

KENTISH DUCK DECOYS

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*In 2015 the site of the former pipe duck decoy at High Halstow became a scheduled monument as the only surviving example in Kent.¹ Ralph Payne-Gallwey's classic work *The Book of Duck Decoys* published in 1886 listed 188 decoys in England of which only two were located in Kent, though not including that at High Halstow. The results of the author's researches into the former existence of duck decoys in Kent (a significantly larger number) are summarized below.*

The harvesting of wild duck was a traditional pursuit in wetland areas throughout Britain from prehistoric times. Bows and arrows, sling shots, throwing sticks and snares would have been the earliest means of 'capture', probably followed by various forms of nets and cage traps.

From medieval times 'duck driving' was recorded in the fens, meres, and broads of east coast counties. Duck driving took place during the short period at the end of the breeding season when the young of the year were unfledged and the adult birds were in moult and flightless. At a suitable place on the marsh long nets were set up in a 'V' formation and the flightless birds were driven from their hiding places in the reeds and captured. Many thousands were caught much to the detriment of the native breeding stock.²

The problem of harvesting migratory birds in large numbers, in prime condition, during the winter season was not solved until the invention of the 'pipe decoy' in fourteenth-century Flanders. The earliest recorded pipe decoy, located by recent research in northern Flanders, was mentioned as a *vogelrij van riviervogels* in a document dated 7 September 1318. In the grounds of the castle of Bornem was an isolated part of the former watercourse of the River Schelde known as the Oude Schelde on which a number of pipes had been built. Ducks were caught there for almost eight hundred years.³

The Dutch have traditionally been credited as the inventors of the pipe decoy, indeed the word decoy is believed to derive from the Dutch 'eendenkooi' meaning duck trap. Pipe decoys were certainly improved and developed by the Dutch and probably introduced into Britain by engineers engaged in draining the East Anglian wetlands in the early seventeenth century.

A pipe decoy consisted of a shallow pond of about two acres set within a wooded area of around eight acres maintained as a quiet, undisturbed sanctuary for wild duck. Wild duck generally feed at night and seek out quiet waters on which to rest during the day. The peace and seclusion of the decoy gave the birds an apparently

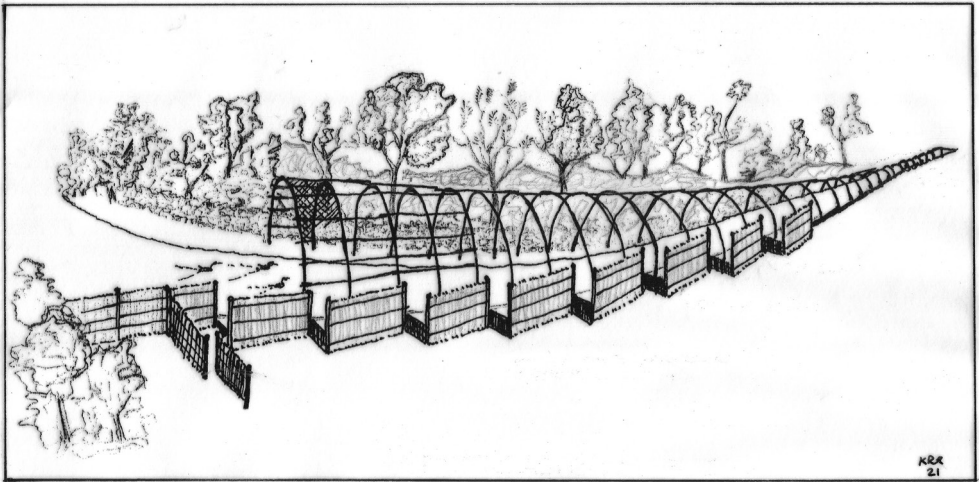


Fig. 1 Shape and construction of a decoy pipe. The pipes were covered by netting supported on wooden or metal hoops. Reed screens hid the decoyman from the ducks on the pond. The 'Piper' leapt over a dog jump between the screens exposing itself to the ducks and lured them down the pipe toward the tunnel net at the end.

safe haven. Extending from the pond were several, usually four to six, curved water-filled channels or 'pipes', up to 70 yards (65m) long, diminishing from 20 feet (6m) wide at the mouth to 2 feet (0.6m) at the end. Each pipe was covered with netting supported on wooden or metal hoops leading to a detachable 'tunnel net'. The outside edge of the pipe was bordered by reed screens, 6ft (1.6m) high, in an echelon formation, 3ft (0.9m) apart with 2ft (0.6m) high 'dog jumps' in between (**Fig. 1**).

The success of the decoy depended on a small, well-trained, foxy-looking dog, the ducks 'mobbing' instincts and their determination to maintain clear sight of a possible predator. The decoyman, hidden from view behind the screens at the mouth of the pipe, threw a handful of corn over the screen on to the water. A flock of tame 'lead' ducks – resident on the pond – swam after the corn followed by their wild companions. The dog then leapt over a dog-jump exposing itself to the ducks then disappeared behind the next screen, only to repeat the action further down the pipe. The wild ducks, safe on the water, paddle after the dog down the pipe. Once unsighted from the birds remaining on the pond by the curve in the pipe, the decoyman appeared and frightened the ducks in the pipe who flew down the pipe into the tunnel net where they were quickly dispatched. Ducks take flight into the wind, consequently having a choice of pipes aids the efficiency of the pond.

There were two 'standard' shapes of purpose-built ponds, 'crab-shaped' and 'starfish', both of which had their origins in Holland (**Fig. 2**). The crab-shaped generally had only four pipes though a fifth pipe is known. The starfish could have up to eight pipes on larger ponds. Payne-Gallwey's own decoy had only three pipes. He considered that unless the fowl were very numerous three/four pipes were sufficient.⁴ Natural, large, irregularly shaped ponds could have many pipes. It was not unusual for the pond and woodland cover to be within a moat.

The fowl caught varied with the locality. Some ponds depended on particular

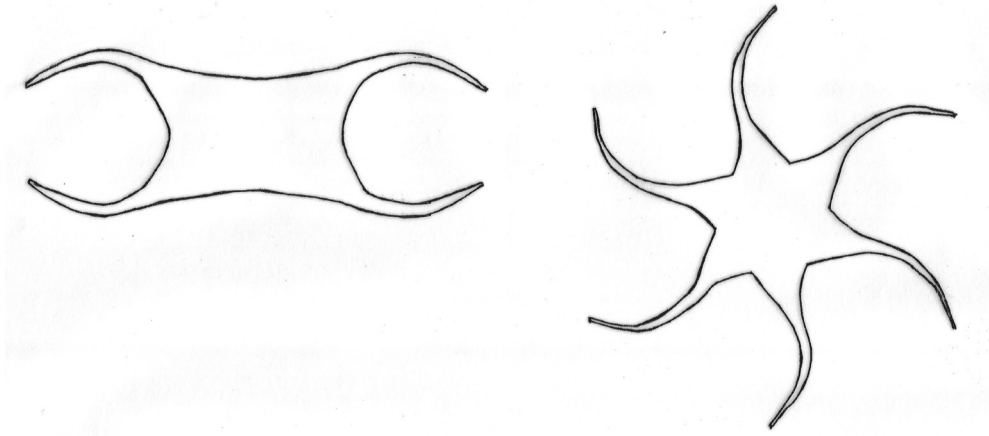


Fig. 2 The standard shapes for purpose built decoy ponds, crab-shaped and starfish, originated in Holland. The average pond was one to two acres in area and a maximum of three feet in depth. Four to six pipes were usual though eight pipes is known. Many more pipes were built on large existing waters such as Fritton Lake, Norfolk, which had twenty-one.

species, mallard, widgeon and teal being the most usual though pintail and shoveler were regularly taken, gadwell more rarely. Diving ducks, tufted, pochard and golden-eye rarely enter the pipe but should they do so once startled they swim under water to escape rather than take flight. There were a few specialist pochard ponds on the east coast, particularly in Essex, which caught the birds in flight but they did not employ dogs nor exploit their mobbing instincts.

What was probably the first pipe decoy in England was built by Sir William Wodehouse (d.1639) on his estate at Waxham, Norfolk, c.1620.⁵ Charles II is often, erroneously, credited with introducing the pipe decoy to England. He had a decoy built in St James' Park which was mentioned by John Evelyn in a diary entry dated 9 February 1665.⁶ This entry is insufficiently detailed to confirm the actual form of the decoy but the relevant royal financial records contain enough detail to do so.⁷

After the restoration Royalists returning from exile on the Continent, regained their estates and rebuilt them. Some, having seen decoys in the Low Countries, built their own, sometimes as a garden ornament which supplied fowl for the table or, realizing their commercial potential, as a financial investment.

The investment involved was considerable and always at risk subject to the vagaries of the fowl, agricultural change affecting the availability of food in the immediate area and disturbance of the pond. This is amply exemplified by the efforts of Essex yeoman farmer John Cooch who built a four-pipe decoy on his land at Canney Marsh, nr. Steeple in 1713. Detailed accounts show that £176 11s. 4d. was expended and the pond was first used on 3 September 1714 when 'Jos. Woodward, Duckoyman' took 66 birds. That first full season's take totaled 7,345 birds which, sold at the going rate of 9s. 6d. per doz. would have been valued at £290 15s. 0d. a balance of £114 3s. 8d. over and above the cost of construction. Such was the decoy's success that in 1721 Cooch added another 3 pipes to the pond at a

cost of £130 3s. 0d. Only marginal increases in catches were recorded in the two subsequent seasons after which they plummeted and the pond was abandoned in 1727.⁸ These remarkable figures show how speculative an investment in a decoy could be.

Given a suitable location, freedom from disturbance and the availability of fowl, success depended on the skill and trust shared by ‘coyman and dog. Most decoymen, as employees, are anonymous though there were dynasties such as the Williams family of Borough Fen in Cambridgeshire who were first recorded there in 1670. The last of the family, Billy, took his last take in 1958 when his ‘victims’ were ringed for research into migration rather than being destined for the market. Williams family members were also employed at other decoys.⁹ The famous Skelton family of Friskney, Lincolnshire – seven ‘coymen spread over three generations – built and managed decoys throughout England and in Ireland.¹⁰

The skills of the dog, traditionally called ‘Piper’, are akin to those of a sheepdog. Though receptive to the commands of the ‘coyman a good Piper knew his job and a piece of cheese was the reward for a job well done. The cardinal rule was that the dog should never show his face to the ducks, such an occurrence resulted in scaring the birds into flight out of the pipe. Payne-Gallwey experimented with a cat, a ferret and a rabbit, each provoked the correct response from the birds but were, of course, untrainable.¹¹

The counties of Lincolnshire (39), Essex (29), Norfolk (26) and Somerset (14), contained the greatest number of decoys.¹² Later research has suggested that Somerset may have had as many as forty-five.¹³

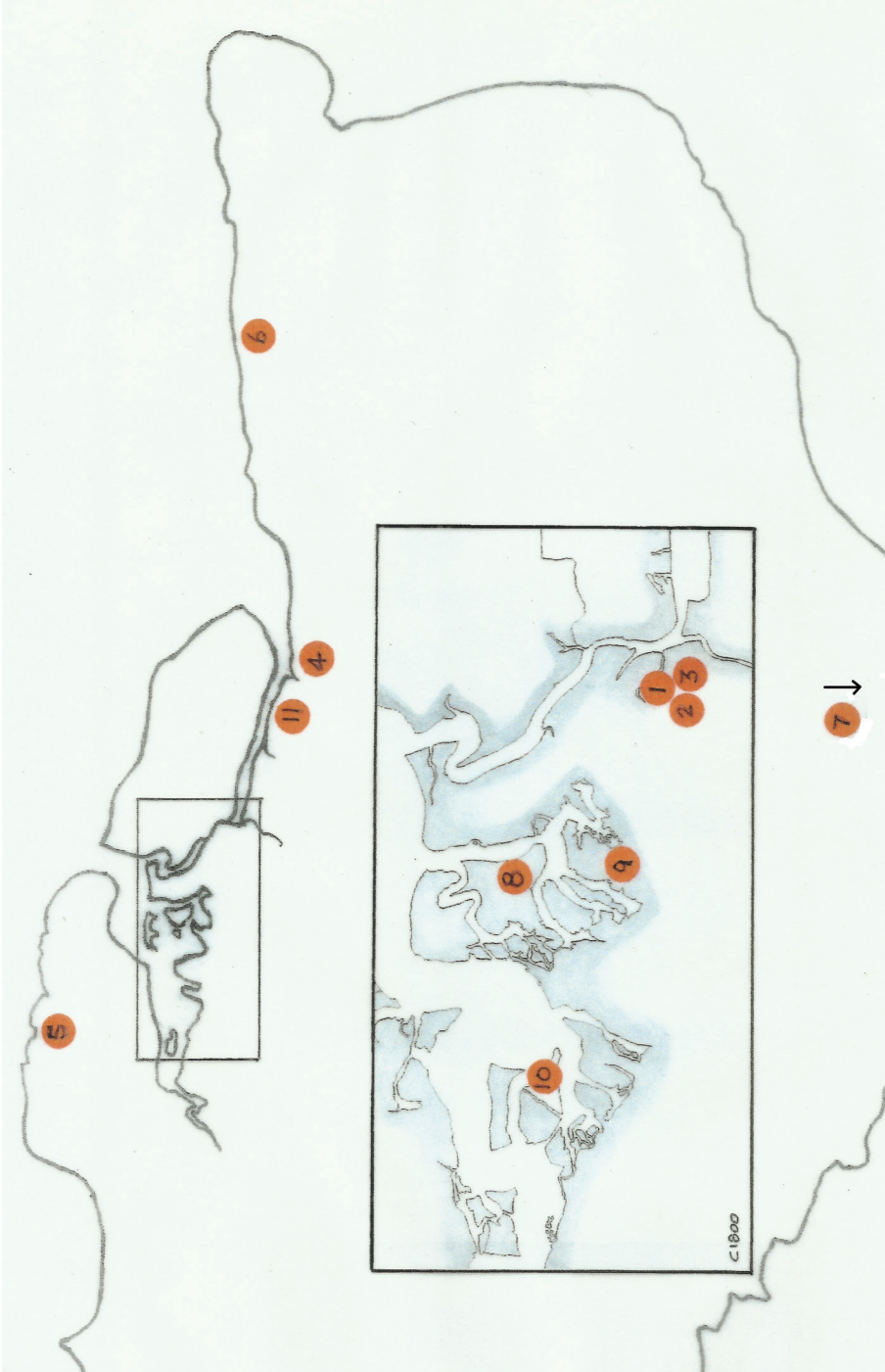
Payne-Gallwey’s national survey of decoys greatly underestimated those of Kent which had at least eight (see below). The first mention of a decoy in the county was in 1634 when Sir William Brereton (1604-1661), en route for Rotterdam, stopped over at Queenborough and commented that there was ‘a convenient place in the remotest part of the marsh for a Coy’.¹⁴ Brereton built two of the earliest decoys in England, neither mentioned by Payne-Gallwey, on his estate at Hodleston, Cheshire, which were operative in 1634. Brereton toured Holland during May of that year visiting eight decoys, though the wary Hollanders did not allow his close scrutiny even though the host’s son, known as ‘John Ward’ (Jan Waerd?) had designed and supervised the building of Brereton’s own ponds.¹⁵ The building of many of the earliest ponds, in Ireland as well as England were supervised by Dutchmen, as was that built for Charles II in St James’ Park. Charles’ choice ‘Sydracke Hilcus’ later built the decoy at Grovehurst Farm, nr Milton Regis, as detailed below.¹⁶

Gazetteer for Kent

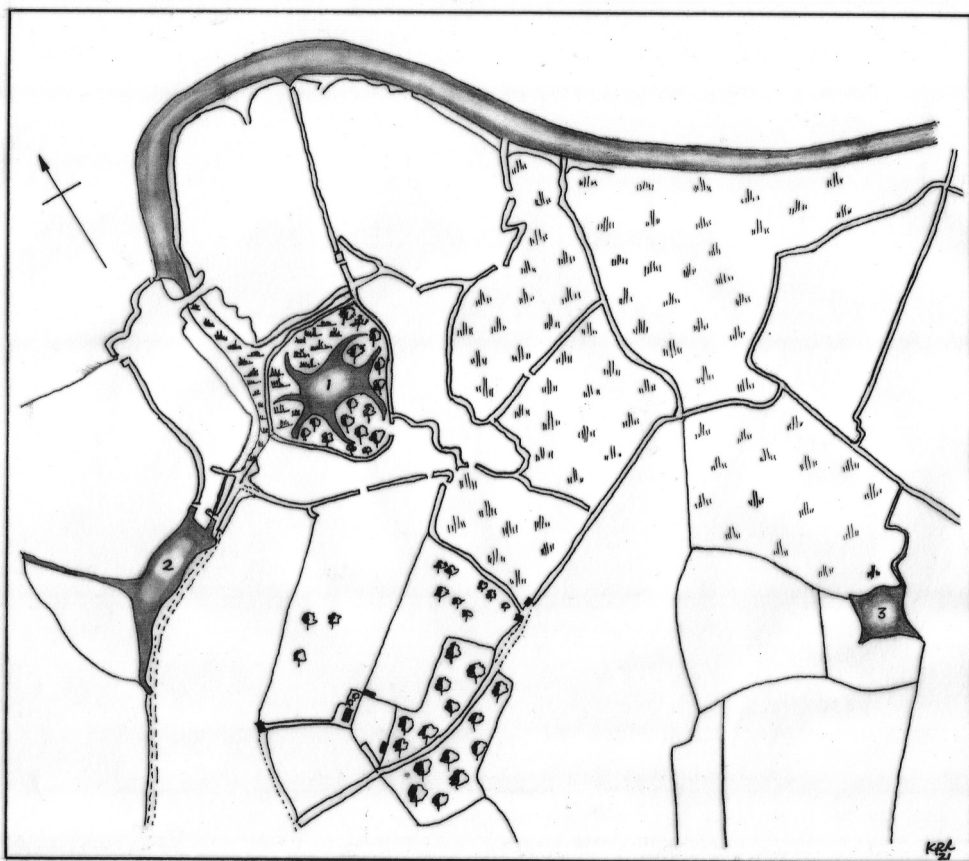
The author’s researches have identified eleven possible decoy sites in the county, eight of which supported by documentary evidence (**Map 1**).

- 1) *Grovehurst Farm, nr Milton Regis*: TQ 9113 6728: built between 1676-8 by Sidrack Hilkes on lands rented from Sir Jonathan Keates.¹⁷ ‘Starfish-shaped’, the number of pipes varied. Seven pipes in 1824, redesigned latterly with four pipes at the time of closure in 1865. Hilkes probably died before the pond was in use. His widow Elizabeth remarried and the decoy was first recorded as being held by her husband William Griffin in November 1679.¹⁸

KENTISH DUCK DECOYS



Map 1 The sites of former, and possible, Kentish duck decoys.



Map 2 The decoys at Milton Regis:

- 1) Grovehurst, operational 1679-1865; 2) 'Birdhide' operational c.1687-c.1704;
- 3) Kemsley Downs construction c.1682-87 but unfinished.

Due to increased industrial activity in the area, the Sittingbourne/Sheerness branch railway being built within 250 yards and the lowering of the water table by four feet in the course of marsh reclamation catches were reduced to 500 per annum, and the decoy became uneconomical.¹⁹ A decoy house close to the pond was demolished post 1824, its replacement survived into the late 1950s (**Map 2**).

- 2) *Birdshide, Grovehurst Farm, nr Milton Regis*: TQ 9095 6725: local tradition held that the decoy at Grovehurst dated from the inning of the local marshes by the Dutch.²⁰ Other sources described a teal pond – usually a small pond with a single pipe.²¹ When the Grovehurst estate was auctioned in 1824 the sales details included a map²² which showed a pond, an obvious detached portion of Coldharbour Creek, described as 'Birdshide Bay' at the extreme western end of which appears to be a decoy pipe. In 1687 Birdshide and the Decoy are listed as separate holdings rented by William Griffin in the Holy Trinity Church Warden's accounts.²³ 'Birdshide Bay' was an odd shape for a

normal teal pond, but its narrowness, made it suitable. Teal ponds were often ‘fed’ with corn rather than being ‘dogged’ and used a net dropped over the mouth of the pipe to trap the birds. This was done at night, the ducks being fed in the mouth of the pipe, in essence a feeding station. This may explain why the pond was not referred to as a decoy in the Warden’s accounts.

- 3) *Kemsley Downes, nr Milton Regis*: TQ 9159 6662: properties detailed as ‘Old Decoy Wood’ and ‘Old Decoy Reed Bed’ appear on the 1841 Tithe Map and in the Apportionments. The reed bed shown has every indication of being the remains of a four-pipe decoy. Between 1682 and 1687 William Griffin, then occupant of the Grovehurst decoy, rented land on Kemsley Downes from owner Robert Groves.²⁴ However at no time was this holding recorded as a decoy in the Parish Records nor on OS maps. It was ‘known’ locally that there had been a decoy at Kemsley Downes close to the Grovehurst pond. Ornithologist Nicholas Ticehurst inspected the site in the 1900s and identified two pipes. Eric Gillham, a decoy researcher, inspected the pond in the 1950s and failed to find any trace of pipes.²⁵ We might conclude that William Griffin rented the land with the intention of building a decoy but abandoned the attempt, possibly after establishing the ‘Birdshide’ teal pond.
- 4) *Nagden Marsh, Graveney, nr Faversham*: TR 0324 6416: this decoy was built on lands which were formally part of the Faversham Abbey estate and first recorded in estate accounts for 1678.²⁶ The last record in the estate accounts was in 1808. A map detailing the ponds appears not to have survived. Literary references in the 1760-80 period mention ‘ponds’.²⁷ There was extensive flooding of the marshes in 1953 and later the installation of land drainage; however, crop marks show the possibility of a number of ponds, the shapes and the number of pipes indistinct. The decoy house was represented as Kye Cottage on an OS map dated 1878.
- 5) *Nordowne Farm, nr High Halstow*: TQ 7827 7778: a four-pipe crab-shaped decoy, probably built c.1680 on a 108 acre farmstead owned by Rev. John Price and tenanted by Abraham Snusher. A farmhouse, barn, stables and other buildings were situated nearby as detailed in an indenture dated 26 May 1693 recording the sale of the holding to John Mawdistley and John Best in trust for Thomas Best of Chatham.²⁸ An estate map dated 1697 shows buildings in the same field as the decoy which, however is not delineated.²⁹ These buildings were demolished before the first Ordnance Survey maps. A small cottage of a later date close to the decoy, *Little Decoy House*, was recorded as occupied in 1881 but probably abandoned soon after (**Fig. 3**).

There is evidence that the decoy ceased operations by 1736. Invoices from ‘William Cox, carpenter’, detailing the felling of trees and their conversion to lumber and extensive building works carried out on the farm buildings exist in the Medway Archives, Best family collection.³⁰ The invoices are dated between September 1736 and June 1737 – throughout the ‘catching’ season indicating that the decoy was probably no longer in use. Any traditionally-minded decoyman would never have allowed interference with his pond in the catching season.

Aerial photographs, LiDAR surveys, and inspections on the ground reveal alternative pipe locations and a possible reduction in pond size. This is a



Fig. 3 Aerial view of the site of the scheduled former duck decoy pond on the High Halstow marshes. March 2014 (©Historic England Archive).

probable indication that improvements to the pond were attempted prior to its abandonment. The original farmstead became part of the larger landholding named Decoy Farm. The decoy site is now in the ownership of the RSPB.

- 6) *Gray's Farm, Chislet*: TR 2380 6810: subject of a lease of land for 25 years between landowner Henry Crispe and lessee Henry Wraith dated 14 September 1753.³¹ Another document dated 1745 in the same collection of the Kent History and Library Centre at Maidstone, is an amendment to a previous lease indicating that the decoy predates 1740.³² A sketched addition to a 'scots' map, earliest date 1813, shows a four pipe decoy of an irregular star-fish design with a central island, which may indicate that at that time it was being used as a flight pond for shooting, within a rectangular moat.³³ Crop marks confirm the shape, as is the possible existence of a house and other buildings close by. The ancient landmarks, Fowler's Drove and Fowler's Bridge, may well predate the decoy, an indication of the wealth of wildfowl in the area.
- 7) *Midrips, Romney Marsh*: TR 0097 1882: a Decoy House and probable store building was shown on early OS maps east of the Lydd/Jew's (Jury's) Gut road on the Ministry of Defence Range. Exploration of the site by ornithologist Norman Ticehurst in the 1950s revealed the foundations of the buildings partially destroyed by wartime defensive works.³⁴ A reeded hollow with indistinct pipes was located but could not be definitively identified. It is possible that this was a cage decoy.³⁵ The decoy house was occupied by Customs Riding Officers, probably intermittently, during the 1719-40 period.³⁶

During the 1740s through to 1754 the seawalls were often breached by winter gales and flood water reached nearby Scotney possibly destroying the decoy.³⁷ A sketch of the decoy house c.1759-63, probably by Thomas Hogben,³⁸ suggests that it survived these inundations.

An alternative siting – two fields, designated ‘Decoy House Field’, one with a pond and a building – are shown on the tithe map and apportionments c.1825 west of the road.³⁹ These fields are now gone due to gravel extraction.

- 8) *Slayhills Marsh, nr Upchurch*: TQ 8669 7042: between 1878 and 1883 landowner George Webb enclosed around 400 acres of Medway estuary saltmarsh including the islands of Milfordhope, Greenborough and Slayhills.⁴⁰ On the reclaimed Slayhills island he attempted to use an existing rill to form a two-pipe decoy as detailed on OS maps dated 1904. There was apparently no attempt to regularize the shape of the pond but some trees were planted. The reclaimed marshland, and the water within it, was initially salty and unsuitable. However as time progressed the water freshened and ducks began to use the pond. Mr. Webb died in 1899, the decoy incomplete. The whole of the reclaimed lands were lost back to the tide after a gale and high tide on 30 December 1905.⁴¹

- 9) *Horsham Marsh, nr Upchurch*: TQ 8374 6843: first identified by Eric Gillham from an aerial photograph with a hand lens.⁴² Gillham saw a small rectangular pond with two ‘pipes’ clearly and two faintly visible. Perusal of the tithe map and apportionments (1841) reveal no relevant field names, nor the parish registers ‘decoymen’. The manor of Horsham, over a thousand acres, was from 1731 leased from All Souls’ College, Oxford, by Joseph Hasted, grandfather of Edward the Kentish historian. Edward mentions decoys at Grovehurst and Nagden but none at the family holding at Horsham. In September 1812 a long running legal dispute over the Hasted family estate was resolved with the sale of the lease of Horsham Manor after an auction held at Rochester. The comprehensive sales particulars contain no reference to a decoy.⁴³

This is a wild and lonely site without public right of access. Nearby Otterham Creek was in the past a busy harbour giving access to London markets. This may have been a pond used for flight shooting fed from adjacent rills.

- 10) *Nor Marsh, Gillingham*: TQ 8218 6996: Nor Marsh, totaling c.300 acres, is situated north of Bartlett Creek opposite Gillingham Saltings in the former Cinque Ports Liberty of Grange which extended out into the Medway estuary.⁴⁴ The marsh was once divided into two. The western half was until the late 1950s an enclosed, island fresh marsh, with a farm house and garden connected by a causeway to the mainland. The seawall was eventually breached and the marsh reclaimed by river waters. The eastern half was unenclosed saltings now fast being reduced to a mud bank.

The possible existence of a decoy on the eastern part depends solely upon the evidence of an OS map dated 1819. Set in the unenclosed saltings is the form of a four-pipe crab-shaped decoy pond. A map dated 1724 entitled a ‘Plan of the River Medway from Rochester Bridge to Sharpness Point’ by J.P. Dezmarez shows two small indistinct ponds in the area of the ‘decoy’.⁴⁵

A decoy in the salt marsh would be untenable, although a pond within the enclosed western fresh marsh may have been successful before the intense industrialization of the area.

- 11) *Luddenham Marshes: North TQ 9864 6451; South TQ 9838 6351*: two possible decoy ponds were identified from aerial photographs and entered into the KCC HER.⁴⁶ The site identified to the north shows evidence of a possible pond, but there is no indication of a decoy on the original OS surveyor's drawings dated early 1800s, tithe maps nor apportionments dated 1840, nor in parish registers.

There is a pond with an island in the southern position on recent OS maps, and aerial photographs indicate a former enclosure. This area is designated as 'Pound Field' in the tithe apportionment, but no pond is delineated on the tithe map. This most likely describes an animal enclosure rather than deriving from a pond. The more recent pond with an island probably indicates a flight pond for shooting.

The peak and decline of English duck decoys

Decoy ponds depended for their success on being secluded and undisturbed. Many ponds did not appear on estate maps nor indeed on Ordnance Survey maps. Decoy men were notorious for their jealous attitude towards *their* ducks and denied access to their ponds.

Decoy men, especially those employed on a piece rate basis, usually maintained a Decoy Book detailing their takes.⁴⁷ Unfortunately none of those for Kentish decoys survive. That for Grovehurst, kept by 'coyman William Chapman, c.1860, was seen by Payne-Gallwey but has since been lost. Chapman's best figures were 80 ducks in a take, 140 in a day and 2,500 in a season. Former owner Mr Gascoyne recorded that before closure in 1865 the annual take at Grovehurst had declined to 500.⁴⁸

Ten thousand birds could be taken in a season September-March, though this was rarely achieved by an English decoy. Many Dutch ponds claimed ten thousand birds a year. Two and a half thousand 'ducks' is generally considered to be the minimum required to maintain the financial viability of English ponds.

After a number of legal cases in the eighteenth century in which the deliberate disturbance of a decoy was interpreted as a restraint of trade,⁴⁹ fears of punishment by fines levied in magistrates' courts protected decoys from disturbance. Ponds maintained to shoot flighting duck were often called decoys to deter interference from local shooters or marauding children.

English duck decoys as commercial ventures had reached their peak by the early nineteenth century. Subsequent decline was rapid. Payne-Gallwey recorded 44 operative in 1886,⁵⁰ Joseph Whitaker found 21 in 1918⁵¹ and a survey of 1936 found 16 capable of use, but only 4 still supplying the market.⁵² The major contributory factors to the decline included the drainage of wetlands and their conversion to agricultural use, disturbance due to increased leisure time within the population and the availability of cheap cartridge loading shot guns.

The decline of English decoys was to the benefit of the Dutch. It was estimated that there had been as many as a thousand decoys in Holland. Payne-Gallwey estimated that 70-80 ponds were still operative in 1886. Dutch regulatory laws, both commercial and for conservation, were far in advance of those in the United

Kingdom. Shot guns could not be discharged within 1,000 yards of a decoy and punt guns were prohibited. Dutch game merchants delivered many thousands of birds into the London market annually. The thousands of acres of coastal mudflat and marsh were a major wintering ground of migratory fowl from Russia and Siberia and the source of Holland's almost inexhaustible supply of wildfowl to the English markets.⁵³

CONCLUSION

The scheduling of the site of the former duck decoy at High Halstow in 2015 ensured against loss the remains of the last decoy extant in Kent.⁵⁴ The six sites identified above as probable commercial undertakings compare not unfavourably with the density of decoys in Essex, north of the Thames.

Vast areas of fresh and salt marsh have been lost from the north Kent coast since the early nineteenth century to agriculture and industrial development – the draining of marshland grazing for other agricultural purposes, the destruction of salt marsh to supply raw materials for brick and cement making and the use of reclaimed land for the manufacture of explosives and, later, for oil refining and container storage. These activities, and the greatly increased barge trade, caused disturbance of the open water sanctuaries of the Thames and Medway estuaries and the Swale deterring the teeming flocks of wintering wildfowl which fed the decoys.

William Gascoyne, owner of the last of the Kent decoys operative at Grovehurst until 1865, specifically mentioned these causes as predating its demise. He recorded his own dismantling of the decoy structure, filling in the pond and planting a plum orchard in its place.⁵⁵

There may have been other decoys in Kent. Decoys are mentioned on the Isle of Sheppey though undetected, probably flight ponds. A decoy at the southern end of the old Wantsum Channel nr Sandwich would possibly have been viable. Old maps often showed a Decoy house, cottage, farm, field or marsh long after the pond had gone. The word decoy may be abbreviated to coy and the pond to coypond or coypon when mentioned in deeds, wills, inventories, accounts or invoices.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Grateful thanks are also due to the staffs of the Medway Archives, now at Bryant Road, Strood; the Kent History and Library Centre, Maidstone; the Cathedral Archives at Canterbury; the former East Kent Archives at Whitfield, Dover and Sittingbourne Library. Help and encouragement was also received from members of the Faversham Historians, particularly John Owen and the late Dr Arthur Percival.

ENDNOTES

¹ Carpenter, Edward, English Heritage Research Report Series, no. 17 (2014).

² Payne-Gallwey, Ralph, *The Book of Duck Decoys* (1886), Kessinger Legacy Reprint (2008), pp. 4-7.

³ Verstreoten, André, Karelse, Desire and Zwaenepoel, Arnout, *Eendenkooien in Vlaanferen en Nederland* (2011), pp. 33-34.

⁴ Payne-Gallwey, *Book of Duck Decoys*, pp. 55-56.

⁵ Sir Henry Spelman in his posthumously published *Icenia* (1698) wrote ‘Sir W. Wodehouse (who lived in the reign of James I, 1603-25) made among us the first device for catching DUCKS, known by the foreign name of a *koye*’. The site of Wodehouse’s pond on his estate at Waxham, Norfolk, has been identified but the exact procedure used in its operation, whether by driving or enticing fowl, is not known.

Norfolk naturalist Thomas Southwell, who assisted Payne-Gallwey, revealed in a lecture before the Norwich and Norfolk Naturalist’s Society in May 1903, and later published in its *Transactions*, the existence of a Chatham Society publication of 1844 of the travel diaries of Sir William Brereton. The first recorded his ‘Travels in Holland the United Provinces’ during 1634 wherein he described in detail his own decoys on his estate at Handford, Cheshire, which indisputably used a dog to entice the fowl.

⁶ Evelyn, John, *The Diary of John Evelyn* (1818), Everyman’s Library Edition (1945), vol. 1, pp. 396-397.

⁷ Payne-Gallwey, *Book of Duck Decoys*, pp. 126-127.

⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 79-81.

⁹ Cook, A. and Pilcher, R.E.M., *The History of Borough Fen Decoy* (1982), pp. 42-61.

¹⁰ Payne-Gallwey, *Book of Duck Decoys*, pp. 12-14.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 49.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ McDonnell, R. R. J., ‘Duck Decoys in Somerset, a Gazetteer’, *Somerset Archaeology and Natural History*, vol. 128 (1984), pp. 25-30.

¹⁴ Southwell, Thomas, ‘On Some Early Dutch and English Decoys’, *Transactions of the Norwich and Norfolk Naturalist’s Society* (1903), p. 612.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 615.

¹⁶ Payne-Gallwey, *Book of Duck Decoys*, pp. 126-127.

¹⁷ Sittingbourne Library, Milton Regis Parish Chest. Overseers’ Account 1671-1792, P253 Reel 930.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Payne-Gallwey, *Book of Duck Decoys*, p. 98.

²⁰ Jordan, Denham, writing as ‘A Son of the Marshes’, *Annals of a Fishing Village* (1891), p. 21.

²¹ Payne-Gallwey, *Book of Duck Decoys*, p. 100.

²² Surrey History Centre, Woking, G85/2/1/258.

²³ Kent History and Library Centre, Maidstone, Milton Regis Parish Chest, Church Wardens Accounts 1607-1694, P253/5/1.

²⁴ Milton Regis Parish Chest, Overseers’ Account (see note 17).

²⁵ Ticehurst, Norman, *A History of the Birds of Kent* (1909), p. 349. (Eric Gillham, *pers. comm.*, 2 February 2004.)

²⁶ Northampton Record Office, Ref. WR364.

²⁷ *A Tour into Kent* (1759), Berkshire Record Office, D/Amt F5; Jacob, Edward, *Plantae Favershamiensis* (1777).

²⁸ Medway Archive Office, Thomas Best Collection, No. U480/T123.

²⁹ Kent History and Library Centre, Maidstone, S/NK P5.

³⁰ Medway Archive Office, U480/E61.

³¹ Kent History and Library Centre, No. U1105 T1/17.

³² *Ibid.* no. R/U1063 T68.

³³ *Ibid.* no. U1105 T1/23; Scots document probably originated dated c.1777 with additions.

³⁴ Harrison, James, *The Birds of Kent* (1953), p. 13.

³⁵ One of the early means of entrapping ducks was a cage trap – a box-shaped wooden frame clad in netting – which could be set up in the dense reeds on the margin of a creek or pond. Wild duck

were enticed into the trap by corn bait sometimes aided by a live decoy duck behind a net partition. The birds were entrapped by either a portcullis door slowly lowered by the trapper or a funnel shaped entrance through which the birds passed in but were unable to find their way out.

³⁶ Kent History and Library Centre, copies of letters December 1719 NR/CPL/69/69/7 and July 1720. NR/CPL/69/69/5 sent to Riding Officers at the Decoy House regarding a bale of cotton and some cake soap salvaged from a wreck. British History Online, Warrants for Minor Appointments 1736-7 and 1740 appointing officers to the Decoy House, Rye Port. (Accessed 1 October 2014.)

³⁷ Eddison, Jill, *Romney Marsh – Survival on the frontier* (2000), p. 119.

³⁸ Kent History and Library Centre, S/RM/P7/18 Preparatory sketch for a map of Jury's Gut watering.

³⁹ *Ibid.* Tithe map for Broomfield Parish by Land Surveyor John Adams of Tenterden (1825), no. FTR 1977/8.

⁴⁰ Jackson, Ian, 'The Medway Embankments and in Particular Mr Webb's Inclosures', *of the North Kent Marshes* (2015), pp. 58-72.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁴² Eric Gillham, *pers. comm.* 2 February 2004.

⁴³ Burgoyne Black, Shirley, *A Scholar and a Gentleman: Edward Hasted, the Historian of Kent* (2001), pp. 364-365; Medway Archive Office. Auction particulars, U565/T127.

⁴⁴ Maddens, Frank and Draper, Gillian, 'Out on a Limb': 'Insights into Grange, a Small Member of the Cinque Ports Confederation', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 135 (2014), 1-32.

⁴⁵ Medway Archive Office (Navigation Collection).

⁴⁶ <http://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploringKentsPast>.

⁴⁷ Decoyman's books may record their catches under individual species or as 'ducks'. Mallards are larger than other ducks and it was against them the others were measured. The usual combinations being – two wigeon or shovellers, three teal or a pintail and a teal – each equal 'a duck'. The price received for a dozen 'ducks' could be for three dozen teal.

⁴⁸ Payne-Gallwey, *Book of Duck Decoys*, pp. 98, 100.

⁴⁹ Simpson, A.W. Brian, *Leading Cases in the Common Law* (1995), pp. 45-75.

⁵⁰ Payne-Gallwey, *Book of Duck Decoys*.

⁵¹ Whitaker, Joseph, *British Duck Decoys of Today* (1918).

⁵² Gilbert, H.A., 'British Decoys', *International Wildfowl Inquiry*, vol. 1, ed. John Berry (1941), CUP reprint (2011) p. 50.

⁵³ Payne-Gallwey, *Book of Duck Decoys*, pp. 197-198.

⁵⁴ There are five decoys in good repair which are normally open to the public – Abbotsbury Swannery, Abbotsbury, Dorset; Boarstall Duck Decoy, Boarstall, nr Aylesbury, Bucks.; Borough Fen Decoy, nr Peterborough, Cambs.; Nacton (Orwell Park) Decoy, Nacton, Ipswich; Suffolk and Slimbridge Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge, Gloucs. Another at Hale, on the River Mersey at Halton, nr Widnes, has been plagued by flooding in recent years. A single pipe has been restored at Fitton Lake Countryworld, nr Great Yarmouth, Norfolk. Access to these sites may require prior arrangement. The survival of these decoys is mostly dependant on their use as bird ringing stations in the study of migration.

⁵⁵ Payne-Gallwey, *Book of Duck Decoys*, p. 99.