such adaptations took place throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, depending on the region and the status of the occupiers. Some houses obviously also had additions, and in some, particularly in the towns, the hall was rebuilt, but this was not the norm in the countryside. In rural areas a few of the best medieval buildings were completely rebuilt, particularly in the clothing district of the High Weald,[217] but elsewhere many of the new houses of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were smaller and would appear to have been new dwellings erected to accommodate a rising population. In Boughton Monchelsea, for example, they were grouped in two hamlets, probably intended to house those who came to work in the ragstone quarries. By the late seventeenth century there was a great upsurge of building in the towns around the coast, but again this was to provide homes for an entirely new urban population. Only in the rural areas of east Kent does there appear to have been a genuine and large-scale rebuilding of earlier houses, and this took place from the late seventeenth century onwards, after the time of the 1664 hearth tax.

The 1664 hearth tax reflects standards of heating at a single moment during a period of transition. It captures the situation at the point when new opportunities of employment on the London fringes and in the naval and dockyard towns were setting in motion massive changes in the fabric of those northern towns, and just before rebuilding began in rural east Kent. In all parts of the county the occupiers of older buildings were slow to upgrade them, while new ideas about what constituted an acceptable level of heating meant that newly erected buildings were far better equipped. The result was an uneven equation between hearths and wealth. A similar discrepancy occurred in the twentieth century when central heating was introduced: on the whole, old middle-class houses lagged a couple of decades behind new working-class flats in making what was ultimately an inevitable change.

A question which is seldom asked is whether the tax itself inhibited the introduction of new fireplaces. On the one hand extra fireplaces may have been seen as status symbols, and their introduction subject to peer pressure, on the other the fact that it was such an unpopular tax suggests that it was seen as unfair, and may have delayed some people from upgrading their properties. This is perhaps a question of particular relevance in a county like Kent where a large proportion of the population was clearly in a financial position to introduce more hearths by this time. It is also important to understand how individual houses were occupied, particularly in towns where rented accommodation within houses must have been widespread. These are aspects which require more work before the evidence

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[216] M. Johnson, *Housing Culture*, (London, 1993).

[217] Around Cranbrook the wealthiest clothiers completely rebuilt the medieval houses they inherited, or at least rebuilt the reception rooms, leaving only part of the original for services (Pearson, *Medieval Houses*, pp. 141-2). However, the situation in that area is not typical of Kent as a whole.

can be interpreted correctly. Nonetheless, publication of the tax for most of the county brings to the fore some striking and important contrasts in the state of housing, which has the potential to reveal a great deal about Kentish society, both at county and local level, in the third quarter of the seventeenth century.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MANUSCRIPT

By Duncan Harrington

The frontispiece to this volume is taken from the original constable's return for the Liberty of Ashford, in the lathe of Scray. Although it dates to 1662 it has been illustrated because signed constables' returns so rarely survive. The general introduction, pages xvi-xvii, details the requirement for the householders to provide signed returns. Meekings explains:

> The Petty Constables (a term including the officials of the smallest local area such as Headboroughs, Tythingmen and Borsholders) were to notify the occupiers that a statement of the number of their hearths would be required from them; the latest date for this notification was to have been, in the first instance, 31 May 1662, but as the Act was not published in time, a Proclamation ordered it to be done immediately.[218] Occupants were to supply their statement within the next six days: for a false assessment the penalty was to be a £2 fine, and where no return was made the Petty Constables were to inspect the house and assess the number of hearths, becoming liable to a £5 fine for each week they neglected to do this.[219]

He goes on to describe in detail the exemptions[220] and notes that the assessments were to be delivered to the clerk of the peace for enrolment at the next Quarter Sessions, in the first instance those of July. The majority were enrolled in a single column (of names and hearths) on the recto and verso of the membranes. Enrolled returns rarely survive from 1662 and the only one for Kent is that for Lady Day 1664, which is entered in a double column. The Kent Family History Society published transcripts of those for the lathes of St Augustine and Shepway, but before publication neither text was compared with the Exchequer duplicates and are thus not as accurate as the present listing.[221]

Whilst no 1662 Cinque Port enrolled Assessment has survived, the return for Faversham shows its Assessment was enrolled at the November Sessions although it was actually made in July.[222] Meekings says:

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[218] Commons Journals, pp. 383, 385.
[219] Meekings, *Surrey Hearth Tax*, pp. xii-xiii.
[220] See above, pp. xvi-xvii.
[221] D. W. Harrington, 14 (1983) and 182 (1984). Both titles are now out of print and available only as microfiche.
[222] PRO: E179/262/21, see transcript of this in Hyde and Harrington *Faversham Hearth Tax*, pp. 8-13.

> The original Petty Constables' Assessments were not returnable to the Exchequer, but among the Particulars of the Accounts, especially for the half-year to Michaelmas 1662 or the year to Lady Day 1663, a proportion of the Petty Constables' Returns appear to be either their original Assessments, or duplicates of them, revised to show details of payments; that for part of the Prince's Liberty, in Lambeth, dated 23 July, 1662, and re-dated 23 September, 1663, for example, was used in this way; it has A placed against the names of those who paid and C against those exempted by [an adjoined] certificate, whilst against the rest is written Poor, no distress or empty, no distress.

Among the 1663 Kent returns, mostly enrolled on parchment, are many with headings written over erasures which clearly show this point. The clerk of the peace had to enrol the Assessments and make a duplicate Roll which, signed by three or more justices, was to reach the Exchequer within a month.[223]

What makes the Ashford Liberty return of 1662 unique amongst these original returns is that the entries are either signed by the householders themselves, or they have made their mark.[224] The complete transcript forms Appendix VI. At first sight some of the signatures have a very similar appearance. This may simply reflect the handwriting of the period rather than the scribe's attempt at creating an illusion of verisimilitude. Whilst the bulk of the entries are written by one scribe, almost certainly John Smallwood, other entries are completely written, as opposed to just being signed, by the householders. Sir Roger Twysden, a Kent justice of the peace, responsible for the southern half of the lathe of Aylesford, wrote that on

> the 8th day of January 1663/4 Sir Thomas Style Captayn Dalyson Sir John Reyney and myself met at Town Malling as we had severall tymes before about hys majesties revenue arising out of herths of which I have spoken somwhat before, But really we could make small progresse in it, by reasons of the perplext ambiguity of the latter act, and requiring things allmost impossible as ... that every particular man is to give an accompt in writing what hearths he hath and the borsholder to engrosse on the backside the truth of it, which was troublesome hardly one beeside the minister beeing found able to write his name in the whole parish much less to write hys byll and this is that wee could not make them understand. [225]

Whilst he was primarily concerned with the region for which he was

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[223] Meekings, *Surrey Hearth Tax*, pp. xii-xiii..

[224] CKS: U1107/O1. The manuscript, amongst the Dering collection, also contains the borsholders returns from the half-hundreds of Aloesbridge, Bewsborough, Bridge & Petham, Cornillo, Newchurch, Westgate and Wingham, the hundreds of Bleangate, Eastry, Marden, Ringslow and the Borough of Longport, Canterbury. Although undated it appears, both from the archive group, and the content to pertain to the first year of the tax.

[225] Twysden Notebook, CKS: U47/47 O1; p. 47 n. xj.

responsible, the comments are just as valid for other areas. The Liberty of Ashford comprised the northern part of Ashford parish including almost all the built-up area of the town.

Arthur Ruderman points out that 104 out of 125 households in the Ashford return were able to sign their names – a higher proportion than might be expected from Sir Roger's pessimistic remarks. As they were all charged, he suggests this may reflect the most prosperous section of the community. The 1664 return (see p. 296) gives a total of 268 households, of which 115 (43 per cent) were exempt on grounds of poverty. If the 1662 return had a similar proportion of exemptions, then about 47 per cent of all householders were able to sign their names. Amongst those listed are four that refused to sign, of whom at least two are known to have been non-conformists with such extreme views that they are unlikely to have countenanced any new taxation to the Crown. Ashford had a core of fervent non-conformists so that it is perhaps surprising that the constable, John Smallwood, only had only four refusals, especially since his predecessor in office, Thomas Cuckow, was summoned before the King's Council to answer for the non-collection of Ship Money in the town.[226]

Ruderman has been able to identify a large number of the premises and has come to the conclusion that the occupiers appeared before the constable in a random order. He says:

> ... comparison of this original return of 1662 with that of 1664 is not easy, since only names and the number of hearths are given. However assuming that persons of the same name (including changes within a family) were in the same house, comparison is possible for 129 of the total of 141 dwellings. Of these 87 returned the same number of hearths in both years, while only eight cases had a greater number in 1664, on the other hand 24 dwellings returned fewer hearths. Whether these householders physically removed the hearths they had previously, or covered them from view, or merely made a false return (perhaps with the connivance of the constable) we do not know but this certainly supports the implications of the amending Acts that the tax was unpopular and avoided when ever possible.[227]

The Quarter Sessions copy comprises eighty-five numbered parchment membranes, measuring approximately 165mm x 760mm (6½ in. by 30 in.) to which have been added another five membranes which have been given A numbers. The explanation of these five membranes is to be found at the beginning of PRO: E179/249/37B, the Exchequer duplicate, which says:

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[226] Based upon details obtained from Arthur W. Ruderman, *A History of Ashford* (1994), p. 6; idem, 'Hearth Tax', *Journal of Kent Local History*, 13 (Sept. 1981), 2-3; Calendar of State Papers Domestic January and May 1639.

[227] I am very grateful for this information from Arthur Ruderman.

> An account of the firehearthes and stoves which were not returned at the quarter sessions of the peace holden at Maydstone for the county of Kent in the fifteenth yeare of his Majesties Reigne and in the yeare of the Lord 1664 According to an act of parliament entitled [an additionall] act for the better ordering [and collecting] the revenue ariseing by Hearth Mony.

Later binding has now incorporated these un-numbered membranes, covering Queenborough, East Farleigh, Loose and the lower half of Toltingtrough hundred, into the Quarter Sessions file, and the scribe also used some appropriate blank sections on the earlier Quarter Sessions return for some sections that form part of E179/249/37B.[228]

The return and its duplicate appear to be written by just two scribes; perhaps these were two of the signatories to the Exchequer return.[229] Their hands are demonstrated by the following sections of the same text taken from E179/249/37A,[230] folio 25v (Plate V), and CKS: Q/RTh, folio 47v (Plate VI). The two texts are remarkable for their similarity, even following the same pattern. Christopher Dering, clerk of the peace, received £60 as a reward for his expenses, assistance and making fair copies of the 'firehearthes' assessments.[231] No reliable autographed material has so far come to light to prove whether it was Christopher himself and his assistant who actually wrote the Quarter Sessions copy and the Exchequer duplicates although it seems likely. Christopher was given a further reward of £6 10*s.* 0*d.* in May 1665, possibly representing the copying of the lists that were received later.[232] As clerk of the peace he also received £7 6*s.* 5*d.* in poundage on the money received.[233]

Christopher Dering, clerk of the peace 'liveth at Pluckley' according to a notation on the accounts for Lady Day 1664.[234] However, it would appear that he may simply been staying briefly at *Surrenden* in Pluckley, the residence of his relative Edward Dering. Styled Christopher Dering of *Wickens* in Charing he was born 8 August 1625 the son of John Dering.[235] He married in 11 June 1663, Elizabeth the daughter and heiress of Thomas Spackman of Wiltshire by Joan daughter and heiress of Francis Kennerly of Lincolnshire. Elizabeth Dering died at Albury, Surrey on 19 April 1724 aged 89 and was buried in the Brent chapel in Charing church on the 27 April. Christopher had died earlier aged 69 on the 18 December 1693 at the chambers of his son Heneage Dering in the Inner Temple and was also buried in the Brent chapel.[236] Christopher had been admitted to the Inner

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[228] See Appendix II for a listing.
[229] The E179 duplicate has on folio 74v the clear finger print in ink of a scribe.
[230] Because of its physical size the PRO computer request is "EXT 6/100".
[231] PRO: E360/77 and E179/330/22 m. 11 is his receipt dated 27 March 1665.
[232] PRO: E360/77 and E179/330/22 m. 2 is his receipt dated 3 May 1665.
[233] See above, p. xvii.
[234] E179/330/6 folio 46v.
[235] Baptised at Charing: *Archaeologia Cantiana,* 10 (1876), 327-52, includes pedigree.
[236] DNB under Heneage Dering LLD (1665-1750), Dean of Ripon; W. Berry, *Kent County Genealogies* (1830), p. 402.

Temple in November 1648 and called to the bar 11 February 1655/6.[237] According to Heneage, in Michaelmas 1664 his father went to live in Maidstone. In 1667 he moved to Acton in Charing, and around Michaelmas that year finally went into his own house of *Wickens* which had been inherited from the Brent family.[238]

The old DNB says that Christopher Dering 'was secretary to Heneage Finch, chancellor of England and Earl of Nottingham'. It did not say when or where this information was obtained. Heneage Finch was born 23 December 1621 probably at *Eastwell*, Kent and having been admitted to the Inner Temple on 25 November 1638 rose rapidly through various offices to become Solicitor-General on the 6 June 1660.[239] Heneage Finch did not become chancellor of England until 19 December 1675 and Earl of Nottingham until 12 May 1681. Upon joining the Inner Temple he became a distinguished student, with special proficiency in municipal law. Could this be what brought Christopher Dering to be the clerk of the peace?

The differences in spelling between the two texts would suggest that perhaps the listing was either taken down phonetically or that the scribe simply imposed his own 'correct' spelling. Such differences occur in the spelling of Christian names such as Jeffery or Geoffrey, Stephen or Steeven, Phillip or Phillipp, Gregory or Grigory to give just a few examples. Besides a smaller than expected number of Puritan and biblical first names there is an entry for Marcellus (Swanton) which Miss Withycombe says has been used very rarely in England since the sixteenth century when a good many classical names came into use as Christian names.[240] Other unusual first names are Abiezer (Boykin) and the male names Blase (White) and Saphire (Paramour). In surnames the differences often amounted to whether the i comes before e or vice versa, a constant has been doubled, y for i, e for i, ley for ly, u is substituted for o, o is substituted for r, and the name ended with er or ar. A published example of these slight differences is given for the hundred of Faversham.[241] The more worrying aspects are where the initial letter is different so that Hawkins is shown as Wankins, Mayor as Ayer and Thomas Fish as Thomas Ash. Some cross-references have been given in the index to try to eliminate these diverse variations. Readers are reminded that the index does not show where there is more than one entry for a page and are advised to scan each page carefully.

The collection of the hearth tax in Kent at Lady Day 1664 was the responsibility of three individuals, the sheriff of Kent, the sheriff of Canterbury, and the Warden of the Cinque Ports. For the county, Thomas Bigg had been appointed sheriff for 1663 and would have remained in office

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[237] F. A. Inderwick, *Calendar of Inner Temple Records, vol. II, 1603-1660* (1898), p. 319; idem, *Inner Temple Admissions 1547-1660* (n.d. pb. 1877), p. 319. I am grateful to John Titford for this reference.

[238] 'Autobiographical Memoranda by Heneage Dering', *Surtees Society,* 65, (1875), pp. 334-5. (I am grateful to Sarah Pearson for this reference).

[239] DNB under Heneage Finch, first Earl of Nottingham (1621-1682); *The Complete Peerage,* by G. E. C., ed. by H. A. Doubleday, IX (1936), pp. 790-2.

[240] E. G. Withycombe, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names* (1989), p. 205.

[241] Hyde and Harrington, *Faversham Hearth Tax,* pp. 37-48.

until November 1664.[242] He was charged with raising £2864 2*s.* 0*d.* for the half year to Lady Day 1664, which as shown on E360/77 amounted to 57,282 chargeable hearths. However, when Bigg's deputy sheriff, Valentine Hodges, declared his account on 5 May 1665, Thomas Bigg was £1084 7*s.* 0*d.* in arrears, practically all of which was owing by the constables.

The total charge of 57,282 chargeable hearths can be broken down into the five lathes: Aylesford, 16,530; St Augustines, 6544; Scray, 9951; Shepway, 6699; Sutton at Hone, 16,592; together with Rochester, 880, and a supplementary of 86. The accounts recorded in E179/330/6 ff. 36-45 list the totals of the hundreds and half-hundreds, and the totals of most of the boroughs are written on the Exchequer duplicate by columns, including the non-chargeable hearths. A random check of borough totals produced by the computer for this volume was found to agree with the Exchequer figures – a compliment to the Exchequer clerks who had to add all these entries by hand.[243]

The City and County of Canterbury was collected separately from the County of Kent. The hearth tax was made an excise duty in 1663 and a further act of 1664 removed collection from the province of the sheriffs to a specially appointed receiver.[244] Francis Clarke, knight, was made receiver for Kent and the City and County of Canterbury by his patents of 23 June 1665 and 3 May 1666.[245] He showed in his declared account of 13 December 1667 that all the Lady Day 1664 arrears had been collected, and that he had also collected the Lady Day 1664 duty for the City of Canterbury which had previously been uncollected by the sheriff of the city.[246]

John Barrett was the sheriff of the City and County of Canterbury at Lady Day 1664. Because he failed to collect the hearth tax on time the whole of his charge of £134 10*s.* 0*d.* on the citizens of Canterbury, for 2690 hearths, passed as arrears to the receiver Francis Clarke to collect. Meekings, in a summary of hearths for the city of Canterbury, notes that at Michaelmas 1662 there were 3586 hearths,[247] at Lady Day 1664, 2690 hearths, and at Michaelmas 1664, 3792 hearths.[248] What his abstracts do not explain is the considerable discrepancies in numbers, nor why Francis Clarke appears to owe £191 8*s.* 0*d.* for the 1664 Lady Day collection for Canterbury. There may be insufficient data to elucidate the matter but the explanation is

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[242] *List of Sheriffs for England and Wales from the Earliest Times to AD 1831,* PRO Lists and Indexes, IX (1898).

[243] There are discrepancies between the computer and Exchequer totals which can partly be accounted for by the fact that hearths in detached portions of hundreds have, in this volume, been assigned to the hundred in which they geographically lie. Nonetheless, the high total in Shepway lathe must have some other cause. It may, for example, include the chargeable hearths in the Liberty of Romney Marsh, although this would be unlikely to account for such a lage disparity. Further work is required to clarify this.

[244] Excise Duty Act 15 Chas. II c.14, repealed in 1689. See above, p. xviii.

[245] C. A. F. Meekings, *Analysis of Hearth Tax Accounts 1662-1665,* List and Index Society, 153 (1979), p. 143 indicates Sir Samuel Starling was receiver for the County and not the City or Cinque Ports in the half year collection to Michaelmas 1665.

[246] PRO: E360/77.

[247] An Exchequer duplicate of assessment exists.

[248] PRO: E360/164 extracted from, Meekings, *Analysis*, pp. 129-43 and p. 403.

probably connected to the entry for Michaelmas 1663 where John Barrett, is charged £196 4*s.* 0*d.* for 3924 hearths, which was the total for the city and the precincts. The computer totals for the chargeable hearths in the City and County are 2695 (Appendix IV), which with 1094 further chargeable hearths in that part of Westgate hundred which lies within the city (Appendix V), together add up to 3788. This is not far from the 3924 hearths that Barrett was required to collect, and very close to the 3792 hearths which Meekings notes for Michaelmas 1664, suggesting that the money Clarke was required to collect incorporated not only the separately administered City and County, but also the rest of the built-up area of Canterbury.

The Cinque Ports were also separately assessed. John Strode, Lieutenant of Dover Castle and Deputy Warden of the Cinque Ports in his declared account of 5 April 1666, showed that 8944 hearths in the Kentish Ports were charged with £447 4*s.* 0*d.* for the half year to Lady Day 1664.[249] Meekings does not say whether these figures are broken down, and the original documents have not been examined. However, for Michaelmas 1662 a set of figures for the Cinque Ports has survived amongst the state papers, and since this total of 8918 is very close to that for 1664, the figures are given here for reference:[250] Deal, 1073 hearths; Dover town and port, 2208; Faversham town, 1156; Folkestone, 238; Hythe (given as 4 wards), 384; Hythe parish, 16; Lydd town, 365; New Romney town, 388; Ramsgate, 247; the parish, town & port of Sandwich (given as 12 wards), 2033; Sarre, 47; Tenterden town and hundred, 688, and Walmer, 75. The figure for Fordwich town is damaged but looks like one hundred and fifty plus, bringing the total to just over 9000 hearths. In 1671 John Strode, Deputy Warden and receiver for the Cinque Ports, was still in arrears on his 1664 charge (which presumably included Lady Day 1664) 'lost in empty houses, by plague, poverty and no distress and depending on Mayors and Jurats'.[251]

When Samuel Lambe received his commission on 23 October 1671 it was for Kent, Canterbury and the Cinque Ports, and he was thus the first to collect for the whole county. An assessment exists for this year. Although now damaged and incomplete it still consists of 142 membranes, PRO E179/129/746, and contains details of the hearths for some of the Cinque Port areas for which there are no other surviving returns.

Appendix II shows the arrangement of the PRO membranes and the surviving constables' returns for Lady Day 1664. Whilst many of these last have now been transcribed, it has not been possible to publish these at this time. Collation of some of the returns shows that usually the scribes worked down the returns writing the entries from left to right in the two columns. Once again the Christian names and surnames are often slightly differently written, many phonetically, as was found between the fair copies. However, some spellings are rather wider of the mark. The following examples of the wild differences which occur come from the half-hundred

[249] *op. cit.,* pp. 335-6.
[250] PRO: SP46/134/296 and Hyde and Harrington, *Faversham Hearth Tax,* p. 80.
[251] Meekings, *Analysis,* quoting from E360/164 and E179/265/35 folio 1.

of Chart, in Chart and Longbridge hundred. *Shelvington borough*, Edward Tourt not Tourth, Robert Massder not Maxted, William Beadle not Widow Beagle, Richard Waters not Wachers; intriguingly Mr Small and Mr Maytham have had their first names added in the enrolled copy. *Bucksford borough*, The parsonage is shown as Axton, The Court Lodge as Nevitt, 'Ninne' as Mr George Moore and 'Bucksford' as Edward Ellis, most of the other variants are relatively minor although perhaps one might not expect to find William Dason fair-copied as Dawson and Daniel Nower became Goodwife Nower and Widow Riding became Reading. *Chelvington borough* (or Chilminton in the constable's return) has Elizabeth Eems for Eeves, Thomas Seger for Sedger, John Honos for Jones and the non-chargeable entries should read Seath Moat 1, John Noble 2, George Finne 1, George Bunckly 1 and Widow Cockle 1. *Worting borough*, Richard Cashby not Caseby, *Swinford borough*, John Sandige not Savidge, John Missin not Missing and John Masters not Mercer, *Hothfield borough*, Lawrence Bissenden not Wissenden, Thomas Tuck not Toke, Alice Ridle not Kedwell. Richard Master 5 doesn't appear on the return but a note has been added at the end by the constable George Moore, 'Robert Steere borsholder of the Great Borough in Hothfield hath returned Thomas Britton 4 hearths the house not being inhabited, Thomas Wells 2 hearths and Richard Master 5 herths' in the non-chargeable section Widow Parker becomes Baker, Widow Bramfield appears as Broomfield, and Widow Gumry as Groomebridge. *Shippenden borough* (Shrippenden) has Thomas Hady not Hodge, Henry Stace not Elvy, John Moone not Man, the Non chargeable section includes Richard Wells for Willes, Widow Rolph for Roust, Peter Holmes for Holness, Peter Watches for Waters and William Shepard for Staphery, *Rumden borough, Street borough* and *Snoad Hill borough* had no real discrepancies although James Jarvis is shown in the last as having two hearths. Finally *Rudlow borough* Widow Barker and Thomas Barker are shown as Parker and John Mayny is shown as Mayning.

Without further research it is impossible to say how typical this half hundred is of the whole text. It seems likely that whilst there may be some variation in the number of hearths in the non-chargeable class, the chargeable list was more accurately recorded, as mistakes in the latter were likely to cause problems in collection. Some of the spelling variations may be attributed to phonetic spelling and the scribe's perception of the 'correct' spelling, but the disturbing conclusion is that most surname variations are caused by miscopying. This suggests that the 1664 Quarter Sessions assessment was compiled from the constables' returns with some reference being made to an earlier listing, and that the duplicate was then made from this, possibly by dictation. Anyone searching for particular names in the lists should be aware of these problems.

The transcription in this volume is the Quarter Sessions return for Lady Day 1664. It was undertaken over a period of time from 1982 before the general use of computers. Original spelling has been retained throughout, but capitalisation has been modernised, and contemporary

contractions extended. The whole of the Quarter Sessions text was computerised and then checked against the Exchequer duplicates in PRO E179/249/37A and 37B. These Exchequer duplicates were created by the clerk of the peace as the time that he made the county copy for the sheriff and were used by the Exchequer to audit the sheriff's accounts. Occasionally when a name is omitted in the E179 duplicate the columns are slightly altered within the borough, but on the whole they followed the same pattern. The differences between the texts were then re-checked back against the original Quarter Sessions manuscript to ensure that the Quarter Sessions text had been correctly interpreted. Whilst it is hoped that transcription errors have been reduced to a minimum there has occasionally been room for doubt. For example, did a surname have two t's or an l and t? Likewise, it has often been difficult to distinguish between n, u or v. A few entries missing from the Quarter Sessions file are shown in italics. The E179 duplicates have suffered from damp and are considerably more damaged than the Quarter Sessions copy, making the latter much easier to read. Fortunately those sections not legible, even under ultra-violet light, in the Quarter Sessions copy were visible in the E179 duplicates. All the numbers of hearths originally in Roman figures have been converted to Arabic numerals here.

[fol. 0r]

KANT

An accompt aswell of the names of the persons and number of hearths and stoves in theire respectyve possessions that are Chargeable by virue of a late act intituled an act for the establishing an additional revenue upon his Majestie his heires and successors for the better support of his and theire crowne and dignity as alsoe of the names of the persons and number of hearths and stoves in theire respective possessions which are not chargeable by the said act which accompt being transmitted by the justices of Peace unto the clarke of the peace of the said county is by him engrossed in parchment to be still kept in the said county And now this duplicate thereof being signed by two justices of the peace and the clarke of the peace of the said county of Kent is transmitted into his majesties court of Exchequer by virtue of another late act entitled an additionall act for the better ordering and collecting the revenues arising by Hearth money.

A duplicate hereof was transmitted unto the exchequer on the xvijth day of August 16 Charles 1664.

[PRO: E179/249/37A fol. 1:
A TRUE DUPLICATE conteyning an account etc.
{signed} Wm. Peyton
Philip ?Packer
Chr. Dering Clerk of the Peace.]