

THE WOTTON SURVEY: THE LANDS OF A KENT GENTRY FAMILY IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

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The Wotton family of Boughton Malherbe, ‘for their learning, fortune, and honors, at times when honors were really such, may truly be said to have been ornaments to their country in general, and to this county in particular’.¹ Over a century and a half, and five generations, the family accumulated substantial estates in Kent. These estates were the subject of a detailed survey carried out in the mid sixteenth century by Thomas Wotton.² In a project sponsored by the KAS, the Survey has been transcribed by a group of volunteers and published on the KAS website.

Like many noble and gentry families, the Wottons initially established themselves through trade. The earliest member of the family so far identified is William, a merchant of the City of London in the late fourteenth century (see **Fig. 1**). William’s son Nicholas was a draper, sheriff of London in 1406-07, the year of Richard Whittington’s second mayoralty, and Lord Mayor twice, in 1415-16 and 1430-31.³ Nicholas married Joane, daughter and heiress of Robert Corby, a substantial landowner in Kent. The Corby or Corbie family had been established at Eltham and at Widehurst in Marden since the early thirteenth century, if not earlier. Through this marriage Nicholas Wotton acquired the manor of Boughton, or Bocton, Malherbe, and Boughton Malherbe was henceforward the principal residence of the Wotton family in Kent. Nicholas died in 1448. His son, also Nicholas, married Elizabeth, daughter of John Bamburg or Bamberg, adding further land to the Wotton estate, including the large manor of Paddlesworth (Snodland). Nicholas Wotton junior does not seem to have held any public office, but his son Robert held appointments in Kent and elsewhere. He was sheriff in the fourteenth year of Henry VII (1498-99), and was knighted. Under Henry VIII he was chief gatekeeper of Calais, lieutenant of Guisnes, and later Comptroller of Calais.⁴

Robert Wotton married Anne Belknap, daughter of Sir Henry Belknap, who held lands in Warwickshire, Essex, Sussex and Kent.⁵ Robert died in 1524.⁶ His heir was his son Edward, born about 1489. Edward was a Justice of the Peace in 1524, knighted by 1528 and sheriff in 1529

The Wotton Family

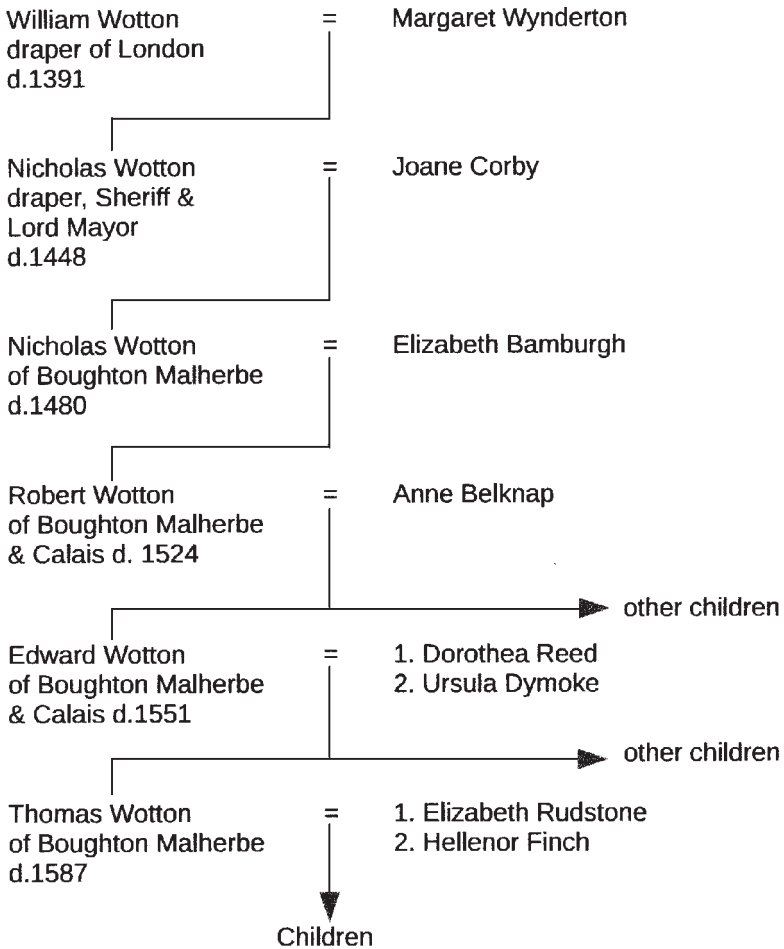


Fig. 1 The Wotton family.

and 1535. He was present at a number of court occasions, including the coronation of Anne Boleyn in 1533 and the baptism of Prince Edward (the future Edward VI) in 1537, and was among those who travelled to Calais to greet Anne of Cleves on her way to England in 1539. The following year he was appointed treasurer of Calais. Much of his work

there involved overseeing the extensive refortification of the town, and preparation for war with France. His career in public service continued into the reign of Edward VI.⁷ Edward Wotton's younger brother Nicholas was also a public servant. He was an ordained priest and Dean of Canterbury and of York. He was also a diplomat, holding office under Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth, serving as ambassador to Cleves, the Netherlands, the Empire, France and Germany.⁸

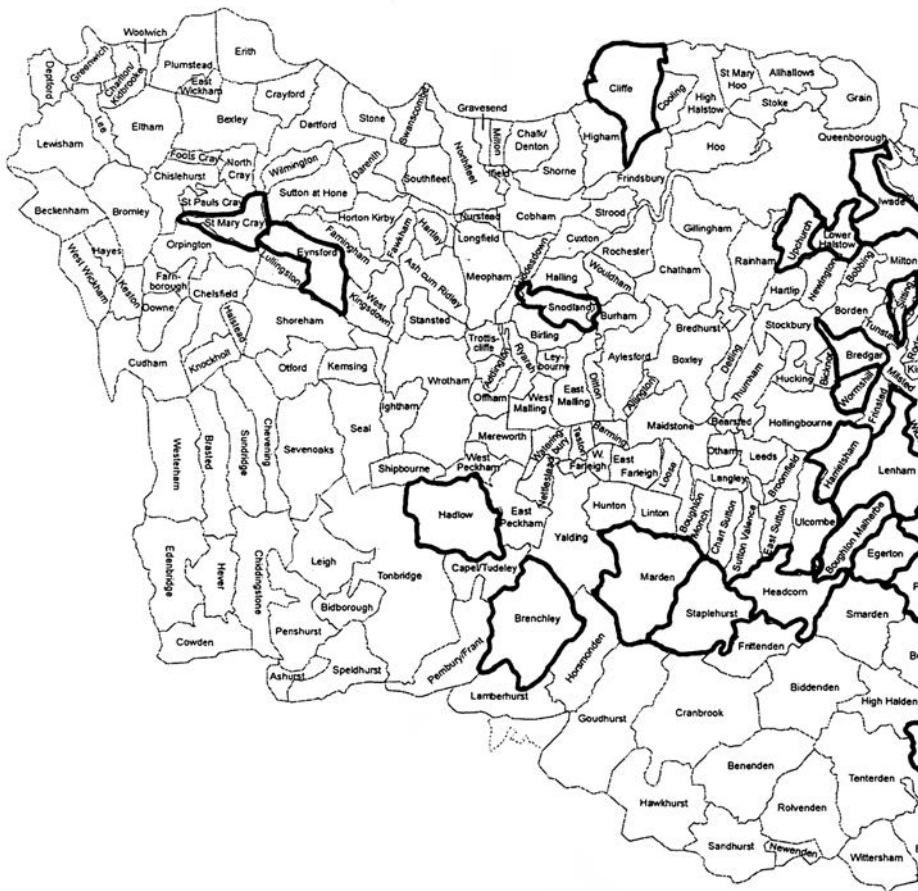
Edward Wotton's marriage to Dorothea Reed added more lands to the Wotton estates. He also made substantial purchases of land during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI, taking advantage of the active land market in Kent when monastic estates became available following the Dissolutions.⁹

Edward's heir was Thomas, born in or before 1521. He was sheriff of Kent in the fourth and fifth years of Mary's reign, completing his second shrievalty under Elizabeth. He was sheriff again in 1577-78. In August 1573 the Queen visited Boughton Place on her progress through Kent. Thomas 'had many invitations from Queen Elizabeth to change his ... retirement for a Court, offering him a knighthood ... and that to be but as an earnest of some more honourable and profitable employment, yet he humbly refused both'.¹⁰ Thomas Wotton's greatest personal interest seems to have been his library of books with fine bindings. He is believed to have been the first Englishman to assemble a library of gold-tooled bindings, most of which he acquired in Paris around 1550-1552.¹¹ The male line of the Wotton family died out in 1630 when Thomas's grandson, another Thomas, died leaving only daughters. Boughton Place passed to the eldest, Katherine, who married into the Stanhope family.¹²

In the mid sixteenth century the Wotton lands in Kent covered an estimated six thousand acres. The bulk of the estate was in Boughton Malherbe and in the parishes around, although outlying lands were scattered over every part of the county, from Hadlow in the west to the Isle of Thanet in the east, from Cliffe in the north down to Romney Marsh. It was a very large estate by Kent standards; possibly only the ecclesiastical landlords and a handful of lay lords had greater estates. The majority of gentry families in the county held only one or two manors, their estates totalling a thousand acres or fewer.¹³

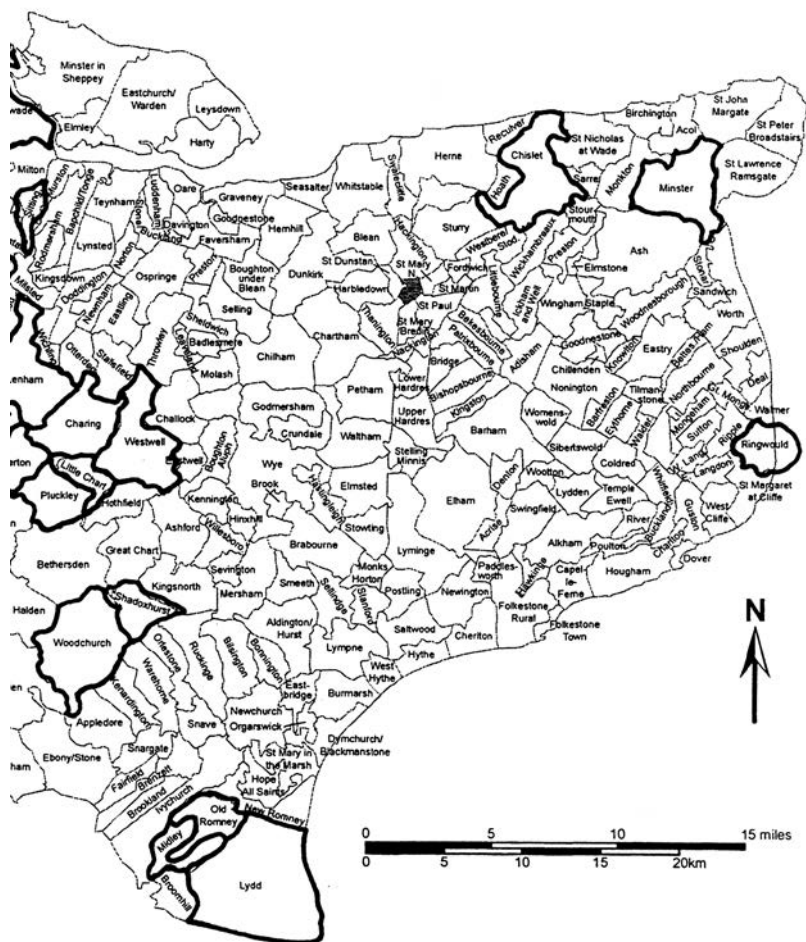
On the initiative of Thomas Wotton a detailed survey of the Wotton estates was carried out between 1557 and 1560.¹⁴ Its purpose was to establish precisely what lands he held, where they were, how they were used, what feudal obligations they carried and, especially, whether they were 'of the custom, nature and tenure of gavelkind'.

Gavelkind was the ancient customary tenure of the county. According to the *Custumal of Kent*, 'if any tenant in Gavelkinde die, and be an inheritour of landes or tenements in Gavelkinde, that all his sons shall part



Map 1. Parishes where the Wotton landholdings were located.

THE WOTTON SURVEY: THE LANDS OF A 16th-CENTURY KENT GENTRY FAMILY



that inheritance by equall portions'.¹⁵ The earliest surviving manuscript versions of the Customal date from the early fourteenth century, but the custom itself is believed to be of much earlier date. It was traditionally believed that the 'Custom of Kent' was accepted as having the force of statute law in 1293, but elements of it almost certainly date from before 1066.¹⁶ Until 1540, the power of a freeholder to bequeath, or devise, his land by will was limited; however, owners of land held in gavelkind were supposed to have the right to bequeath them by will. This aspect of the custom is disputed, however; it is pointed out that there is no mention of it in the Customal of Kent.¹⁷

While gavelkind facilitated the rise of the yeoman class in Kent, at the lower end of the economic scale it could lead to the fragmentation of estates, with all the sons of a small landowner inheriting some land, but none of them having enough to support a family. Thomas Wotton's estates included about thirteen acres of land in Lenham called Goldhurdefeelde and Lee Wood. Six acres were purchased by Edward Wotton in 1534. The remainder had previously been purchased by Robert Wotton about 1510, from Gregorie Ogan, and Elizabeth his wife, John Humfreye and Dorothea his wife, John Turle and Alice his wife, Gregorie Peers and Agnes his wife, John Geffreye and Thomasine his wife, and John Cheeseman and Cicile his wife.¹⁸ Dorothea, Alice, Agnes, Thomasine and Cicile were almost certainly the daughters or sisters of the previous owner, who had inherited the land between them.

Gavelkind operated against the interests of the larger landowner who wished his estate to pass on intact to his descendants over several generations. There were, however, methods whereby landowners could circumvent the custom of gavelkind in order to bequeath their estates intact. One way was to create a 'feoffment to use'. The land would be held by named feoffees or trustees. The original landowner would have the use, or benefit, of the land, but technically would not be the actual owner. 'The landowner could provide for younger sons, daughters, bastards, remote relations, or charities, could vary the provision given by law to his widow, and could charge the payment of his debts and legacies on real property ... It was the use and not the legal title which passed on the testator's death'.¹⁹ A feoffment could also be used to establish settlements or entails which prevented land being treated as gavelkind; these might be continued from generation to generation, thus avoiding the custom indefinitely.

By about 1500, much of the land in England was held in use, in order to evade the limitations on willing or devising land, and allow the landowner greater freedom in making provision for his family. Boughton Malherbe and other lands of Robert Corby seem to have been held by various feoffees before they passed to Nicholas Wotton.²⁰ Nicholas Wotton the younger, who died in 1480, and his son Robert, who died in 1524,

both enfeoffed their lands. Nicholas's will does not survive. Robert's intention, in his will, was to create an entail. He divided his manors of 'Sherifyscote' in Thanet and Chilton in Sittingbourne between his sons Edward, Nicholas and George, 'as gavelkynde lands'. The manors of Boughton Malherbe, Powcyns and Burscombe, however, he willed either to Edward or Nicholas or George in their entirety 'never to be divided or departed'. The specified lands were then to pass to the eldest sons of the three heirs, and, failing legitimate issue of any of them, to pass to the survivor or survivors. In the event both George and Nicholas died without issue, so all the lands ultimately passed to Edward's eldest son Thomas.²¹

Feoffments to uses were also a means of avoiding feudal dues to the king, thus reducing the Crown's income. In an attempt to clarify the situation, the Crown initiated a test case in Chancery, based on an inquisition into the estates of the late Thomas, Lord Dacre, who died in 1534. The inquisition was held at Canterbury, so Kentish gentlemen would have been well aware of the case. The Statute of Uses, which ensued in 1536, attempted to restrict the way in which feoffments were used. The Statute aroused opposition among gentry in some parts of England; it was a factor in the risings in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, known as the Pilgrimage of Grace, in the autumn of 1536. Some of the objections to the Statute of Uses were dealt with by the Statute of Wills, 1540, which gave freeholders the right to dispose of freehold land by will. This was of no assistance to landowners who wished to dispose of gavelkind land, however. If they had been using feoffments to uses to circumvent the custom, they now had to find other means.²²

Gavelkind tenure could only be altered by Act of Parliament. Some disgavelling took place in the early medieval period, and Acts were passed in the eleventh year of Henry VII and the fifteenth year of Henry VIII to disgavel the lands of Sir Richard Guldeford and Sir Henry Wyat. Then in 1539 an Act of Parliament was passed to disgavel the lands of thirty-four gentlemen, including Sir Edward Wotton. This was the year in which legislation to dissolve the remaining monasteries was passed; many of these gentlemen would add to their estates when the monastic lands came onto the market. A second disgavelling Act was passed in 1549. Forty-four men were named in this Act, including Edward Wotton and eleven others who had already had lands disgavelled under Henry VIII.²³

The disgavelling may have been a response to the Dissolutions, which changed the pattern of landownership in Kent more than in many other counties. It may have been necessary in order to clarify the tenure under which former monastic lands were held. Lands held directly from the king (*in capite*, or by knight service) were not subject to gavelkind. Lands not held directly of the king (*in socage*) were. Confusion was created when Henry VIII made grants of former monastic lands without

considering under what tenure the lands had been held before they came into the possession of the religious houses. 'Much land, which was at first gavelkind, had come to be held in knight service [i.e. *in capite*, and thus not subject to gavelkind], and yet the customary descent remained'.²⁴

It was assumed that all land in Kent was gavelkind unless it could be proved otherwise. In the absence of any evidence that land had been disgavelled, it continued to be treated as if it was gavelkind. Demonstrating that land had been disgavelled was not necessarily easy. The disgavelling acts were private acts. They were presented to Parliament in the form of petitions, which were either assented to, or not. Private acts were not normally published; the second of the two disgavelling acts was not printed. Nor, during the period in which the disgavelling acts were passed, were private acts routinely included in the Parliament Roll, the official listing of all statutes. There was thus sometimes no public record of the passing of such acts. Neither was there any publicly available schedule specifying precisely which lands were covered by the legislation. Hence the necessity for the survey of the Wotton lands, to establish which were still of gavelkind tenure following the two disgavelling acts.²⁵

Sixty-seven discrete units of land are described in the Survey. Each section is headed with the name of the land being described. The lands surveyed ranged from plots of a few acres to moderately sized farms to the demesne lands of entire manors. Sandeland and Ketcroft, in Charing, were only two and a half acres and three acres respectively. Bourne's Tenement, in Lenham, was about seventy acres; Austens or Upstreet, in Chislet, was over eighty acres. The demesne lands of Ringwould totalled several hundred acres.²⁶

The parish in which the land lay was always stated. However, some manors extended over more than one parish, not necessarily adjoining, so some of the lands surveyed might lie in a parish or parishes other than the one named in the preamble. The demesne lands of the manor of the manor of Mynchincourte alias Fryringcourte lay in Shadoxhurst, Orlestone, Warehorne, Snave and Woodchurch. The manor of Wardones, in Egerton, had meadow in Charing. The manor of Burscombe in Egerton extended into Charing and Boughton Malherbe.²⁷

Nearly all the lands were surveyed between October 1557 and November 1560. The measuring was nearly all done by William Clarke, husbandman of Lenham, and Robert Kennett, labourer of Boughton Malherbe, 'withe Roddes of xvj foote and halfe a foote in lengthe'. The rod, five and a half yards, or sixteen and half feet, was a standard unit for the measurement of land. Thomas Wotton himself usually accompanied Clarke and Kennett. Whenever Thomas was not present, his servant William Dymming was. The assumption must be that it was either Thomas himself or William who made notes of the measuring on the spot, to be written up later. The

surveyors worked quickly. On 28 September 1559 they measured Mayes Tenement, Gibbes, Wryhalfeyoke, Robyns Tenement and Doddesdane, all in Lenham. A large manor, however, might take three or four days to survey; Chilton, in Sittingbourne, was measured on 6, 7, and 8 March 1559/60. The work was not always easy. It was quite frequently noted that ‘bycause the peece of woodland aforesaid was at this tyme somewhat highe, and verie thicke and roughe: And so for the hignes [highness] not well able to be seene throughe And for the thicknes not well able to be gonne throughe: the measurers aforesaid were verie vncertaine whether they had well and trulie measured the same peece of land ye or no’.²⁸

Within the manor or tenement, each individual field or plot of land was described individually and its acreage given:

A peece of Lande called Stoneteghe, nowe of the saide Thomas Wotton, and lyenge in Charinge aforesaid ... conteynethe by Estimacion sixe acres one yarde threetic perches.²⁹

A peece of lande called sowthfeelde, late of John Gibbe, nowe of the sayd Thomas Wotton lyenge in lenham aforesaid ... conteynethe by Estimacyon Three acres one yarde sixteene perches.³⁰

Small fields surrounded by hedges were typical of much of Kent in the medieval and early modern period. Chalklin suggests that in the seventeenth century ‘in the Weald and along the sandstone ridge few fields were larger than ten acres, and on most holdings their size was between three and seven acres’.³¹ The demesne lands of the manor of Wardones in Egerton consisted of over two hundred acres of arable land and over eleven acres of woodland in forty one separate fields and shaws. The largest fields were Hartfeeld and Netherwellfeelde at eleven and a half acres each.³² Larger fields are found on the Downs and in east Kent. On the manor of Marleghe in Harrietsham there were fields of thirty, thirty-nine and forty-five acres.³³ ‘The Greate Close’ in Minster in Thanet, belonging to Sherivescourte, was forty seven acres.³⁴

It is generally accepted that there was never any common field farming in Kent; or, that if there had been, it had died out by the early modern period. There were, however, open fields, subdivided between individual landowners and farmed separately.³⁵ The existence of open fields is apparent in the Wotton Survey. At Thurnham, there were several pieces of land ‘lyenge in a peece of lande called Thornham feeld’. References to enclosed land at Sherivescourt in Monkton suggest that there, too, much of the land was not enclosed.³⁶

Land usage was recorded in the Survey. Most of the land surveyed was arable or ‘earable’, meadow and pasture, or woodland. Sometimes there were large areas of woodland; on the manor of Burscombe in Egerton, Foxsmytheswoodd was eighteen acres. In all there were nearly ninety

acres of woodland on the demesne.³⁷ Often, woodland was recorded in the Survey as a 'shave' or 'spring'. A shave or shaw was an irregular piece of woodland between fields, typical of Kent. 'Spring' was the new growth from the bases or stumps of felled trees. The implication is that the woods so described were being managed by coppicing. Many of these shaws or springs were small; often less than an acre each. On the manor of Colbredge in Boughton Malherbe, 'a shaue or springe of woodde called Middlefeeld springe' was 'one yarde threetic perches'. 'A peece of wooddelande called Barnecrofte shave' belonging to Loyes in Hadlow was 'one yarde twentie perches'.³⁸

Fresh marsh and salt marsh were described at various places, including Bynwallmarshe in Iwade, Urnhammesmarshe in Upchurch, Sharleysmore (present day Shirley Moor) in Woodchurch, and Austens, otherwise Upstreet, in Chislet.³⁹ Part of Urnhammesmarshe seems to have been an island cut off at high tide:

A salte marshe called Vrnhamesmarshe Lyenge in vpchurche/ besyde Sytingborne in the Countie of kennt, To a streame or Ryver called the Mydwaye or Medwaye leadinge and runninge in the tyme of the fludde from Quynboroughe in the same Countie to Rochester in the Countie aforesaid, toward the West, Northe, and East: To a Cricke or streeme leadinge or Ronnyng in the lieke tyme of the fludde to halstowe in the same Countie, toward the East And To an other Cricke or streame there, toward the Sowthe.⁴⁰

It is not easy to establish precisely the limits of a manor. The lands of a manor may not lie in a compact unit. They may be intermingled with other manors, perhaps with detached portions lying at some distance. The manor of Chilton in Sittingbourne, for example, had marshland pasture in Iwade.

The locations of some of the manor houses, such as Chilton in Sittingbourne and Sherivescourte at Minster in Thanet are easily identifiable. Whiteherste in Marden survives as Widehurst. Others, such as Holmyll in Harrietsham, are now lost. Some of the farms or tenements, such as Frendes, Beadles and Gibbes, were recorded in the Survey simply by the names of their former owners; discovering their locations is not easy. However, using the information given in the Survey, it might be possible to identify the locations of farmhouses and reconstruct the landscape of the 1550s and 1560s. The relationship of each piece of land to adjoining fields, woods or roads was described.⁴¹

A peece of meadowe lande called Sednores meade, percelle of the Demeane landes of the manoure of Fyll aforesaid, and lyenge in Edgerton aforesaid, To certaine landes nowe of John Boicote ... towarde the East: To the kinges highe waie leadinge from a place or Streete called Stonebridge in Edgerton aforesaid to Pluckleye in the same countie, toward the Sowthe: To certaine landes nowe of Thomas Sedgeweeke, And to certaine landes

nowe of John Fidge, toward the West: And to a Streame or water Course there, toward the Northe.⁴²

Nearly thirty houses were described in the Survey, often with associated outbuildings, barns and stables. Some were large and complex buildings. At Sheryvescourte in Minster in Thanet there was:

A newe hawle withe a Chymneye: over the said hawle is one lofte or chamber withe a Chymneye: on the Sowthe parte or syde of the same hawle ar towe lowe chambers: over the said towe chambers, is one other chamber. There is also in the said Sowthe parte, an entrie: on the West parte of the said entrie, is a perloure on the West parte of the said parloure, is one lowe chamber: over the same perlor and lowe chamber, is one other fayre chamber. There is also on the Sowthe syde or parte of the same hawle, one other olde hawle: On the Sowthe syde or parte of the said olde hawle, is one lowe chamber: over the said chamber, is also one other chamber. In the west parte of the same olde hawle, is a kychin: and a newe maltinge howse, withe a fayre chamber over the same.⁴³

Most of the houses described were thatched, but some, such as Burscombe and Wardones, both in Egerton, were tiled.⁴⁴ Chimneys were a significant enough feature to be mentioned. At Wryhalfeyoke in Lenham, for example,

In and belonginge vnto the messuage or tenemennt aforesaid, is first a hawle with a chymneye: On the northe side of the said hawle ar towe little chambers: over the said towe little chambers is one lofte or chamber. On the Sowthe side of the said hawle is a parler withe a chimneye and one little chamber: Over the hawle parler and little chamber aforesaid, ar three little chambers, wherof that chamber that is over the said parler, hathe in it also a chimneye.⁴⁵

Elsewhere, such as at Mynchincourte in Shadoxhurst, there seem to have been no chimneys:

In and belonginge vnto the scite or mansyon howse of the Manoure of Mynchincourte ... is first a hawle In the East ende of the said hawle is one lowe Chambre: over the said Chambre is one other Chambre: On the west ende of the same hawle ar towe lowe Chambres: over the said towe Chambres is one other Chamber.⁴⁶

Kitchens were often referred to. Before brick hearths and chimney stacks, kitchens were in buildings set apart from the main house. At Mynchincourte in Shadoxhurst:

There is also appertayninge vnto the Scite or Mansion howse of the same manoure, one ketchin, sentrallye sett of and from the Scite or Mansyon howse aforesaid: In the East end of whiche ketchyn is one lowe chambre: over the said Chambre is one other Chambre.⁴⁷

Outbuildings were also described. Nearly every house had its associated barns and stables. At Seynctling Okemere, in St Mary Cray, Thomas Wotton had a barn of eight bays, which ‘conteyneth by Estimacion in bredthe thirtie Foote, in lengthe fowerskore foote’.⁴⁸

From the descriptions of the houses and associated buildings, it is possible to determine which way each house faced. Brookes Tenement, for example, with chambers to the north and south of the hall and the kitchen to the east, must have faced west. This information about the orientation of the buildings may help to identify them where they survive, or survive much altered, under different names.⁴⁹

The manor had never been such a strong institution in Kent as in other parts of England. Labour services were never so onerous as in some Midland counties. By the sixteenth century ‘the Kentish manor was usually a geographically dispersed jigsaw, its main function increasingly limited to extorting minor seigneurial dues from tenants’.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the Survey records a complex array of rents, dues and services issuing out of the Wotton lands. Land changed hands frequently in the active land market of the mid-Tudor period, tenements were assembled then dispersed, often in piecemeal fashion. Keeping track of what was owed, and to whom, required close attention to detail. The obligations are scrupulously recorded and paid, down to one farthing due to the manor of Lenham issuing out of six acres of land held by Thomas Wotton in a field called Snagboldane. The farthing is payable in lieu of:

‘the yerelye custome or service of and in the Earinge or plowinge of thre feete and half a foote of lande ... and by the yerelye custome or service of & in the reapinge of towe feete of wheate’ on the demesne lands of Lenham.⁵¹

Services related to agriculture, or money payments in lieu, were the most common obligations, but some of the Wotton lands bore more unusual charges. Two pieces of land called Eastyokes, part of the manor of Wardones in Egerton, were charged with replacing three of the bell ropes at Egerton church whenever they became worn. The ‘owner Fermoure or occupier’ of Eastyokes was entitled to have the old ropes.⁵² The manor of Boughton Malherbe was part of the Honour of Peverel, a collection of 162 manors in Kent, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and elsewhere from which payment was due for the maintenance and repair of Dover Castle.⁵³

The Survey recorded when and how the Wottons acquired their lands. Evidently the family had kept records over generations; details were given of the purchase of land by Robert Corby in the 1390s, twenty years or more before his daughter Joane married the first Nicholas Wotton:

The towe peeces of Lande aforesaid called the hill and little Ewewell weare purchased of John Roper and Thomas Ickham by Robert Corbey of

bocton aforesaid Esquier, As by a deede of gifte of the said John Roper and Thomas Ikham therof made dated in the sixth daye of Marche in the xvith yere of the reigne of the late Prince of famous memorye kinge Richarde the Seconde.⁵⁴

The largest acquisitions appear to have been made by Sir Edward Wotton, Thomas's father, in the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI. In 1548 alone he purchased separate parcels of land which together amounted to about seven hundred acres. Some of Sir Edward's purchases were very small. In 1536, for example, he bought a plot of land in Harrietsham that was only just over an acre.⁵⁵

All land was theoretically held by the king, and granted out by the king to others (and hence could be forfeit to the king in certain circumstances). Strictly speaking, the only way for land to be transferred from one individual to another would be for the king to take the land back into his own hands, then grant it out again to the new owner. Over the centuries, however, the legal profession had developed a number of procedures to circumvent this requirement. The Wottons used a number of these in their acquisition of land:

The peeces of Lande aforesaid called Doddesdane, Martynesdane, hokeswoodde, Swattelmere and Coppnettes crofte, [in Lenham] were purchased of william partriche by Thomas wotton of bocton malherbe in the Countie of kennt Esquier, As by a fyne withe due forme & order of lawe therof knowledged by the said william Partriche.⁵⁶

Kennerden in Egerton 'for the Somme of fourtie ponde [was] purchased of Anthonye Philpott by the said Thomas wotton: As by a recoverie withe Due forme and order of lawe, therof passed againste and suffred by, the said Anthonye Philpott'.⁵⁷

Gibbes tenement was

purchased of Roberte Elviston and Richard Burgeoist then feoffes of John Gibbe by Edward Wotton then Esquier father of the sayde Thomas Wotton: As by a deede of gifte of the said Robert Elviston and Richard Burgeoist therof made.⁵⁸

The Survey only reveals a snapshot of the Wotton estates as they were about 1560. Their extent and composition was constantly changing, as they sold land as well as purchasing it. Some of the lands surveyed by Thomas Wotton were sold subsequently, the sales, and sometimes the sum received from the purchaser, noted in the Survey. Eight pieces of land in Iwade, for example, had been sold to Myldred Taylor. The manor of Ringwould was sold to Sir Thomas Edolphe.⁵⁹

The Survey is a rich resource for place name scholars. Archaic forms of place names such as Bocton for Boughton and Hedcrone for Headcorn

were used. Urnhammesmarsh and Smeeden hammes in Goldenham in Headcorn seem to support Gelling's suggested definitions of 'land hemmed in by water ... river meadow'.⁶⁰ Many farms, fields, woodland, pasture and marsh were recorded by name, and their locations described. Many of these may be previously unknown names, or previously unrecorded spellings of known names.

The Wottons amassed a large estate, but much of the land came from other large estates that had been broken up by death, such as the Belknap estates, or by the dissolution of the monasteries. Many manors came to the Wottons through marriage. The manor of Boughton Malherbe itself was in the Wottons' possession for a little over two hundred years, from the marriage of Nicholas Wotton to Joane Corby in 1416 to the death of Thomas Wotton, grandson of the Thomas who carried out the Survey, in 1630. Over time the Wotton estates in turn were dispersed, by sale in the lifetimes of members of the family, and by the ending of the male line in 1630. Research has been carried out into the land market in Kent at various dates; study of the previous and subsequent ownership of the Wotton manors and tenements may reveal how frequently lands changed hands through sale and purchase, and how often ownership was transmitted via the female line, through marriage or inheritance.

The Wotton Survey was carried out during a period of transition in England. Politics, religion, the economy and society were all changing. While Thomas Wotton and his servants were walking the fields with their measuring rods, Elizabeth succeeded Mary on the throne and England became irreversibly Protestant. Many traditional and feudal customs were still being observed, the performance of services or payment of rents in lieu being carefully recorded. Other customs were dying out or being abolished or ameliorated by legislation. The landscape was changing to meet the needs of the growing population. The yeomanry was emerging as the class which would dominate the local economy of Kent for the next century and a half.⁶¹ All of these are reflected in the Wotton Survey; it provides a record of the continuing process by which England was transformed from a medieval country into a modern one.

The Survey is a valuable resource for the study of landscape, land usage, tenure and feudal obligations in Kent. It is hoped that the transcript will be of use to scholars and local historians and enable research that will increase our knowledge of the county in the sixteenth century. We would be glad to hear of any research or publication based on the Survey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ENDNOTES

¹ Edward Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, Vol. 5 (1798), pp. 397-415.

² The Wotton Survey BL Add. Ms. 42,715 [henceforward *Survey*]. Michael Zell, 'Landholding and the land Market', *Early Modern Kent 1540-1640* (2000), p. 65.

³ Calendar of wills proved and enrolled in the Court of Husting, London: Part 2: 1358-1688 (1890; *The Visitation of Kent, Taken in the Years 1574 and 1592* (1924).

⁴ Hasted, *op. cit.*, Vol. 5, pp. 397-415.

⁵ Will of Henry Belknap TNA PROB 11/8.

⁶ Will of Robert Wotton TNA PROB 11/21.

⁷ Luke MacMahon, 'Edward Wotton', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

⁸ Michael Zell, 'Nicholas Wotton', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2004).

⁹ *Visitation, op. cit.*; Zell, 'Landholding and the land Market', *loc. cit.*

¹⁰ Thomas Wotton's career is briefly described in MacMahon, 'Edward Wotton', *loc. cit.*; Izaak Walton, *Lives of John Donne, Henry Wotton, Rich'd Hooker, George Herbert, &c.* (1807 edn), p. 104.

¹¹ G. Eland (ed.), *Thomas Wotton's Letter-Book 1574-1586* (1960), p. xii.

¹² Hasted, *op. cit.*, p. 397.

¹³ Peter Clark, *English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution: Religion, politics and society in Kent, 1500-1640* (1977), p. 7; Christopher Chalklin, *Seventeenth Century Kent* (1965), p. 50; Alan Everitt, *The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion, 1640-60*, (1966), p. 34.

¹⁴ See British Library reference at footnote 2.

¹⁵ William Lambarde, *A Perambulation of Kent* (1576) (1826 edn), p. 516.

¹⁶ Felix Hull, 'The Customal of Kent', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, LXXII (1958), 148.

¹⁷ Charles Sandys, *Consuetudines Kanciae, a history of gavelkind and other remarkable customs in the County of Kent* (1851), p. 281.

¹⁸ *Survey*, p. 144. (Note that the page references are to the original document, the pagination of which has been retained in the transcript).

¹⁹ J.H. Baker, *An Introduction to English Legal History* (2002), p. 248.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 252; *Calendar of Close Rolls*, Henry IV: volume 3: 1405-1409 (1931), pp. 359-362.

²¹ Nicholas Wotton Inquisition Post Mortem, *Survey*, p. 70; Will of Robert Wotton, TNA PROB 11/21.

²² E.W. Ives, 'The Genesis of the Statute of Uses', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 82, No. 325 (Oct. 1967), p. 690.

²³ Hasted, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1 (1797), pp. 311-321; *Survey*, p. 8.

²⁴ Charles I. Elton, *The Tenures of Kent* (1867), *passim*.

²⁵ *Survey*, p. 9; http://yourarchives.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php?title=Classification_and_Recording_of_Acts_of_Parliament.

²⁶ *Survey*, pp. 248, 184, 484, 516.

²⁷ *Survey*, pp. 424, 216, 208.

²⁸ *Survey, passim*. Marker stones were used to mark boundaries – there is a long section in the Survey under Chilton about an access dispute which mentions marker stones. But no doubt one of the reasons why the neighbouring landlords and tenants were present at the measuring was to protect their own interests. Disputes did arise at times leading to court cases.

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- ²⁹ *Survey*, p. 240.
- ³⁰ *Survey*, p. 136.
- ³¹ Chalklin, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
- ³² *Survey*, p. 216.
- ³³ *Survey*, p. 548.
- ³⁴ *Survey*, p. 494.
- ³⁵ M.D. Nightingale, quoted in Alan R.H. Baker, 'Field Systems in the Vale of Holmesdale', *Agricultural History Review*, xiv (1966).
- ³⁶ *Survey*, pp. 276, 497.
- ³⁷ *Survey*, p. 210.
- ³⁸ *Survey*, pp. 20, 389.
- ³⁹ *Survey*, pp. 452, 376, 420, 484.
- ⁴⁰ *Survey*, p. 376.
- ⁴¹ *Survey*, pp. 464, 492, 396, 544, 264, 312, 136.
- ⁴² *Survey*, p. 228.
- ⁴³ *Survey*, p. 492.
- ⁴⁴ *Survey*, pp. 208, 220.
- ⁴⁵ *Survey*, p. 164.
- ⁴⁶ *Survey*, p. 424.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁸ *Survey*, p. 346.
- ⁴⁹ *Survey*, p. 192.
- ⁵⁰ Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
- ⁵¹ *Survey*, p. 552.
- ⁵² *Survey*, p. 223.
- ⁵³ Hasted, *op. cit.* Vol. 5 p. 397; *Survey*, p. 77.
- ⁵⁴ *Survey*, p. 153.
- ⁵⁵ Zell, 'Landholding and the Land Market', *loc. cit.*, p. 65; *Survey*, p. 540.
- ⁵⁶ *Survey*, p. 178.
- ⁵⁷ *Survey*, p. 201.
- ⁵⁸ *Survey*, p. 139.
- ⁵⁹ *Survey*, pp. 452, 516.
- ⁶⁰ *Survey*, pp. 376, 532; Margaret Gelling, *Place Names in the Landscape* (1984), p. 41.
- ⁶¹ Jacqueline Bower, 'The Kent Yeoman in the Seventeenth Century', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, cxiv (1994), 149-163.