

# ELIZABETHAN AND EARLY STUART THANET: THE EXPANSION OF EDUCATION PROVISION AND ITS IMPACT ON LITERACY LEVELS

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*This paper examines the religious background and motivating factors in the expansion of education in Thanet in the early modern period. The likely number of children (boys) provided with schooling is calculated. Documentary sources provide evidence of the typical backgrounds of teachers employed and the nature of the lessons provided. Some estimate is made of the improvements in literacy levels which resulted.*

To the early modern mind, education marked the difference between savagery and godliness. The author of the 1616 volume *The Office of Christian Parents* warned that children who were not sent to school would grow up to become ‘idle ... vile and abject persons, liars, thieves, evil beasts, slow bellies and good for nothing’.<sup>1</sup> This paper looks at the spread of education in early modern Thanet.

## *The Schools*

Our knowledge of schools in this period stems from church records. Teachers had to be licensed by bishops and visitations often made reference to the existence of schools as well as occasionally to disputes regarding their conduct. The Isle of Thanet consisted of seven parishes at this period and schools were opened as follows:

St Peter, Broadstairs	1575
St Laurence, Ramsgate	1578
Minster	1581
St John, Margate	1589
Birchington	1603
Monkton	1607
St Nicholas at Wade with Sarre	1616

All of these schools were elementaries or petties, what we would today regard as combined infant or junior schools. Their role was to provide very basic instruction with most children leaving them to go to work though some would have gone on to

grammar school. These early schools mostly existed within the church buildings. At St John's and St Laurence, there is evidence on the pillars of where the screen stood which separated off the school from the nave and the first licence to Birchington parish was for the school 'held in Monkton Chapel'. At St Laurence too, there remains evidence of graffiti on one of the columns showing where children learnt their letters. At Minster, the schoolhouse was set up within the church and there were complaints that the carpenter had failed to secure the area fully which meant it was possible for people to go through the school door into the main body of the church and rob it.<sup>2</sup>

There were two exceptions to the church-based schools. The first was that at Wood in Birchington where a separate wooden schoolhouse was built attached to the ruins of the chapel. The will of Henry Crispe which was made on 24 November 1573 refers to Woodchurch free school 'late builded'. How it came to be built is uncertain but it was likely the gift of the Crispe family and the first on the island. The school did not last long and as there are no records of it employing any teachers, it may never have been used at all. In 1602, it was reported that the schoolhouse had been demolished on the orders of another Henry Crispe who wanted to build a house on the site.<sup>3</sup> The second was the school endowed by Thomas Paramor in 1636 which operated from a house at St Nicholas which he left for the schoolmaster. This was established for up to ten children but did not open until October 1640.<sup>4</sup>

### *Motivating Factors*

Education was very much of a novelty in the Tudor period. In 1540, there were just six schools in the entire county of Kent.<sup>5</sup> In the literature of the period, the reason for establishing a school was simple: it was to teach people to read so that they could study the Word of God. The great humanist scholar Desiderius Erasmus spoke in the introduction to his Greek New Testament of his dream:

I would desire that all women should read the Gospel and Paul's Epistles and I would to God they were translated into the tongues of all men so that they might not only be read and known. ... I would to God the ploughman would sing a text of Scripture at his plough and that the weaver at his loom with this would drive away the tediousness of time, ... I would that all the communication of the Christian should be of the Scriptures.<sup>6</sup>

Erasmus' words were written before the Reformation and his horror at the divisions unleashed by that event caused him to retreat somewhat. He remained a Catholic and nervousness about allowing all classes of people to read the scriptures grew.<sup>7</sup> In 1543, Henry VIII restricted Bible reading to men of yeomen rank and above, women of the nobility, and even then required that they read it silently to themselves and certainly did not discuss it. Interpretation was a matter for the church alone. Cardinal Pole summed up the traditional Catholic view that people should 'absorb the faith through the liturgy ... and in attentive and receptive participation in the ceremonies and sacraments of the church' and that Bible reading was dangerous for the masses because it 'maketh many to fall into heresies'.<sup>8</sup>

Yet the translation of the scriptures into English created a desire to read on the part of many and meant that the reformed church now saw teaching as a duty.<sup>9</sup>

Initially there was a hope that money from the Dissolution in the 1530s would be spent on building schools but it was to take over forty years before schools were established in Thanet and the timing may be significant. Those at St Peter's and St Laurence were established by the Reverend Simon Stone who was the first vicar to have been born after the Reformation. In 1570, the Pope had excommunicated Elizabeth I and said that nobody should obey her laws, rather they should revolt and depose her. In April 1571, letters regarding the Ridolfi plot had been discovered in nearby Dover. In 1572, the massacre of St Bartholomew's in France had caused Protestant refugees to stream into Kent and people in Thanet would have heard all the horrific details. This would have strengthened anti-Catholic sentiment which was already strong due to memories of the burnings in Canterbury under Bloody Mary, something still within living memory. The new schools were not only to spread the Gospel and hopefully reduce social problems by encouraging godly behaviour but they were part of national defence.

However, the early schools faced a cautious response. In 1581, William Stafford noted that the more learning somebody had, the more vexations he faced. Recalling the number of people who had lost their lives or liberties in the previous thirty years as opinions changed, he wrote: 'who, seeing instead of honour and preferment, dishonour and hindrance recompensed for a reward of learning: will put his child to that science that may bring him no better fruit than this?'.<sup>10</sup> Thomas Cranmer had previously criticised Thomas Cheyney, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports saying: 'people dare not apply themselves to read God's word for fear of your threats at assizes and sessions'.<sup>11</sup> Fear takes time to quell and many people in Elizabethan Thanet would have remembered Mary's commissioners coming to take the English Bibles away.

Given that the Church's desire was to spread the Word and encourage godliness, it is not surprising that teaching people to write was not seen as a priority. A person who could read might study the Bible and see what God expected of them and hopefully form their life accordingly: being able to write was not likely to contribute to them being a better Christian. For many people in early modern Thanet, the ability to write was not essential. It would not help the fisherman catch more fish or the ploughman work faster. In 1618, Nicholas Breton wrote a telling account of attitudes to education:

Farmers know their cattle by the heads, and shepherds know their sheep by the brand, what more learning have we need of, but that experience will teach us without book? We can learn to plough and harrow, sow and reap, plant and prune, thrash and fan, winnow and grind, brew and bake, and all without book.

He acknowledged that some education might be beneficial:

This is all we go to school for: to read common prayers at church, and set down common prices at markets, write a letter, and make a bond, set down the day of our births, our marriage day, and make our wills when we are sick, for the disposing of our goods when we are dead.

But qualified that by adding

If we cannot write, we have the Clerk of the church, or the Schoolmaster of the town

to help us, who for our plain matters will serve our turns well enough, and therefore what need we trouble our heads with writing of Letters?<sup>12</sup>

There are many wills made by people on Thanet which state that they were written on the testator's behalf by the parish clerk, schoolteacher or vicar, for example the Reverend Edward Edgworth wrote the wills of John Balden who was illiterate (1609) and his colleague the Reverend Philip Harrison who was too ill to do more than sign the document (1607). Bartholomew Martindale, described as a non-practising teacher due to having been excommunicated, wrote the will of George Grant (1617). Robert Webb wrote numerous wills for the parishioners of St Peter's including Roger Rockin (1583), Alexander Child (1597), Thomas Sprackling (1611).

Despite the invention of the printing press, books remained expensive luxuries so parishioners who wanted to read the Holy Bible were most likely to need to look at the copy in the parish church, although the creation of the so called Geneva Bibles which were pocket sized and priced from seven shillings meant that they were within the price range of yeomen and master craftsmen by the end of Elizabeth's reign. Whilst some people would have wanted to learn to read so they could study the Word and to follow the services in church or to lead prayers at home, others would have had different ambitions. Farmers and fishermen may have wanted to read so they could consult almanacs which provided details of tides and moon positions, sunrise and sunset times, dates of fairs and which offered advice on crops, healthcare and useful information on topics such as weights and measures, calculating interest and historical events. The popularity of almanacs amongst craftsmen was satirised by Shakespeare in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* where the actors use one to find out if the moon is due to be shining brightly on the night of their performance (3, i, 45-46). It may be imagined that many in Thanet would have purchased the almanacs written each year by Gabriel Frende of Canterbury, copies of which are held in the Cathedral library. Another popular writer was Thomas Bretnor who also included details of legal terms and distances to foreign ports in his books. Priced generally around 2d., almanacs were within the price range of most people.<sup>13</sup> A further motivator may have been the desire to sing, be it psalms in church or the latest ballads which would have been sold by travelling chapmen. Some people may have been motivated by the desire to read news broadsheets increasingly available from the 1630s onwards so they could see what was happening in the world.

Yet it is evident from wills that a belief in education became increasingly popular. Valentine Culmer, a fisherman at St Peter's, in 1625 left the income from a piece of land to keep his four sons at school. Thomas Coppin, a fisherman at St Laurence in 1643 left instructions that his four year old son was to be sent to school 'to learn to read and write and all other education as is fit for him'.<sup>14</sup> This increased interest in education can be shown to relate to the changes in curriculum. The earliest schools included rudimentary Latin to help prepare boys for entry to grammar schools at Canterbury or Sandwich and these did not prove especially popular to husbandmen or sailors but when grammar was dropped and replaced with arithmetic, numbers of pupils increased.

*Continuity*

Today, we tend to assume that schools will continue to exist unless numbers of pupils on the roll fall dramatically or there is some disaster such as a fire. This was not the case in early modern Thanet. The records show that the existence of a school depended primarily on the availability of a teacher. With schools having just one member of staff, it was inevitable that if the teacher died, moved or became infirm, the school would close. In some cases, parishes were able to recruit a new teacher fairly quickly which meant that the children would have had some continuity of education but in other cases, schools closed never to reopen at all or for several years at a time. At Minster, a licence was given to open a school in the north aisle of the church in 1686 when it was described as a new foundation, the previous school on the premises clearly having been closed for decades.<sup>15</sup> The same happened at St Peter's where Elizabeth Lovejoy left money in 1694 to found a school for the poor in the south-west corner of St Peter's.<sup>16</sup>

*The Teachers*

The fact that teachers were licensed means that it is possible to learn more about some of the individuals who took up the profession in early modern Thanet. In each case, the criteria for selection was that they were men famed for their 'learning and dexterity in teaching as for sober and honest conversation and also for right understanding of God's true religion'.<sup>17</sup>

The first teacher to be licensed was Robert Webb at St Peter's on 20 December 1575. He had married Avice Norwood two months earlier when his occupation was listed as a yeoman. The couple went on to have nine children of their own, seven of whom – three sons and four daughters – survived infancy. It is likely, therefore, that Robert was in his mid twenties when he was first appointed. Robert was still teaching in 1596 but it is unclear how long he continued to do so. In 1618, a year before his death, a report was made that the church had employed the services of an unlicensed teacher named Francis Ward and in Robert's own will made on 24 June 1619, he again referred to himself as a yeoman. He left no books or money toward upkeep of the school and there is no further reference to there being a teacher at St Peter's until 1630 when John Baker agreed to take on the role. He was forty-eight, a father of six, and the parish clerk. Baker remained in the parish until his death in 1661. The Bishop's transcripts of the register show he was regarded as a gentleman when he died, the same status as shown on his marriage licence in 1630.

The long tenure of the teachers at St Peter's was in marked contrast to other parishes. At Minster, for example, John Busher, the parish clerk, was appointed in 1582. He was replaced by William Moss eleven months later. Moss stayed for just over two years and was followed by Robert Alcock who lasted twenty months. The next teacher was Lewis Davis who managed two years and it was not until the appointment of George Read on 4 April 1589 that a degree of stability was provided. Read stayed for almost a decade before moving to Chillenden as a farmer and subsequently becoming a merchant. After him came Richard Railton who stayed for up to six years. An unnamed teacher was present in 1607 but the next reference is to a teacher named Mills who appeared briefly in 1614 when it was noted that he

did not have a license and the archdeacon was clearly insufficiently impressed to recommend him for one.<sup>18</sup> The probability is that the school remained closed until Thomas Brent was appointed in 1621. He stayed in the parish until 1649 although he had ceased teaching by 1634. Not a great deal is known about these men. Busher was a thirty-one year-old yeoman and father of three. Moss was recently married and went on to have six daughters in the parish before moving to the Sandwich area. Alcock was probably approaching forty and came from Canterbury where he and his wife had had children in the 1570s. Lewis Davis was the first teacher to have a degree, something he shared with George Read. Railton was simply listed as having proved his literacy to the episcopal court.

The first teacher at Margate was James Duval who was appointed in 1589. Absolutely nothing more is known about him but by 1591 the teacher was John Alsop and in 1594 it was a man named Johnson. Neither of these last two were formally licensed and it may be assumed they were just stand-ins as the parish struggled to keep the school open while they recruited. The school clearly had its problems for in 1598, Margaret Cates marched into the classroom and in front of the scholars started to stone the teacher.<sup>19</sup> Unsurprisingly he left and in September 1599, the vicar Robert Jenkinson took over teaching. Jenkinson had an M.A. from Cambridge and must have been around fifty when he joined the school but his death in May 1601 meant he was not there long. Given he remained vicar, it must be wondered how much time he was able to devote to the job anyway. It took until October 1603 for a new teacher to be found but John Elfrith only stayed three months, moving on to teach in Dover. William Norwood senior, a yeoman well into his sixties, took on the job in January 1604 but only for a few weeks. He was followed by the new curate Nathaniel Jackson who stayed two years. The parish seemed very keen on employing clergy as teachers and Jackson was followed by Richard Read and Edward Edgworth who both served as curates. Clergy were often the best educated men in a parish but not the most wealthy so many appreciated the extra income which teaching gave them.

Thomas May became the eighth teacher in ten years in 1608 and he stayed until his death in December 1615, although it cannot be known whether he was teaching to this date or had been absent due to illness for some time previous. At the time of his marriage in 1600, May had been listed as a gentleman. Another curate, Henry Tunstall, took on the job a few months after his death and he remained there for a year. William Stone, the parish clerk, taught for up to two years and was followed by Nicholas Osborne, a twenty-four year-old son of a deceased local yeoman and May's successor as parish clerk. Osborne died in February 1629/30 but had presumably been unable to work for some time since the parish had appointed another teacher in May 1628. Two years afterwards, Edmund Cobb, the curate took over the school where he remained for three years until he moved to Ash. The parish was without a teacher for a year until Richard Sladden agreed to take on the role in the spring of 1634. He was most likely a local man given a family of that name had lived in the parish in the late Elizabethan era but he died after three years. The fact that the parish was able to appoint a new teacher just a month after his burial would suggest that he had been ill for some time giving them time to recruit. Thomas Harding, a yeoman aged thirty-six, was also the parish clerk and he remained in post until his own death in 1645.



The only other school on the island to have a reasonable degree of continuity was that at St Laurence, Ramsgate. John Cole was the first teacher and he started in 1578.<sup>20</sup> After two years, he was replaced by Robert Bacon who moved on to a school at Hythe fifteen months later. After this precarious start, the school achieved some stability with the appointment of John Hewitt. A father of ten with three sons who survived infancy, he was around fifty and his licence shows he had a reference from the curate. Hewitt continued to teach for eighteen years when he was succeeded by William Wood, the first graduate. Wood taught for two years though he remained in the parish where he died in 1605. Thomas Crodwell took over in 1603 but he left some time before 1607. Lewis Rogers was appointed in 1612 though the visitation report shows he had started a little while before this. He had a stormy relationship with the vicar who accused him of being a ‘common ale-house haunter and gamester’. Whether this was true or not is unknown but the vicar may have been motivated by money for he added that Rogers was reducing his ‘small means of maintenance’ by taking pupils.<sup>21</sup> Either way, Rogers left and was replaced by John Evers, a brewer aged around fifty who taught for three years. He was replaced by the graduate Francis Ward, who happily gave his occupation as schoolteacher when he married a year later, although he had by that stage moved on to St Peter’s where he was prosecuted for instructing children without a licence. Whether Ward stayed there or not is uncertain but ten years later, he was re-appointed to St Laurence. By that time, the parish had employed the services of two other teachers, Hammon Turner and Richard Kennett. Turner, almost sixty when appointed, had taught for two years then died. A year elapsed before Kennett took over. Related by marriage to the vicar, Kennett had been described as a tailor when he married four years before. He died in October 1625 and the parish remained without a teacher until the return of Ward in 1628. He seems to have departed when the Reverend William Dunkyn took over as vicar at Whitsun 1629 and as schoolteacher in 1630. Although well educated, Dunkyn was not popular in the parish. He was close friends with Adam Sprackling, a man who abused and later murdered his wife, and an eye witness described Dunkyn as ‘a drunken, scandalous, railing Priest’.<sup>22</sup> Despite this, he was favoured by Laud and a licensed preacher across the diocese. It may be that this work prevented him continuing his teaching for by 1634 it was reported that the parish had no teacher and there is no trace of another being appointed in his stead.<sup>23</sup>

The other schools on the island were rather short-lived. Charles Stone, son of the Reverend Simon Stone of St Laurence and St Peter, was licensed to teach at Monkton in August 1607 but just six weeks later he was appointed curate at Wittersham so it is probable that he never actually taught a single lesson. In 1617, the then curate and Henry Montstephen’s wife were both reported for teaching children without due authority. This is the only reference to a woman teaching on the island. As there is no further reference to either teaching or being granted a licence, it is likely that they were ordered to cease.<sup>24</sup> As Mrs Montstephen had twins in September 1617, she probably had other concerns. At Birchington, the curate Thomas Gifford began teaching in 1603 but his length of tenure is uncertain. In September 1614, another curate Silas Hawker took on the job for an unknown period although it was clearly less than four years for he went on to be vicar of Lower Hardres in January 1618. William Tye, curate of Birchington with responsibility for Monkton chapel

was licensed to teach at Christmas 1598 but he had moved on by 1603. The first teacher appointed at St Nicholas was John Bright, a yeoman, in 1616. He died in 1620 and there is no indication of another teacher being appointed until 1630 when the curate William Hartley took on the job. Four years later, he moved on to Herne and a five-year interval followed before William Watts, a twenty-seven year-old recently married son of a parish gentleman, accepted the job. The length of his tenure of the role is unknown.

It may be asked what prompted teachers to take up the occupation. In some of the cases quoted, they were ordained clergy who were trying to either supplement their income whilst ministering or else use their time productively while they were between parishes. In the case of tradesmen who taught, this could have been to boost income but was more likely to be a temporary move occasioned by an injury or illness which prohibited them following their usual trade. The small size of the schools would have necessarily meant that the income available to the teacher was likely to be in the region of three to five shillings a week which suggests that teaching would have been a part-time occupation. The greater part of the teacher's income would have come from outside work such as the writing of wills. In 1639, William Curling was paid 20s. to write the will of Richard Pearce and it may be presumed teachers charged a similar amount.<sup>25</sup> The one benefit which the Thanet teachers appeared to have judging by the various assessments was exemption from rates.

### *Economics*

During this period, a professional full-time teacher in a grammar school could expect to earn £10 a year with many towns offering a house as well as an extra incentive to attract the best candidates. Teachers in elementaries or petties earned from £3 to £6.<sup>26</sup> As the Thanet churches had annual incomes of between £10 and £30, there was no possibility of them offering a paid position and the idea that schools were expected to be self-supporting is indicated by the lack of any reference in parish records to any related expenses. The exception was that at St Nicholas which Thomas Paramour endowed providing a house and £6 per annum for the schoolmaster and capital of £80 for establishment and maintenance. Elsewhere, fees were charged to parents and these might be due weekly or quarterly with parents expected to pay even if their child was absent in order that their place in the school be kept open. It is unknown what any of the Thanet schools charged but in 1634 at Maidenhead (Berks.) the charges were 4d. a week to learn to read and 6d. a week for those who wanted to learn to write, to cast simple accounts or to be prepared for grammar school.<sup>27</sup> Additional charges would have been made for candles, paper, quills, materials to make ink and loan of knives to cut pens. There is no evidence in the church buildings of fireplaces in the school area so it may be supposed that children were required to study in the cold, something which prevented additional cost to their parents but which probably did not assist their concentration or enjoyment of school.

There is little detail available for Thanet wages at this time but it is believed that by the end of Elizabeth's reign, labourers were earning around 5d. a day and craftsmen around 1s. 6d.<sup>28</sup> The author of the 1616 *Office for Christian Parents*



condemned the working classes for their ‘niggardliness’ if they failed to send their children to school piously adding that ‘though the parents leave no goods, yet the benefit of a good education supplieth all other things’, but the cost of education could represent a third of a poor man’s household income.<sup>29</sup> It is likely, therefore, that few labourers were able to send their offspring especially if they had more than one.<sup>30</sup>

### *The size of schools*

By tracing through the lives of all the children born on the island between 1560 and 1620, it is possible to assess the maximum potential size of the schools. Given the lack of any records, there is no way of knowing exactly the number who attended each school and there would have been considerable fluctuation in these figures anyway for a number of reasons. Seasonal factors would have affected attendance and it is possible that small parish schools actually closed during harvest tide so that the pupils, and quite possibly the teacher too, could go and earn some additional cash. Parents had to pay for their children to be educated so there would have been times when they lacked the money and had to keep the children home. Three of the parishes on the island were largely maritime in nature with many families dependent on the sea, either for trade or coastal fishing, so poor weather or a delayed ship could have a disastrous effect on income. Another factor was the geography of the parish. Children did not universally start school at a certain age but when their parents believed they were old enough. Some began as early as four while others might not start until they were eight or nine. Parents who lived nearest the school would have been happier to send their children along when they were quite young but those who lived a mile or two away would wait until their offspring were older on grounds that a very small child was not able to walk so far travelling to and from school each day. For many, education would have begun when the boy was breeched.

The length of time a child attended school was also subject to variables such as whether the parents could afford to send them, what they wanted them to learn and how quickly the child was able to get the necessary skills. A bright child might learn to read in six months and leave while another might struggle on for several years. Educationalists of the time tended to assume it would take approximately a year to teach a child to read with a further year to teach them to write meaning that they would attend school for up to two years but in practice there would have been many children who received a lot less or a lot more schooling than this.

Notwithstanding the difficulties of calculation and accepting the necessary limitations of such an effort, it is evident that all the schools were likely to be small. **Table 1** shows the number of boys available in each parish. All the licences granted specified that boys only were to be taught and this is in line with illustrations in text books of the time and local wills where fathers left money for their sons only to be educated.<sup>31</sup>

Assuming that at most only half of the boys born were sent to school at all and that they stayed for an average of two years, it might be estimated that the schools at Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs generally contained between ten and twenty children while those at Birchington and Minster were nearer five to ten. The low

TABLE 1. POTENTIAL PUPILS AVAILABLE PER PARISH (BOYS)

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Total born 1560-1619</i>	<i>Died before age of 5</i>	<i>Known to be alive at 5</i>	<i>Fate not known</i>	<i>Max. available p.a.</i>	<i>Min. available p.a.</i>	<i>Ave. max annual intake</i>
Birchington	484	138	267	79	6.92	5.34	6
Minster	457	157	242	58	6.00	4.84	5
Margate	846	171	526	149	13.50	10.52	12
Ramsgate	826	173	533	120	13.06	10.66	12
Broadstairs	741	125	514	102	12.32	10.28	11
Monkton*	40	7	20	13	1.94	1.18	2
St Nicholas*	114	28	48	38	3.31	1.85	3

\* Parish records are incomplete. Over the full fifty years, it is likely that 117 boys were born in Monkton and 219 in St Nicholas.

number of children available in Monkton and St Nicholas would have made it very difficult for schools there to be viable.

It is impossible to obtain accurate figures for families migrating into the area but there is no evidence of any great population explosion at this period suggesting that this factor did not seriously impact school numbers.

### *The Lessons*

The purpose of an education was primarily to teach children to read. Letters were learnt orally and then from horn books, a sheet of paper affixed to a board which contained the alphabet and Lord's Prayer. Children were taught to recognise the consonants first and then vowels. They went on to diphthongs and then syllables such as ba, be, bi, bo, bu, ab, eb, ib, ob, ub. Illustrations and books show children being left alone to study their horn books then working in pairs with an older child testing the younger on his letters.

Once the letters and syllables had been learnt, words could be formed and children were given simple Bible verses and prayers to read. The Royal Injunctions of 1559 required that teachers 'accustom their scholars reverently to learn such sentences of Scripture as shall be most expedient to induce them to all godliness' and use would have been made of a primer containing key Christian texts as well as prayers for morning and bedtime and graces for meals.<sup>32</sup> The fact that memorising texts was highly valued meant that probably a number of pupils simply learnt the texts and recited them to the teacher rather than actually reading them, a risk which contemporary polemicists recognised when they recommended teachers point to single words only to test them. Whilst there was no set standard for children to achieve, Brinsley said that after a year at school, children should know their alphabet, the Apostle's Creed, the Ten Commandments and Lord's Prayer, be able to read any of the metrical psalms as chosen at random by the teacher and to have read the New Testament.<sup>33</sup>

With the exception of the primer, all of the books used to teach reading would have been available in the church itself. Each church had a copy of the Holy Bible and Erasmus' *Paraphrases* plus a Book of Common Prayer and some would have had a copy of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* better known as *The Book of Martyrs*.<sup>34</sup> It was recommended that reading exercises be set from Genesis and later the Gospels.<sup>35</sup> The ease with which these could be accomplished would have been affected by the typesets of the books themselves. St Laurence replaced its 'old bible' in 1634 which may mean it had been using one of Henry VIII's Great Bibles until this date.<sup>36</sup>

Although today it is usual to teach children to write their letters alongside the act of teaching them to recognise them, in Tudor and Stuart times this was not the case. Learning to write was seen as a separate vocational skill which should only be attempted once a child was proficient in reading. Given that many children never reached this stage, the number of potential pupils for writing was small. To further reduce it, the cost of writing lessons was almost double the price of reading ones and it may be readily presumed that a number of parents who had saved up in order to have their child taught to read were either unable or unwilling to pay for them to learn to write as well. Moreover, the licences show that some of the teachers were appointed only to teach reading with writing never even being placed on the curriculum. This was the case with the first school at St Peter's and that at St John's from 1599 to 1601 and St Laurence from 1581 to 1582.

The earliest formation of letters would have been in sand trays although it may be that as the Isle of Thanet is largely chalk based, local schools took advantage of this resource. Paper, universally used today for drawing and writing, would have been scarce in the schools due to cost. A small pack which could be cut to produce forty-eight small sheets cost 4*d*.

Ink had to be mixed by the pupils or teacher and recipes for this were given in books of the period. One such, given in verse to help the students remember it, ran:

To make common ink, of wine take a quart  
Two ounces of gum, let that be a part  
Five ounces of galls of copperas take thee  
Long standing doth make it better to be  
If wine ye do want, rain water is best  
And as much stuff as above at the least  
If ink be too thick put vinegar in  
For water doth make the colour too dim<sup>37</sup>

Soot could be added to make the ink blacker but that tended to clog the pens making it rather impractical in a classroom environment. Salt could be added to help the ink last longer.

Pens had to be cut ideally from goose quills but from raven feathers in the case of poverty. Clement Francis' popular *The Petie Schole* included three pages of instructions on how to cut the pen advising children to turn it 'upon the inside of your right thumb and half a quarter of an inch above the rift, bring down a slash with your knife ... Cut the nib upon your left thumbnail: first a slant toward you then a midslant with the knife's edge turned more down toward your nail'.<sup>38</sup>

With regard to writing, children would have practised copying out Bible texts. Secretaryhand was the preferred style of lettering but some children may have learnt

italic or chancery. They never indulged in creative writing and writing out their name was positively discouraged because it was recognised that names did not always follow the rules of spelling which were being taught.<sup>39</sup> It is for this reason that it is not unusual to find people of the same family writing their name differently.

Some children would have been taught 'to cast accounts' which meant learning to do addition and subtraction using counters or stones which were laid out on the floor in rows rather like an abacus. The sums might involve money but could also use other weights and measures such as bushels and acres. This was an additional subject for which parents had to pay an extra fee and was only available at St Laurence school from 1578 to 1581.

It was not until the early seventeenth century that conventional arithmetic using pen and paper was added as a school subject and significantly it only featured on the syllabuses of the coastal schools at Ramsgate, Broadstairs and Margate and that only from 1627, 1620 and 1628 respectively. These were places where it might be thought that potential sailors and merchants would find the skill useful but the change was also to benefit the churches themselves. It was around this time that their accounts changed from using Roman numerals to Arabic and it followed that they would need people trained up in the new system of reckoning.<sup>40</sup> Arithmetic meant that children could be taught multiplication and division also and how to solve problems such as 'A bushel of wheat costs 3s and a 4lb loaf costs a penny. If the wheat price goes down to 2s, how much would the loaf weigh if a penny was still charged?' The answer was 6lb which was calculated by multiplying the first number (3) by the second (4) and then dividing by the third (2) – a practice known as the rule of three.<sup>41</sup> To check their work, children were taught to cast out nines, a method of checking which was still in use in Kent schools in the 1770s.<sup>42</sup> Whilst we regard arithmetic as a regular part of a basic education, it was unusual at the time for it formed no part of grammar school education before the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>43</sup>

The school day began and ended with an act of worship which involved prayers, the reading of a chapter from the Holy Bible and the singing of a psalm. At Minster, it was reported in 1581 that John Busher was teaching the pupils to sing as well as to read and write. As parish clerk, Busher would have had a leading role in worship and this suggests that the school formed the nucleus of a church choir for singing psalms.<sup>44</sup> Such song schools had existed at larger churches and cathedrals in the middle ages but were less common in the late sixteenth century when music in worship was discouraged. The catechism was taught on Saturdays by the minister not the schoolteacher.

Some of the schools were also able to offer in certain years the subject of grammar. At Minster, for example, it was taught from 1586 for around twenty years but at St Laurence it was available only 1579-81, 1600-5 and 1618-25, at Margate from 1603-8 and 1630-3 and at St Nicholas 1630-4. It is impossible to know whether offering Latin was in response to local demand or if it reflected the ideals of the school founders who saw it as raising the status. With church services now in English and the increased availability of books in English, the need for it was decreasing but it remained a staple of a classical education. The entrance requirements for the grammar schools at Sandwich and Canterbury are unknown but were probably similar to that at Southwark which required a child at seven to be able to read and write English and Latin, to know the fundamentals of Latin

grammar and ideally to be able to translate a simple Latin letter from Sturmius' collection.<sup>45</sup> Although a considerable amount of grammar could be taught by oral repetition, translation would have required the use of textbooks and these would have cost money. Lily's *Grammar* cost 5*d.* while works of Latin authors and dictionaries cost up to 2*s.* each.<sup>46</sup> Parents would have paid extra for grammar lessons and with the costs of books plus writing equipment, the only pupils would have been sons of yeomen and gentlemen.<sup>47</sup>

Nothing is known about how the school day was organised at local level. Grammar schools operated from six in the morning to five in the afternoon six days a week with a two-hour break for lunch.<sup>48</sup> Local parish schools may have worked to a similar schedule but few children would have attended for those hours. Not every parent who wanted their son taught to read would have chosen to have them taught to write or to do arithmetic or to learn grammar. It may be that teachers taught reading in the mornings with the last hour devoted to writing then used afternoons for arithmetic or grammar depending on demand. This would have allowed parents who wanted to give their sons some education but who could not afford to lose their labour entirely, a chance to achieve both.

### *The Impact*

Trying to assess the impact of education is a controversial subject today. In quantitative terms it can be measured through testing and recording the ability of students to read and comprehend a text and through the analysis of writing covering letter formation, sentence structure, breadth of vocabulary, spelling and the ability to convey ideas clearly and in a logical manner. No such inspection reports exist for the early modern era so historians are necessarily left with having to use the data which is available despite the limitations of this. With regard the ability to read, this leaves no trace so it is totally impossible to assess how many people in Tudor and Stuart England were able to read. Studies have suggested that up to a third of English households by 1660 contained almanacs which would indicate a widespread ability but this figure would have masked regional variations.<sup>49</sup> Literacy levels in London and trading towns and ports would have been higher than in remote rural communities.

A more measurable guide can be seen in whether or not people could sign their own name. This is not clear proof of literacy since it was possible for somebody to learn just to complete this feat without having any other ability to read or write. Richard Mathew in 1576 admitted he could not read at all and nor could he write more than his name which he liked to do so he could sign agreements and appear a more learned man.<sup>50</sup> However, given the impossibility of finding other sources of writing by people of this period, the ability to sign a document is conventionally used as an indicator of literacy. It is generally presumed that if a person could write their name, they could also read to some level and write at least simple notes as applicable to their work, for example recording grain prices or dates a ship set sail. There are five main sources for signatures at this time:

- 1) *Wills*: ordinarily the testator and the witnesses would sign the document and many surviving wills provide this information, though some are copies which just show the names or nuncupative. The occupation of the testator

is often given which enables some analysis to be made of literacy levels by different trades. Where the age and place of birth of the testator and witnesses are known, this information too can be fed into the analysis. A problem with this source is that wills may be written close to death by which time the person is not physically able to sign the document hence an artificially low rate of literacy could be generated.<sup>51</sup> Such a problem is not likely to occur with the witnesses and it should not be over-stressed. The average interval between writing the will and burial for Thanet people was 215 days with a quarter of wills being composed more than a year before death. Of course, people could have been ill for this length of time but the longer the interval, the more likely it is that whether a person could sign the document or not is a fair indicator of his literacy. Throughout this period, around a third of adult men dying on Thanet left a will and one in twenty-five women. Although the higher ranks of society are over represented, from a total of 275 wills of adult men, a quarter were sailors most of whom had little left to leave but the clothes they wore and their nets, and a sixth were husbandmen. Labourers accounted for one in twenty, the same rate as gentlemen. Just over a third were yeomen and one in eight was a skilled craftsman.

- 2) *Church records*: every church had churchwardens and overseers for the poor who were required to keep records covering church accounts, payments to the needy and also baptisms, marriages and burials. Even where the records themselves were written up by the vicar or parish clerk, the wardens and overseers and sometimes sidesmen were required to sign that they were a true record. St Laurence and Birchington have particularly full sets of data but all the parishes produced annual transcripts for the archdeacon each Michaelmas and bishop each Lady Day from around 1600 to the start of the civil war. This source generates hundreds of names and given that the individuals were then employed as parish officials, it may be assumed that they were in reasonable health at the time although someone having a temporarily injured arm cannot be ruled out.
- 3) *Official oaths*: in June 1643, all males over the age of fifteen were required to sign the Vow and Covenant. Although these records survive in the House of Lords, the Thanet pages are all copies so there are no original signatures to be seen. The only parish to possess such a record is Birchington which has copies of the 1643 Vow and the 1644 Solemn League which cover 171 people of whom a quarter were able to sign their name.
- 4) *Marriage licences*: from 1619 onwards, it was usual for the groom to be asked to sign the marriage licence. The bride was never asked, even when she was a widow or otherwise 'at her own government' or known to be literate.<sup>52</sup> Where either party was under age, the guardian was also asked to sign the licence but again, mothers were excluded. The licences, therefore, not only provide evidence of literacy amongst men who were normally in the prime of life but they have the advantage in that they often give the age and occupation of the groom.



5) *Depositions*: although the church courts used Latin, deponents gave their statements in English and were required to sign them. Since the documents generally give details of a person's age and place of birth, they offer the chance to look at the literacy of people who grew up on the Isle of Thanet and moved away and to see the literacy levels of those born before the schools opened.

All of the above sources are limited by the fact that they involve almost exclusively men. Few women made wills or witnessed them and none served as parish officials or were required to take official oaths though some appeared in court cases. A further problem is that they largely exclude the poorer classes since wills were ordinarily made by people with something to leave and parish officials were normally recruited from local landowners and prominent tradesmen. Another issue is that people's occupations did sometimes change over time – such as husbandmen prospering to become yeomen or yeomen losing money and becoming husbandmen – or by season.<sup>53</sup> Camden famously spoke of the men of Thanet being sailors for part of the year and agricultural workers the remainder and that is shown in wills. For example, Stephen Sampson of Ramsgate in 1592, who described himself as a fisherman, owned a third share in a boat named *The Thomas* plus various items of fishing equipment and a sea chest as well as a house in Ramsgate with a garden and twenty acres of land. He also owned a second house in Ramsgate with two acres of land attached which he rented out.<sup>54</sup> Nonetheless, the sources represent the only window which we have on the world of early modern Thanet and as such they represent an important guide to the maximum literacy levels of the period and the impact of the schools. How far the schools succeeded in broadening the minds of the pupils or increasing their faith must inevitably remain a total mystery.

From the above sources, a database of 1,397 individuals has been created which shows how literacy levels changed over time (**Table 2**). Whilst clergy, gentlemen and merchants were literate throughout, others born before the schools were opened were rarely so but they soon came to see education as a bonus.

Amongst women, just one in twelve were able to write their own name and the rate did not alter between the 1520s and 1620s. The only women found able to write were the daughters and wives of gentlemen. Women from other groups such

TABLE 2. LITERACY RATES (PER CENT) BY OCCUPATION AND BIRTH PERIOD

<i>Decade of birth</i>	<i>Tradesmen</i>	<i>Husbandmen</i>	<i>Sailors</i>	<i>Yeomen</i>
1500-59	9.1	20.0	15.8	30.2
1560s	30.0	0.0	0.0	31.6
1570s	42.9	22.2	41.7	46.3
1580s	35.3	23.1	35.7	51.1
1590s	44.4	16.7	34.3	62.0
1600s	50.0	33.3	42.9	68.4
1610s	44.4	62.5	60.0	58.3
1620s	33.3	50.0	60.0	75.0
<i>No. of cases</i>	<i>109</i>	<i>104</i>	<i>164</i>	<i>310</i>

as tradesmen's widows who left wills or serving women who gave evidence in court, were clearly invited to sign the documents but they invariably made a mark. This suggests that literate working men did not find time to teach their wives or daughters.

No labourers were found to have been literate and only one servant though it is unclear what function the man held within the household of Sir James Oxenden. It is likely that he was a senior member of staff rather than a scullion.

Within the tradesmen, the literacy rates of the main groups were: masons, glaziers and slaughtermen 100%, bakers and cobblers 66.7%, innkeepers and brewers 57.1%, tailors 45.5%, millers 42.9%, blacksmiths 36.4%, butchers and 33%, carpenters 31.8%, coopers 20%, bricklayers 18.2%, weavers 16.7%.

Unsurprisingly, the data also shows that literacy levels rose following the establishment of a school though it is worth noting that a number of people were literate before. As there were never any chantry schools in the area, tuition could only have been private, perhaps from the parish priest or by a tutor hired by the parents. In the areas where the schools operated with a reasonable degree of continuity, the rates were as shown in **Table 3**.

TABLE 3. MALE LITERACY RATES BY SELECTED PARISH

	<i>Minster</i>	<i>St John</i>	<i>St Laurence</i>	<i>St Peter</i>
% literacy of those born <i>before</i> the school opened	35.7	46.8	50.0	18.2
% literacy of those born <i>after</i> the school opened	54.8	59.6	53.3	48.6
<i>Number of cases</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>161</i>	<i>204</i>	<i>197</i>

It may have been expected that the difference would be greater but the later figures incorporate a much wider section of the population. Deposition evidence plays a much greater part in the early data than the latter and over half of deponents were from the higher levels of society who may have been able to afford private lessons. The figures also show that the literacy rates fell when the school was closed. Children born in Minster in the first half of the 1610s had less than half the literacy of those born in the second half who had the opportunity to attend school.

In the smaller villages, the irregularities in schooling provision combined with the smaller amount of data makes figures less reliable. Monkton, for example has a steady forty per cent literacy rate despite rarely having a school but a third of the sample were gentlemen who would have been privately educated. A similar picture exists at St Nicholas.

It is important to note, that not everyone who learnt to read and write did so at school. Edward Wildbore was the son of a husbandman and born in Minster in 1581. In 1611 he witnessed a will and in 1621 he approved church accounts, both times by making his mark. By the time of his death in 1640, he had risen to be a yeoman and he was able to read and write as is shown by his signature on his own will and by the inventory which shows he owned two complete Bibles, a New Testament and a Puritan book called *The Practice of Piety*. Edward had two sons who reached school age in the 1620s and he may have learnt when they did.

With regard to what people did with their learning, there is some evidence

of children from local schools going on to professional careers. The son of the Reverend Simon Stone went on to be ordained as did Richard Culmer, a yeoman's son from St Peter's. Alexander Norwood became a notary. Generally, few parents would have had the resources to send their sons on to grammar school and even less to send them on to university. Henry Robinson, a gentleman of Monkton, in his will of 13 May 1642 established four scholarships for able children born anywhere on the Isle of Thanet to go on to King's School at Canterbury.<sup>55</sup>

### *Book Ownership*

Another way of looking at the impact of education is to consider book ownership. Amongst the gentry, it is clear that books did exist and they were highly valued. The wife murderer Adam Sprackling spent the morning of the day he killed his wife ordering books, a rational act which helped the jury conclude he was not insane at the time he committed the crime but simply evil.<sup>56</sup>

The will of the Reverend Philip Harrison, vicar of St John's Margate, provides remarkable evidence of book ownership. In this document he refers to owning the following:

Desiderius Erasmus, *Adagiorum Chiliades*  
 William Camden, *Britannia*  
 Sebastian Brant, *Ship of Fools*  
 Pomeramus, *Interpretatio in librum Psalmorum*  
 Enea Vico, *Omnium Caesarum verissimae imagines ex antiquis numismatis*  
 Alexander ab Alessandro, *Genialum dierum*  
 Raimundi de Sabunde, *De theologia naturali*  
 Petrius Substuda, *De Cultu Vine*

In addition, he had an unspecified work of philosophy by Seneca and books by Lodovico Vives and an unnamed Latin translation of a work by the Greek satirist Lucian, a herbal, and various books of law and precedents. Although some of these works had been published in England, others could only have come from the continent. He also notes that he had borrowed a Hungarian story from Sir Peter Manwood, two volumes of Hus' sermons and *Polycraticon* by Joannes Sarisburiensis from Sir William Browne whom he describes as Lieutenant-Governor of Flushing.<sup>57</sup> He distributed these as bequests to five different people: Browne and Manwood plus the Reverend Edward Edgworth, Alexander Norwood and George Newman who were both employed at the church courts in Canterbury. It is possible that his reference to loans shows that he was part of a group aiming at studying the word.<sup>58</sup>

References to books otherwise are scarce. James Bromwell, vicar of Minster in 1597 left a Bible and a volume of Calvin's sermons. Samuel Shinton, a gentleman at Monkton, left a Bible in 1637. Lewis Rogers, the ex-schoolteacher, left a Bible and unspecified books in his cupboard. One of the reasons for the scarcity is because there were no booksellers on the island. Residents would have had to journey to Canterbury or send to London if they required works. For the most part, people who had learned to read would only have had access to the books available in churches, the Holy Bible, Erasmus' *Paraphrases* and Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, better known as the *Book of Martyrs*.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Anon, 1616, *The Office of Christian Parents* (London), 73-4.
- 2 Arthur Hussey, 1902, 'Visitations of the Archdeacon of Canterbury', *Archaeologia Cantiana* XXV, 34. (The visitations continue in XXVI, 1904).
- 3 *Ibid.*, 13. The lead from the chapel was taken to Quex and the timber of the school incorporated into Crispe's new building at Wood.
- 4 W.K. Jordan, 1961, 'Social Institutions In Kent 1480-1660', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, LXXV, 83-84; Richard Parker, 1957, *The Schools of St Nicholas at Wade* (Millbank), 7; Probate Records Canterbury [hereafter PRC] /31/107 P/13.
- 5 Jordan, 'Social Institutions', 73. None of these were on the Isle of Thanet and there was no chantry provision either.
- 6 Desiderius Erasmus, 1529, *An Exhortation to the diligent study of Scripture* (London), fol. 6. He noted that many might laugh and ridicule them but said some would take them to heart.
- 7 His works such as *De Pueris Instituendi*, *De Ratione Studii* and *Enchiridion Militis Christiani* show he believed education should be based on the classics not the Bible. He warned that the Bible was often difficult and interpretation should be left to theologians and clergy whilst the masses should be taught just morality and the basics of faith in order to avoid disputes that disturbed Christ's peace.
- 8 Eamon Duffy, 2005, *Stripping of the Altars* (Yale), 530.
- 9 In the middle ages, church schools had generally taught choristers to read just enough Latin so they could sing the services.
- 10 William Stafford, 1581, *A Compendious or briefe examination of certayne ordinary complaints* (London), f. 10d.
- 11 Diarmaid MacCulloch, 1996, *Thomas Cranmer* (Yale), 199.
- 12 Nicholas Breton, 1618, *Court and Country* (London), f. 20, 27.
- 13 Lauren Kassell, 2011, 'Almanacs and Prognostications', in Raymond Joad (ed.), *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture*, Volume 1 (Oxford), 438.
- 14 PRC/16/180 C/15; PRC/16/239 C/4.
- 15 Hussey, 1902, 'Visitations', p. 34.
- 16 PRC/17/78/407.
- 17 Walter Howare Frere and William Kennedy, 1910, *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation*, vol. 3 (London), 21. In June 1535, Cromwell had insisted that teachers promote the royal supremacy, G.R. Elton, 1972, *Policy and Police*, (Cambridge), 232.
- 18 Hussey, 1902, 'Visitations', 34.
- 19 Hussey, 1904, 'Visitations of the Archdeacon of Canterbury', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, XXVI, 23. It is likely that she had a child at the school though there is no record of this. The family only appear to have moved to the parish a year or so before where their son Richard was born in December 1597.
- 20 A John Duckett had been teaching for a few months prior to this date probably as the school was in process of being established. Hussey 1904, 'Visitations', 31.
- 21 John Cole appears to have been a litigious individual who had a number of difficulties in his relationships with parishioners, see Margaret Bolton, 2016, *St Laurence in Thanet* (Thanet), 96-7; Hussey, 1904, 'Visitations', 34.
- 22 Richard Culmer, 1657, *A Parish Looking Glasse* (London), 18.
- 23 For more on Dunkyn and his removal from the parish see Bolton *St Laurence*, 96-100.
- 24 Hussey, 1902, 'Visitations', 37, names the curate as Henry Montstephen but this is incorrect as he was a husbandman. The curate was not named in the indictment.
- 25 PRC/16/224 P/6. Curling was not a teacher but a literate man.
- 26 Joan Simon, 1966, *Education and Society in Tudor England* (Cambridge), 232-4, 378-82.
- 27 John Bruce (ed.), 1864, *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic – Charles I*, HMSO, London, vol. cclxx, item 13, p. 90.
- 28 Rosemary Quedest, 2001, *The Isle of Thanet Farming Community* (Thanet), 58-59.
- 29 Anon, 1616, *The Office of Christian Parents* (Cambridge), 78-79.
- 30 Of 1,014 couples marrying on Thanet from 1600-20 where the bride was of childbearing age, 229 had more than five children – almost a quarter.

<sup>31</sup> For example John Twyman 1653, Roger Salmon 1657, Hugh Bachelor 1580, Thomas Coppin 1643. A census of the poor conducted in 1597 Ipswich showed that parish paying for the education of a poor man's daughter but this is likely to have reflected a slip on the part of the enumerator since all the other poor girls were listed as being at knitting school rather than regular elementary; John Webb (ed.), 1966, *Poor Relief in Elizabethan Ipswich* (Suffolk Records Society) The female scholar is recorded on p. 125 but see also 133-134.

<sup>32</sup> Frere and Kennedy, *Visitation Articles*, 21.

<sup>33</sup> John Brinsley, 1619, *Ludus Literarius* (London), 17-18.

<sup>34</sup> St Laurence church still had its copy of Foxe on display for parishioners to read in the nineteenth century, Stephen Glynne, 1877, *Notes on the Churches of Kent* (London), 38.

<sup>35</sup> Charles Hoole, 1660, *A new discovery of the old art of teaching schoole* (London), 22-3.

<sup>36</sup> Canterbury Cathedral Archives-U3-19/5/1. Mary Tudor had ordered the destruction of English Bibles but many would have been removed from churches and hidden only to find their way back after her death. Geneva Bibles were much easier to read but were aimed at private users. Alternatively, the church may have had a Bishops' Bible. The Authorised Version appeared some forty years after the schools started so it could be that churches bought a copy of that for services and gave the old one to the school although if they did so, it was prior to 1613 when the accounts start. The sale of the 'old bible' at St Laurence would fit in with the closure of the school.

<sup>37</sup> Jehan de Beuchesne, 1571, *A booke containing divers sortes of handes* (London), 3.

<sup>38</sup> Clement Francis, 1587, *The Petie School* (London), 54.

<sup>39</sup> David Cressy, 1980, *Literacy and the Social Order: reading and writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge), 25.

<sup>40</sup> The change was made at Birchington in 1614 and St Laurence in 1628.

<sup>41</sup> Humfrey Baker, 1568, *The Wellspryng of Sciences* (London), 42.

<sup>42</sup> See the exercise book of John Curling at Deal (CCA-U3-95/28/1).

<sup>43</sup> It did not become a core subject at Eton until 1851. Keith Thomas, 1987, 'Numeracy in Early Modern England', *TRHS*, vol. 37, 109-110.

<sup>44</sup> Hussey, 1902, 'Visitations', 25. He received his licence a year later.

<sup>45</sup> Foster Watson, 1908, *The English Grammar Schools to 1660* (Cambridge), 346.

<sup>46</sup> Francis Johnson, 1950, 'Notes on English Retail Book Prices 1550-1640', *The Library*, vol. 5, no. 2, 83-112; R.C. Simmons, 2002, 'ABCs, almanacs, ballads, chapbooks, popular piety and textbooks', *Cambridge History of the Book*, vol. 3 (Cambridge), 506.

<sup>47</sup> For more on teaching methods and examples of exercises set, see Margaret Bolton, *The Tudor and Stuart Lesson Book* (forthcoming).

<sup>48</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, 2004, *Will in the World* (London), 26.

<sup>49</sup> Kassell, 'Almanacs and Prognostications', 431.

<sup>50</sup> Peter Clark, 1977, *English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution* (Hassocks), p. 212.

<sup>51</sup> Only two such examples were found. The Reverend Philip Harrison was too ill to sign his will in 1607 and the maltster John Ticknor who died aged 75 in 1646 was unable to sign his despite having witnessed those of others with a clear signature.

<sup>52</sup> Women were not able to claim 'benefit of clergy' prior to 1624 even if they could read Ps. 51:1. The authorities never chose to ask if they were literate.

<sup>53</sup> For example, William Goldfinch was a husbandman when he gave his deposition in 1621 but a yeoman when he died thirty years later.

<sup>54</sup> William Camden, 1610, *Britannia* transl. by Philemon Holland (London), 340; PRC 17/49/244.

<sup>55</sup> PRC/16/238 R/2. His will asked for two scholarships and two fellowships at Cambridge to be established but there was insufficient funds in his estate so four scholarships were created instead.

<sup>56</sup> Edmund Calumy, 1653, *The Bloody Husband* (London), 7.

<sup>57</sup> As part of Elizabeth I's intervention in the Revolt of the Netherlands the Dutch did at one stage accept the idea of appointing a foreign governor of this strategically important place.

<sup>58</sup> For more on the phenomenon of such groups see Alec Ryrie, 2013, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford), 394.