

THE KENTISH DEMONYM – OR, THE DEMONYM OF KENT

JAMES LLOYD

In Box 16 of the Kent Archaeological Society Archive of Past Members' Papers are those of the Hon. Henry A. Hannen, a barrister and JP but also a Council member of the KAS, whose collections include a file entitled 'A Man of Kent: A Kentish Man. Collected notes thereon'. This paper re-opens and concludes his investigation by cataloguing the demonyms used for the inhabitants of Kent from the Anglo-Saxon period to the present, in order to establish definitively how old this terminological distinction is and the rationale behind it.

It is a question that the outsider often asks the native of this county: is he a Man of Kent or a Kentish Man? More often than not, the answer is followed by another question: what exactly is the difference?

The Association of Men of Kent and Kentish Men designate the difference as the River Medway, with Men of Kent being those who are born east or south of it and Kentish Men those born west or north.¹ This is the interpretation to be found in most modern introductions to the county. The definition has not, however, always been so simple. Victorian correspondents in *Notes and Queries* were much exercised by the question (see below) and the Honourable Henry Hannen investigated it, though his research remains unpublished.² This paper proposes to re-open and conclude his investigation by cataloguing the demonyms used for the inhabitants of Kent.

Old English

It has long been argued that the kingdom of Kent was divided into two major districts, the main kingdom in the eastern half of Kent and a sub-kingdom in the west. This is hinted by Saint Augustine's foundation of two dioceses in Kent (by contrast, most other newly converted kingdoms would be given only one bishop, to go with their one king) and dual kingship is occasionally observed in royal charters.³ More recently, archaeological finds have been interpreted as suggesting that east Kent was settled mainly by Jutes and west Kent by Saxons.⁴ Some commentators have tried to attribute the distinction between Men of Kent and Kentish Men to these political and ethnic divisions.⁵ A variation on this theme imagines two separate waves of settlers, with Men of Kent being descended from the first wave and Kentish Men from the second.⁶ Does contemporary evidence support any of these claims?

The earliest demonym used for an inhabitant of Kent is 'Cantwara', coined by

combining the Brythonic name of the area with the obscure Old English word 'wara', which can appear as 'waran', 'ware' or 'waras' in the plural. It should not be confused with the similar word 'wer', meaning a man.

'Wara' is extremely rare as an independent word and is almost always used as a suffix, being comparable to the Old High German suffix '-wari', Old Norse '-veri' and '-verjar' and Latin and Germanic '-varii'. Connections have been suggested with the verb 'werian', meaning 'to protect' or 'to guard', the adjective 'wær', meaning 'wary' or 'attentive' and the noun 'waru', meaning 'shelter' or 'custody'.⁷ One of its few uses as an independent word is as a gloss on 'civis', citizen.⁸ The word is almost always found in compounds, such as the near-interchangeable terms 'portware',⁹ 'ceasterware'¹⁰ and 'burgware',¹¹ all meaning the inhabitants of a town.

These clues suggest that 'wara' meant someone who belonged somewhere or was under the protection of something. It is difficult to translate the word precisely, as it has no modern form but some of the same idea (and etymology) may survive in the legal term 'ward of court'. For the purposes of this paper, 'Cantware' will be used as the standard plural form and will be translated (uninspiringly but non-committally) as 'Kent-people'.

The earliest examples of the compound are to be found in the law-code of Hlothhere and Eadric (issued between 673 and 685), which uses 'Cantware' in genitive phrases in a fashion that seems to preclude the notion of any fundamental geographical distinction.

Hlothhere and Eadric are themselves referred to as 'Cantwara cyningas', kings of the Kent-people, in both the preface to the law-code and the prologue,¹² despite the likelihood that Hlothhere was king of east Kent and Eadric of the west.¹³ Judgement over a charge made at a public assembly is assigned to 'cantwara deman', the judges of the Kent-people, yet it is obvious from the joint nature of the law-code that this cannot refer only to the judicial procedure in one half of the kingdom. Another clause concerning the buying of property in London refers to 'cantwara ænig', any of the Kent-people.¹⁴ Those born west of the Medway would have been in the most convenient position for such transactions but it is hardly likely that the kings meant to exclude easterners from these provisions. These examples make it quite clear that the law-code used 'Cantwara' to mean anyone from the whole of Kent.

This usage is continued in Wihtréd's law-code of 695, which describes itself as 'domas', judgements, added to the 'Cantwara rihtum þeawum', legal customs of the Kent-people. The law-code stresses that both the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of Rochester were present at the meeting at which the law-code was agreed, emphasising the involvement of west Kent as well as east.¹⁵

In conclusion, the law-codes do not acknowledge any distinction, ethnic or terminological, between the inhabitants of east and west Kent but use the term 'Cantware', Kent-people, indiscriminately to cover all the inhabitants of the entire kingdom. This interpretation is supported by the titulature of royal charters, which generally Latinize 'Cantware'.¹⁶ The most pertinent example is a charter of 689 from Swæfheard, 'rex Cantuariorum', giving land in Sturry to Minster in Thanet. Yet the following year Oswine, 'rex Cantuariorum', granted different land in Sturry to Minster in Thanet in a charter attested, after Oswine, by one Swæfheard,

witnessing without a title but obviously Oswine's partner on the throne.¹⁷ These two men are believed to have been joint-kings of Kent and their charters suggest that, even in a time of dual kingship, Kent was not necessarily administered in two parts.¹⁸

Particularly instructive is a charter of around 763, in which King Sigereð granted land to Rochester Cathedral. Sigereð is believed to have been the joint-king based in west Kent,¹⁹ so it is significant that in this charter he described himself as 'rex dimidie partis prouincie Cantuariorum',²⁰ king of a half-part of the province of the Kent-people, phraseology which implies that the other half-part was inhabited by people called 'Cantware' too. The charter is said to enjoy the consent of the 'optimatum et principum gentis Cantuariorum', nobles and princes of the nation of the Kent-people.

The only alternative title that charters sometimes used is 'rex Cantiae'²¹ but this indicates nothing. Æthelberht II was known to use both the titles 'rex Cantuariorum' and 'rex Cantiae' in the same charter.²² After his brother and joint-king Eadberht succeeded him as senior ruler, he described himself as 'Dei dispensatione ab uniuersa prouincia Cantuariorum constitutus rex et princeps', by the gift of God appointed king and prince of the whole province of the Kent-people.²³ Sigereð was his own junior partner and a charter that they granted jointly to Rochester Cathedral calls them both 'rex Cantiae'.²⁴ Despite the traditional partition of the kingdom between two kings, it was still regarded as one kingdom and one people.

The conquest of Kent by Mercia and Wessex brought about no change in its terminological practices. Around 806, Cuthred, 'rex Cantuariorum' (*sic*), granted a charter with the consent of Coenwulf, 'rex Merciorum'. Coenwulf himself later became 'rex Merciorum atque prouincie Cancie' and a charter of his was taken to Canterbury to be confirmed by the 'satrapes Cantuariorum', nobles of the Kent-people. Egbert, calling himself 'rex Occidentalium Saxonum necnon et Cantuariorum', granted land 'in prouincie . Cantuariorum'. His son and sub-king Æthelwulf referred to himself, in both the text and the witness-list of another charter, as 'rex Cancie'. Once he had succeeded to the throne of Wessex, his title became 'rex occidentalium Saxonum et Cantuariorum'.²⁵

Like the law-codes, the charters show no indication that the people of east and west Kent were regarded as fundamentally distinct. The division of Kent into two sub-kingdoms was an administrative, rather than an ethnic, distinction and was not reflected in official terminology except by cumbersome circumlocutions. There was only one Kentish nation, for which the term 'Cantware' was applied indiscriminately.

'Cantware' is also the preferred term of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Entries for 694 and 725 (among others) use the expressions 'Cantware', 'Cantawara rice'²⁶ and 'Cantwara cyning'.²⁷ *ASC* 853 reports that 'Ealhere mid Cantwarum, [and] Huda mid Suþrigu[m]'²⁸ fought the heathen in Thanet and *ASC* 865 describes how the 'Cantware' made peace with the Danes in Thanet.²⁹ This was translated 'Cantuarii' by Asser in his equivalent account.³⁰

Other vernacular sources also support this usage. Edward the Elder's wife Eadgifu, in a writ to Christ Church, described how her father, Ealdorman Sigehelm, set his affairs in order before his death in the Battle of the Holme in 904: 'Þa gelangp emb þa tid þæt man beonn ealle Cantware to wigge. to Holme'.³¹ The

will of Eadgifu's son King Eadred in 955 granted 400 pounds to the archbishop of Canterbury for the relief of the 'Cantwarum [and] Suþrigum [and] Suþseaxum [and] Bearrucscire'.³²

Even sources that do imply an administrative distinction between west and east Kent make it explicitly clear that the same demonym applied to both. The record of a shire court held around 985 describes it as a court of 'ealra East Cantwarena [and] West Cantwarena'.³³

The use of constructions based on *-ware* was common in Kent. Canterbury is the 'Cantwaraburh',³⁴ stronghold of the Kent-people. Similar terms are used in the early names of the lathes: the *Wiware* (Wye-people), *Limenware* (Limen-people),³⁵ *Burhware* (Borough-people)³⁶ and *Eastriware* (eastern district-people).³⁷ There were also the *Merscware* (Marsh-people),³⁸ the *Hooware* (Hoo-people), the *Dæneware* (dens-people),³⁹ the *Doferware* (Dover-people),⁴⁰ the *Tenetware* (Thanet-people)⁴¹ and the *Caesterware* (Rochester-people).⁴² Nicholas Brooks suggested that the *Caesterware* may have belonged to a lathe that originally covered the whole of west Kent, which would later evolve into the Domesday Book's lathes of Aylesford, Sutton-at-Hone and Milton.⁴³ If he was correct, then the special demonym for the inhabitants of west Kent would have been 'Caesterware'.

One might suggest that *-ware* compounds were a Jutish usage, since they are also found of the *Wihtware* (Wight-people)⁴⁴ and *Meanware* (Meon-people).⁴⁵ One should hesitate, however, before identifying the *-ware* construction as a peculiarly Jutish usage since one also finds many examples outside Jutish areas.⁴⁶

There was, as a matter of fact, an alternative to 'Cantwara' but it was not '*Centiscman' and it, too, was used indiscriminately for the whole shire. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that in 999 the Danes raided the 'Weast Centingas' but the annal for 1009 says that the 'East Centingas' made peace with the Danes on their own account. Other annals refer to 'ealle Centingas'.⁴⁷

The *-ing* suffix had several different related uses, some of them only subtly different from one another. It was originally a kind of genitive but denoted association, rather than possession.⁴⁸ It could function as a surname, with either a patronymic or locative meaning. For example, Badanoth Beotting, a royal reeve active in Canterbury in the mid-ninth century, was the son of Beotta.⁴⁹

For similar reasons, it was also used as a kind of clan name, denoting a group claiming descent from, or associated with, a common ancestor. This was an ancient usage, employed to name numerous pre-migration Germanic tribes⁵⁰ and it frequently appears in English place names, such as Eastling (from 'Eslingas', the descendants of Esla)⁵¹ and Hastingleigh ('lea of the descendants of Hæsta').⁵² 'Centing', therefore, would literally mean something like 'belonging to Kent' or 'child of Kent', an attractive name and one that did not discriminate in either its literal meaning or its known examples. Old English, as an inflected language, could also use the adjective 'Centisc' as a noun.⁵³

Middle-English

'Cantware' would enjoy a long life, appearing as late as the turn of the twelfth century in Layamon's *Brut*.⁵⁴ This does not, however, prove that the term was still current then, for Layamon's vocabulary and written style were consciously archaic.⁵⁵ For

example, he also used the term ‘Rom-ware’⁵⁶ but, of the two surviving manuscripts of the *Brut*, only London, British Library, Cotton Caligula A.ix preserves this reading. The scribe of London, British Library, Cotton Otho C.xiii, whose policy it was to modernize Layamon’s archaisms,⁵⁷ changed it to ‘Romanisse’⁵⁸ and his attitude towards ‘Kent-wærre’ appears to have been equally negative, since he replaced it with a reference to Canterbury on at least one occasion (but a lacuna in his manuscript at the word’s other appearance prevents certainty on the point).⁵⁹

That the term ‘Kentish Man’ was used in Old English cannot be ruled out⁶⁰ but the earliest examples known to the author of this paper are from the Middle-English period. A reference to Kentish Men fighting in the Battle of the Holme in Robert of Gloucester’s *Metrical Chronicle* uses ‘Kenters’ or ‘Kenteys’ in manuscripts of the fourteenth century but manuscripts dating from the first half of the fifteenth century change this to ‘Kenteys men’, ‘Kentysche men’ *etc.*⁶¹ This suggests that, in Middle-English, as in Old, the adjective alone could be used as a noun, though this usage would become rarer as the English language became less reliant on inflection and more reliant on syntax.

In the same account, Robert of Gloucester had also used the phrase ‘þat folc of kent’, apparently interchangeably with ‘Kenteys’ and ‘Kentysche men’.⁶² This confirms that analytical terms for the Kentish did exist in the Middle-English period but, as such terms can be invented for any county *ad hoc*, that is hardly a revelation and Robert does not seem to have intended it as a demonym as such.

Latin works can be cited as implying multiple English terms for people in Kent. Some authors used ‘Cantuaritus’ to mean Kentish,⁶³ others preferred ‘Centensis’.⁶⁴ There can be, however, little doubt that these varied Latin usages were not reflected in the vernacular, as is demonstrated by John Trevisa’s 1387 translation of Ralph Higden’s *Polychronicon*.⁶⁵ The original text included numerous references to ‘Cantuaritae’, ‘Kentenses’ or the old ‘Cantuarii’, all of which Trevisa translated as ‘Kentisse men’ or ‘men of Canterbury’ indifferently.⁶⁶

In its feminine singular form, ‘Cantuaria’ also served as the medieval Latin name for Canterbury, which in turn was made into the adjective ‘Cantuariensis’, still used today (in the abbreviation ‘Cantuar’) in the archbishop’s official signature. This, which properly connotes belonging to the cathedral city, might apparently also be used as a demonym for the people of Kent, though examples are rare. One such case is in the historical novel *Vitae duorum Offarum*, written at St Albans in the mid-thirteenth century.⁶⁷ This mentions the ‘Rex Cantuariensium et Kentensium’ as one of several English kings who allied themselves (on two separate occasions) with King Charles of the Franks against Offa of Mercia.⁶⁸ Michael Swanton translated this title provocatively as ‘king of the Eastern and Western Kentish men’ and explained it as ‘A racial distinction since the time of the Settlements, reflected to the present day in the separation of the respective dioceses of eastern Canterbury and western Rochester ...’.⁶⁹

Swanton has inserted into his translation a geographical distinction that is not explicit in the original text. Translated more accurately, it means ‘king of the men of Canterbury and of the Kentish’, which cannot be made to carry the connotations that Swanton attributes to it. Compare a later chapter title: ‘Rex Cantuariensium uel Kentensium a Rege Offa conteritur’,⁷⁰ i.e. ‘the King of the men of Canterbury, or of the Kentish, is crushed by King Offa’ and the phrase ‘Regem Cantuariensem

uel Kentensem' used in the subsequent text, i.e. 'the Canterbury, or Kentish, King'. 'Cantuariensis' and 'Kentensis' are distinct in meaning but similar in appearance and their awkward employment in a text written in Hertfordshire, far from proving 'a racial distinction since the time of the Settlements', is far likelier merely to reflect an outsider's uncertainty about the correct terminology.

English and Latin were only two of the languages used in medieval England. The third was French and its word for the inhabitants of Kent was 'Kenteys',⁷¹ which is found in twelfth- and thirteenth-century sources.⁷² It was derived from vernacular 'Centisc',⁷³ so was really an adjective that could function grammatically as a noun and could serve as either singular or plural.⁷⁴

Its most significant appearance is in the *Consuetudines Cancie*. This is a codification of Kentish customs (supposedly those preserved from before the Norman Conquest by special agreement with William I) and is traditionally dated to the *Quo Warranto* inquest of 1293, though an earlier version was apparently produced during the inquest of 1279.⁷⁵ Around ten manuscripts were written in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (though not all are known still to exist).⁷⁶ Most manuscripts are written in Anglo-French but one is in Latin. No two of them are exactly alike and one of their most significant variations is in the provocative opening clause, which was published by Lambarde and later by the *Statutes of the Realm* as '... tou[te]z les cors de Kenteys seyent francs ausi cu[m] les autres francs cors de Englet[er]re'.⁷⁷

This clause has occasioned much controversy. There is (sadly) no doubt that serfdom did exist in medieval Kent, so this version of the clause, which appears in only three manuscripts,⁷⁸ is usually dismissed as erroneous. All other manuscripts of the *Consuetudines Cancie* say not 'les cors de Kenteys' but 'les cors gavelkenders'. Gavelkind was a form of freehold tenure and it is to the freedom of their tenures that the clause refers. 'To suggest that Kentish birth made a man free *ipso facto* ... is difficult to sustain against accumulated evidence, but to state that gavelkinders were free is a clear statement of a fact'.⁷⁹

Felix Hull identified two distinct traditions behind these manuscripts, one developed by common lawyers, which laid emphasis on the *Quo Warranto* proceedings as their authority and an ecclesiastical tradition, which emphasised the authority of pre-Conquest custom.⁸⁰ It is the ecclesiastical version that uses 'Kenteys' and the common lawyers' version that prefers 'gavelkenders', in turn implying that 'Kenteys' is a more conservative term for the free class of Kent.⁸¹ In other words, that 'the bodies of all *Kenteys* are free' is a slight tautology but one necessitated by the introduction of Norman-French and feudalism. The common lawyer's version needed to use a more up-to-date and legally specific term, so it employed 'gavelkenders', which in context meant the same thing as 'Kenteys'.

If Hull's theory is correct, then this would be the earliest indication that different terminology was used for different classes of people in Kent but it was a social distinction between the free and the unfree, not a geographical distinction between the east and west or an ethnic distinction between Saxons and Jutes. Furthermore, there was no alternative demonym to the free 'Kenteys'. The unfree were neither Men of Kent nor Kentish Men. They were simply the unfree.

The *Consuetudines Cancie*, though claiming to codify customs that pre-dated the Norman Conquest, do not narrate the legend of the ambushing of Duke William at

Swanscombe, to which the preservation of Kentish customary law was traditionally attributed. The earliest narrative of that legend, however, was written in the late thirteenth century, by Canterbury monk Thomas Sprott⁸² and its role in informing Kentish identity and culture cannot be overstated. It is the inspiration for Kent's motto 'Invicta' and its boast to be the Unconquered County, free of serfdom. As hyperbolic as these claims may be, they profoundly influenced Kent's sense of itself and will re-surface more than once as this investigation progresses.

Modern English

It takes no special genius to make a genitival phrase out of the name of a county, so to try to put a date on when the term 'Man of Kent' was coined would be a fool's errand. What may be possible (and would be more to the point) is to work out when the genitival phrase usurped the adjectival as the normal demonym for Kentish natives.

John Trevisa's was not the only translation of the *Polychronicon*. The manuscript London, British Library, Harley 2261 contains the only surviving copy of another translation and continuation, apparently written in the first half of the fifteenth century by an unidentified historian.⁸³ Whereas Trevisa had usually rendered 'Cantuaritae/Kentenses/Cantuarii' as 'Kentisshe men', the anonymous translator preferred 'men of Kente', a phrase that he also used in several original passages.⁸⁴

One must, however, hesitate before hailing the arrival of a new demonym. This translator's style was '... bombastic, and can hardly represent the spoken English of any period ...'.⁸⁵ His preference for the translation 'men of Kente' may thus be owed more to his flamboyant tastes than to contemporary diction. The translator also did not rigidly adhere to it, sometimes using Trevisa's alternative 'men of Canterbury' instead.⁸⁶ Finally, the translator did not confine such elaborate demonyms to Kent. For example, when faced with Higden's 'Northimbrensibus', which Trevisa had translated as 'Norþhumbres', the anonymous translator conjured up 'men of Northumbrelonde'.⁸⁷

By contrast, William Caxton, who issued a revised version of Trevisa's translation in 1482, retained 'Kentisshe men', despite his general tendency to update the language.⁸⁸ It may not be irrelevant to note that Caxton was himself Kentish, whereas the provenance of the anonymous translator is unknown (Trevisa, incidentally, was Cornish). These facts seem to suggest that 'Men of Kent' was more of an arch literary motif than part of the ordinary parlance and later evidence supports this interpretation.⁸⁹

A vernacular history, probably written in the late 1460s, once substitutes 'men of Kent' for its preferred 'comynes of Kent' in its account of Jack Cade's revolt.⁹⁰ Lord Berners's rendition of Froissart's *Chronicles* (published in two volumes in 1524 and 1525) has King Richard II address the Kentish peasants of a different revolt as 'you good men of Kent'.⁹¹ This is a reasonable approximation of Froissart's original 'boines gens de la conté de Kent' (*sic*).⁹² The similar phrase 'meschans gens de la conté de Kent'⁹³ was, however, rendered 'unhappy people of Kent'.⁹⁴ These examples show that 'Men of Kent' was not yet fixed as a demonym.

Another early source to employ the phrase, this time not as a translation, appears to treat it as interchangeable with 'Kentish Man'. In one scene in *The Second Part of King Henry the Sixth* (apparently written in 1591 or 1592),⁹⁵ the Duke of

York refers to Jack Cade of Ashford as ‘a headstrong Kentishman’;⁹⁶ by contrast, later on in the play, Lord Say addresses Cade’s mob as ‘You men of Kent’.⁹⁷ One commentator has charged Warwickshireman William Shakespeare with putting the terms for the two halves of Kent the wrong way round⁹⁸ but the same charge cannot be levelled against the author of *The Kentish Fayre*, a short, satirical play on the subject of the Kentish Rebellion of 1648. Though the author is unidentified, he viewed the rebels favourably and the text was published in Rochester, so he was probably Kentish himself, yet he used the terms ‘Kentish-men’ (*sic*) and ‘men of Kent’ on the same page without distinction of meaning.⁹⁹

In other sources of this period, ‘Kentish Man’ remains by far the more common term. Shakespeare used it again in *Henry VI Part Three*, when he referred to Lord Cobham’s leading ‘the Kentishmen’ in support of the Yorkists.¹⁰⁰

Thomas Stapleton’s 1565 translation of Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (the first in modern English) rendered ‘Cantuarii’ in several ways, his most adventurous being the elaborate circumlocution ‘Diocesans of Canterbury’ but he also used ‘people of Kent’, ‘kentish man’ and, for ‘de prouincia Cantuariorum’, ‘a kentishman borne’.¹⁰¹

William Lambarde consistently used the term ‘Kentish men’ in his *Perambulation of Kent*, including in his translation of the *Consuetudines Cancie*’s ‘Kenteys’. The term also appears in his index, denoting a portion of his text where the characteristics of the people of the county are discussed.¹⁰² There is no entry for ‘Men of Kent’. A ballad on the legend of the ambush of William of Normandy at Swanscombe, written between 1576 and 1600, uses the term ‘Kentish men’ for an army gathered from all over the county.¹⁰³

It may be instructive to compare William Camden’s *Britannia*, originally published in Latin in 1586, to Philemon Holland’s translation of the same from 1610, which consistently renders an original ‘Cantiani’ as ‘Kentish men’.¹⁰⁴ In particular, Camden translated ‘Cant-wara-ryc’, perfectly accurately, as ‘Cantianorum virorum regnum’; Holland in turn translated this as ‘kingdome of the Kentish men’.¹⁰⁵ A similar interpretation was used by Richard Kilburne in his 1659 *Topographie of Kent*, where he derived ‘Canterbury’ from Welsh Caergant, ‘or the Court of Kentish-men’.¹⁰⁶ These examples are significant because they use the expression ‘Kentish Men’ for the very capital of east Kent, which according to the modern definition is the home of the ‘Men of Kent’, a term that has so far been largely eschewed, even by historians of the county.

The earliest clear uses of the term ‘Men of Kent’ as a demonym do, however, date from around this time. A ballad, apparently written in 1637 to celebrate the building of H.M.S. *Sovereign of the Seas* at Woolwich, contains the verse

Kent was never conquered yet,
Kent was thought a place most fitt
To build this goodly arke in it,
Soe stronge.

Kent and men of Kent have showne
By sea, by land, that of their owne
Which other countries have not knowne
Soe long.¹⁰⁷

There is no indication yet that ‘Men of Kent’ was for any reason confined to a particular part of the county but it may be significant that it was in the context of Kent’s unconquered status and the liberty arising from it that the term was employed.

These associations were reiterated by the Reverend Thomas Fuller (1608-61), who in his posthumously published *Worthies of England* was the first to discuss ‘Men of Kent’ specifically as a term. He suggested that ‘Men of Kent’ ‘... may relate either to the liberty or to the courage of this county men ...’.¹⁰⁸ The claim in the *Consuetudines Cancie* that gavelkind was a form of freehold tenure had by this date been misconstrued as an assertion of the freedom of all the county’s inhabitants from serfdom.¹⁰⁹ Fuller, citing the maxim that ‘servi non sunt viri, quia non sui juris’ (serfs are not men, since they are not of their own right), concluded ‘... the Kentish for their freedom have achieved to themselves the name of men’. His alternative explanation cited the tradition that the Kentish formed the vanguard of the English army.¹¹⁰

Both explanations rest on the principle that ‘Man of Kent’ is a term of dignity. An editorial by Fuller’s 1840 publisher noted that ‘There is a dispute between East and West as to which part of the county attaches “Men of Kent”, and to which only “Kentish Men”’. It is significant that the editor used the present tense and did not claim that the question was settled in his own time. Fuller himself had implied no geographical distinction at all. On the contrary, he implied that, just as all inhabitants of Kent were freemen, so were all entitled to call themselves ‘Men of Kent’. Fuller accorded the term ‘Kentish Man’ no special discussion but he did later refer to the inhabitants of the county as ‘the Kentish men’ (while discussing their forming the vanguard)¹¹¹ and called Sir Anthony St Leger a ‘Kentish man’,¹¹² without suggesting any loss of dignity or ethnic distinction.

The earliest appearance of the two terms in apposition (at least, the earliest that Henry Hannen could identify) is in the Reverend Samuel Pegge’s *Proverbs Relating to Kent*, which he compiled while Vicar of Godmersham and presented, annexed to his *Alphabet of Kenticisms*, to his friend Thomas Brett around 1735 or 1736. The relevant entry is curt: ‘A man of Kent, and a Kentish man’.¹¹³ Pegge merely noted the existence of two separate terms. He did not explain their difference and he himself used the term ‘Kentish men’ to refer to the inhabitants generally.¹¹⁴

The earliest explicit statement of a division between Men of Kent and Kentish Men is to be found in a poem by Old Maidstonian Christopher Smart. *The English Bull Dog, Dutch Mastiff, and Quail* (written in 1755 and published in 1758) is a satire on perceived differences among men and on nationalism in particular. The reference to Kentish Men and Men of Kent comes early in the poem and is best understood on the context of the verse that surrounds it:

Are we not all of race divine,
Alike of an immortal line?
Shall man to man afford derision,
But for some casual division?
To malice, and to mischief prone,
From climate, canton, or from zone,
Are all to idle discord bent,
These Kentish men — those men of Kent;

And parties and distinction make,
 For parties and distinction's sake.
 Souls sprung from an ethereal flame,
 However clad, are still the same;
 Nor should we judge the heart or head,
 By air we breathe, or earth we tread.
 Dame Nature, who, all meritorious,
 In a true Englishman is glorious;
 Is lively, honest, brave and bonny,
 In Monsieur, Taffy, Teague, and Sawney.
 Give prejudices to the wind,
 And let's be patriots of mankind.
 Biggots, avaunt, sense can't endure ye,
 But fabulists should try to cure ye.¹¹⁵

This seems to make it quite clear that, by the middle of the eighteenth century, not only were both the terms 'Kentish Man' and 'Man of Kent' in currency but they were thought to mean different things. Smart does not explain the difference but he strongly implies that it was a sharp one and a cause of social discord.

Clarity was provided thirty years later by Francis Grose, who recorded in his *Local Proverbs* that 'All the inhabitants of Kent, east of the river Medway, are called Men of Kent, from the story of their having retained their ancient privileges ... by meeting William the Conqueror, at Swanscomb-bottom ... The rest of the inhabitants of the county are stiled [*sic*] Kentish-men'.¹¹⁶ This explanation continues the association, apparent since the seventeenth century, between 'Man of Kent' as a title of dignity and the Swanscombe legend. Variations on this theme will re-appear several more times in the evidence to follow.

In 1828, the High Sheriff of Kent summoned a meeting at Penenden Heath to debate Catholic emancipation. Irish lawyer Richard Sheil attended the meeting and gave an account of it. His account consistently refers to those in attendance as the 'Men of Kent', always in inverted commas. His editor, Robert Mackenzie, explained that Men of Kent were natives from south of the Medway, Kentish Men west of it and 'The former are locally accounted superior to the latter'.¹¹⁷ The irrational note of snobbery recalls Fuller's belief that the more analytical designation had particular connotations of dignity.

This geographical distinction is not, however, reflected in contemporary election ballads, which usually addressed the voters as 'Men of Kent',¹¹⁸ presumably because they were being respectful. The address 'Kentishmen' in this context was less common but was not unknown.¹¹⁹

The nineteenth century would see a flurry of attempts to explain the difference between a Man of Kent and a Kentish Man, with the pages of *Notes and Queries* becoming a particularly bloody battlefield. In 1852, an inquiry on the subject solicited a reply from the editor, W.J. Thoms, who reported having in his youth heard a story from 'a very old man' who in turn had heard the explanation from a man who had been alive in James II's reign. Even allowing for elasticity in these three men's memories, it should still be safe to date the information to the early eighteenth century.¹²⁰ Only a full quotation can convey its import properly:

When the Conqueror marched from Dover towards London, he was stopped at

Swansconope [*sic*], by Stigand, at the head of the ‘Men of Kent’, with oak boughs ‘all on their brawny shoulders’, as emblems of peace, on condition of his preserving inviolate the Saxon laws and customs of Kent; else they were ready to fight unto the death for them. The Conqueror chose the first alternative: hence we retain our Law of Gavelkind, &c., and hence the inhabitants of the part of Kent lying between Rochester and London, being ‘invicti’, have ever since been designated as ‘Men of Kent’, while those to the eastward, through whose district the Conqueror marched unopposed, are only ‘Kentish Men’.¹²¹

Thoms confessed to being sceptical of the accuracy of this explanation and rightly so. Not only is the ambush at Swanscombe a legend but this is not even an accurate re-telling of Thomas Sprott’s account, which had William marching from London towards Dover and being met, though in the west of the county, by men gathered from all around it. It would appear that the legend had been adjusted to assign the more desirable designation to the inhabitants of west Kent, rather than those of east Kent. It also apparently dates the development of the distinction to a time between the evidence of Fuller and Pegge.

Thoms’s own suggestion was that the two terms had been devised to distinguish families settled in the county since time immemorial (‘Men of Kent’) from recent arrivals (‘Kentish’).

Both of these explanations provoked a riposte from George Corner and Charles Sandys.¹²² Corner had always understood that it was the men of east Kent who gloried in the more analytical designation, ‘... because in East Kent the people are less intermixed with strangers than in West Kent, from its proximity to the metropolis ...’, an interpretation which had some sympathy with Thoms’s.

Canterbury native Charles Sandys was confident that the distinction was even older than that, arguing that Saint Augustine’s foundation of two dioceses created a fundamental distinction between west Kent and east Kent that led to differing terminology. In support of this contention, he fired a salvo of annals from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which he quoted not in the original Old English but in modern translation, allowing him to render both ‘Cantware’ and ‘Centingas’ as either ‘Men of Kent’ or ‘Kentish Men’ according to the requirements of his desired conclusion. It is a textbook example of evidence massaging, yet it would be quoted extensively in several later discussions of the subject.¹²³ It was also adopted by Thoms for *Notes and Queries*, who reiterated it in answer to a question on women’s rights under gavelkind tenure.¹²⁴

Sandys’s argument in turn provoked an indignant response from the son of the Reverend Thomas Streatfeild, who confused the matter even further by claiming the more honourable appellation for natives of the Weald.¹²⁵ He asserted this on the evidence that it was what his father, ‘an authority in our county history’, had told him and was ‘... too widely spread to be probably a fiction imagined by some antiquaries for their own benefit’ – a catty but not undeserved swipe at Sandys. Streatfeild’s novel explanation was accepted by the 1888 *Dictionary of the Kentish Dialect and Provincialisms*¹²⁶ but is seldom repeated today.

Sandys found another enemy in George Pryce, who tellingly confessed to being a native of west Kent and ‘... jealous of its rights and usages, which I am always prepared to defend’.¹²⁷ In his angry rebuttal of the East Kenting’s thesis, he reintroduced the ambushing of William of Normandy at Swanscombe (which he

treated as historical) ‘... and from that day until the present the men of West Kent, who alone went out to meet him, being “Invicta” (Invincible), have ever been designated “Men of Kent”; while those of East Kent ... who offered no opposition to the Conqueror, are simply “Kentish Men”’.

Like previous commentators, he attributed to the Swanscombe legend a distinction among the people of Kent that is not apparent in Sprott’s narration but which seems to have crept into popular re-tellings in order to account for the alternative demonym. He also seems to have believed that the motto ‘Invicta’ (which he slightly mistranslated) pertained only to west Kent, an arbitrary restriction.

Robert Furley also believed that the distinction dated back to the Norman Conquest but he reversed the respective positions of the terms and argued that it was simply an administrative convenience and connoted no difference in honour.¹²⁸

Given this confusing array of interpretations and supposed origins for the distinction, it is hardly surprising that non-Kentish commentators found themselves at a loss what to believe. The Reverend Ebenezer Brewer, in the first edition of his *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, defined a ‘Man of Kent’ as ‘One born east of the Medway. These men went out with green boughs to meet the Conqueror, and obtained in consequence a confirmation of their ancient privileges from the new king. They call themselves the *invicti*’; a ‘Kentish man’ he defined as ‘A resident in Kent, without regard to his birthplace’.¹²⁹ This is an attempt at a compromise between the historical evidence and the conflicting contemporary views. As a result, it does not quite fit any of them.

The *English Dialect Dictionary* in 1902 hedged its bets by giving three definitions, all lifted from *Notes and Queries* and mutually irreconcilable.¹³⁰ The Medway definition was accepted by Walter Jerrold in 1907 but he also recorded the suggestion that ‘Men of Kent’ are those born in the Diocese of Canterbury and ‘Kentish Men’ natives of the Diocese of Rochester.¹³¹

It is evidence of how artificial all these distinctions were that they could slip between these three different ways of dividing Kent – by the east and west banks of the Medway, by east Kent and west Kent and by the dioceses – as though they were interchangeable concepts. In reality, they too contradict one another: the Diocese of Rochester includes (obviously) Rochester, yet that town lies on the eastern bank of the Medway.¹³² West Kent and East Kent are technical terms, denoting the Quarter Sessions divisions, which ignored both the Medway and the dioceses, instead defining themselves by lathe and bailiwick.¹³³

The Quarter Sessions divisions, the dioceses and the banks of the Medway are not and never have been co-extensive areas, so distinctions between Men of Kent and Kentish Men based on them, even if they agree on the sides to which each group should be assigned (and they do not), are bound to be inconsistent with one another.

In 1893, James Simson wrote ‘In olden times natives of Kent were variously designated as Men of Kent or Kentish Men, the former appellation being given to natives or residents on the southern side of the Medway, and the latter reserved for those on the northern side. The more honourable of the designations appears to have been Men of Kent, seeing that those entitled to that name affected some degree of scorn for their neighbours on the other side of the Medway’.¹³⁴ This misplaces cause and effect: ‘Man of Kent’ was an honourable term first and then

became geographically confined, since an honour ceases to be an honour when everyone has it.

Some definitions are grounded on a personal, rather than a geographical, basis. In 1896, G.O. Howell revived the idea that Men of Kent are people of long-standing residence in the county, whereas Kentish Men are those born to non-Kentish parents.¹³⁵ Variations on this theme became popular for a while¹³⁶ and it inspired Henry Hannen's conclusion that the distinction arose from west Kent's absorption of foreigners as London expanded: these incomers and their descendants in the west called themselves by the standard English expression 'Kentish Men', while the purer, unadulterated and long-established families of the east retained the more traditional local expression 'Men of Kent'.¹³⁷

As ingenious as these attempts at defining the terms authoritatively are, they are all misconceived. What the competing articles in *Notes and Queries* really show is that, for as long as the inhabitants of Kent had believed that there was a meaningful distinction between the two terms, they had also disputed what that distinction was. The only point of agreement was that the title 'Man of Kent' was the more desirable. Hence it was claimed by all parties on whatever rationale they found to be most in their favour. The answer to the question 'Are you a Man of Kent or a Kentish Man?' always seemed to be 'A Man of Kent,' and the reason was whatever would justify that answer.

As early as 1865, this same conclusion was advanced, in acidic language, by one reader of *Notes and Queries* who had grown exasperated with the debate.¹³⁸ It was also the conclusion of the Reverend Walter Skeat, who edited Pegge's *Proverbs* in 1874 and expanded upon his predecessor's Spartan entry by noting that '... the current idea is that "a man of Kent" is a term of high honour, whilst a "Kentish man" denotes but an ordinary person in comparison with the former'. After considering a smattering of other views and examples (including some of the arguments in *Notes and Queries*), he concluded '... it appears the men of East Kent have borne both titles, and no doubt the same may be said of the men of other parts of the county. The phrases merely involve "a distinction without a difference"'.¹³⁹

Skeat would be forced to return to the question yet again twenty years later, when, responding to another plea for information in the pages of *Notes and Queries*, he despaired 'The question is utterly hopeless, and the conclusions are useless ...'.¹⁴⁰ The author of the present work feels the same way and, by this point, so must the reader.

The Honourable Men of Kent

The question of how far back the distinction between 'Men of Kent' and 'Kentish Men' dates has been answered as being the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. The question of what the authoritative definition is has also been answered with the explanation that there is none. There are only claims made selfishly by those who wanted to appropriate the grander term for their own group. Therefore, the question that really deserves to be answered is: what is the origin of the term 'Man of Kent' and why is it considered preferable?

It is difficult to put a date on the term 'Man of Kent'. The earliest examples presented in this paper date from the fifteenth century and the assumption of

the term's relative lateness is supported by the preference not only of outside commentators but even of Lambarde (not a native of the county but amply familiar with it) and Kilburne (who was a native) for the term 'Kentish Man', which they used indiscriminately.

Thoms suggested that 'Man of Kent' was invented merely because Kent's uniquely monosyllabic name lent itself to such a phrase in a way that other counties' names do not.¹⁴¹ This in turn suggests that there is no more reason for the term's perceived preferability than the mere fact that it sounds formal.

There is a second possibility. The idea that the Men of Kent were the descendants of those who defied William of Normandy at Swanscombe is persistent, being found in the oldest explanation (from the reign of James II, supposedly). Some of the earliest appearances of the term associate it with the honour conferred on the county by that act of defiance and Fuller had defined it expressly as a term for freemen, connecting it to the county's supposed immunity from serfdom. As such, it may represent a continuation of the usage that Felix Hull perceived in the Anglo-French term 'Kenteys', used in the *Consuetudines Cancie* to denote not merely anyone from Kent but specifically gavelkinders and freemen.

Such connotations would have been reinforced by the term's resemblance to the phrases 'yeomen of Kent', 'freemen of Kent' or 'liegemen of Kent'.¹⁴² The 'yeoman of Kent' is a figure familiar for his proverbial wealth, as expressed in the traditional verse:

A Knight of Cales, and a Gentleman of Wales,
And a Squire of the North Countrey;
A Yeoman of Kent, with his yearly rent,
Will buy them together three.¹⁴³

Since this wealth was owed partly to gavelkind tenure and the relative freedom allowed to yeomen under Kentish customary law compared to other counties, the phrase 'yeomen of Kent' might have assumed connotations related to the Swanscombe legend. Indeed, Lambarde commented on the freedom and 'jollity' of the yeomanry of Kent, which he attributed to their ancestors' defiance of the Normans¹⁴⁴ and Philemon Holland used the term 'Yeomanrie of Kent' in place of William Camden's 'Cantiani' in his rendition of the Swanscombe legend.¹⁴⁵ 'Freemen of Kent' or 'liegemen of Kent' would have had similar connotations and may have lent these to 'Men of Kent' (indeed, these phrases actually are 'Men of Kent', prefixed by adjectives).

Conclusion

A 'Man of Kent' and a 'Kentish Man' are exactly the same thing. The terms were originally interchangeable and their supposedly ancient distinction is a modern artifice.

The Old English evidence is unequivocal: There were two terms for the inhabitants of Kent, 'Cantware' and 'Centingas' but they were perfectly synonymous and were used interchangeably without regard to ancestry, birthplace, residence or social station. In the Middle-English period both terms fell out of use, to be replaced by the one term 'Kentish Man'. 'Man of Kent' seems to have developed by the

fifteenth century and was originally a synonym for ‘Kentish Man’, its only apparent distinction being its slightly more respectful register.

An unfortunate consequence of according positive connotations to one expression is that the connotations of any other expression with the same meaning become correspondingly negative. It is hinted in the late seventeenth century that the two terms were starting to diverge but the evidence on the matter is not clear until the middle of the eighteenth century, when the idea had grown up that the designation ‘Man of Kent’ was so desirable and that therefore the designation ‘Kentish Man’ was so otiose that it was impossible to be both and different parties from different parts of the county started claiming the former label for themselves and condemning their rivals to the latter.

In order to justify this distinction, the claim developed that the Men of Kent were the descendants of those who had opposed William of Normandy, while the Kentish Men were the descendants of those who had surrendered to him, a late variation on the legend that is not apparent in Thomas Sprott’s original account. This explanation remained fashionable throughout the nineteenth century but what it did not resolve was how to identify the respective descendants, leaving different commentators to offer different paradigms, such as the Quarter Sessions districts, the sides of the Medway or the lowland and the Weald, invariably assigning the Men of Kent to their own division.

As the nineteenth century shifted into the twentieth, the Swanscombe explanation fell out of favour in exchange for more pseudo-academic explanations, such as the two dioceses, the difference between long-established families and incomers or even the difference between the Saxons and the Jutes. These explanations proceeded from the assumption that the distinction was an ancient one. They are therefore fallacious and without merit.

Meanwhile, the Men of Kent themselves (and, for that matter, the Kentish Men) lost interest in the original reason for the distinction and just wanted to know what the distinction was. In recent years, consensus has gathered around the Medway as the dividing line, with the Men of Kent assigned to its eastern side and the Kentish Men to its west but, despite its adoption by the eponymous Association, even this rule is no more authoritative and no less arbitrary than any of the others.

The true explanation is that there is no explanation, for there is nothing to explain. The distinction between Men of Kent and Kentish Men is an invented tradition. They are and have always been the same people.

APPENDIX: THE MAIDS OF KENT

The conventional use of ‘Men’ as a generic term for a large group consisting of people of both sexes means that the female form of the Kentish demonym is relatively rare and consequently harder to date. The terms ‘Women of Kent/Kentish Women’ are occasionally found in nineteenth-century sources¹⁴⁶ but in modern times the usual female equivalent is ‘Maids of Kent/Kentish Maids’. It was used, for instance, as both the title and refrain of a flattering song by Richard Ruegg in 1839:

‘The maids of Kent, the maids of Kent–
The pencil hath no art
To shadow forth in all their grace
These idols of the heart ...’¹⁴⁷

A Kentish cricketer in 1773 was similarly distracted when he

‘... spy’d the pleasing MAID OF KENT,
In whom the mental beauties shine
And candour speaks her all divine ...’¹⁴⁸

This usage was probably influenced by the titles given to certain famous (or infamous) women of Kentish history, of whom two in particular spring to mind. Joan, wife of Edward the Black Prince and mother of King Richard II, is known as ‘the Fair Maid of Kent’ but it is unclear if this title was used in her own lifetime. The closest contemporary reference is one by Froissart, who called her ‘jone damoiselle de Qent’.¹⁴⁹ ‘Fair Maid of Kent’ is a rough translation of this but Froissart’s phrase is a description, rather than a cognomen. Her vernacular sobriquet was certainly in use by 1631.¹⁵⁰

For a woman who was married thrice (twice clandestinely and once bigamously), the title ‘Maid’ was perhaps intentionally ironic¹⁵¹ but another Maid of Kent, this time qualified as Holy, was certainly a virgin. Elizabeth Barton was an ecstatic visionary whose doom-laden prognostications concerning Henry VIII’s divorce from Catherine of Aragon brought her, fatally, to the king’s attention. She has come to be known variously as the ‘Holy Maid of Kent’, the ‘Mad Maid of Kent’ or just the ‘Nun of Kent’, according to the religious persuasions of the commentator. She was called ‘the Maid of Kent’ in her own time but this usage was a commonplace for celebrity virgins and reveals nothing about the contemporary Kentish demonym.¹⁵²

Just as the female equivalent of an Englishman is an Englishwoman, so the logical equivalent of a Kentish Man ought to be a Kentish Woman. The preference for ‘Maid’, which appears not to be of any antiquity, was probably influenced by the cases of these famous female Kentings.

There are those who aver that there are no ‘Kentish Maids’ at all but that a lady native to the county is a ‘Maid of Kent’ regardless of her birthplace. There is no obvious rationale for this additional complication. One arbitrary tradition has begotten another.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| ASC | <i>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</i> (ed. Plummer, transl. Swanton) |
| Bede, HE | Bede, <i>Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum</i> (eds Colgrave and Mynors) |
| CantCC (with no. of document) | <i>Charters of Christ Church, Canterbury</i> , ed. Brooks and Kelly |

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| <i>CantStA</i> (with no. of document) | <i>Charters of St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, and Minster-in-Thanel</i> , ed. Kelly |
| <i>Hl</i> (with no. of clause) | Law-code of Hlothhere and Eadric |
| <i>ODNB</i> | <i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> , ed. Matthew and Harrison |
| <i>Roch</i> (with no. of document) | <i>Charters of Rochester</i> , ed. Campbell |
| <i>S</i> (with no. of document) | Sawyer, <i>Anglo-Saxon Charters</i> |
| <i>Wi</i> (with no. of clause) | Law-code of Wihtried |
| <i>WinchNM</i> (with no. of document) | <i>Charters of the New Minster, Winchester</i> , ed. Miller |
| <i>WW</i> with column/line nos | Wright-Wülcker, <i>Vocabularies I</i> |

ENDNOTES

¹ Kent County Society, 'Association of Men of Kent or Kentish Men', <http://kentcountysociety.co.uk/Copied-History.php> (accessed 28 June 2017).

² He was a KAS member 1904-33.

³ The most comprehensive case for the theory of the two Kents is given by Barbara Yorke, 'Joint Kingship'.

⁴ See in particular Brooks, 'creation and early structure', pp. 68-74; Welch, 'Anglo-Saxon Kent', pp. 209-35; Richardson, 'Third Way', pp. 75-8; and Hawkes, 'Anglo-Saxon Kent', pp. 70-4.

⁵ E.g. Lower, *Medway Tales*, p. 7 (though he speaks of Angles, rather than Jutes); Brooks, 'creation and early structure', p. 73 (though expressed in such frustratingly allusive terms that it is not clear how seriously he meant this).

⁶ Bignell, *Kent Lore*, pp. 15-16; Bignell, *Tales of Old Kent*, p. 29; Bushell, *Kent*, p. 4.

⁷ Holthausen, *Altenglisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, pp. 380, 384 and 391. 'Waru' itself, like 'wara', was frequently compounded to create a singular count noun meaning a group or corporation of people (e.g. 'ceaster-warū', used to translate Matthew VIII.34's 'civitas' in the Bath Old English Gospels (ed. Skeat, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, p. 68)). Upon inflection, however, 'waru' becomes indistinguishable from 'wara' and there is no evidence that the term '*Cantwaru' was ever used.

⁸ Bouterwek, 'Angelsächsische Glossen', pp. 498 and 518.

⁹ E.g. in an Alfredian endorsement to S 287 (839 and 871 x 888; ed. *CantCC* 71(b)), where it refers to the citizens of Canterbury.

¹⁰ E.g. as a gloss for 'cives': *WW* 140.39 and 333.11.

¹¹ E.g. as a gloss on 'cives' (*WW* 110.39) or 'municipes' (*WW* 440.29).

¹² Ed. Oliver, *Beginnings of English Law*, p. 126. This usage is repeated in Wihtried's law-code (ed. *ibid.*, p. 152).

¹³ Although not specifically assigning either man to either half, Yorke did identify Eadric as the junior king ('Joint Kingship', p. 7), which would normally put him in the west.

¹⁴ *Hl* 6 and 11 (ed. Oliver, *Beginnings of English Law*, p. 132).

¹⁵ *Wi Prol.* (ed. Oliver, *Beginnings of English Law*, p. 152 and see p. 164).

¹⁶ This is found as far back as the earliest surviving authentic Kentish charters: S 7 (*CantStA* 6; 675), the earliest authoritative copy and S 8 (*CantCC* 2; 679), the earliest surviving original.

¹⁷ S 10 (*CantStA* 40); S 13 (*CantStA* 42).

¹⁸ Yorke, 'Joint Kingship', p. 8.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁰ S 33 (*Roch* 8; 762 x 764). Cf. S 26 (*CantStA* 48; 727), in which Eadberht uses a similar title.

²¹ E.g. S 20 (*CantStA* 10; 699).

²² S 24 (*CantCC* 11; 741).

²³ S 28 (*CantStA* 13; 762 x 763). On Eadberht, see Yorke, 'Joint Kingship', pp. 8-11. On the unity of Kent, see comments *ibid.*, p. 16.

²⁴ S 32 (*Roch* 5; 762).

²⁵ Charters quoted in this paragraph: S 41 (*CantCC* 39; 805 x 807); S 164 (*CantCC* 41; 809); S 282 (*CantCC* 61; 845 for *c.* 825 x 832); S 286 (*CantCC* 68; 838); S 286a (*CantStA* 19; 838 for 839?).

²⁶ *ASC* 694 (ed. Plummer I, pp. 40/41). Specific recensions of the *Chronicle* are not cited for annals that are common to two or more recensions, unless the provenance of the recensions is relevant or there are material differences in spelling. Specific recensions are cited for unique annals.

²⁷ *ASC* 725 (ed. Plummer I, p. 42/43).

²⁸ 'Ealhhere with the inhabitants of Kent and Huda with the men of Surrey' (ed. Plummer I, pp. 64/65; transl. Swanton, p. 62).

²⁹ Ed. Plummer I, p. 68/69.

³⁰ *Vita Ælfredi regis* §20 (ed. Stevenson, p. 18).

³¹ S 1211: 'When it came about, at around this time, that all the men of Kent were summoned to the battle at the *Holme*'. Ed. and transl. *CantCC* 124. This battle (also recorded in *ASC* AD 905 (= 904) and BC 902 (ed. Plummer I, pp. 93-5)) was fought when King Edward the Elder chased the Danes (and his rebellious nephew Æthelwold) across the east Midlands into the Fens. The king eventually ordered withdrawal but the Kentish contingent disobeyed and engaged the Danes alone. It was a Pyrrhic victory for the Danes, in which both the ealdormen of Kent (the last men to hold the office) were killed.

³² S 1515: 'people of Kent and Surrey and Sussex and Berkshire' (*WinchNM* 17; 951 x 955 (transl. Whitelock, *English Historical Documents* I, p. 555)). It is, incidentally, interesting to see how the former kingdoms were defined by their inhabitants, whereas the historic shires of Wessex were regarded purely as areas; cf. *ASC* 860 (ed. Plummer I, pp. 66-9).

³³ S 1458 (*Roch* 34). For the date, see Lloyd, 'Reeves as Agents of Royal Government', p. 115.

³⁴ Ekwall, *Dictionary*, p. 85.

³⁵ These two groups both appear for the first time in S 1180 (*CantStA* 47), which notionally dates to 724 but the relevant section may be a later addition (see Kelly, *Charters of St Augustine's*, p. 165).

³⁶ First recorded in S 125 (*CantCC* 23; 786), which is in fact an eleventh-century forgery (Brooks and Kelly, *Charters of Christ Church* I, p. 407).

³⁷ S 128 (*CantCC* 24; 788); cf. Watts, *Cambridge Dictionary*, p. 206.

³⁸ S 111 (*CantCC* 20; 774). The main text of this charter is a mid tenth-century forgery (Brooks and Kelly, *Charters of Christ Church* I, pp. 389 and 394) but cf. *ASC* 796 (= 798) (ed. Plummer I, p. 57), where the *Mersware* are named alongside the *Cantware*, as though a distinct nation.

³⁹ Both in S 1481d (ed. Brooks, 'Appendix C', pp. 362-3; *c.* 1014). All of these groups are discussed in Lloyd, 'Origin of the Lathes', pp. 83-5 and in the sources there cited.

⁴⁰ S 1044 (*CantCC* 167; 1042 x 1044).

⁴¹ These are commemorated in Tenterden, originally **Tenetwaradenn*, the swine-pasture of the Thanet-people (Wallenberg, *Place-Names of Kent*, pp. 355-6).

⁴² S 30 (*Roch* 4; 762 for 747), S 31 (*CantCC* 14; 748 x 762) and S 157 (*Roch* 16; 801).

⁴³ Brooks, 'creation and early structure', pp. 71-3. See also Brooks, 'Rochester Bridge', pp. 33-4.

⁴⁴ *ASC* 449 (Plummer I, pp. 12/13), in which they are mentioned alongside the *Cantware* and both are derived from the Jutes; cf. Bede, *HE* i.15: 'Cantuari [*sic*] et Uictuarii' (ed. Colgrave and Mynors, p. 50). The *Old English Bede*, by contrast, translated this passage 'Cantware, and Wihtsætān' (ed. Miller, p. 52).

⁴⁵ *Old English Bede*: 'meanware mægðe' (ed. Miller, p. 302); cf. Bede, *HE* iv.13: 'Meanuarorum prouinciam' (ed. Colgrave and Mynors, p. 372).

⁴⁶ For example, the *Lundenware* (*ASC* E 616 (ed. Irvine, p. 23)); *Lindisware* (Lindsey-people) (*ASC* E 678 (ed. Irvine, p. 33)); *Romware* (*Old English Orosius* i.10 and ii.2 (ed. Bately, pp. 31 and 39)).

⁴⁷ *ASC* 999 (ed. Plummer I, p. 133); *ASC* 1009 (ed. Plummer I, p. 139); *ASC* 1011 (ed. Plummer I, p. 141) and 1052 (ed. Plummer I, pp. 178/179).

⁴⁸ Smith, *English Place-Name Elements* I, pp. 285 and 291-8.

⁴⁹ S 1510 (*CantCC* 78; 845 x 853); cf. S 296 (*CantCC* 77; 845). See further Smith, *English Place-Name Elements* I, pp. 290-1.

⁵⁰ Such as those listed in the Old English poem *Widsith* (ed. Malone, pp. 23-7).

⁵¹ Wallenberg, *Place-Names of Kent*, pp. 284-5, though he also suggested derivation from ‘ós’, meaning a minor deity.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 424-5 and Wallenberg, *Kentish Place-Names*, pp. 340-1, though he also suggested that ‘hæst’, meaning violent, might simply have been a nickname or that the ‘hæstingas’ might have been warriors. On ‘-ingas’ place-names generally, see e.g. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements I*, pp. 298-303; Dodgson, ‘Significance of the Distribution’.

⁵³ E.g. *ASC AD 905* (= 904) (ed. Plummer I, pp. 94/95), an account of the Battle of the Holme.

⁵⁴ *Brut*, ll. 4,158: ‘al þa Kent-wærre’; and 14,853: ‘Cantuaren aðeling’ (ed. Brook and Leslie I, p. 218 and II, p. 778). A wide range of dates has been suggested for the *Brut*, which are discussed by Le Saux (*Layamon’s Brut*, pp. 1-10), who tentatively concluded that the likeliest parameters were 1185 x 1216.

⁵⁵ Oakden, *Alliterative Poetry*, pp. 20-2; Stanley, ‘Layamon’s Antiquarian Sentiments’, esp. pp. 25-6, 28-30 and 32-3.

⁵⁶ *Brut*, ll. 3,957 (ed. Brook and Leslie I, p. 208) and 11,975 (ed. Brook and Leslie II, p. 626).

⁵⁷ Stanley, ‘Layamon’s Antiquarian Sentiments’, p. 29.

⁵⁸ Ed. Brook and Leslie I, p. 209. On the second occasion he went even further, changing it to ‘men’ (ed. Brook and Leslie II, p. 627).

⁵⁹ The Otho scribe replaced ‘Cantuaren aðeling’ (prince of the Kent-people) with ‘Cantelburi his aþe...’ (prince of Canterbury) (ed. Brook and Leslie II, p. 779).

⁶⁰ ‘Engliscmon’ was certainly used (e.g. *Ine* 24 and 74 (ed. Liebermann, *Gesetze I*, pp. 100 and 120)).

⁶¹ Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, l. 5,458 (ed. Wright I, p. 398 and see n.). On the dates of the manuscripts, see Wright, *Metrical Chronicle*, pp. xl-xlvi. The *Metrical Chronicle* itself apparently dates from shortly before 1300 (*ibid.*, pp. ix-xiv; Kennedy, *Manual of the Writings*, pp. 2617-18). The source for this particular episode was Henry of Huntingdon (see Wright, *Metrical Chronicle*, p. xix), who had used ‘Centenses’ at this point (*Historia Anglorum* v.14 (ed. Greenway, p. 300)), in turn translating from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which used the inflected adjective ‘Centiscan’ (*ASC AD 905* (= 904) (ed. Plummer I, pp. 94/95)).

⁶² Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, l. 5,455 (ed. Wright I, p. 397).

⁶³ E.g. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum* i.15 (ed. Mynors *et al.* I, p. 36) *etc.*

⁶⁴ E.g. Henry of Huntingdon used ‘Centenses’ to translate both ‘Centiscan’ and ‘Cantwara’: *Historia Anglorum* v.14 and v.16 (ed. Greenway, pp. 300 and 304); *cf.* *ASC AD 905* (= 904) (ed. Plummer I, pp. 94/95) and BC 902 (ed. Plummer I, p. 93). Other terms, such as ‘Cantianus’ and the continuing ‘Cantuarius’, will be encountered over the course of this paper.

⁶⁵ Trevisa himself gave the date of the work’s completion as 8 April 1387: Babington and Lumby, *Polychronicon VIII*, p. 352.

⁶⁶ Ed. Babington and Lumby, *Polychronicon II*, pp. 112/113; V, pp. 264/265 and 354/355; VI, pp. 6/7, 242/243 and 406/407; and VII, pp. 4/5, 88/89 and 492/493. Trevisa also used ‘men of Canterbury’ more correctly to translate ‘Cantuarienses’ (*Polychronicon II*, pp. 112/113 and VI, pp. 164/165), though on the latter occasion Higden actually meant the people of Kent. For more on this use of ‘Cantuarienses’, see the following paragraph.

⁶⁷ It is often attributed to Matthew Paris but, though he composed the best surviving manuscript, the text probably pre-dates him (Swanton, *Lives of Two Offas*, pp. xxix-xxxii).

⁶⁸ Swanton, *Lives of Two Offas*, p. 51. Although Swanton seems to take the appeal to King Charles seriously, the romantic tone of the novel and its numerous historical errors (chronologically, this Charles should be Carloman but he has been attributed the deeds of Charlemagne; *ibid.*, pp. xc-xci and 56, n. 305) make it unclear why he should.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 52 and n. 289. The letter that the kings sent to Charles, however, uses the title ‘rex Cantii’.

⁷⁰ Ed. *ibid.*, p. 59.

⁷¹ Also spelt ‘Kenteis’, ‘Kenteytz’ and ‘Kentois’.

⁷² E.g. Geoffrey Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis*, ll. 974 and 2,427 (ed. Bell, pp. 30 and 78); Wace, *Roman de Brut*, l. 4,075 (ed. Weiss, p. 102); *Livre de Reis de Brittanie*, ed. Glover, p. 198.

⁷³ This is proven by *Statutes of the Realm* I, ed. Luders *et al.*, pp. 223 and 224a, where ‘kentey[t]z/Kenteys’ is used to refer to the Kentish dialect.

⁷⁴ The previous examples are grammatically plural but it also appears grammatically singular in *Statutes of the Realm* I, ed. Luders *et al.*, p. 225.

⁷⁵ Sinclair Williams, ‘Codification’, pp. 66-8. The *Consuetudines Cancie* are ed. Luders *et al.*, *Statutes of the Realm* I, pp. 223-5.

⁷⁶ The manuscripts are listed in Luders *et al.* *Statutes of the Realm* I, p. 223, n.; Hull, ‘Customal of Kent’, 148-50 and 158; Sinclair Williams, ‘Codification’, pp. 65-6. Discrepancies amongst the surviving manuscripts and early published editions make it unclear how many manuscripts once existed.

⁷⁷ ‘all the Bodies of Kentishmen be free, as well as the other free Bodies of England’. Ed. and transl. Luders *et al.*, *Statutes of the Realm* I, p. 223. Cf. Lambarde, *Perambulation*, p. 514.

⁷⁸ *Viz.* London, British Library, Harley 667, 83v; Canterbury Cathedral Library, Register B, 418r; and a manuscript used by Lambarde, now lost; see Hull, ‘Customal of Kent’, p. 51 and Hull, ‘John de Berwyke’, p. 8.

⁷⁹ Hull, ‘Customal of Kent’, pp. 151-2.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 157-9.

⁸¹ Hull, ‘John de Berewyke’, 9.

⁸² The relevant section in the earliest manuscripts of Sprott’s chronicle is London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A.ix, 120r-120v and Lambeth Palace Library 419, 123v-124r. The chronicle has not been published but chunks of it were used by the later historians Thomas Elmham and William Thorne. Of these, only Thorne reproduced the Swanscombe episode: *Gesta Abbatum* vi.9 (ed. Twysden, *Scriptores X* II, cols. 1,786-7).

⁸³ Babington and Lumby believed that contemporary references that follow the translation dated it to 1432 x 1450 (*Polychronicon* I, pp. lxxvii–lxxix) but the wisdom of relying on such references in a manuscript known not to be original has been challenged and a date as early as 1401 is possible (Matheson, ‘Historical Prose’, pp. 214-15; Kennedy, *Manual of the Writings*, p. 2661). See also Taylor, *Universal Chronicle*, pp. 139-40.

⁸⁴ ‘Men of Kente’ is used as a translation (or paraphrase) at Babington and Lumby, *Polychronicon* II, p. 51; V, p. 411; VI, pp. 165, 243 and 407; and VII, p. 89. It appears in original passages at *Polychronicon* VII, p. 53 and VIII, p. 495.

⁸⁵ Babington and Lumby, *Polychronicon* I, p. lxxix.

⁸⁶ Ed. Babington and Lumby, *Polychronicon* II, p. 113; V, p. 265; and VII, p. 5, in all cases translating ‘Cantuaritae’.

⁸⁷ Ed. Babington and Lumby, *Polychronicon* VII, pp. 290/291.

⁸⁸ On Caxton’s edition, see Babington and Lumby, *Polychronicon* I, pp. lxi–lxxvii. Caxton’s variant readings are noted in the footnotes to the Babington and Lumby edition.

⁸⁹ Harley 2261 contains the earliest uses of the phrase ‘Men of Kent’ that the author of this paper has been able to find but, as is so often the case when trawling for evidence in what may be the wrong waters, this is the result of chance. Any reader who knows of earlier examples is encouraged to bring them to his attention.

⁹⁰ Ed. Gairdner, *Three Fifteenth-Century Chronicles*, p. 68. The last events in this apparently contemporary chronicle date from 1465 (*ibid.*, p. 80 and *cf.* p. ii) but it does not mention the redeption of Henry VI in 1470.

⁹¹ Ed. Macaulay, *Chronicles of Froissart*, p. 257.

⁹² *Chroniques* ii.220 (ed. Luce *et al.* X, p. 113).

⁹³ *Chroniques* ii.213 (ed. Luce *et al.* X, p. 99).

⁹⁴ Ed. Macaulay, *Chronicles of Froissart*, p. 252.

⁹⁵ Chambers, *William Shakespeare* I, pp. 287-9.

⁹⁶ Act III, Scene I, line 356 (ed. Taylor *et al.*, *New Oxford Shakespeare*, p. 292).

⁹⁷ Act IV, Scene VII, line 41 (ed. Taylor *et al.*, *New Oxford Shakespeare*, p. 315).

⁹⁸ Bignell, *Kent Lore*, p. 16.

⁹⁹ Anonymous, *Kentish Fayre*, p. 3.

- 100 Act I, Scene II, line 41 (ed. Taylor *et al.*, *New Oxford Shakespeare*, p. 343).
- 101 Stapleton, *History of the Church of England*, 75r: cf. Bede, *HE* ii.20 (ed. Colgrave and Mynors, p. 206); 54r: cf. Bede, *HE* ii.5 (p. 148); 90r: cf. Bede, *HE* iii.14 (p. 256): 97r; cf. Bede, *HE* iii.18 (p. 268).
- 102 Lambarde, *Perambulation*, pp. 4, 358 and 514; see index, p. 536, referring to p. 6.
- 103 Thomas Deloney, *William the Conqueror*, ll. 69, 81 and 97 (ed. de Vaynes and Ebsworth, *Kentish Garland* I, pp. 8-9. On authorship and date, see *ibid.*, p. 3 and Hales and Furnival, *Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript* III, p. 151).
- 104 Camden, *Britannia*, p. 230; Holland, *Britain*, p. 324.
- 105 Camden, *Britannia*, p. 231; Holland, *Britain*, p. 325.
- 106 Kilburne, *Topographie*, p. 301.
- 107 Ed. Firth, *Naval Songs and Ballads*, p. 39. For the date, see *ibid.*, p. xxv.
- 108 Fuller, *Worthies* II, p. 122.
- 109 Hull, 'Customal of Kent', pp. 151-2.
- 110 This dubious privilege was first recorded c. 1170 in the *Policraticus* of John of Salisbury (ed. Webb II, p. 47) and in the contemporaneous *Roman de Rou* of Wace (ll. 7,841-6 (ed. Andresen II, p. 341)). As romantic as this tradition sounds, there is some tentative evidence for its historicity dating back to c.903 (Campbell, 'What is not known', p. 17).
- 111 Fuller, *Worthies* II, p. 180.
- 112 *Ibid.*, p. 140.
- 113 Ed. Skeat, 'Dr. Pegge's MS. Alphabet of Kenticisms', p. 119. On the date of the compilation, see Pegge's introductory letter and Skeat's note thereon, *ibid.*, p. 61. Pegge himself was from Derbyshire but Brett (a nonjuring bishop) was born in Betteshanger; see O'Sullivan, 'Pegge, Samuel (1704-1796)' and Cornwall, 'Brett, Thomas (1667-1744)'.
- 114 'Dr. Pegge's MS. Alphabet of Kenticisms', pp. 56 and 59.
- 115 Ed. Williamson *et al.*, *Poetical Works of Christopher Smart* IV, p. 299.
- 116 Grose, *Provincial Glossary*, p. 72. This is quoted from the third edition of 1811. The entry is also present in the original edition of 1787 but that does not use page numbers.
- 117 Sheil and Mackenzie, *Sketches of the Irish Bar* II, p. 316, n.
- 118 De Vaynes and Ebsworth, *Kentish Garland* I, pp. 337-8 and 344. The selection is taken from 1769 to 1831.
- 119 De Vaynes and Ebsworth (*Kentish Garland* I, p. 342) provided only one example, from 1790.
- 120 Thoms was born in 1803. If he heard the story at the age of around ten from a man who was around eighty and if this man in turn had heard the story when he was around ten, then that would date the initial conversation to about 1743, when someone even born in James II's reign (never mind old enough to remember it) would have been fifty-five at least. This is not impossible but it is likelier that at least one of these three men had over-estimated his own or another's age.
- 121 B.M. and Editor, 'Men of Kent and Kentish Men', p. 322.
- 122 Corner and Sandys, 'Men of Kent and Kentish Men'.
- 123 E.g. Dunkin, *History of the County of Kent*, p. 8, n.; de Vaynes and Ebsworth, *Kentish Garland* I, p. 242; Allchin, *Glance at the Early History of Kent*, pp. 21-3.
- 124 Davidson, 'Gavelkind'. The correspondent apparently believed that the existence of these rights depended on whether she were called a 'woman of Kent' or a 'Kentish woman'!
- 125 Streatfeild, 'Men of Kent and Kentish Men'.
- 126 Parish and Shaw, *Dictionary of the Kentish Dialect*, pp. 86 and 98.
- 127 Pryce, 'Men of Kent and Kentish Men'.
- 128 Furley, "'Men of Kent" and "Kentish Men"', quoted from 'a Kent paper'. This solicited a polite rebuke from a correspondent pretentiously calling himself 'Nuda Veritas' (the Naked Truth), who offered his own, preposterous alternative from a bizarre misunderstanding of both the history and geography of the Swanscombe legend. This was rightly slapped down as 'incomprehensible' in Furley's rebuttal: Nuda Veritas and Furley, 'Men of Kent and Kentish Men', quoted from *The Maidstone and Kentish Journal*.

- 129 Brewer, *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, p. 473.
- 130 Wright, *English Dialect Dictionary* III, p. 421 and IV, p. 25.
- 131 Jerrold, *Highways and Byways in Kent*, p. 16.
- 132 Pace Bignell, *Kent Lore*, pp. 15-16, who did treat the dioceses as defining East and West Kent and so (by implication) the distinction between Men of Kent and Kentish Men.
- 133 Hasted (*History and Topographical Survey* I, p. 253) defined West Kent as the lathes of Sutton-at-Hone and Aylesford, with the lower division of the lathe of Scray (the bailiwick of the Seven Hundreds) and East Kent as the remainder of the lathe of Scray, with the lathes of Shipway and Saint Augustine's. Hasted treated the hundreds of Calehill, Chart and Longbridge, Felborough and Wye as part of the lathe of Shipway (*ibid.*, p. 255) but this is because the justices for Shipway presided over the petty sessions for those hundreds. Contemporaries continued to treat these hundreds as part of the lathe of Scray; see Kilburne, *Topographie*, pp. 311-13.
- 134 Simson, *Eminent Men of Kent*, p. v.
- 135 Howell, 'Kentish Proverbs', pp. 59-61.
- 136 E.g. Winniffrith, *Men of Kent and Kentish Men*, pp. 17-19.
- 137 Hannen, 'A Man of Kent: A Kentish Man'. See also Oswald, *Country Houses of Kent*, p. xiii.
- 138 Schin, 'Men of Kent and Kentish Men'. His tartness has to be read to be believed but his closing suggestion, that the preferable title be awarded annually on the basis of a cricket match, gives some idea of his low opinion of the disputants' arguments.
- 139 Skeat, 'Dr. Pegge's MS. Alphabet of Kenticisms', p. 119.
- 140 Skeat, 'Men of Kent', responding to Dolman, 'Men of Kent'.
- 141 B.M. and Editor, 'Men of Kent and Kentish Men', p. 320. No other county in England has a monosyllabic name.
- 142 Jack Cade's manifesto (or, rather, his men's), the Complaint of the Poor Commons of Kent, issued in 1450, describes his band as 'the Kynges lege men of Kent' (ed. Gairdner, *Three Fifteenth-Century Chronicles*, p. 94; see also *ibid.*, p. x). Since the 'liege' in 'liegeman' is really an adjective, this might actually be another early example of the phrase 'Men of Kent'.
- 143 Howell, *Lexicon Tetraglotton*, p. 17.
- 144 *Perambulation*, pp. 7-8.
- 145 Holland, *Britain*, p. 325, translating Camden, *Britannia*, p. 231. This was not, however, a fixed usage, since an additional passage in Holland's translation with no equivalent in the original text also discusses Swanscombe and the 'Kentish men' on p. 329. (Holland's translation contains numerous such expansions, of which the majority were probably suggested by Camden himself: Harris, 'William Camden, Philemon Holland and the 1610 Translation of *Britannia*', pp. 293-5.)
- 146 E.g. Davidson, 'Gavelkind'.
- 147 Ed. de Vaynes and Ebsworth, *Kentish Garland* I, p. 160. For an earlier but less fulsome example from 1785, see *ibid.*, p. 357.
- 148 *Ibid.*, p. 423.
- 149 *Chroniques* i.43 (ed. Luce *et al.* I, p. 304).
- 150 Weever, *Ancient Funerall Monuments*, p. 419. The only English translation of Froissart's *Chronicles* to pre-date this reference, that of Lord Berners, was taken from a redaction that did not include the relevant passage.
- 151 As was suggested by Barber, 'Joan, *suo jure* countess of Kent', p. 137.
- 152 Tyndale, *Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue*, §18 (ed. Russell, *Works of the English Reformers* II, pp. 94-6), which also discusses the similar case of hysterical Essex teenager Jane Wentworth, dubbed 'the Maid of Ispwich'