



Ightham Mote

Its Late-Medieval Economic and Geographical
Context

Philip Stott

‘This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars.’
(William Shakespeare, c.1595: John of Gaunt, Act 2, Scene
1, ‘The Life and Death of King Richard the Second’)

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Defining Late-Medieval

Over-pedantically, for England, the Late-Medieval Period (Late Middle Ages) is often defined as 1272-1485, between the High Middle Ages (1066-1272) and the Early Modern Period (1485-c.1800).

It is seen to begin with the re-establishment of Royal authority by Edward I (r.1272-1307), and it ends with the accession of the Tudor dynasty (Henry VII, r. 1485-1509).



Ightham Mote: part of a well-ordered society



‘Every aspect of rural life, every chance to use or sell resources, continued to be closely scrutinised, and decisions were local in nature.’

[Miri Rubin, 2006. ‘The Hollow Crown. A History of Britain in the Late Middle Ages.’ London: Penguin Books: p.201]

'Piers Ploughman'



'A fair field full of folk · found I in between,
Of all manner of men · the rich and the poor,
Working and wandering · as the world asketh.
Some put them to plow · and played little enough,
At setting and sowing · they sweated right hard
And won that which wasters · by gluttony destroy ...
... And some chose trade · they fared the better,
As it seemeth to our sight · that such men thrive.'

[Prologue: William Langland (late-C14);
illustration from the Luttrell Psalter (c.1320-1340). © British Library]

How Many Folk?

- ◆ 1250-1348: stable/rise, 1315-17 fall; 1348-1420: decline (25-60%). Poll Tax 1377 (>14 years old): 1,361,478 (alt. est. 2 million);

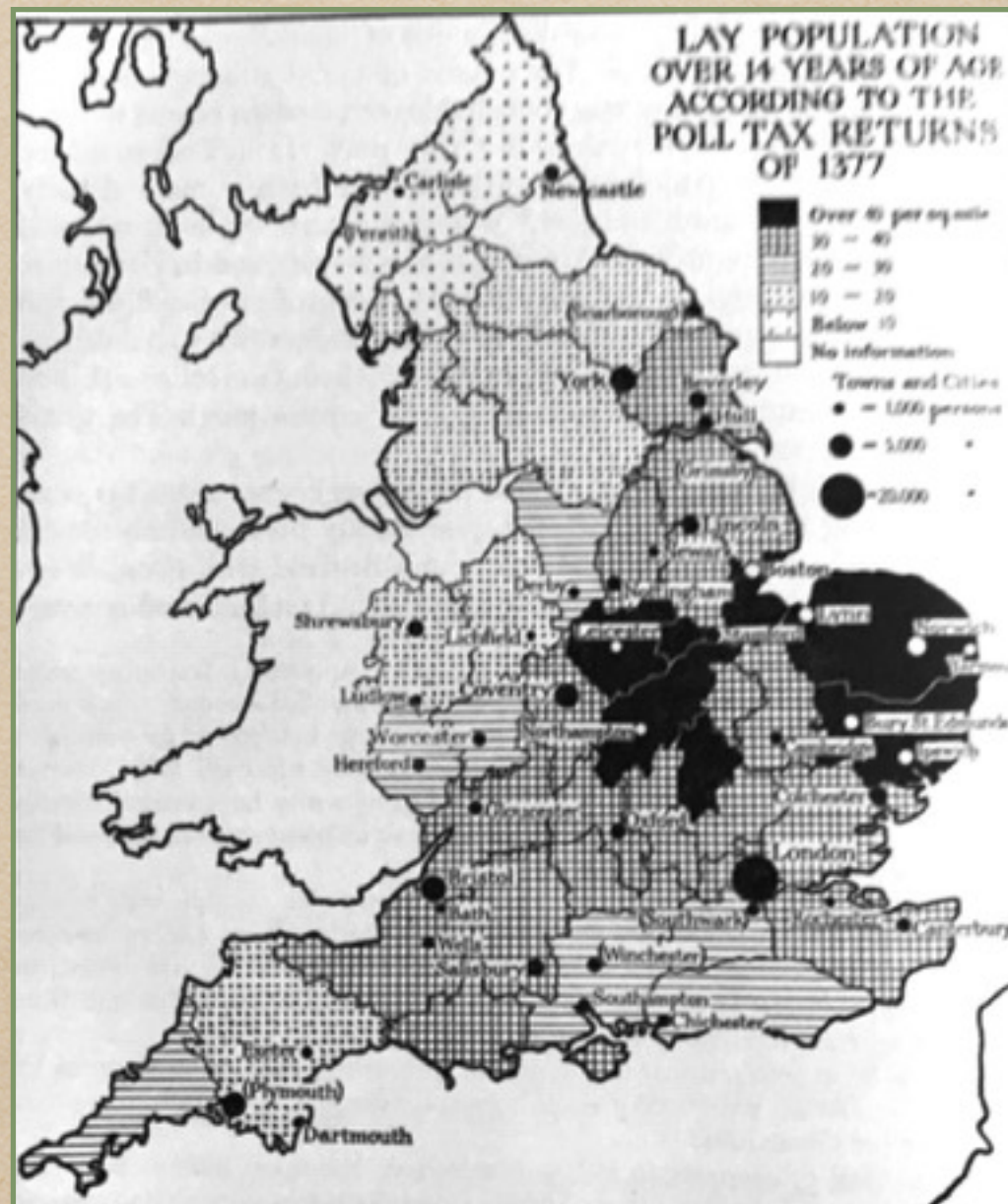
- ◆ London: 23,000 [<2%] (35,000); cf. Florence in 1351: 54,000;

- ◆ Holland (Lincolnshire): 54 per square mile ; Norfolk: 48; Kent: 30-40; Sussex: 20-30; Devon: 10-20 (1377).



[The Queen Mary Psalter (c.1310-20).
© British Library]

Lay Population 1377



[H.C. Darby (ed.), 1963. 'An Historical Geography of England before A.D. 1800.' Cambridge: CUP: Fig. 30, p 232]

1. The Long Fourteenth Century

General Context



Some Key Dates

- ◆ C14: expansion of 'overshot' mills;
- ◆ Edward II (1307-27);
- ◆ 1315-22: The Great Famine;
- ◆ 1323: Venetian galleys at Southampton;
- ◆ Edward III (1327-77);
- ◆ 1337-1453: Hundred Years' War (top: Crécy);
- ◆ 1348-50: The Black Death; 1361-62/69;
- ◆ 1361: Justices of the Peace Act;
- ◆ Richard II (1377-99);
- ◆ 1381: Peasants' Revolt.

Bannockburn

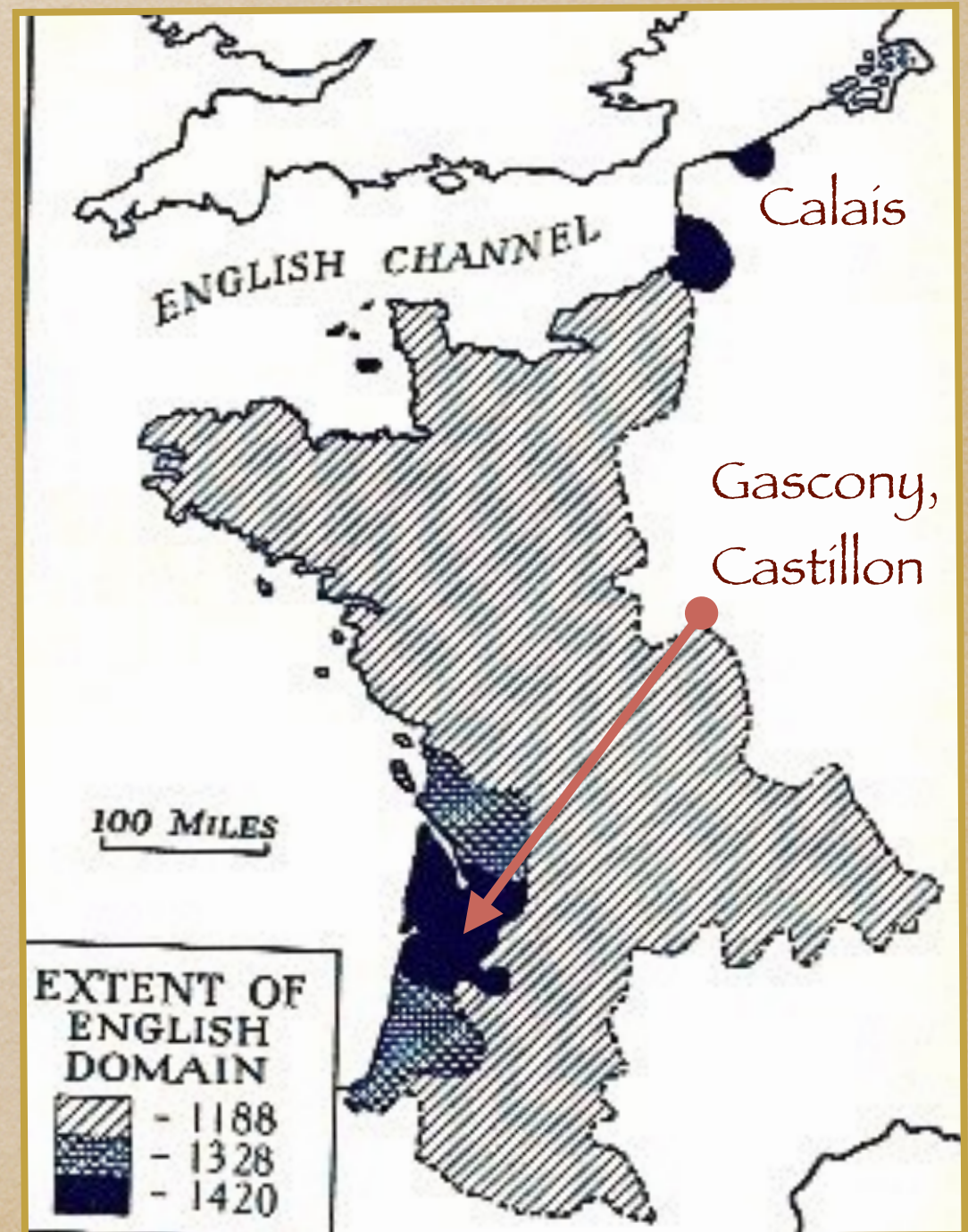
- ◆ 23/24 June 1314:
victory by King of Scots, Robert the Bruce, against the army of Edward II;
- ◆ Treaty of Edinburgh–Northampton (1328):
independence of Scotland; Bruce, and his successors, the rightful rulers.



[1440s, Walter Bower's 'Scotichronicon';
earliest image of the Battle (Corpus
Christi College, Cambridge)]

Frexit: Loss of France

- ◆ The Hundred Years' War ended in 1453; England was left bereft of its Continental possessions, save only Calais;
- ◆ Any joint monarchy was over. Despite fêted victories, like Crécy (1346) & Agincourt (1415), with the Battle of Castillon (17 July), Gascony was finally lost, gained 300 years earlier in 1152 by England's founding Plantagenet king, Henry II (r.1154-1189), through his marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine.



Rye and the War



- ◆ 1249/early C14(?): 'Ypres' Tower built;
- ◆ 1339: French sack 52 houses and a mill; c. 1340: the Landgate built (above);
- ◆ 1377: Rye sacked for a second time;
- ◆ 1381: stone city walls; four gates;
- ◆ 1449: French attack. Town defences only partially successful; buildings burned;
- ◆ 1381: Cooling Castle licensed.

Quote for your Exam!

‘This decisive battle of the world [Crécy, 1346] was fought during a total eclipse of the sun and naturally ended in a complete victory for the All-Black Prince, who very romantically “won his Spurs” by slaughtering one-third of the French nobility.’

[From: W. C. Sellar and R. J. Yeatman:, 1930. ‘1066 and All That’. Ch. XXIV]

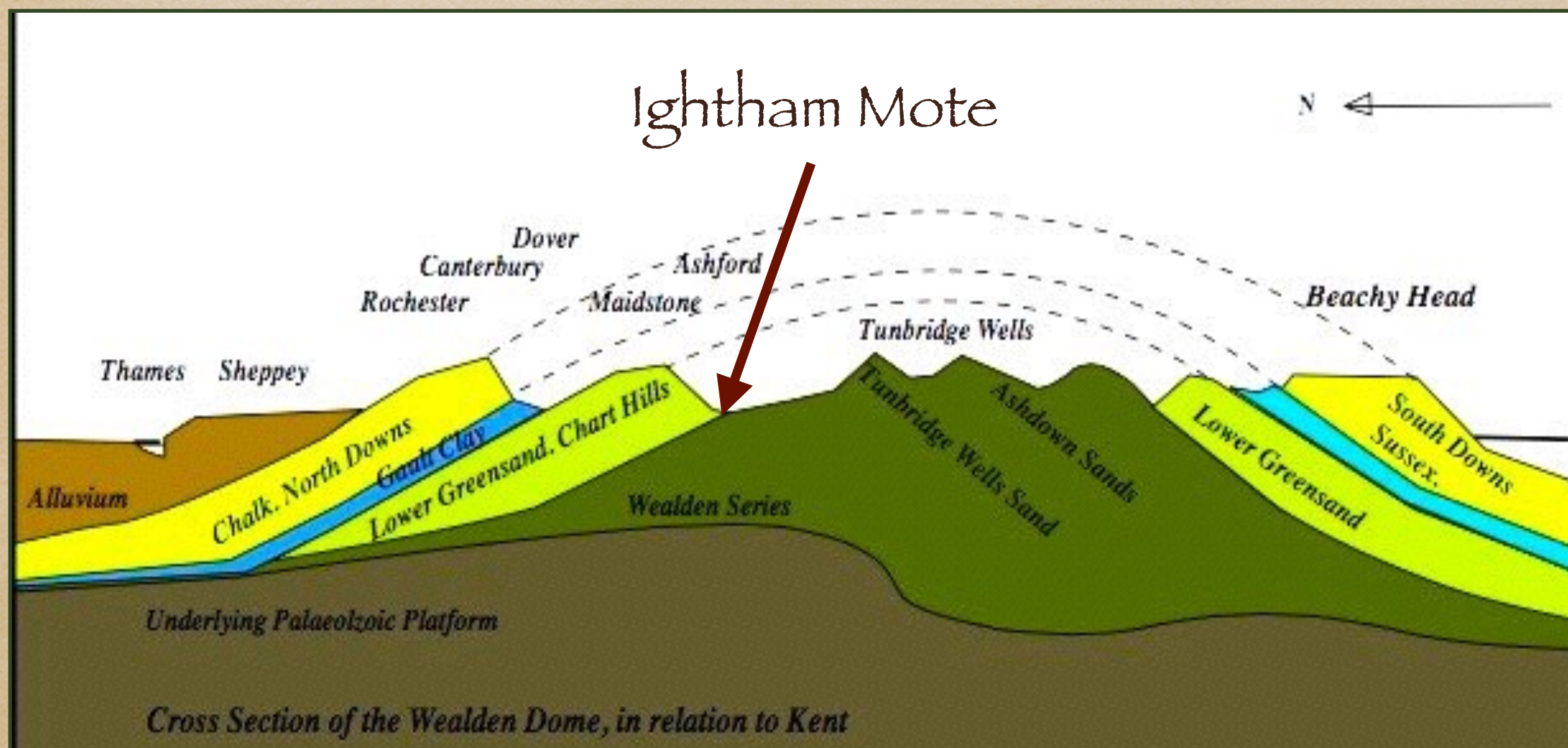


Now I'm mort,
everyone tries to
blacken my
name!

2. Geography & Economy

An Agro-Industrial Revolution

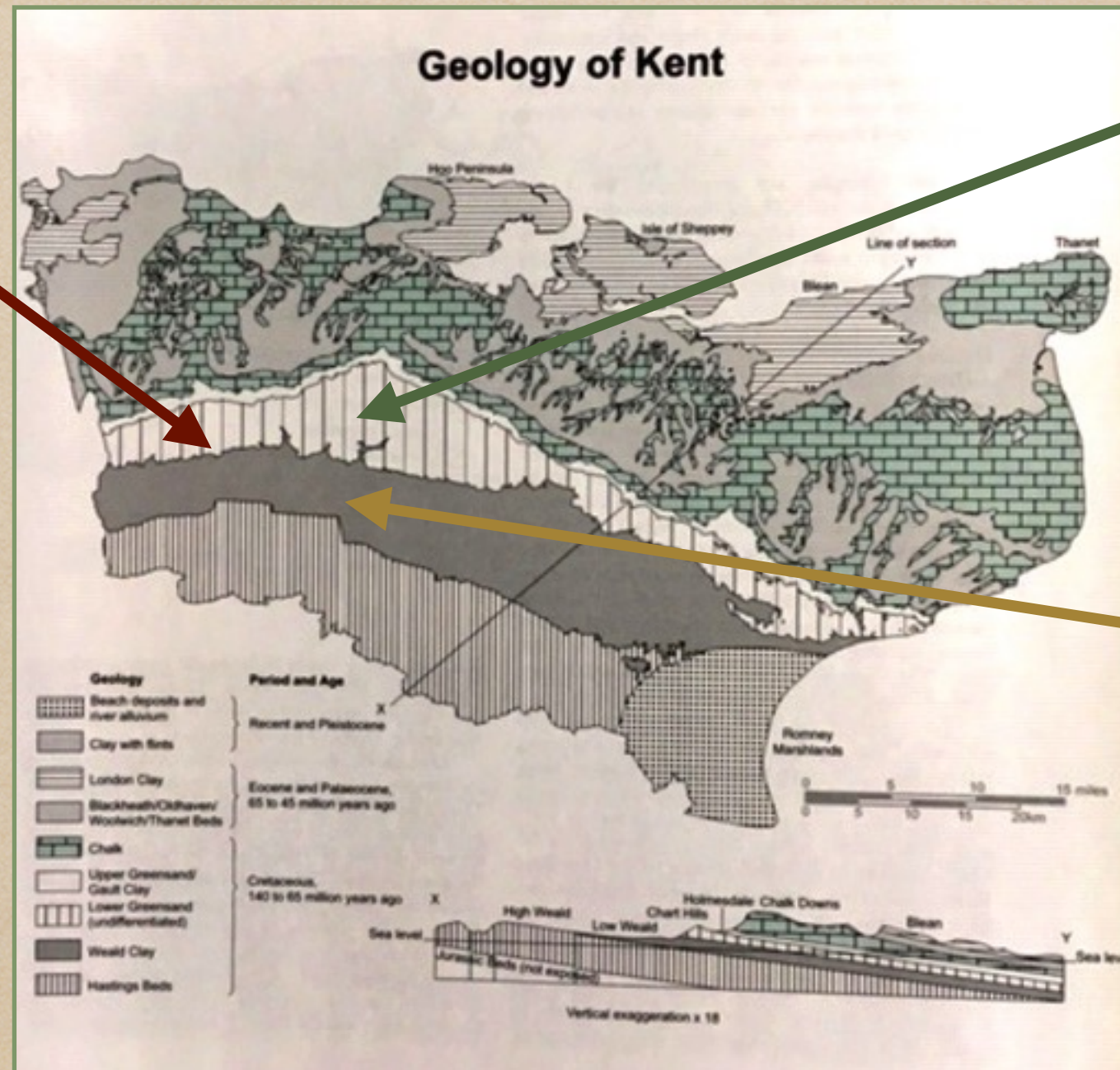
Our Wealden Dome



The Geological Map

Ightham Mote

Lower Greensand



Weald Clay

[From: Terence Lawson & David Killingray (eds), 2004. 'An Historical Atlas of Kent.'
Chichester: Phillimore: p.1]

Lower Greensand

- ◆ Mainly arenaceous sandstones; named after presence of glauconite; often poor soils, though varied;
- ◆ Comprises Atherfield Clay; Hythe, Sandgate, and Folkestone Beds; Maidstone area yields:
 - ◆ a. Sandgate Beds: Fuller's Earth, a clay used for cleaning ('fulling') woollen cloth;
 - ◆ b. Hythe Beds: 'Kentish ragstone', a blue-grey sandstone with a high % of lime, of which the Mote is built.

Greensand Commons

- ◆ The soils consist ‘... of a poor cold loam ... a wet stiff clay ... but the principal part abounds in gravel and sand ... covered with furze and fern, interspersed with patches of grass, and feed some lean cattle and half-starved sheep...’

[John Boys, Report on Kent to the Board of Agriculture,
1796]

Upper Streams

- ◆ The Shode is the main river of Ightham Parish;
- ◆ A tributary rises north of Oldbury Hill at Styants Bottom;
- ◆ It flows through Ightham, where it is known as the Busty;
- ◆ The Atherfield Clay produces various streams, like those at the Mote and the Plaxtol Spout;
- ◆ There are also many wells and swallow holes, as at Redwell, where iron ore tints the water.

Sheep, Wool, & Mills



- ◆ 14th century wool duties contributed one-third of the total revenues of the realm;
- ◆ In June 1374, Geoffrey Chaucer was made Comptroller of Wool Customs, London. He resided on Wool Wharf.

‘I wol have moneie, wolle,
chese, and whete,
Al were it yeven of the
povereste page,
Or of the povereste wydwe in
a village...’

[From the Prologue to ‘The
Pardoner’s Tale’,
‘Tales of Caunterbury’ (1387-1400)]

Importance of Sheep

‘I thank God, and ever shall,
It is the sheep hath paid for all...’

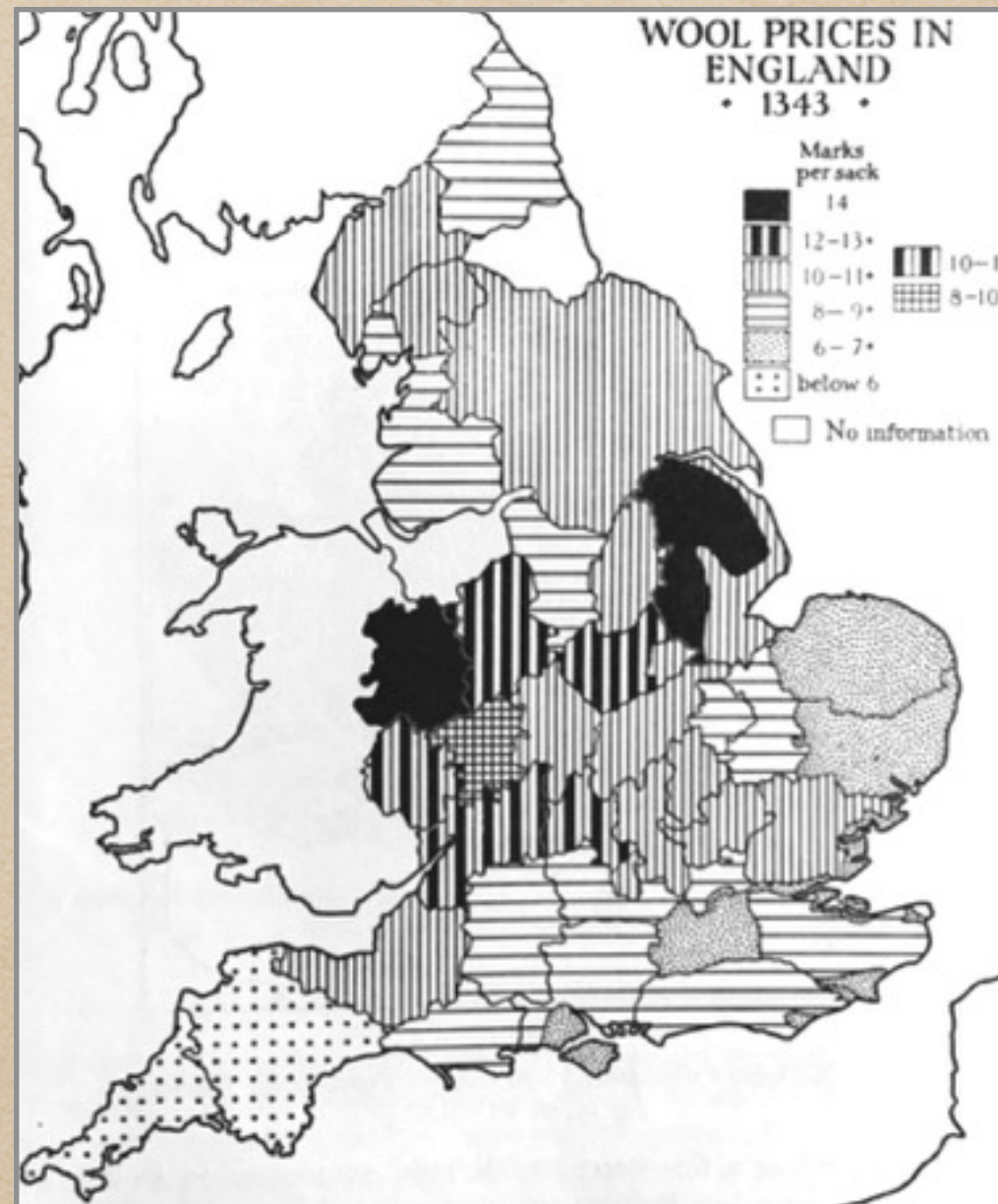
[John Barton, wool merchant of the Staple of Calais,
in a window of his house]

Ryeland Sheep

- ◆ Possibly bred by the monks of Leominster;
- ◆ Short-woolled; staple c. 8-10 cm;
- ◆ Eclipsed by rise of the modern down breeds;
- ◆ Medieval long-wool like modern Romney.

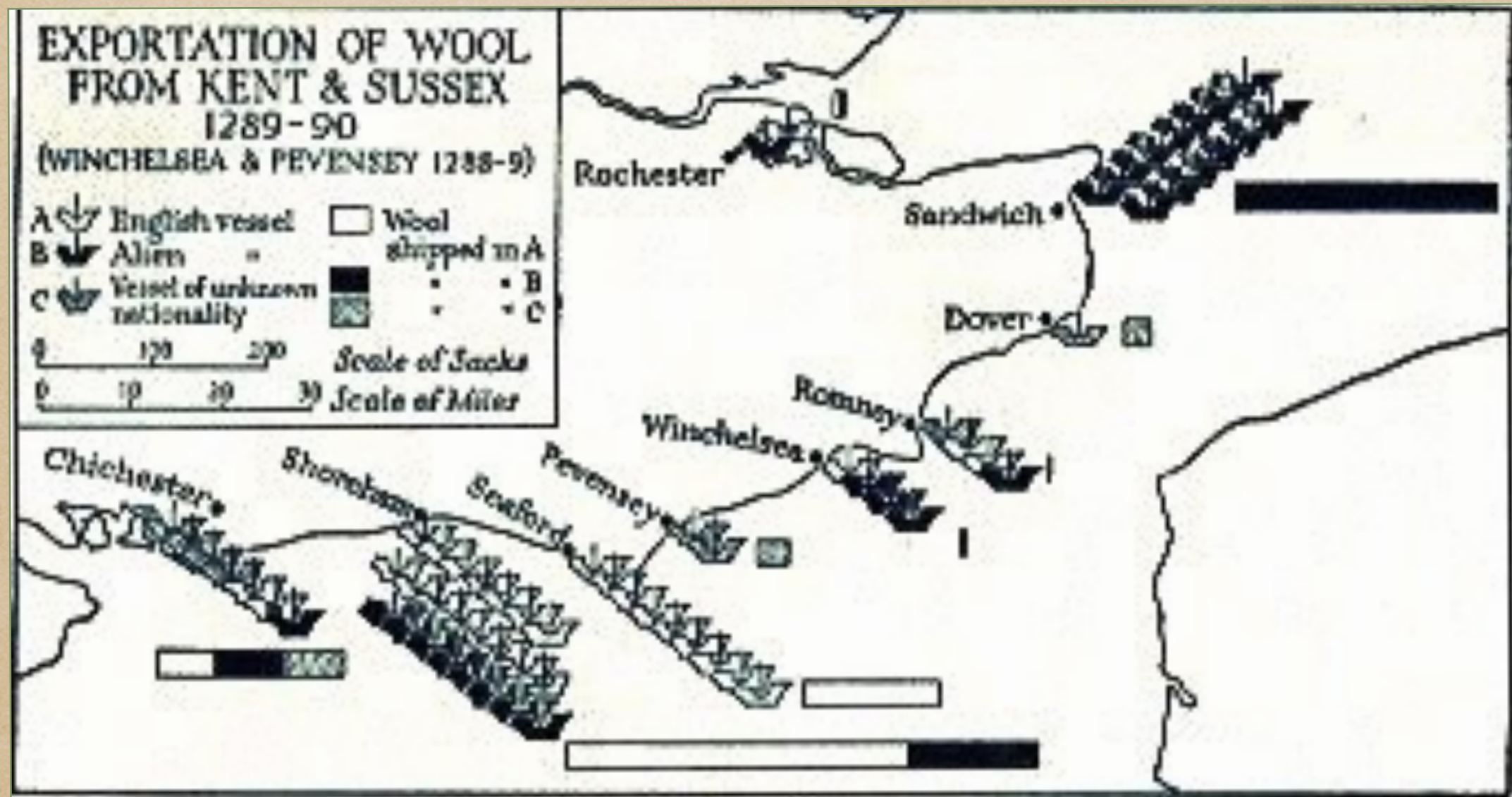


Wool Prices 1343



[H.C. Darby (ed.), 1963. 'An Historical Geography of England before A.D. 1800.' Cambridge: CUP: Fig. 36, p 245]

Wool Exports



[H.C. Darby (ed.), 1963. 'An Historical Geography of England before A.D. 1800.'

Cambridge: CUP: Fig. 53, p 310]

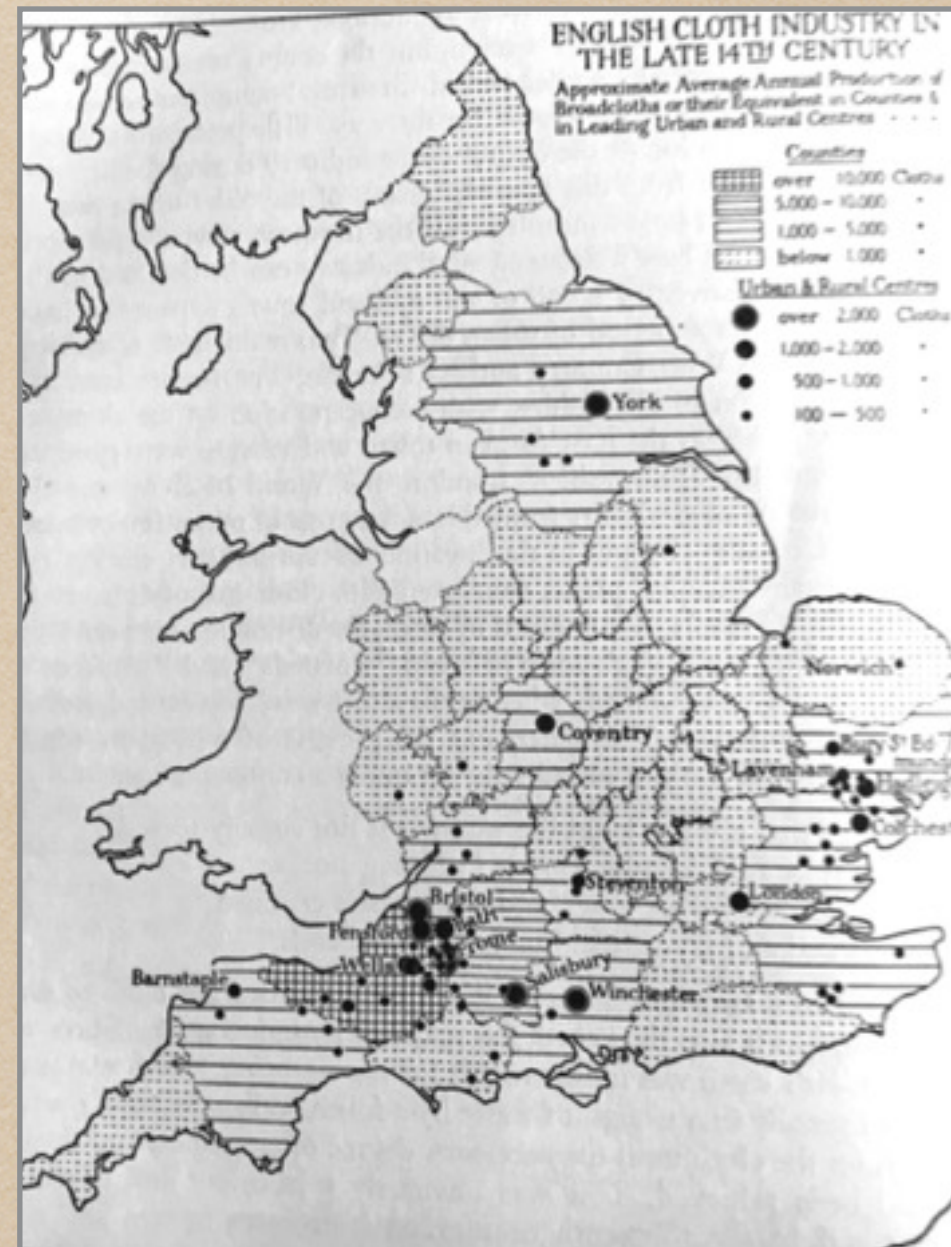
Italian Wool Trade



[H.C. Darby (ed.), 1963, 'An Historical Geography of England before A.D. 1800.' Cambridge: CUP: Fig. 55, p 312]

Cloth

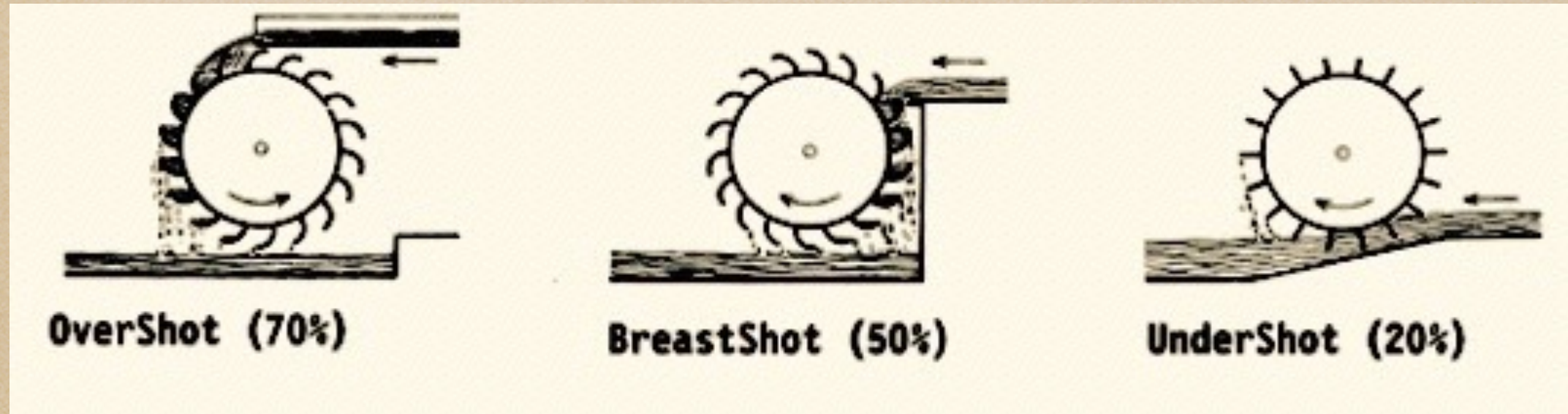
- ◆ Under Richard II, the cloth industry spread from the towns to rural areas;
- ◆ Mechanical advances in fulling mills greatly facilitated this move, creating an 'agro-industrial revolution'.



[H.C. Darby (ed.), 1963. 'An Historical Geography of England before A.D. 1800.'

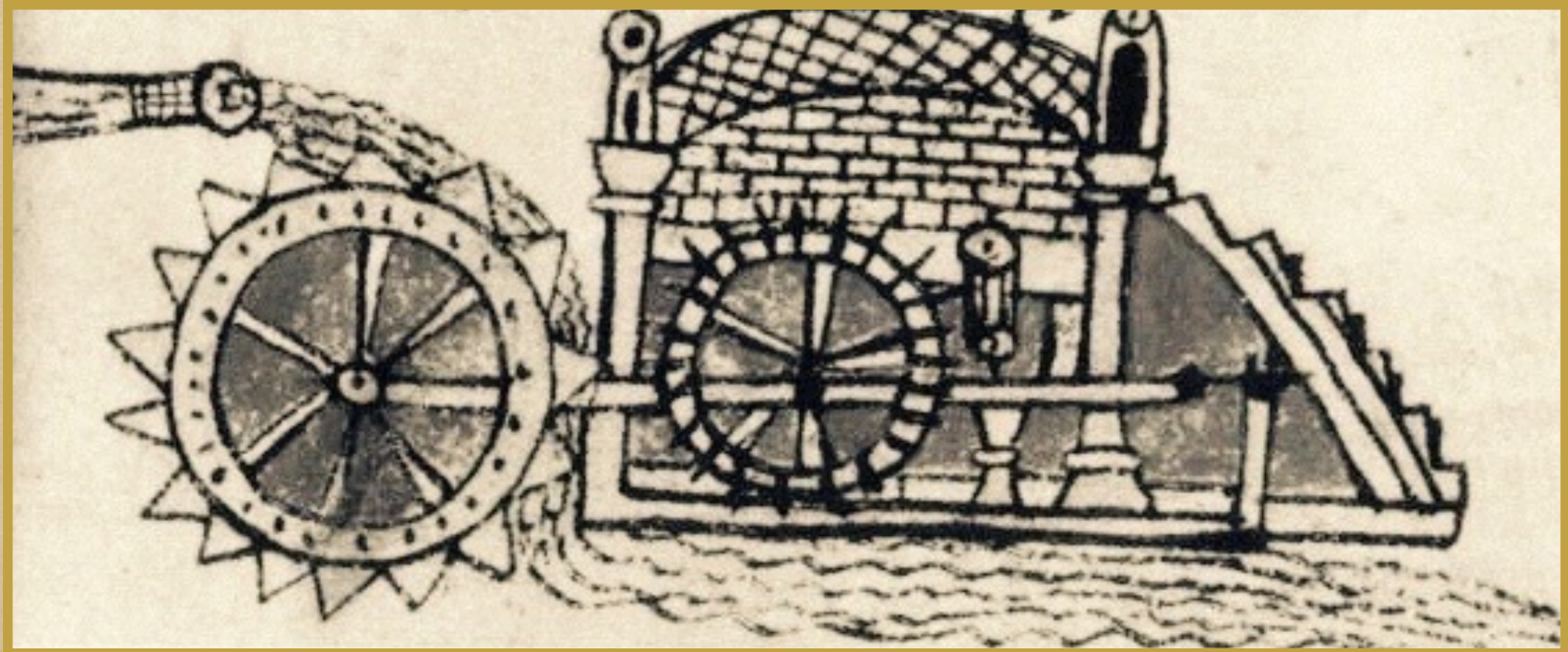
Cambridge: CUP: Fig. 39, p 250]

'Overshot' Power



Weight of available water to do work makes 'overshot' wheels highly efficient, with ratings of up to 70% to 90%. Needs a drop of c.4.5 m - thus best adapted to upper valley streams.

Medieval 'Overshot' Mill



[British Library, Cotton Manuscript Cleopatra C XI, fol 10]

Tanning

- ◆ Tanning was a dirty job, even by Medieval standards. After trimming, the tanner rinsed the skins in a stream or well; hair was removed by scraping and rotting in urine or wood ash and lime;
- ◆ Treated with dog or pigeon excrement; washed in water; preserved with bark in pits until required colour attained.



Pigs



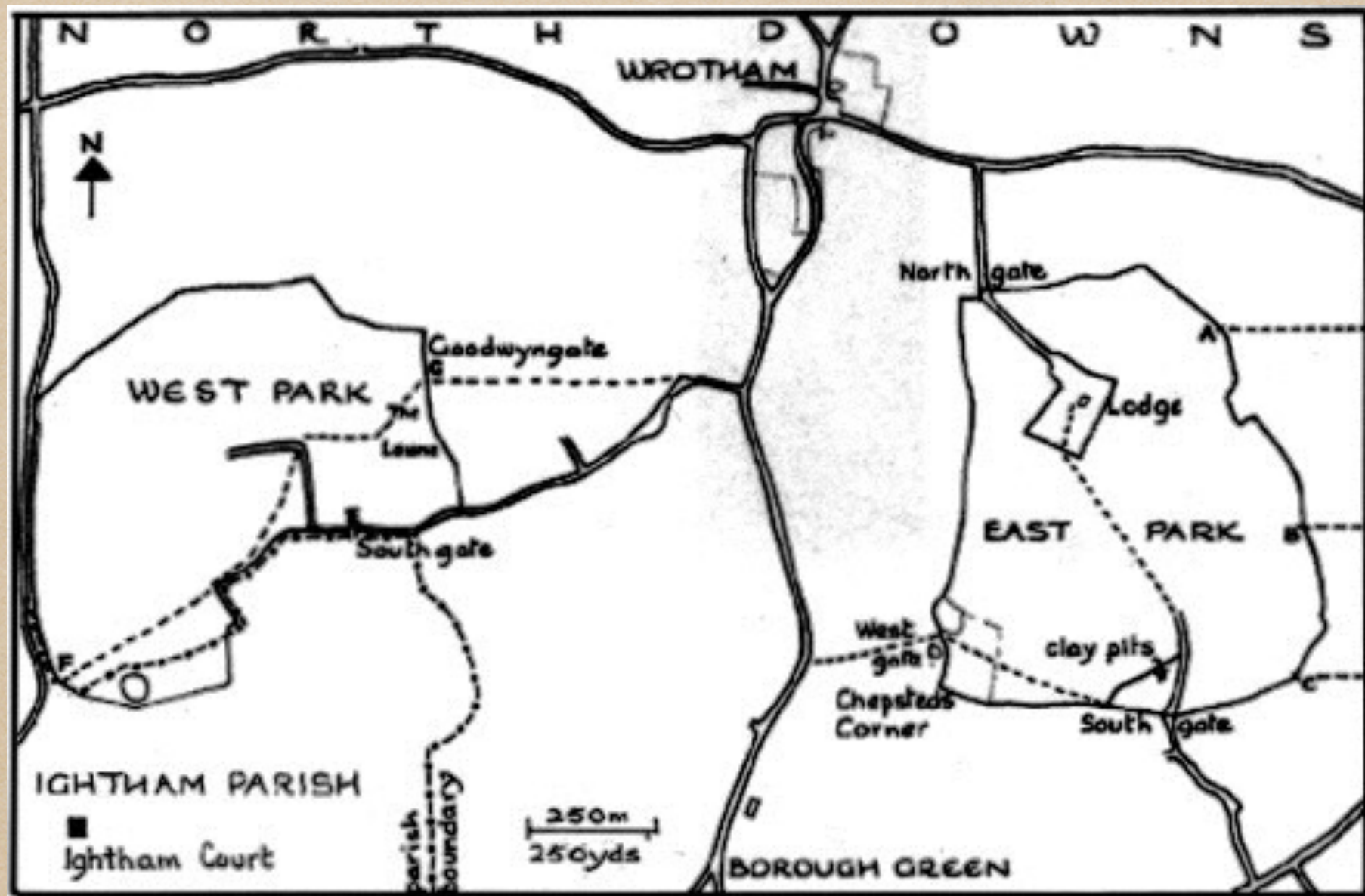
- ◆ Pannage: autumn fattening of pigs on acorn/beechnut mast;
- ◆ Ightham: c.1,200 acres of 'beechwood'; pannage for up to 50 pigs in a good year;
- ◆ Medieval pigs were small, difficult to fatten in winter, and a rare delicacy;
- ◆ Often in wood pastures; swineherds always carried sticks.

[From the Queen Mary Psalter (c.1310-20): beating down mast for pannage. © British Library]

Deer Parks

- ◆ The Archbishop of Canterbury had two deer parks at Wrotham, the West and East Parks. The West Park abutted onto Ightham Parish, and this was also known as Ightham Park. They existed by at least 1283;
- ◆ The West was 132 acres, the East 98 acres. The herds were Fallow Deer and they were fed hay;
- ◆ In 1394, 140 oaks were felled for local use and elsewhere. The parks also allowed the practice of agistment.

Wrotham Deer Parks



[Jayne Semple, 2008. 'The Medieval Deer Parks of Wrotham.'
Archaeologia Cantiana, Vol. 128: Fig. 2]

Brewing and Coppicing

- ◆ Brewing: in 1386: at Maidstone, a third of all households engaged in home brewing; on average, adults drank 3 pints of ale per day; ale was made from grain, water, fermented with yeast (no hops);

- ◆ Coppicing: woods in South East England were managed on an 11-year cycle, yielding fuel, faggots (bundles of sticks), small timbers, and timber, increasingly bound for the London market.

Fish Ponds



- ◆ Fish ponds & stew ponds (where fish were purged of muddy water before cooking); bream and pike; no evidence for carp before c.1350;
- ◆ Lay 'Fysshe' days: Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays; Lent;
- ◆ Managed by draining down and sorting the entire population at set periods (c. 5 years);
- ◆ A luxury (most ate salt fish); commercial production burgeoned between 1300 and 1350, as by the Thames.

Inheritance in Kent

- ◆ Gavelkind: system of land tenure mainly in Kent (+ parts of Ireland & Wales); of Irish origin, 'Gavail-kinne', 'family settlement';
- ◆ Land divided equally among sons or other appointed heirs;
- ◆ A dowager entitled to one-half; a childless widow inherited half of the estate, as a tenant, so long as she remained unmarried;
- ◆ Abolished under the Administration of Estates Act, 1925.

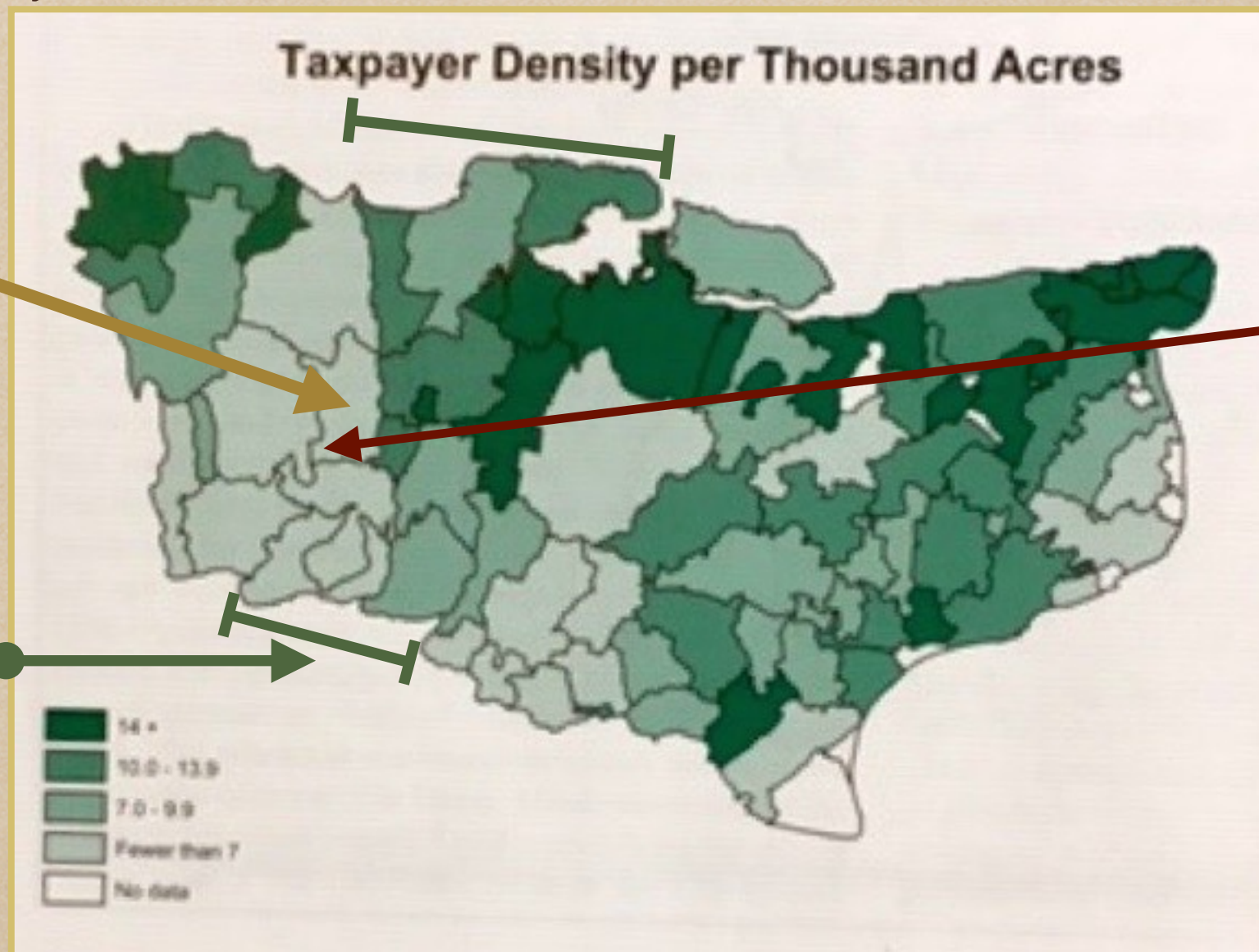
3. Conclusions

Taxpayer Density 1334/5

Hundred of
Wrotham

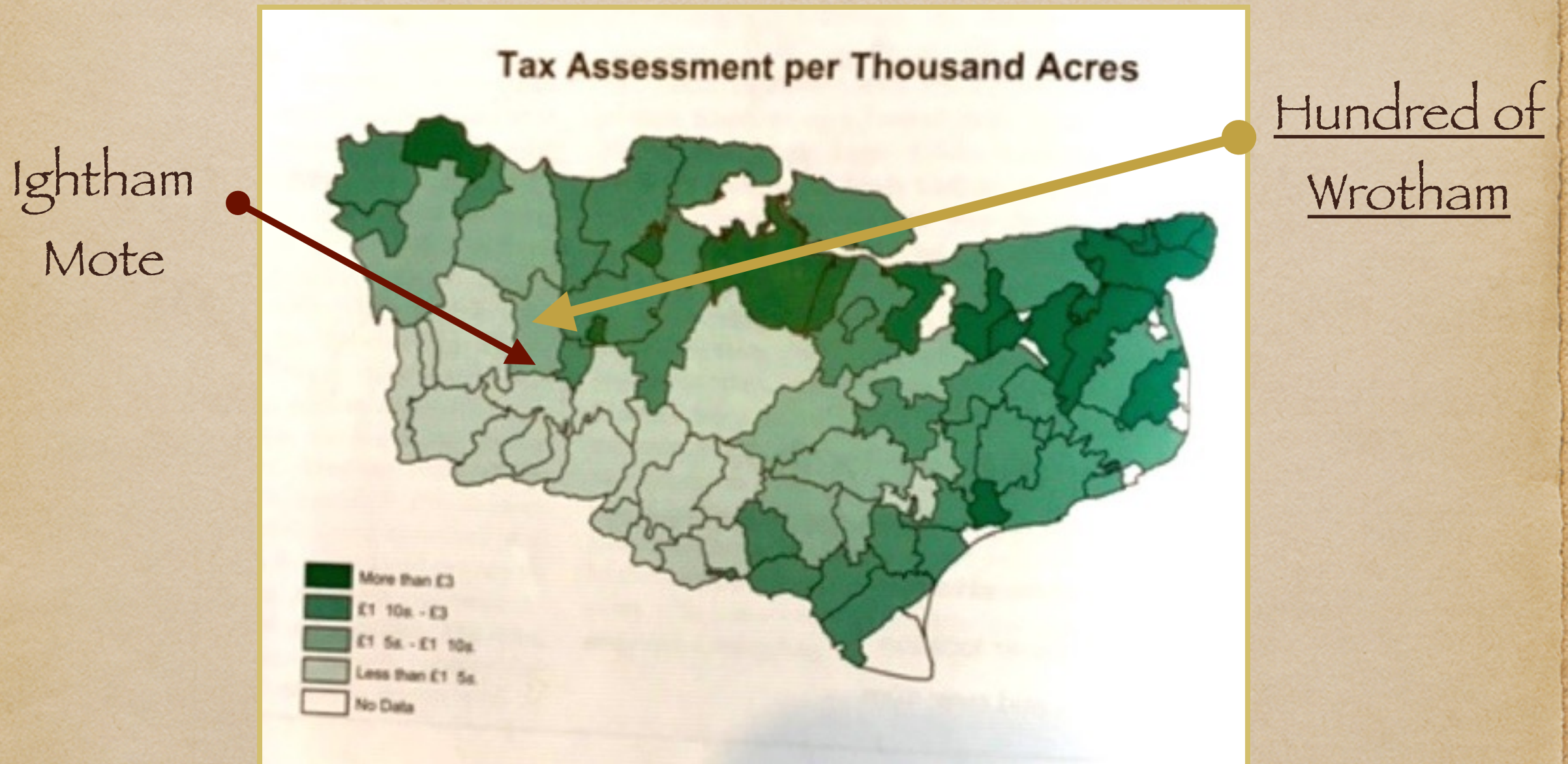
Lathe of
Aylesford

Ightham
Mote



[From: Terence Lawson & David Killingray (eds), 2004. 'An Historical Atlas of Kent.' Chichester: Phillimore: p. 58]

Tax Assessment 1334/5



[From: Terence Lawson & David Killingray (eds), 2004. 'An Historical Atlas of Kent.' Chichester: Phillimore: p. 58]

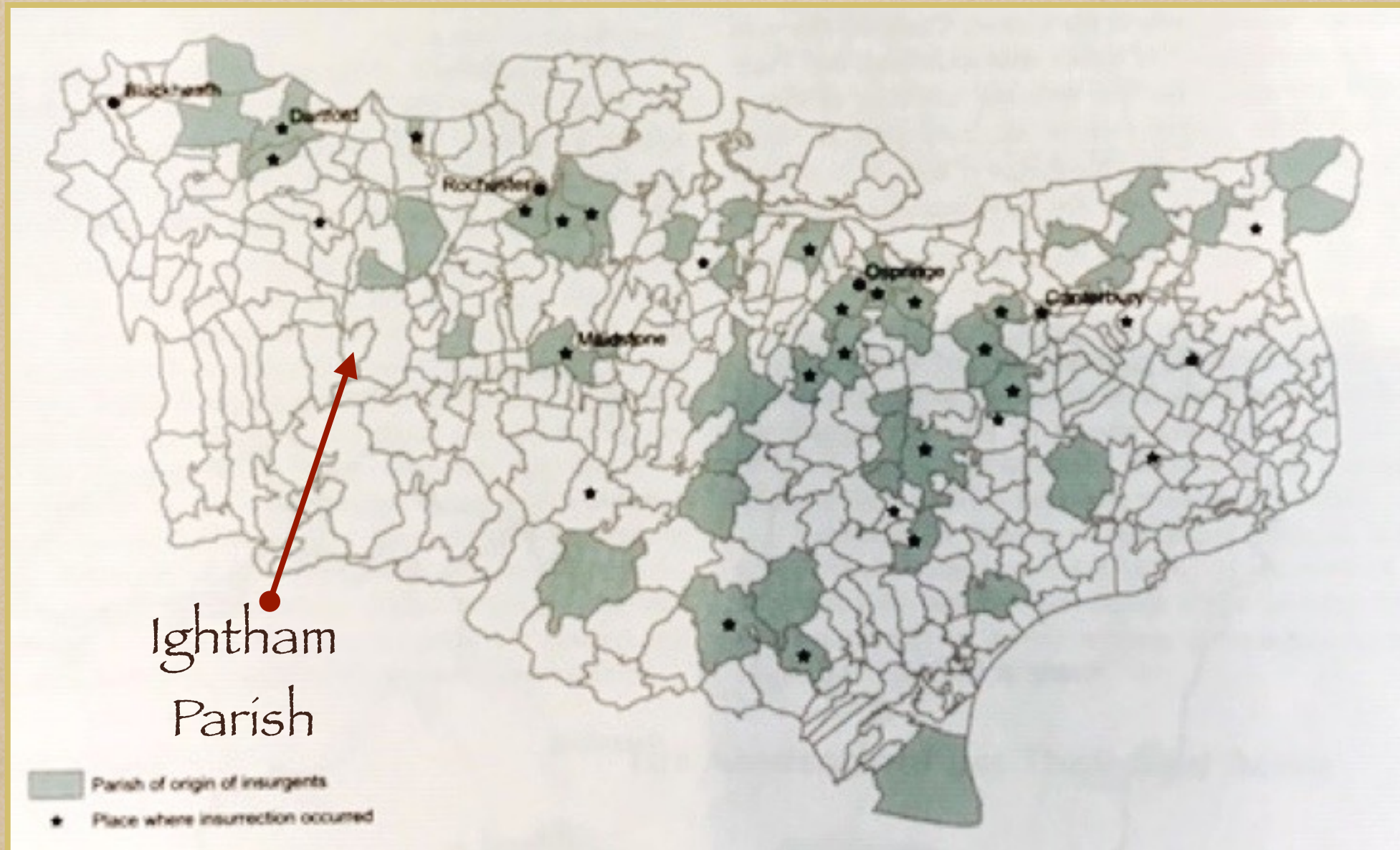
1334/5

Hundred of Wrotham

HUNDRED OF WROTHAM		
Hamon Godwyne	4s.	0d.
Wid. of Wm. Mounthe	1s.	4d.
Pet. Renger	2s.	0d.
Lambert Tanner	3s.	0d.
Hen. atte Hothe	2s.	0d.
Wid. of Rd. de Nepakere	5s.	0d.
Pet. atte Hothe	12s.	0d.
Adam Abraham	4s.	0d.

Rd. Herchamp	2s.	10d.	Walt. son of Ralph de Stikelhe	2s.	0d.
Nich. atte Fenno	12s.	0d.	Walt. de Croulonde	6s.	8d.
Robt. Stroket	16s.	0d.	Rd. le Coun	1s.	4d.
Rd. Bounde	1s.	4d.	Rob. Wolford	2s.	0d.
Wm. Acard	5s.	4d.	Wm. atte Hale	5s.	0d.
Jn. atte Fenno	2s.	0d.	Ralph Bakere	1s.	4d.
Robt. atte Fenno	1s.	8d.	Rd. Ropere	2s.	0d.
Jn. Ketel	3s.	0d.	Jn. Godwyne	1s.	4d.
Robt. de Wynefeld	3s.	0d.	Wm. le Wherthe	2s.	0d.
Jn. de Ledes	3s.	0d.	Steph. Sterre	2s.	0d.
Geoff. Gileberd	3s.	0d.	Steph. Lorel	2s.	0d.
Rd. atte Hale	6s.	0d.	Jn. de Berdesole	3s.	0d.
Jn. atte Werthe	1s.	6d.	Wm. atte Sente	2s.	6d.
Thos. Walraund	10s.	0d.	Rog. Sorang'	2s.	0d.
Rd. atte Bourne	2s.	0d.	Sim. le Bos	1s.	0d.
Adam Smyth	1s.	4d.	Wm. le Smyth	3s.	0d.
Walt. le Hore	6s.	0d.	Thos. de Eytone	3s.	4d.
Rd. Derman	1s.	6d.	Steph. atte Hecche	4s.	0d.
Jn. Pol	1s.	8d.	Nich. de Mikelfelde	2s.	0d.
Robt. Follere	3s.	4d.	Rd. Bakere	4s.	0d.
Wm. Bertyn	2s.	0d.	Acard de Aldham	1s.	4d.
Walt. Makefair	3s.	0d.	Jn. Bede	3s.	0d.
Jn. Louwyne	3s.	0d.	Jn. Smertoker	2s.	0d.
Benedict Wolfriche	3s.	6d.	Rd. de Elderbery	2s.	0d.
[w. 11d]			Jn. Seyncier	11s.	0d.
Jn. Follere	2s.	0d.	Wm. Moraunt	3s.	4d.
Jn. Kyng'	1s.	10d.	Margery de Pocham	10s.	0d.
Wm. Wolfriche	4s.	0d.	Jn. Farman	4s.	0d.
Jn. Lefberghe	4s.	0d.	Wm. atte Hecche	3s.	0d.
Wm. Tayllour	1s.	0d.	Wm. atte Hoke	1s.	4d.
Matilda Wolfriche	1s.	6d.	Robt. Pary	2s.	0d.
Jn. atte Thorne	12s.	0d.	Wm. de Ospringe	2s.	0d.
Wm. le Reade	3s.	4d.	Mabel le Hore	4s.	0d.
Rd. le Reade	1s.	6d.	Robt. de Croulonde	4s.	0d.
Laur. de Holedene	3s.	0d.	Pet. de Esshe	6s.	8d.
Jn. Hendyman	3s.	0d.	Thos. Hore	4s.	0d.
Rog. Bavant	8s.	0d.	Jn. Hobel	6s.	8d.
Jn. Michel	4s.	0d.	Steph. Farman	6s.	8d.
Jn. Benoyt	2s.	0d.	Total	£20. 15s. 0d.	
Jn. Kenewy	2s.	0d.	[102 names]	[£19. 18s. 4d.]	
Jn. Welikemde	3s.	0d.			
Wm. de Schibourne	1s.	0d.			
Barth. Colyn and Wm. his brother	4s.	0d.	HUNDRED OF WACCHELSTONE (WASHLINGSTONE)		
Pet. le Moyster	2s.	0d.	Thos. de Linleghe	3s.	0d.
Isolda Inge	£1. 13s.	0d.	Gilbt. de Crolcherst	2s.	9d.
Jn. Godefray	6s.	0d.	Geoff. Jud	1s.	3d.
Jn. Roter	2s.	0d.	Rog. Bugehorn	1s.	0d.
Robt. Longe	5s.	0d.	Rog. atte Melle	2s.	6d.
Jn. and Robt. sons of Hugh atte Lane	2s.	0d.	Jordan Odam	1s.	11d.
Hen. le Choun	2s.	0d.	Wm. Herberd	4s.	2d.
Wm. le Tannere	3s.	0d.	Jn. atte Sandhelle	1s.	3d.
Ralph Tannere	3s.	0d.	Wm. Huchoun	1s.	6d.
Robt. atte Fenno	1s.	4d.	Wm. de Berhamme	2s.	5d.
Gregory Tailour	2s.	0d.	Jn. Watte	1s.	0d.
Jn. Curteys	4s.	0d.	Jn. Wodecok'	1s.	0d.
Walt. son of Thos. de Stikelhe	6s.	0d.	Walt. de Chiticrofte	3s.	11d.
Ralph de Stikehelde	5s.	0d.	Walt. Parstepe	1s.	2d.
			Thos. Dodehurst	3s.	1d.
			Jn. Sinnyngloghe	2s.	0d.
			Wm. de Hothersche	6s.	0d.

'Peasants' Revolt', 1381



[From: Terence Lawson & David Killingray (eds), 2004. 'An Historical Atlas of Kent.' Chichester: Phillimore: p. 60]

'An Empty Land'

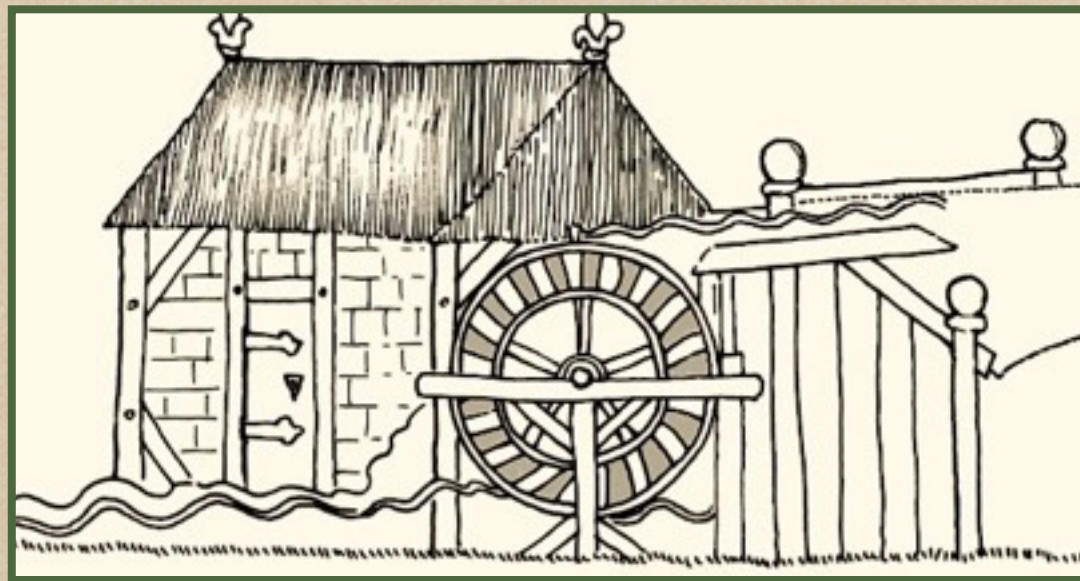
'People sought the remedy of law, the durability of records, in efforts to enshrine and make safe so much that was new: tenancies, contracts of domestic service, arrangements for retirement, enclosure of fields for pasture, membership in fraternities.'

[Miri Rubin, 2006. 'The Hollow Crown. A History of Britain in the Late Middle Ages'. London: Penguin Books: p.201]

Some Further Reading

- ◆ C. T. Allmand, 1988. 'The Hundred Years War: England and France at War, c.1300-c.1450.' Cambridge: CUP.
- ◆ H.C. Darby (ed.), 1963. 'An Historical Geography of England before A.D. 1800.' Cambridge: CUP.
- ◆ Terence Lawson & David Killingray (eds), 2004. 'An Historical Atlas of Kent.' Chichester: Phillimore.
- ◆ Miri Rubin, 2006. 'The Hollow Crown. A History of Britain in the Late Middle Ages'. London: Penguin Books.

Thank You for Coming



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