

THE MERCHANT FLEET AND SHIP-BOARD COMMUNITY OF KENT, c.1565-c.1580

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Until recently, knowledge of Kent's merchant fleet in Tudor times relied heavily on ship surveys such as those of 1566 and 1572. However, records of individual ship voyages (both overseas and coastal), which began to be systematically collected at ports countrywide from 1565, can now be exploited thanks to the creation of a national database covering the period to 1580 at the University of Southampton (www.medievalandtudorships.org). The Kentish data contained therein is fully analysed here, from which the patterns of coastal trade and voyages overseas emerge together with details of the activities of individual masters.

In 1570 the antiquarian and lawyer, William Lambarde, produced a history of Kent (published in 1576).¹ Organised as a history of the county's towns, Lambarde's *Perambulation* shows that ports and coastal settlements were an important part of Kent's political, social, and economic fabric, and subsequent generations of scholars have agreed with his assessment. According to Mavis Mate, five of Kent's towns operated as major urban centres in the 1520s.² Apart from Canterbury these were all ports (Rochester, Maidstone, Faversham, and Sandwich).³ A further seven of Kent's ports and coastal and riverine towns can be classified as small market centres (Dartford, Gravesend, Dover, Folkestone, Hythe, New Romney and Lydd). In all there were perhaps twenty-five settlements in early modern Kent which can be described as towns.⁴ Therefore, nearly half of Kent's major and minor towns were ports or coastal and riverine settlements that relied on maritime trade, both overseas and coastal, and fishing.

Unsurprisingly, given its status as one of the original Cinque Ports, those studying the maritime history of Kent have, from the earliest times, focused a good deal of attention on Sandwich. In the late eighteenth century, William Boys collected and published a series of documents that charted the town's religious and civic developments.⁵ More recently, Helen Clarke and others have enriched the history of the town through the exploitation of national records and sources of local provenance, providing an in-depth social, economic, and archaeological survey of one of Kent's most important ports.⁶ Dover has also attracted interest from historians. In 1813 John Lyon produced the first major history of the town, but, unlike Sandwich, a more comprehensive history of Dover has yet to be written.⁷

Another strand of the historiography of Kent has naturally focused upon naval

aspects of the county; unsurprising considering that four of the original members of the Cinque Port confederacy were in the county. Much ink has been spilt on their history and what role they played in the wars of late medieval and Tudor England, and debate on their contributions to naval warfare still rages.⁸ What we can say is that some Kentish ports, such as Sandwich and Dover, did play an important role in the Hundred Years War.⁹ In the short-term, war proved profitable for some members of the Cinque Ports. As important embarkation points, the mobilisation of thousands of men in the environs of Kentish members of the Cinque Ports no doubt provided an opportunity for local brewers and food producers to supply armies awaiting embarkation. The use of Kentish ships in naval operations also provided a ready source of employment for the county's maritime labour force, and the prestige that came with aiding the king's war meant that many Cinque Port men were amply rewarded for their service. The key role played in the wars also enabled the men of the Kentish Cinque Ports to acquire considerable political influence. Not only were the barons of the ports summoned to each parliament by right, but the capital and manpower resources they contributed to the war effort (ships and men) meant that many men involved in the business of shipping were appointed to important civic offices and sat as MPs for the boroughs.¹⁰ Of course, being such an important centre of military activity naturally placed the harbours of Kent in harm's way. In August 1457, for example, the French raided Sandwich and in 1514 they threatened Kent's coast after raiding Sussex.¹¹

In the Tudor period the Cinque Ports continued to play a role in the crown's naval operations. From the spring of 1512 to the spring of 1514 Henry VIII put to sea a fleet of 268 ships of which 198 vessels were requisitioned from the English merchant fleet; thirty-one (16 per cent of the English contingent) were contributed by the Cinque Ports, and Dover and Sandwich acted as the principal embarkation ports.¹² In 1513 men from Dover also helped to transport 3,000 horses, numerous cattle and helped to move soldiers from the shore to the ships.¹³ One Dover man, Thomas Prowde, was paid 3s. 4d. for writing a proclamation for the king.¹⁴ In the preparations for the 1513 campaign the men of Sandwich informed the Lord Treasurer that sixty ships could anchor in the harbour and 500-600 vessels could ride in Sandwich haven, which shows why Henry's government chose Sandwich as one of the key ports from which to launch the invasion of France. The Cinque Ports continued to function as important entry and exit points for armies and diplomats. Indeed, on 26 May 1520, the emperor Charles V landed at Dover, and his entourage was largely transported in Dover ships.¹⁵ In 1588 the Cinque Ports provided well-manned ships to the English fleet that faced the Spanish Armada.¹⁶ But even though the Cinque Ports continued to be utilised by the crown during the sixteenth century, the reality was that since the end of the Hundred Years War their importance had begun to wane.¹⁷ From the early to mid-sixteenth century the government gradually encroached on the Ports' long held liberties, other regional harbours emerged to challenge their position, and some of the ports were vulnerable to physical changes to their harbours. Yet as one door on Kent's naval importance shut another was opened. Gravesend was developed as a bulwark against any possible attack on London, and other ports in Kent such as Deptford, Gillingham/Chatham, Erith, and Dover became part of the growing infrastructure of the Royal Navy.¹⁸

The Economy of Kent in the Sixteenth Century

The economy of Kent from the advent of the Tudor regime up to the 1560s can best be characterised as turbulent. From the late fifteenth century the county suffered periods of population decline and economic recession which did not improve until the 1560s, and the Reformation and the Hapsburg-Valois wars had a negative impact on Kent's overseas trade.¹⁹ Yet, despite such setbacks, over the 1520s and 1530s imports of salt and wine, and exports of beer, kerseys, and grains continued.²⁰ Individual ports did however have their own problems. Sandwich suffered from the mid-fifteenth century and into the early sixteenth century when Genoese and Venetian ships carrying luxury goods, such as spices, fruits, and sweet wines, ceased to arrive.²¹ For Sandwich silting was another problem. Some of this was natural, some man-made. John Leland pointed out in the 1530s or 1540s the man-made problems when he blamed the silting of the haven on the 'caryke that was sonke yn the haven, in Pope Pauls tyme which did muche hurt to the haven, and gether a great bank'.²² Dover also suffered from silting, and despite some efforts at dredging in 1533 the harbour was reportedly 'utterly destroyed'.²³ Similar problems of 'decay' were attributed to other places in Kent. In 1563 for example Romney was described as 'once a good fisher town, and now utterly decayed, and not a fisher boat remaining'.²⁴ In the same year Dover, Folkestone, and Sandwich were equally described as being in a bad state, and Hythe's fleet had been reduced from eighty ships previously to only eight.²⁵

The 1566 survey (discussed below) does not include any returns from New Romney which suggests that by the mid-1560s the fishing fleet of the port had disappeared, or was too inconsequential to record.²⁶ Due to changing environmental conditions Romney, as a port, had been in decline since the early to mid-fifteenth century, and the surviving port books for New Romney are blank.²⁷ The only conclusion to draw is that by the 1560s New Romney's merchant fleet ceased to exist. By the 1540s merchants in the north Kentish ports seemed unwilling to risk any more than only a few shipments each year, and overseas trade became dominated by alien shippers and merchants.²⁸

In the 1550s however things seemed to improve, as some of Kent's ports increased their exports of grain and livestock which helped to offset the decline in the luxury trades of the earlier period.²⁹ Moreover, an influx of Protestant refugees from the Continent helped to increase the population of skilled craftsmen.³⁰ Hythe developed a key stake in the shipment of animals to Calais and, with Sandwich and other north Kentish ports, became important for the shipment of grains into London.³¹ War could disrupt the grain trade as the English government often prohibited its export so it could be used to provision English armies and stop food supplies potentially reaching enemies of the realm. Embargoes of grain in England often created shortages on the Continent, which in turn led to higher prices.³² Higher prices offered an incentive to ignore government prohibitions and some shippers no doubt took the risk of smuggling cargoes of grain to these foreign markets. The loss of Calais in 1558 certainly had a detrimental impact on the trade of some of Kent's ports, but at the same time there were also investments in new industries, principally on the north Kent coast.³³ As noted above, the county became an important part of the burgeoning Royal Navy's infrastructure, particularly through

the establishment of royal dockyards which created economic opportunities for Kent's population and traders, and alongside the important trade in woollen cloth, new industries like paper and gunpowder manufacture developed. With a growing population to feed these industries with labour, and the growth of London, there was a ready market for any goods re-shipped coastwise or imported by Kentish ships into the capital. Geography also played its part. The River Medway acted as an artery allowing easy shipment of products from the Weald to the harbours of north Kent and London.

Fishing too was an important industry. Smaller coastal settlements had developed an interest in fishing since the eleventh century. In places such as Lydd and Folkestone fishing was a central part of the economy and underpinned the socio-economic fabric of the towns by providing labour and a source of income for both men and women.³⁴ The coastal survey of Kent in 1566 showed that fifteen ports (Hythe, Folkestone, Dover, Sandwich, Ramsgate, Broadstairs, Margate, Whitstable, Swalecliffe, Herne, Faversham, Queenborough, Milton, Upchurch, Halstow, Gillingham, and Rochester) listed fishing as an important part of their commercial enterprise, and five settlements, including Broadstairs, were said to rely only on fishing.³⁵ The survey of 1566 might seem to be providing definitive information, but as we shall see below Broadstairs ships did engage in trade, so fishing was perhaps only one aspect, albeit the main one, of the town's maritime activities.

Determining the Size and Geographical Distribution of Kent's Merchant fleet c.1565-c.1580

Historians have long taken an interest in the merchant fleet of Kent. In the 1920s Michael Oppenheim examined a series of ship surveys from the reign of Elizabeth I to reconstruct the county's merchant fleet.³⁶ The first survey he examined was compiled in 1560, but this only recorded ships of 100 tons and over and the only ship of Kent to appear was the 140-ton *John* of Sandwich. As noted above, in 1563 the investigation into Kent's merchant fleet described a state of general decay, but three years later a coastal survey in 1566 paints a far less gloomy picture. It showed that Kent had 293 ships, although the vast majority (eighty-six per cent) were under 20 tons, and one in five just 1 ton.³⁷ Fewer than seven per cent of Kent's ships were forty tons and over, and only one per cent were 100 tons and upwards. By far the most important survey which highlighted Kent's merchant shipping was, however, the kingdom-wide survey compiled in 1572 by Thomas Colshill. Oppenheim used this survey to make an estimate as to the size of Kent's merchant fleet, but failed to notice that Hythe was recorded under the Sussex customs head port of Chichester.³⁸ Additionally, Oppenheim was of the opinion that the survey only recorded coasters (ships that only traded between English ports) and did not include vessels engaged in overseas trade and fishing.³⁹ There is no evidence to support that assertion; Colshill himself tells the reader that the survey includes 'the number of shippes and vessels and the maisters names beinge in all the portes and crekes within the Realme of England'.⁴⁰ The 1572 survey is a complicated document and the issues with it are far too detailed to develop here; but a recent examination of this survey has revealed that Colshill did not record all the ships

or ports in England.⁴¹ For example, Ramsgate appears in the customs accounts (port books) but not the ship-survey of 1572, the ships of Erith are recorded under London's ships, and those of Creeksea in Essex are listed with those from Kent. All told, the survey of 1572 tells us that twenty-four ports in Kent held 163 ships at a total of 3,656 tons.⁴² Of these, twenty-one were of 40 tons and upwards.

Given the long-established scholarly interest in Kent's historic merchant fleet it is surprising that up until now the mass of evidence contained in port books, first collated from Easter 1565, has not been exploited. These records provide an unrivalled source that allows estimates of both the size and geographical distribution of Kent's merchant fleet to be made, and together with details of the trade routes it operated on. They record for each ship its name, size, master, the date it entered or left port, and the direction of its travel (where it sailed from or where it was going to), along with information by some customs officials of the names of the merchants using the vessel, the goods being carried, and the customs duties levied on those goods.

The port books are also the first national accounts to systematically record coastal trade.⁴³ Earlier studies into Kent's maritime economy, while valuable, are hindered by the fact that, apart from a few isolated examples, the particulars of customs accounts cover only overseas trade. For the late Middle Ages it has been estimated that two-thirds (if not more) of trading voyages were coastwise.⁴⁴ This pattern undoubtedly continued into the sixteenth century.⁴⁵ Of course, in the sixteenth century, there were some regional variations and one port might have more overseas voyages than coastal, but as a whole the majority of sailings by English vessels were to and from English ports. The value of imports and exports might be greater than the goods which were moved coastwise (as only overseas trade was subject to paying customs duties), but that does not take away from the likelihood that most English shippers were more interested in the coastal trade.

The information contained in port books supplements the ship surveys mentioned earlier, principally that of 1572. Using the information provided in these two classes of document can allow us to pose, and answer, three important questions. How many Kentish ships were there and what size were these vessels? Which Kentish ports possessed the most ships? Which were the most favoured destinations for Kentish ships?

At the core of this article lies a computer database that records approximately 53,000 ship voyages from over 600 ports and creeks in England, Wales, and the Channel Islands during the period 1400-1580.⁴⁶ In using a large database to estimate the size and geographical distribution of Kent's merchant fleet there is the need to adopt a method that avoids double counting ships (counting the same vessel twice and thus over-estimating the number of ships), or conflating ships (mistakenly counting two or more vessels as one, thus under-estimating the number of ships). There are three principal ways in which this can be done. The first one is called the three-identifier method. Using the 'three identifiers' of a ship's home port, name, and master's name, and linking these together, it is possible to identify separate ships. Within a specified time-frame, records of ships that are identical according to these three 'identifiers' are deemed to be referring to the same vessel. As an example; in 1565 Humphrey Atkinson commanded the *Peter* of Faversham (recorded under his command in 1565 at 8-18 tons) on four occasions;

so although he made four voyages he did so in command of one ship.⁴⁷ Of course, this method might double count the *Peter* if this vessel was commanded by another master. Indeed, it looks as though this might be the case because in 1570 a 12-ton Faversham ship, also called *Peter*, was commanded by Lawrence Austin.⁴⁸ Important in this three-identifier method are the service patterns of shipmasters. If masters stayed with the same ship(s) for most of their career the instances of double counting would be much reduced. In Sandwich, of the ninety-eight known masters that served between 1565 and 1580, three-quarters (seventy-three) only commanded one ship. In Dover from 1565 to 1580, fifty-two of the fifty-eight masters only commanded one ship. The three identifiers of ship name, master, and ship's home port were also the key pieces of information recorded by the clerks. If the master was an unstable component, why did the customs clerks not give the name of the owner instead? It is true that a ship might have multiple owners, but listing the principal shareholder would surely have sufficed. If any inconsistency in the cargo or voyage occurred the crown obviously felt that it could trace the vessel back to its owners through the recording of the master's name. We should not underestimate their judgement in this regard as these were the men on the quayside.

The second way to measure the size of Kent's merchant fleet is to adopt another methodology developed by the Southampton research team; the 'ship name/tonnage' methodology. This involves discounting the shipmaster and using the ship's name, its tonnage, and home port. This means that a single vessel commanded by multiple shipmasters will not be duplicated in any calculation of the size of the fleet. As we can see with the example of the *Peter*, however, tonnages of ships were recorded without any real precision. The vessel commanded by Humphrey Atkinson was recorded with four different tonnages ranging between 8 and 18 tons. Moreover, what are we to make of the 30-ton *Peter* of Faversham recorded in the ship survey of 1572 commanded by Humphrey Atkinson; is this the same *Peter* recorded at 8, 10, 14, and 18 tons in the customs accounts?⁴⁹ The only conclusion is that this is indeed the same ship. If we applied the 'ship name/tonnage method' to the study of Kent's fleet there is the danger that the *Peter* would be classified as several ships. Even if we applied a 5-ton leeway either side of 10 or 12 tons (the most frequent tonnages at which the ship appears) it would still count the vessel more than once at 10, 18, and 30 tons respectively.

The third method is the 'ship name' method which links a ship name with its home port and discounts the tonnage and master. In this approach all ships with the same name from the same port within a specified time period are counted as one ship. On the surface this looks like it would address issues of double counting ships that occurs in the two aforementioned methodologies, yet if we look at the ships of Hythe we can see that the ship name method is also not without its problems. Take the *Edward* of 40 tons and the *Edward* of 4 tons.⁵⁰ Even if we accept the problems of how tonnages are recorded, the range here from 4 to 40 is too high for this to be the same ship.

Of course, all methodological approaches are reliant on a ship keeping its original name. If a ship changed its name through the course of its working life all three methods would double count it. Francis Drake's renaming of the *Pelican* to the *Golden Hind* during his circumnavigation of 1577-80 is perhaps the most

famous example of this occurring. As we shall see below a ship bequeathed by William Ferrers of Erith might have had its name changed by the beneficiary. Yet, evidence has been found that when people bequeathed ships to family members, and the vessel was retained in family service, the name of the ship was unlikely to be changed, probably because the name held some significance to the family, or for sentimental reasons.⁵¹ Ships, especially large ones, were also owned by numerous individuals, and if a few shares were sold to a new investor it is unlikely that this would result in the vessel changing its name. Moreover, as we can see from the example of the *Peter* of Faversham, it is clear that vessels used one name for several years; which means if we examine the merchant fleet of Kent over a period of one or two years the findings are unlikely to include instances of ships changing their names. Sometimes the same ship may have operated out of more than one place, especially in areas where several ports were clustered together, and this may produce instances of double counting. There are ways to address this potential issue, such as using the county as one of the identifiers and not the port; although this practice would reduce the numbers of ships considerably. Examining snapshot periods however reduces the problem of double counting ships serving out of more than one port because usually only one or two port books for each port is used for such short period examinations.⁵²

We can explore the differences between the various methodologies by examining Kent's merchant fleet over two well documented years. **Table 1** shows that between the highest (three-identifier) and lowest estimates (ship name method) of ship numbers, there is a difference of fifty-five ships, with the ship name/tonnage method nestling in between the two.

TABLE 1. NUMBERS OF KENTISH SHIPS AND TOTAL TONNAGE, 1571-1572 (1 JANUARY 1571-31 DECEMBER 1572)

Three-Identifier Method	Ship Name and Tonnage Method ⁵³	Ship Name Method ⁵⁴
Nos (tons)	Nos (tons)	Nos (tons)
212 (5,292)	175 (5,192)	157 (3,881)

It is clear that each of the three methodologies have their issues. However, for this article, as the authors are only analysing a sub-set of a large body of data, we can apply a more nuanced approach to the analysis, moulding together the best attributes of all three methodological approaches. This involves applying the methodology that produces the most results (three-identifier) and checking each entry for each port to eliminate any ships that were double-counted or conflated. For example, in Hythe in 1580 there is a ship called the *Bundel* commanded by George Hallet, and one of the same name commanded by Michael Buckland.⁵⁵ The three-identifier method would count these as two separate ships, but as these were both recorded at 12 tons we can be confident that this was one ship commanded by two masters. In Sandwich over 1565-1566 there was a *James* recorded at 50 tons, one at 25 tons and one at 16 tons.⁵⁶ The ship name method would count this as only one ship and the ship-name-tonnage method would count three ships. In this case it was judged that over 1565-66 there were two ships called the *James*; one vessel at 50 tons, and one somewhere in the range of 16 to 25 tons.⁵⁷

Table 2 examines Kent's merchant fleet across the period 1565-1580⁵⁸ and shows the differences between the more nuanced approach discussed in this paragraph and the original figure provided by the three-identifier methodology. It demonstrates that the three-identifier methodology overestimates the numbers of ships and the tonnage total. It also seems less reliable when applied to the shipping capacity of larger ports where there was a larger pool of manpower and many ships sharing

TABLE 2. NUMBER OF SHIPS AND TONNAGE OF KENT'S MERCHANT FLEET, c.1565-c.1580

Port	Number of Ships		Tonnage	
	Preferred measure	Using three-identifier method	Preferred measure	Using three-identifier method
<i>Thames</i>				
Dartford	3	3	50	50
Deptford	5	5	109	109
Erith	4	6	220	275
Gravesend	3	3	46	46
Milton	34	60	740	1,255
Stoke (Hoo)	1	2	6	12
Woolwich	1	1	18	18
<i>Medway Estuary</i>				
Chatham	3	3	70	70
Frindsbury	1	1	10	10
Gillingham	10	11	309	369
Lower Halstow	1	1	8	8
Rainham	7	17	157	395
Rochester	24	38	698	1,125
Strood	2	2	16	16
<i>Lower Medway</i>				
Aylesford	3	3	116	116
Holborough	1	1	40	40
Maidstone	16	45	506	1,440
Millhall	6	15	221	511
New Hythe	7	13	260	460
Snodland	1	1	25	25
<i>Isle of Sheppey</i>				
Harty	7	8	101	117
Leysdown	3	3	23	22
Queenborough	10	14	555	606
Sheppey other	1	1	30	30

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Port	Number of Ships		Tonnage	
	Preferred measure	Using three-identifier method	Preferred measure	Using three-identifier method
<i>North Kent</i>				
Faversham	43	109	828	2,088
Herne Bay	2	2	21	21
Oare	4	4	37	37
Reculver	1	1	4	4
Sittingbourne	8	9	152	156
Whitstable	10	15	162	218
<i>Isle of Thanet</i>				
Broadstairs	8	11	132	171
Margate	16	24	222	307
Ramsgate	14	13	247	222
Sarre	1	1	70	70
Thanet other	2	2	48	48
<i>East Kent including Romney Marsh</i>				
Ash	1	1	8	8
Dover	46	65	1,229	1,777
Finglesham ⁵⁹	2	2	40	40
Folkestone	9	15	159	243
Fordwich	1	1	30	30
Hythe	35	81	676	1,314
Lydd ⁶⁰	1	1	16	16
St Mary's Bay	2	2	26	26
Sandwich	59	137	1,526	3,051
<i>Total</i>	419	753	9,967	16,972

common name forms. Furthermore, looking at Kent's merchant fleet over a fifteen-year period produces skewed results as only a small number of ships may have been operational at the same time throughout.

Even when applying the more nuanced methodology from Table 2 and examining a series of ports over three snap-shot years (**Table 3**) is problematic. As can be seen, Broadstairs's estimates are relatively stable across the three periods, but Dover's fleet ranges from six to nineteen vessels, and Sandwich from thirty-eight ships to nine. Such discrepancies can be explained by the fact that some of the port books do not survive in the sample years, and that on occasion the records which do survive are for overseas voyages only. The absence of coastal accounts for some ports in some years (which include more English ships given the numerical predominance of coastal voyages) can also skew the figures.⁶¹ Of the snap-shot periods of Table 3, 1571-72 has the best coverage of data because not only do we

TABLE 3: NUMBERS OF SHIPS AND TONNAGE OF A SAMPLE OF KENT'S PORTS AT VARIOUS DATES

Port		1565-6	1571-2	1574-5
Broadstairs	Ships	2	2	2
	Tonnage	19	48	46
Dover	Ships	6	19	6
	Tonnage	268	524	192
Faversham	Ships	12	22	11
	Tonnage	254	436	208
Hythe	Ships	1	19	8
	Tonnage	60	451	190
Maidstone	Ships	10	9	6
	Tonnage	308	306	150
Sandwich	Ships	22	38	9
	Tonnage	519	809	261

have the port books, but we can also draw upon the large ship-survey that was compiled for those years.

Taking the better documented period of 1571-72 as our guide, therefore, we can estimate that Kent's merchant fleet numbered a minimum of *c.*200 ships in any one year in the decade 1565-75. It might have numbered more ships, for the 1566 survey records more vessels (293) than the highest estimate of 212 (using the three-identifier methodology) given in Table 1. However, in the 1566 survey one in five of the vessels were one-ton fishing boats, and such ships do not appear in the port books.⁶² Nonetheless, the 1566 survey is valuable because what it suggests is that perhaps as much as thirty per cent of Kent's ships went un-recorded in the customs accounts. Granted these were small fishing boats, and they would have little effect on the tonnage figures presented in the tables above, but nevertheless it is worth bearing in mind that in addition to Kent's merchant ships there were a large number of small fishing boats providing a living for many of the county's coastal inhabitants. We can be confident that Kent's fishermen who owned, or part-owned, ships of over one ton bolstered their income by operating as freighters in the coastal trade; indeed, when examining ships of three or more tons it is difficult to differentiate between one used for fishing and one used for trade: the reality is that many were employed in both types of activity.⁶³ Across the whole period, and if we include the many small fishing craft, there were likely to have been approximately 500 Kentish ships entering or leaving various ports. Of course, this fluctuated as old ships were retired and new ones commissioned, but there would also have been times when an old vessel's trading life overlapped with that of a new ship.

Using the average size of Kent's ships of 25 tons (discussed more fully below) the total tonnage of the county's merchant fleet can be estimated at 4,500-5,000 tons in any one year from *c.*1565-75. In terms of tonnage distribution, the ports

TABLE 4. TONNAGE DISTRIBUTION OF KENT'S SHIPS 1572

No. of ports	No. of ships	Under 10 tons	10-19 tons	20-29 tons	30-39 tons	40-49 tons	50-99 tons	100+ tons
28	115	19	32	23	18	10	12	1
(Per cent)		(16.5)	(27.8)	(20)	(15.6)	(8.7)	(10.4)	(0.9)

of Sandwich, Dover, Hythe, Rochester, Queenborough, and Faversham had pre-eminence; Sandwich alone probably held between a tenth and a fifth of Kent's merchant ship tonnage.⁶⁴

We can also look further at the ship-size patterns of Kent's ports more broadly. Again, taking the best documented year of 1572, **Table 4** highlights the tonnage distribution of Kent's merchant shipping from which it is clear that nearly two-thirds of Kent's ships in this snap-shot year were 29 tons or less, with most falling in the 10-19 ton range. The 'big' ships – that is to say those of 50 tons or more – constituted just above ten per cent of Kent's merchant marine, the biggest being the 100-ton *Luke Evangelist* of Erith (which actually appears under London in the 1572 ship survey).⁶⁵ Overall, the average tonnage of Kent's ships in the period was approximately 25 tons, compared to a nationwide average from 1565-80 of 30 tons. This has led some historians to be critical of Kent's merchant fleet. For example, when Oppenheim looked at the 1572 ship survey he assumed that it only recorded coastal traders, presumably because he expected to find a greater number of larger ships.⁶⁶ Unsurprisingly the more important ports in Kent had a higher proportion of larger ships. From 1565-1580 thirty-nine per cent of Dover's and Sandwich's ships were 30 tons or more; a significant proportion above the national average.⁶⁷ Kent's merchant fleet might have been smaller in terms of ships and tonnage than that of Bristol, London, or other major centres of overseas trade, but presumably its size and geographical distribution was perfectly adequately matched to the trades and routes its ports specialised in.

Applying the same methodological approach that is used to generate the low figures in Table 2 (the preferred/more nuanced methodology) we can compare Kent's fleet with the neighbouring county of Essex. Such an exercise is valuable for several reasons. Essex, like Kent, is close to London and so the impact the growth of London was having on Kent's ports should also have been felt by Essex towns. Taking 1571-72 as a case study shows that 123 Essex ships measuring 4,641 tons sailed from twenty ports. The average tonnage of Essex ships was approximately thirty-eight. This means that while Essex probably had fewer ships (bearing in mind once more the vagaries of documentary survival), the vessels were larger than those of Kent. Partly, this is because Essex ports such as Leigh-on-Sea, Harwich, Maldon, Brightlingsea, St Osyth, and Colchester had a greater proportion of ships 40 tons and over. Indeed, from c.1565-c.1580 over thirty per cent of Essex ships were over 40 tons, whereas in Kent twenty per cent of ships fell into that bracket.

Direction of Trade, c.1565-c.1580

The above discussion has shown that Kent's merchant fleet probably numbered

some 200 merchant vessels and 5,000 tons in any given year. Ships, however, are just one aspect of Kent's maritime history. The range of Kent's merchant ships is also an important point to address. Mate has shown that before 1565 export markets for Kentish goods were centred on two principal areas; the Low Countries and Calais. But from 1565 with the port book evidence we can both measure the direction of coastal trade and examine in more detail the overseas places that Kent's ships visited. Over the period 1565-1580, Kent's ships performed a minimum of 1,380 ship-voyages, of which 1,185 (86 per cent) were coastwise. The most popular coastal voyages for Kent's ships was to London. Indeed, twenty-nine per cent of all voyages undertaken by Kentish ships either left or entered London. Not all these voyages started from Kent's ports. In July 1566 the 55-ton *Trinitie* of Erith, commanded by William Ferrers (a Kentish master), left Bristol bound for London with a cargo of wine and other materials.⁶⁸ Indeed, Ferrers had an established connection with the ports of the South-West, because three years later, in command of the same ship, he sailed out of Bristol into Truro.⁶⁹ Ferrers was not the only Kentish master journeying to and from the south-western ports. In November 1576 the *Kathern* of Ramsgate left Exeter for London.⁷⁰ Kent ships also freighted goods coastwise from London to places such as Falmouth, or made short journeys from Exeter to Falmouth.⁷¹ Three per cent of voyages by Kent ships were made to or from the ports of Dorset, Devon, Cornwall, and Bristol; sometimes these began in Kent's harbours, sometimes the voyages started in London, Bristol or Exeter.⁷²

After London, the bulk of voyages undertaken by Kent's ships came in or out of Sandwich (twelve per cent), Faversham (eleven per cent), Milton (eight per cent), Newcastle (five per cent), and King's Lynn (five per cent). Apart from the London trade, the voyages to the south-west, and those sailing to Newcastle for coal, most of Kent's ships sailed no further than Sussex (three per cent of voyages) and East Anglia (six per cent of voyages), although some Dartford, Dover, Gillingham, Hythe, Lydd, Faversham, Folkestone, Rochester and Sandwich ships sailed to Boston and Southampton. Indeed, in terms of destinations, the coasting trade of Kent's ports c.1565-c.1580 remained relatively stable. London and sailings to and from other Kentish ports accounted for most of this trade, but the two East Anglian counties of Norfolk and Suffolk consistently remained important.

Interestingly, Kent's ships did very little trade with Essex, with only a few voyages to Maldon and one to Manningtree.⁷³ Some Essex ports were becoming prominent in both coastal and overseas trade at this point. Leigh-on-Sea, for example, rose from obscurity in the late Middle Ages to become one of the principal ports in Essex. Perhaps Kent shippers viewed Essex men as competitors for the expanding coasting trade into London and so shied away from visiting the ports of their Essex rivals.

Many of the coastal masters followed a routine pattern of voyages. Humphrey Atkinson of Faversham only ever sailed between the ports of London, Sandwich, Faversham, and Milton.⁷⁴ Henry Austin, also of Faversham, specialised in runs to the ports of Lincolnshire and the North-East.⁷⁵ Richard Gurdish (Girde; Gyrde) of Dover sailed between his home port and London, King's Lynn, Rye, and Sandwich.⁷⁶ On these coastal routes masters were keen to make turnaround times in port as quick as possible. This was because some bulk cargoes meant low profits and thus required frequent journeys to achieve good returns. On 26 October 1576

Maurice Jones in command of the 30-ton *Anne* of New Hythe arrived in King's Lynn from Newcastle; on the same day he set off from King's Lynn to London.⁷⁷

Overseas voyages

Of the 1,380 Kentish ship voyages recorded in the period, 195 involved trade with the Continent. In terms of exports, the most frequent journey was out of Hythe to Boulogne-sur-Mer in France, a short trip across the Channel, followed by Rouen and Flushing (Vlissingen).⁷⁸ Not all Kent's ships left for Flushing out of a Kent port, and some left from Ipswich and King's Lynn. Many also left from London and were sometimes recorded as London vessels. In 1572 the 100-ton *Luke Evangelist* commanded by William Ferrers entered London from Hamburg with a cargo of butter, and the clerk recorded this as a London ship, although in the ship survey of 1572 it was listed as an Erith vessel.⁷⁹ Some of Kent's ships made the journey from Southampton to La Rochelle. On 14 May 1566 the 25-ton *James* of Sandwich commanded by Robert Moundey left Southampton for La Rochelle with a 'piece of Cornishe teyne weyinge thre hundred pound' belonging to William Evers of Sandwich.⁸⁰ Some of Kent's ships sailed even further. On 23 August 1565 the 60-ton *Elizabeth* of Rochester left London bound for Andalusia with a cargo of tin.⁸¹

Most import voyages made by Kent's ships arrived into the county from Antwerp, Dunkirk, and Hamburg. Some overseas voyages, however, were made from further afield. On 26 July 1572 the 80-ton *Mari Thomas* of Dover commanded by Robert Bennett entered London from Gdansk carrying, amongst other things, nineteen firkins and nineteen kegs of sturgeon.⁸² Bordeaux was also frequented by Kentish ships. On 25 September 1574 the 50-ton *Sweepstake* of Dover commanded by Germain Doves left Southampton with a cargo of cloth and Cornish tin bound for Bordeaux.⁸³ At the same time Robert Bennett, this time in command of the 50-ton *Elizabeth* of Dover, left Southampton for Bordeaux carrying a cargo of Devonshire and Cornish tin and a large cargo of cloth.⁸⁴ Unsurprisingly, the return cargo from Bordeaux often consisted of wine. In January 1571 the 40-ton *Anne Galant* of Milton arrived into Bristol from Bordeaux carrying thirty-nine tons of Gascon wine.⁸⁵ One of the longest voyages made by any ship in this period was performed by the 60-ton *Barke of Sandwich* which on 24 July 1565 arrived into London from the Barbary Coast with a cargo of dates weighing 200 pounds.⁸⁶ Most of the imports carried by Kent's ships went either into London or Faversham. As with the coasting trade, some masters were keen to ensure a quick turnaround in port. On 2 June 1574 Alan Salmon of Milton left for Dunkirk in command of the 8-ton *Jesus*, and on 15 June he arrived back from Dunkirk. Salmon journeyed to Dunkirk, unloaded his cargo, loaded another cargo and sailed back to Milton in under two weeks.⁸⁷ Other masters came in from overseas and made a quick coastal voyage on arrival. On 16 July 1574 Gregory Wright of Sandwich, in command of the 40-ton *William*, entered Southampton from Calais with a cargo of hops, and on the same day he left Southampton for Sandwich with a cargo of firewood.⁸⁸

If we examine the voyages of vessels from smaller Kentish ports we see a more restricted zone of movement. The ships from Broadstairs, for example, went no further north than Rochester, and no further south than Hythe, with the most popular voyage being Sandwich to London and Sandwich to Rochester.⁸⁹ The *John* (10 tons)

and *Julian* (30 tons) of Chatham are only ever recorded as sailing from Rochester to London.⁹⁰ The ships of Dartford specialised in runs from Boston (Lincs.) and London.⁹¹ Most ships from Gillingham sailed within the London and Kent area, with some voyages to Devonshire and East Anglian ports.⁹² In the summer of 1571 the 60-ton *Trinite Richard* commanded by Richard Goram, however, made a trip from London to Goes (near Flushing); but he also made coastal journeys from Beaulieu and Dartmouth.⁹³ From 1565 to 1575 the seven recorded ships of Harty on the Isle of Sheppey undertook twenty-four voyages, only six of which went outside Kent, to Sussex ports and London.⁹⁴ Likewise, the ships of Rainham predominately sailed to Milton, London, and Dover, although a few sailed from and to Newcastle, Hull, and Pevensey.⁹⁵ The range of Whitstable's ships was also limited, running to Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn, London, Faversham, and Rochester.⁹⁶ In short, with the exception of ships from Faversham, Hythe, Sandwich, Dover, and Rainham, most of Kent's ships sailed to London, Sussex, and East Anglia.

Kent's Shipmasters

Based on the 1566 returns Gibson estimated that Kent's ship-board community numbered 924 masters, mariners and fishermen,⁹⁷ which seems a reliable estimate. Geoffrey Scammell showed that in 1538 some ships were manned at one man per eight tons, and in 1577 one man for every thirteen tons.⁹⁸ The latter figure seems too low and one man per six tons probably reflects the manning of ships over this period. This article argues that in any given year over this period there were approximately 200 Kentish ships totalling 4,500-5,000 tons; a fleet that would have required a workforce of at least 800 people. Given the large numbers of small boats identified in the 1566 returns there were probably more than 924 members of Kent's ship-board community because some people must have escaped the attention of the assessors. Indeed, in addition to the mariners that sailed overseas and laboured in the coastal trade there were likely to be a significant number of fisher-farmers who mixed smallholding with inshore fishing; these were probably the men that owned and operated the multitude of one-ton boats.

With the evidence of the port returns we can look at the career patterns of typical Kent masters over this period. Clearly, most specialised in one or other branch of trade, either coastal or overseas. From 1573-94 William Cooke of Sandwich worked the coastal routes of Sandwich to London, or Sandwich to Newcastle; as far as the records show he sailed to no other destination.⁹⁹ Moreover, he did so in command of only two ships, the *Margaret* (18 tons) and the *Bark Sara* (12 tons), suggesting he may have owned these vessels, or at least had shares in them. A handful of masters on the other hand performed both overseas and coastal voyages. Robert Bennett of Dover undertook voyages from King's Lynn to Rochester (1568), Southampton to Dover (1569), Gdansk to London (1572), and Southampton to Bordeaux (1574).¹⁰⁰ For these voyages he commanded three ships: the *Elizabeth* (50 tons), the *John* (36 tons) and the *Mari Thomas* (80 tons). The route to and from Southampton was well known to Bennett, and he probably used Southampton as a staging post for voyages to France before re-shipping goods back to Kent coastwise from Southampton. On his voyage from Southampton to Bordeaux in 1574, Bennett transported (amongst other things) 'four little slabbes

of Devonshire tynn, wayinge five hundred pounds' and 'eichte slabbs of Cornyshe tynn, wayinge one thousand eichte hundred pounds', as well as horses for the Earl of Leicester.¹⁰¹ Leicester had connections with Southampton and had invested in ships as a means to expand his income.¹⁰²

We can penetrate further into the socio-economic world of Kentish shipmasters by exploiting evidence from wills. We have already covered some aspects of the career of William Ferrers of Erith. Although he sailed to Hamburg in 1572 he specialised in voyages from London to the south-west ports of Helford/Helston, Falmouth, Truro, and Bristol.¹⁰³ In all of his coasting voyages he commanded the 55-ton *Trinity*. His last recorded voyage in command of the *Trinity* was in July 1569, but we know he was still working in 1572.¹⁰⁴ Unfortunately we are not given the specifics of the 1569 cargo, but the named merchants were haberdashers and pewterers.¹⁰⁵ His will was sealed in 1575, meaning his 1572 journey from Hamburg might have been one of his last before he retired. In his will he revealed that he owned the *Trinity*, and he bequeathed this vessel to his brother, Henry.¹⁰⁶ He gave his two daughters, Joan and Charity, two featherbeds with bedsteads and sheets as well as 'one halfe or halfe parte of all my shipping un-bequeathed with all the tackle, furniture and apparel belonging to the same and the halfe and halfe parte of the gayne and profit of three viogys'.¹⁰⁷ His wife, Joan, was to gain profits from the said ships too, but had to pay his debts. None of the ships could be sold until the daughters reached twenty-three years of age or got married. He also left 40s. to his mother-in-law, 40s. to the poor men of Erith, and differing amounts to relatives, servants, and business partners. He named two business partners, Peter Hill of Radcliffe and Thomas Andrews of London, both of whom were to be his 'true overseers to see this same [will] executed'.

The naming of Hill and Andrews in Ferrers's will provides us with an opportunity to investigate a trading partnership between the three men that centred on the ports of the south-west. On 23 July 1579 Thomas Andrews, in command of the eighty-ton *Elizabeth Bonaventur*, arrived in Helston from London carrying various products including haberdashery wares, bags of feathers (presumably for bed making), and ironmonger wares; he left Helston on 8 August and sailed back to London.¹⁰⁸ Interestingly, on 13 August 1579 and in July 1580, the 60-ton *Marigolde* of London commanded by Robert Andros (Andrews) left Truro for London; by 16 November 1580 Robert was back in Truro commanding the same ship, but this time Thomas Andrews was the sole merchant involved in shipping goods.¹⁰⁹ We can infer from these voyages that Robert was a relative of Thomas (perhaps a son or brother). In 1580, Peter Hill commanded the 60-ton *Blessinge of God* from Truro to London.¹¹⁰ What we do know is that even a cursory search of the Cornish port books shows that Ferrers, Andrews, and Hill had developed an important stake in the coastal trade from Cornwall to London. On their outward voyages to Cornwall they shipped haberdashery products, and, although we lack evidence of return cargoes, they most likely freighted back Cornish tin to be used in Kent's pewter industry. Combining the evidence from William's will with the data from the port books reveals the connections that shipowners/masters forged in order to trade. For a Kent-based shipper like William Ferrers, the London connections that came with Hill and Andrews would have provided much business and a way into a large and growing market, and given that William left Thomas Andrews money so

his son, Lancelot, could buy a ring, shows that the relationship between these three men went beyond mere business.

Other seafarers from Kent were not as wealthy as Ferrers. In 1564 Thomas Gybson, mariner of East Malling, left 10*s.* to the poor men of the town, 12*d.* to his god children, and £20 to his son to be paid to him when he reached the age of twenty-one.¹¹¹ In 1574 William Peacock of Faversham left to his family some limited profits from voyages he had made, but he also owed money. All told he had £28 of wealth to bequeath, but £7 of this was for an unpaid debt to one John Giles.¹¹² In 1575 Giles Rage of Lewisham, mariner, bequeathed to his ‘thre children twentie nobles a pece to be paid out of my shippes parte’.¹¹³ Unfortunately he does not name the ship, but as he fails to mention future profits from voyages it looks as though Giles had made prior arrangements to sell his share in the ship so that the money could be given over to his three children. However, he did leave his brother, William Rage, 40*s.* and his mother-in-law a featherbed with sheets and pillows. It is difficult to know what position Thomas Gybson, William Peacock, and Giles Rage had on-board ships. Rage seems to have invested in a ship, but Peacock and Gybson left no ships or shares in ships; are we to assume that they were humble mariners? We can never know, for they may have possessed ships and sold them in the years leading up to their deaths. However, since Rage, Peacock, and Gybson do not appear as shipmasters in the port books we can surmise that they were ordinary mariners, taking wages and, when possible, shipping small amounts of goods to make extra income, or as in the case of Rage investing in ship-shares. William Ferrers by contrast was a successful entrepreneur who made partnerships and created business strategies focused on a small selection of ports underpinned by the ownership of vessels. That William took command of the *Trinity* probably reflected the fact that this was his most important asset, a prized possession not to be entrusted into the care of another shipmaster.¹¹⁴ Given the fact that the *Trinity* was such a central part of the Ferrer’s family income it is therefore surprising that after William made his will the ship no longer appears in the records. Did Henry Ferrers sell the ship after he was bequeathed it? Was it lost in an accident, or broken up because of old age? Given the inaccurate recording of tonnages it is a possibility (admittedly a small one) that the 50-ton *Trinity* was the 60-ton *Blessing of God* commanded by Peter Hill; Henry might have sold the ship to his brother’s business partner who re-named it. If this was the case it truly was a blessing from God because this vessel came via a will and from a deceased business partner.

CONCLUSION

The merchant fleet and shipboard communities of Kent made an important contribution to the county’s economy. In the late Middle Ages and Tudor period, the ports of Kent were used as springboards for armies, diplomats, and trading ventures across Europe. From the mid-to-late fifteenth century and into the sixteenth century Kent’s shippers gradually reacted to changing economic circumstances, and shifted their focus to shipping grains, livestock, and other commodities to ports in Northern Europe. The growth of London during the sixteenth century also provided new opportunities for Kent’s shippers. The development of the north Kentish ports meant they could re-ship goods into and out of London, while other places in Kent

could supply the expanding population of London with much needed foodstuffs. In short, the ports of Kent were ideally placed to exploit the increasing demands of an ever-growing capital city. To do this Kent's merchants needed access to plenty of shipping. This article has demonstrated that Kent's shipowners invested in ships to meet the demands of merchants. Most of the tonnage of Kent's ships was employed in the coastal trade, mainly running short voyages into and out of London and East Anglia; although some Kentish shippers plied the longer coastal routes to the commercially expanding ports of the South-West. Nonetheless, many of Kent's shippers and merchants maintained close trading links with France, and some vessels even sailed to the Barbary Coast for more exotic products.

The shippers of Kent were, unsurprisingly, of mixed social and economic standing. Some like William Ferrers achieved a relatively good standard of living through the ownership of vessels and through the development of trading routes between the West Country ports and London. Others, such as Thomas Gybson, obviously found a living on the ships leaving and entering Kent's harbours each day. By the 1560s the heyday of the Cinque Ports might have been a distant memory, but Kent's shippers continued to do a brisk business via maritime trade. The merchant fleet of Kent in terms of size and geographical distribution probably changed little from the fourteenth century to the sixteenth century.¹¹⁵ Kent's shippers also showed themselves to be adaptable to changing economic circumstances, and once the richly laden Italian galleys ceased to arrive they gradually shifted their focus to cross-Channel trading and supplying the city of London.

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ENDNOTES

¹ W. Lambarde, *A Perambulation of Kent: Conteyning the Description, Hystorie and Customes of that Shire. Collected and Written (for the most part) in the Yeaere. 1570. By William Lambard of Lincolnes Inne Gent. And Nowe Increased by the Addition of Some Things which the Author Him Selfe Hath Observed Since That Time* (London, 1576). Lambarde completed his first draft in 1570: J. Alsop (2004-09-23). Lambarde, William (1536-1601), antiquary and lawyer. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 13 Apr. 2018, from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-15921>.

² M. Mate, *Trade and Economic Developments, 1450-1550: The Experience of Kent, Surrey, and Sussex* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 10 (Map 2).

³ Ships did sail into Canterbury, but too few to classify it as a port of any significance, see The National Archives, Kew [hereafter TNA] Exchequer, King's Remembrancer: Port Books E 190/388/4 f.10r; E 190/738/2 f.3r. Additionally there was not much activity in Fordwich; the only Fordwich ship in the records appears in 1573 and sailed from King's Lynn to Dover: E 190/427/4 f.3; E 190/639/4 f.1r.

⁴ J. Bower, 'Kent Towns, 1540-1640', in *Early Modern Kent, 1540-1640*, ed. M. Zell (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 141-176, p. 142.

⁵ W. Boys, *Collections for an History of Sandwich* (Canterbury, 1792).

⁶ H. Clarke, S. Pearson, M. Mate and K. Parfitt (with contributions from S. Sweetinburgh and B. Jones), *Sandwich: The 'Completest medieval Town in England': A Study of the Town and Port from its origins to 1600* (Oxford, 2010).

⁷ J. Lyon, *The History of the Town and Port of Dover and of Dover Castle with a Short Account of the Cinque Ports* (Dover, 1813).

⁸ N.H. Nicolas, *History of the Royal Navy: From the Earliest Times to the Wars of the French Revolution*, two vols (London, 1847) who discusses the Cinque Ports throughout his work; F.M. Hueffer, *The Cinque Ports: A Historical and Descriptive Record* (London, 1900); M. Oppenheim, 'Maritime History', in *The Victoria History of the County of Kent*, ed. W. Page (London, 1926), pp. 243-369; F.W. Brooks, 'The Cinque Ports', in *The Mariner's Mirror*, 15 (April, 1929), pp. 142-191; N.A.M. Rodger, 'The Naval Service of the Cinque Ports', *English Historical Review*, 111 (1996), 636-51; S. Rose, 'The Value of the Cinque Ports to the Crown 1200-1500', in *Roles of the Sea in Medieval England*, ed. R. Gorski (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 41-58.

⁹ C.L. Lambert, 'Naval Service and the Cinque Ports', in *Military Communities in Late Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Andrew Ayton*, eds, G.P. Baker, C.L. Lambert and D. Simpkin (Woodbridge, 2018), pp. 211-36.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*; A. Ayton and C. Lambert, 'A Maritime Community in War and Peace: Kentish Ports, Ships and Mariners, 1320-1400', *Archaeologia Cantiana* 134 (2014), 67-104.

¹¹ Oppenheim, 'Maritime History', pp. 278, 282.

¹² The naval expeditions over 1512-14 are not easy to reconstruct. There are several overlapping and interlinking exchequer and letters and papers records, which repeat many of the same ships but commanded by different men over different periods of service. Additionally, there are problems of the same ship given different names in the documents (for example, the *Sweepstake* was also known as the *Katherine Pomegrante*; A. Spont, *Letters and Papers Relating to the War with France 1512-1513* (London, 1897), p. 78 n.9) and the fact that several vessels are not allocated a home port. There might have been more ships because some of the accounts are mutilated and sometimes numerical totals of ships are given without providing the names of the vessels, but repetition across the records suggests that the number of 268 vessels is probably accurate. There were thirty-seven ships hired from Spain and the Low Countries (one ship, the *Leonard Frescobald*, might have had Italian owners), nine are not given names, and the king contributed twenty-four 'royal ships' and row-barges. The Cinque Port ships were from Dover, Hythe, Folkestone, Winchelsea (Sussex), Sandwich, Romney, Hastings (Sussex), Faversham, and Brightlingsea (Essex); one ship, the 50-ton *Trinite*, was supplied by Erith. The Cinque Ports might have supplied fewer (22) ships because some vessels in the document that concerns the Ports are not designated home ports so we can never be certain if they came from the Cinque Ports. Exchequer King's Remembrancer: Accounts Various E 101/56/15; E 101/56/16; E 101/56/18; Spont, *Letters and Papers*, pp. 6-15, 81-88, 171-72; *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII*, vol. 1, part 2, eds J.S. Brewer and R.H. Brodie (London, 1920), nos. 1413, 1453, 2304, 2686.

¹³ TNA E 101/56/18 f.5r.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Oppenheim, 'Maritime History', p. 282.

¹⁶ J.S. Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. I (Aldershot, 1988), pp. 32-33 and vol. II, pp. 138-39.

¹⁷ G.J. Mayhew, 'Rye and the Defence of the Narrow Seas: A 16th-Century Town at War,' in *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 122 (1984), 107-126; Clarke, *et al.*, 'Sandwich', p. 146. Elizabeth's war against Spain naturally drew on the shipping resources of the South-West ports.

¹⁸ D. Childs, *Tudor Sea Power* (Barnsley, 2009), pp. 136, 167; D. Loades, *The Tudor Navy: an Administrative, Political and Military History* (Aldershot, 1992), p. 74, 91 n.3.

¹⁹ Bower, 'Kent Towns, 1540-1640'.

²⁰ Mate, *Trade and Economic Development*, Chapter 6.

²¹ Clarke *et al.*, *Sandwich*, pp. 121-30.

²² *The Itinerary of John Leland in or About the Years of 1535-1543, Parts VII and VIII, with Appendices including Extracts from Leland's Collectanea*, ed. L.T. Smith (London, 1909), p. 48. This could be Paul II (1464-71) although there was more than one wreck creating problems; see Clarke *et al.*, *Sandwich*, p. 123.

- ²³ Mate, *Trade and Economic Developments*, p. 93.
- ²⁴ Oppenheim, 'Maritime History', p. 298.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²⁶ J.M. Gibson, 'The 1566 Survey of the Kent Coast', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 112 (1993), 341-53, pp. 346-53 prints the survey.
- ²⁷ M. Burrows, *Cinque Ports* (3rd edition, London, 1892), pp. 210-15. In 1563 Romney did gain full borough privileges. There are many blank port books for New Romney which date from the 1560s-90s: TNA E 190/737/1; 737/21; 738/8; 738/16; 742/18; 742/39; 743/2; 744/7; 744/16; 745/11; 745/18; 746/15; 746/18; 746/22; 747/9; 747/18; 747/22; 749/15; 749/18.
- ²⁸ Mate, *Trade and Economic Developments*, pp. 96-101.
- ²⁹ Clarke *et al.*, *Sandwich*, pp. 121-30; Mate, *Trade and Economic Developments*, pp. 96-101.
- ³⁰ E.W. Brayley, *The Beauties of England and Wales; or Original Delineations, Topographical, Historical and Descriptive of each County*, Vol. VIII (London, 1801), pp. 1000-1; Bower, 'Kent Towns, 1540-1640', pp. 141-76, p. 143.
- ³¹ Mate, *Trade and Economic Developments*, Chapters 4 and 6.
- ³² *Ibid.*, pp. 90-96.
- ³³ J. Andrewes, 'Industries in Kent, c.1500-1640', in *Early Modern Kent, 1540-1640*, ed. M. Zell (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 105-140.
- ³⁴ S. Sweetinburgh, 'Strategies of Inheritance among Kentish Fishing Communities in the Later Middle Ages', *The History of the Family*, 11 (2006), pp. 93-105.
- ³⁵ Gibson, 'The 1566 Survey'.
- ³⁶ Oppenheim, 'Maritime History', pp. 298-300.
- ³⁷ Gibson, 'The 1566 Survey'.
- ³⁸ Oppenheim, 'Maritime History', p. 297. Sandwich was the head port of Kent.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 299 n.380. In his *A History of the Administration of the Royal Navy and of Merchant Shipping in Relation to the Navy from 1509 to 1660* (London, 1896), p. 173, Oppenheim suggested that the survey also only recorded ships that traded, but this is not the case. The *Castell of Comfort* is listed under the port of Southampton (TNA SP 15/22 f.17v) and this ship never entered in lawful trade. On the *Castell*, see J.A. Williamson, *Hawkins of Plymouth: A New History of Sir John Hawkins and of the other Members of his Family Prominent in Tudor England* (London, 1949), p. 195; M. Lewis, *The Hawkins Dynasty: Three Generations of a Tudor Family* (London, 1969), p. 63; K. Andrews, *Elizabethan Privateering: English Privateering During the Spanish War, 1586-1603* (Cambridge, 1964), p. 17.
- ⁴⁰ TNA SP 15/22 f.1r.
- ⁴¹ C.L. Lambert and G.P. Baker, 'The Tudor Merchant Fleet: a Case Study of 1571-72', in J. Davey and R. Blakemore, eds, *The Maritime World of Early Modern Britain* (Amsterdam University Press, forthcoming, 2019).
- ⁴² As noted there are some errors with the survey. For example, the *Jhesus* of Hythe (5 tons) commanded by John Holford is from Hythe on Southampton Water and not Hythe in Kent (TNA SP 15/22 f.17r).
- ⁴³ There are customs accounts before 1565 that record the coasting trade, but their survival is patchy and they do not provide the same amount of detail as the port books.
- ⁴⁴ M. Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade in Medieval Exeter* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 224-32; R.H. Britnell, *Growth and Decline in Colchester, 1300-1525* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 70.
- ⁴⁵ The importance of the coasting trade in this period is highlighted in this present article and in a forthcoming piece: G.P. Baker, 'Domestic Maritime Trade in Late Tudor England c.1565-85: A Case Study of King's Lynn and Plymouth', in Claire Jowitt, Steve Mentz and C. Lambert, eds, *The Routledge Research Companion to Marine and Maritime Worlds, 1400-1800: Oceans in Global History and Culture* (Routledge, forthcoming, 2020).
- ⁴⁶ This can now be freely accessed at: www.medievalandtudorships.org.
- ⁴⁷ TNA E 190/3/1 fols 1v-30v; E 190/638/3 fols 1r-2r.
- ⁴⁸ TNA E 190/588/7 f.3v.
- ⁴⁹ TNA SP 15/22 f.13v.

⁵⁰ TNA SP 15/22 f.16v; E 190/739/13 f.3r.

⁵¹ C.L. Lambert, 'Maritime Communities, 1550-1600', in Claire Jowitt, Steve Mentz and C. Lambert, eds, *The Routledge Research Companion to Marine and Maritime Worlds, 1400-1800: Oceans in Global History and Culture* (Routledge, forthcoming, 2020). This aspect of the methodology will be dealt with in more detail in a forthcoming publication: A. Ayton, G.P. Baker and C.L. Lambert, *Ships and Seamen: England's Merchant Fleet and Maritime Communities from the Late Middle Ages to the Age of Drake, 1300-1580* (Oxford, 2021).

⁵² Port books usually run from Michaelmas to Michaelmas, however for some larger ports Easter to Michaelmas books might be produced, and in London some port books sometimes recorded only the freightage of certain commodities like wool.

⁵³ A margin of up to 10 tons has been used for this (i.e. a ship at 15 tons and one at 30 tons with the same name are counted as two ships; but one at 25 tons and one at 30 tons with the same name is only counted once).

⁵⁴ When removing ships with the same name the one with the largest tonnage was used to calculate the tonnage.

⁵⁵ TNA E 190/741/26 f.1v; E 190/742/6 f.1r.

⁵⁶ TNA E 190/638/3 f.5v; E 190/4/1 f.7r; E 190/814/3 f.25v.

⁵⁷ One at between 25 and 50 tons, the other at 16 tons. There are still difficulties because tonnages could vary widely: the *Elizabeth* of Dover commanded by Robert Benett was recorded in 1569 at thirty tons and in 1574 at fifty tons; TNA E 190/814/5 f.10r; E 190/814/9 f.46v.

⁵⁸ Kent's ships in this period can be found in the following TNA records (E 190/): 1/4; 1/5; 3/1; 3/2; 4/1; 4/5; 5/5; 5/6; 303/2; 303/4; 304/2; 304/4; 304/9; 304/10; 304/12; 305/4; 305/5; 305/12; 306/1; 306/4; 306/7; 306/8; 306/9; 306/10; 306/11; 306/16; 306/17; 307/2; 307/3; 307/9; 307/12; 307/18; 307/19; 387/10; 387/2; 387/4; 387/7; 388/1; 388/4; 388/7; 388/12; 389/4; 425/1; 425/2; 425/3; 425/5; 425/6; 425/10; 426/1; 426/4; 427/2; 427/4; 427/5; 427/8; 427/9; 428/2; 428/3; 428/4; 471/2; 472/4; 473/3; 473/7; 473/10; 587/2; 587/11; 588/5; 588/7; 589/4; 589/6; 589/10; 589/13; 591/4; 591/18; 638/1; 638/3; 638/6; 638/7; 638/8; 639/1; 639/2; 639/3; 639/4; 639/5; 639/6; 639/7; 639/7; 639/8; 639/9; 639/10; 737/10; 738/2; 738/6; 739/2; 739/8; 739/9; 739/13; 739/14; 739/16; 739/19; 739/21; 739/24; 739/25; 739/30; 740/1; 740/4; 740/6; 740/14; 740/15; 740/18; 740/24; 740/28; 740/29; 741/12; 741/17; 741/19; 741/21; 741/25; 741/26; 741/46; 742/10; 742/5; 742/6; 814/2; 814/3; 814/5; 814/6; 814/8; 814/9; 814/10; 814/11; 815/2; 864/7; 864/8; 864/9; 865/1; 927/3; 928/2; 928/4; 930/9; 930/16; 930/26; 931/3; 1010/12; 1010/13; 1010/14; 1010/23; 1011/12; 1011/19; 1011/21; 1011/23; 1011/4; 1011/8; 1013/20; 1128/12; 1128/15; SP 15/22. or by searching: www.medievalandtudorships.org.

⁵⁹ Gerald Grainge, who lives in Finglesham, writes: the precise location could have been West Street, a little hamlet about half a mile north-west of the main village of Finglesham. The contour lines on a modern OS map show that in times past there would have been a creek linked to the sea here and, of course, West Street is the location of the Anglo-Saxon (Jutish?) settlement associated with the Finglesham cemetery. The contour lines indicate a further such creek a mile or two south of Finglesham at Northbourne Court. Hasted, vol. 9, 583-604, quotes Leland as saying: 'A ii myles or more fro Sandwich from Northburn cummeth a fresch water yn to Sandwich haven'.

⁶⁰ Beryl Coates, 'Some thoughts on the Harbour(s) at Lydd', *The Romney Marsh Irregular*, no. 26, Autumn 2005. Symonson's map of Kent, 1596 shows a waterway ('Wainway') running towards Rye harbour; see extract in *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 138, 2017, 158.

⁶¹ Oppenheim, 'Maritime History', p. 300, noted similar problems with regard to the numbers of ships for Kent's ports recorded in ship surveys. In 1582 Margate was said to have only one vessel, but in 1584 it had eight.

⁶² The smallest ships in Kent recorded in the port books were the 3-ton *William* of Milton and the 3-ton *Peter* of Sandwich (TNA E 190/3/1 f.48v; E 190/814/5 f.11v).

⁶³ N.J. Williams, *The Maritime Trade of the East Anglian Ports, 1550-1590* (Oxford, 1988), p. 165.

⁶⁴ As noted it is difficult to be more precise with tonnage estimates.

⁶⁵ TNA SP/15/22 f.12r.

⁶⁶ In 1539/40 the French ambassador reported that there were only seven or eight English merchant ships over 400 tons, Loades, *Tudor Navy*, p. 93. This may have indeed been an overestimate as for the period 1571-75 the authors here could find only three ships of 400 tons upwards, see E 190/639/9

f.5v; E 190/1129/3 f.9v; E 190/1129/5 f.4r; E 190/1129/6 f.10v; E 190/1129/7 f.4r. One of these (the *Golden Lion* of Bristol) was measured at between 350 and 450 tons.

⁶⁷ The size of the average Elizabethan merchantman c.1565-c.1580 has probably been over-estimated. For example, Gibson seems to be surprised that *only* (authors' italics) seven per cent of Kent's merchant ships weighed forty tons or more.

⁶⁸ TNA E 190/1128/12 f.8r.

⁶⁹ TNA E 190/1010/12 f.3v.

⁷⁰ TNA E 190/930/26 f.2r.

⁷¹ TNA E 190/927/3 f.4r; E 190/3/1 f.23v; E 190/4/1 f.2r.

⁷² TNA E 190/927/3 f.4r; E 190/1010/13 f.4r; E 190/1128/12 f.8r.

⁷³ TNA E 190/638/1 f.2v; E 190/589/4 fols, 1v, 3v, 4r, 4v; E 190/587/2 f.3r.

⁷⁴ TNA E 190/3/1 f.30v; E 190/588/7 f.2v; E 190/591/4 f.3r; E 190/638/3 f.1r. He commanded the 20-ton *Anne*, the 15-ton *John* and the 18-ton *Peter*.

⁷⁵ TNA E 190/306/8 f.1r (Grimsby); E 190/306/10 f.4r (Hull); E 190/588/7 f.3r (Newcastle). He commanded the 30-ton *George* on all these occasions.

⁷⁶ TNA E 190/4/1 f.11v; E 190/426/1 f.15r; E 190/638/6 fols, 1r, 3r. He commanded the 30-ton *John* and 30-ton *Thomas*.

⁷⁷ TNA E 190/428/3 f.13v; E 190/428/2 f.1v; E 190/428/2 f.9r. From Newcastle he carried a cargo of thirty-five ways of salt and left with a cargo of Icelandic fish.

⁷⁸ TNA E 190/739/25; E 190/740/29; E 190/741/25; E 190/739/19; E 190/425/1; E 190/589/6 f.8r; E 190/639/10 f.6r.

⁷⁹ TNA E 190/5/5 f.30r; SP 15/22 f. 12r. It was also listed as 80 tons in the port book and 100 tons in the ship-survey.

⁸⁰ TNA E 190/814/3 f.25v.

⁸¹ TNA E 190/1/4 f.23r.

⁸² TNA E 190/5/5 f.37v.

⁸³ TNA E 190/814/9 f.46v.

⁸⁴ TNA E 190/814/9 f.46v.

⁸⁵ TNA E 190/1128/15 f.2v.

⁸⁶ TNA E 190/3/2 f.20v.

⁸⁷ TNA E 190/639/10 f.6r. The port book does not list the cargo.

⁸⁸ TNA E 190/814/9 f.28v; E 190/814/9 f.9r. Sometimes clerks referred to Cadiz as Callyce (or variants of), but the cargo of hops suggests Calais.

⁸⁹ TNA E 190/638/1 f.7r; E 190/639/2 f.1r; E 190/639/3 fols 2v, 5r, 5v; E 190/639/9 fols 2v, 4v; E 190/741/17 f.2v.

⁹⁰ TNA E 190/3/1 f.70v; E 190/639/3 f.3r.

⁹¹ TNA E 190/3/1 fols 13v, 52v, 67r; E 190/4/1 f.53v.

⁹² TNA E 190/1/5 fols 1r, 3r; E 190/3/1 fols, 23r, 39r, 45v, 48v, 71r; E 190/5/6 f.1r; E 190/305/12 f.5r; E 190/473/7 f.22v; E 190/5/6 f.1r; E 190/741/19 f.1r; E 190/814/8 f.8r; E 190/814/9 f.5; E 190/815/2 f.3r.

⁹³ TNA E 190/5/6 f.1r; E 190/473/7 f.24v; E 190/741/19 f.2r; E 190/741/21 f.3r; E 190/814/8 f.8r; E 190/814/9 f.5r; E 190/815/2 f.3r.

⁹⁴ TNA E 190/3/1 f.39v; E 190/638/1 fols 3r, 3v, 4v, 5r; E 190/639/9 fols 1v, 2v, 3r, 4v; E 190/741/12 f.2v.

⁹⁵ TNA E 190/307/12 fols 4r, 5r; E 190/639/10 fols 1v, 2r, 6v; E 190/639/3 f.2v; E 190/639/8 f.5v; E 190/639/10 fols 3r, 4r; E 190/740/18 f.1r.

⁹⁶ TNA E 190/3/1 f.16v, 43r; E 190/4/1 fols 8v, 43r, 51r; E 190/426/4 f.7v; E 190/473/7 f.14v; E 190/589/10 f.3v; E 190/589/13 f.5v; E 190/638/3 fols 1r, 2v, 3r, 3v; E 190/639/9 fols 4r, 4v.

⁹⁷ Gibson, 'The 1566 Survey', p. 344.

⁹⁸ G.V. Scammell, 'Manning the English Merchant Service in the Sixteenth Century', in *Mariner's Mirror*, vol. 56, n. 2 (1970), pp. 131-54, pp. 131-32.

⁹⁹ TNA E 190/639/2 f.4r; E 190/185/6 f.32r.

¹⁰⁰ TNA E 190/426/1 f.17v; E 190/814/5 f.10r; E 190/5/5 f.37v; E 190/814/9 f.46v.

¹⁰¹ TNA E 190/814/9 f.46v.

¹⁰² S. Adams, 'Dudley, Robert, Earl of Leicester', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (published 23 September 2004), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/8160>; accessed 28/11/2017.

¹⁰³ TNA E 190/3/1 f.68r, 68v, 69r; E 190/4/1 fols 2r, 41r, 54r, E 190/1010/12 f.3v; E 190/1010/13 f.4r; E 190/1010/23 f.2r; E 190/1011/4 f.8v; E 190/1011/8 f.3r; E 190/1011/19 f.5r; E 190/1128/12 f.8r.

¹⁰⁴ TNA E 190/5/5 f.30. He commanded the *Luke Evangelist* (80 tons) of London from Hamburg into London.

¹⁰⁵ Pewterers had an established presence in Maidstone, Sandwich and Faversham and it is possible that these men were based in one of the aforementioned towns, see Mate, *Trade and Economic Developments*, p. 12.

¹⁰⁶ TNA PROB 11-57-291.

¹⁰⁷ The un-bequeathed shipping might relate to the 80/100 ton *Luke Evangelist* noted above.

¹⁰⁸ TNA E 190/1014/19 fols 1r, 2r.

¹⁰⁹ TNA E 190/1014/10 f.3v E 190/1014/21 f.1r; E 190/1015/3 f.3r.

¹¹⁰ TNA E 190/303/4 f.1v; E 190/425/5 fols, 3r, 4v, 6r, 12r, 13r, 15v; E 190/1011/14 f.3v.

¹¹¹ TNA PROB 11-56-452.

¹¹² TNA PROB 11-56-452.

¹¹³ TNA PROB 11-57-611.

¹¹⁴ Given the wording of the will it is likely that he held shares in the *Luke Evangelist*.

¹¹⁵ Ayton and Lambert, 'A Maritime Community'.