SIR RICHARD CLEMENT, IGHTHAM MOTE AND LOCAL DISORDER IN THE EARLY TUDOR PERIOD

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In 1534, Sir Richard Clement of Ightham Mote in Kent was sent to the Fleet following his forceful intervention in a property dispute at Shipbourne. Clement, a minor royal servant and local justice of the peace, had been asked by Sir John Crosse, the parson of Shipbourne, to expel Robert Brenner from premises which he had allegedly entered without authority. Clement, however, had gathered about two hundred men from villages around Ightham which he used to overwhelm Brenner and his confederates. Yet Brenner had refused to give up and retaliated by lodging a complaint against Clement in Star Chamber. His failure to justify successfully his conduct resulted in his temporary incarceration in the Fleet.[1]

Complaints against local officials were part of everyday life in early modern England. At first glance the accusation against Clement seems to be just another example. Yet was the case that clear-cut? Without knowing more about Clement this is surely an unwise assumption to make? Clement's career and remarkable rise to power in Kent was first examined some time ago by Starkey. He ascertained that Clement served as a page of Henry VII's Privy Chamber; became a gentleman usher without wages during Henry VIII's reign; married Anne Whittlebury, widow of Robert Whittlebury of Milton in Northamptonshire by 1510; moved south to Kent after purchasing Ightham Mote in 1521; and in little more than a decade was participating at the highest level of county politics.[2]

[1] The case was first referred to in M. Zell, 'Early Tudor JPs at Work', *Arch. Cant.*, xciii (1977), 134–5.

[2] D. Starkey, 'Ightham Mote: Politics and Architecture in Early Tudor England', *Archaeologia.*, cvii (1982), 153–63. Starkey also remarks here that Clement was a groom of the Privy Chamber. However, his earlier analysis of Clement only refers to him as a page: D. Starkey, 'The King's Privy Chamber, 1485–1547' (University of Cambridge Ph.D., 1973), 52–5.

Nevertheless, there are two areas of Clement's life which Starkey's study did not cover: first, he did not examine Clement's family background and links with other gentry families; and second, despite highlighting Clement's association with the Greys during the 1530s, he failed to identify Clement's political connections at the centre which helped advance his career in Kent. This article will explore Clement's gentry connections; the circumstances surrounding his purchase of Ightham Mote in 1521; and his participation in county affairs during the 1520s and 1530s.[3] On the one hand, it will demonstrate that Clement's personal connections are essential to understanding his move to Kent; on the other hand, it will show that powerful court connections were crucial to his local success during the 1520s and 1530s. Moreover, it will also argue that while his conduct was typical of other royal servants at that time, his rapid rise to local prominence was a clear reflection of the fundamental changes taking place in county management during the early Tudor period.

Until recently Clement's family background has proved to be a puzzle. Although he moved from Northamptonshire to Kent in 1521, his family did not appear to come from the Midlands. His coat of arms was bordered which suggested that he descended from a bastard or cadet line, but this shed little light on his family or place of birth.[4] It is now apparent that the Clements were a minor gentry family, probably resident at Bersted in Sussex. Bersted was close to both Bognor and Chichester. Records for Aldwick Hundred suggest that Richard Clement was the son of William Clement who died in 1494.[5] William Clement was probably one of at least three children. He seems to have had two other brothers: John and Richard.[6] Richard Clement the elder served as chamberlain of Pagham and bailiff of Aldwick Hundred between 1493 and 1495.[7] While references to William Clement are rare, he is known to have given evidence about the age of Elizabeth, daughter of John Michelgrove

[3] This article develops some of the ideas first advanced in Starkey's article as well as refining and correcting the more recent analysis of Clement's career in M. Mercer, 'Kent and National Politics, 1437–1534: The Royal Affinity and a County Elite' (University of London Ph.D., 1995), 217–24.

[4] Starkey, 'Ightham Mote', 153.

[5] L. Fleming, *History of Pagham in Sussex* (3 vols, Ditchling, 1948–9) iii, cxxiv.

[6] *Ibid.*, cxxiv, cxxvi.

[7] Fleming, *op. cit.*, ii, 352, 354. Aldwick Hundred was sometimes referred to as Pagham Hundred.

in 1475;[8] and, in 1493, he was sold land in nearby West Wittering by Edward Bartelot.[9]

The Clement family belonged to a much wider gentry circle centred around the Gorings of nearby Burton. William Clement had married a sister of John Goring II who died in 1495.[10] He had at least five children: one son and four daughters. The Aldwick records state that William Clement was succeeded by a son aged twelve called Richard. He would therefore have been born about 1482.[11] This is consistent with another estimate of Sir Richard Clement's year of birth: 1478.[12] Only the names of three of his sisters are known: Alice, Elizabeth and Joan. Alice married twice: first, to Edward Palmer of Angmering; second, into the Parker family.[13] Elizabeth also married twice: first, into the Toppys family; second, into the Rychers family.[14] Joan married William Stafford of Sutton-at-Hone in Kent.[15]

The identity of Clement's fourth sister is unknown. However, her name was probably Anne. Hasted alleged that Clement had a niece called Anne, daughter of a brother called John. She had supposedly married Hugh Pagenham, a member of another local family.[16] While there is no foundation for the claim that Clement had a brother or niece, Hugh Pagenham's son, Robert, was later referred to as 'cousin and one of the heirs of Sir Richard Clement' when he sold his share of Ightham Mote.[17] Although this demonstrates a close relationship between the

[8] W.D. Cooper, 'Proofs of Age of Sussex Families, temp. Edw II to Edw IV', *Suss. Arch. Coll.*, xii (1860), 44. The Michelgroves possessed lands at Kingsham in Chichester, Earnley and Bosham, close to the Clements in Bersted: *V[ictoria] C[ounty] H[istory of] Sussex*, Ed. W. Page *et. al.* (9 vols, 1905–86) iii, 105; iv, 185, 202.

[9] P.S. Godman, 'Itchingfield', *Suss. Arch. Coll.*, xl (1896), 120.

[10] (Ed.) W.B. Bannerman, *The Visitations of the County of Sussex: made and taken in the years 1530 by Thomas Benolte . . . and 1633–4 by John Philipot . . .*, (Harleian Society 53, 1905), 45; Will of John Goring II, P[ublic] R[ecords] O[ffice], PROB11/10 fos. 208v–209v.

[11] Fleming, *op. cit.*, in note 5.

[12] PRO, STAC2/18/321.

[13] C[entre for] K[entish] S[tudies], U947 T2/1 Bundle B, dated 4 July, 1544, and 4 February, 1545; Bannerman, *op. cit.*, 24. Her second husband was probably one of the Parkers of Willingdon in Sussex although it is not shown in their pedigree: Bannerman, *op. cit.*, 22.

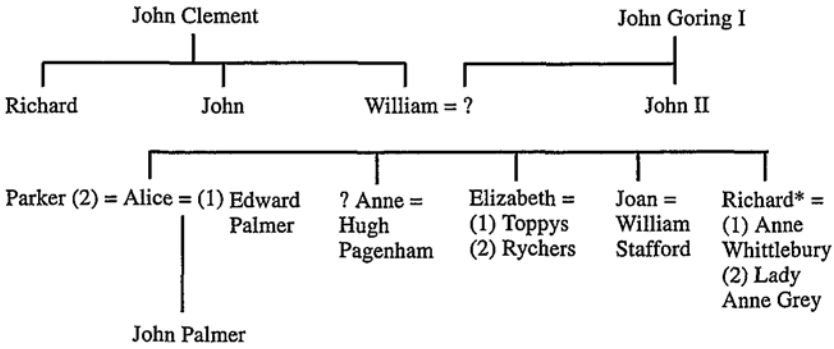
[14] CKS, U947 T2/1 Bundle B, dated 1 July, 1544.

[15] CKS, U947 T2/1 Bundle B, dated 21 October 1542; PRO, PROB11/19 fos 18–18v.

[16] E. Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent* (12 vols, Canterbury, 1797–1801) v, 41. This assertion appears to be based on seventeenth-century pedigrees, although it is conceivable that Hasted possessed evidence no longer available to us: Bannerman, *op. cit.*, 24, 44.

[17] CKS, U947 T2/1 Bundle B, dated 12 December, 1544.

TABLE 1. CLEMENT CONNECTIONS



Clements and Pagenhams, the precise connection still remains unclear.[18]

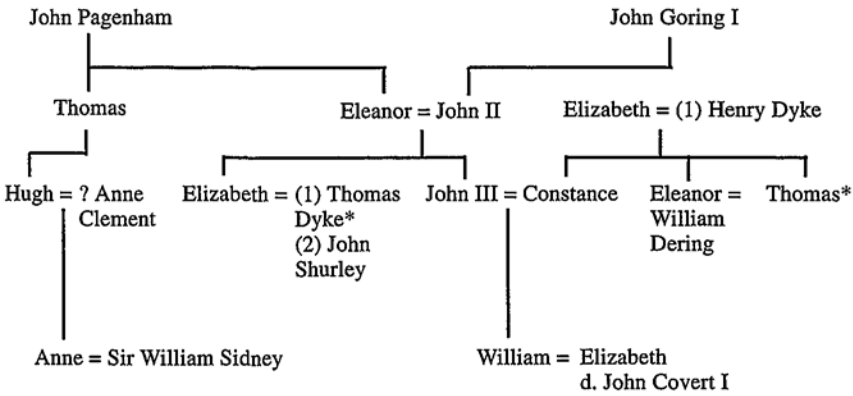
Through the Goring circle, Clement also had links with the Dykes, Shurleys, Sidneys, Pagenhams, Coverts, Derings, Brokes, Dudleys and Brays.[19] Three members of the circle had legal backgrounds: Sir Reginald Bray, Edmund Dudley and Richard Broke. Bray had been a lawyer before becoming Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and head of the Council-learned-at-law;[20] Dudley had been a member of

[18] The Clement-Pagenham connection is further confirmed by the presence of a panel of armorial glass in the gatehouse at Ightham Mote which incorporates the arms of Dawtrey (connected to the Dykes and Gorings), Clement and Pagenham. The Pagenham connection was previously unidentified. However, only part of the Pagenham arms, *azure a griffin segreant argent with a chief ermine*, has been used in the panel: Starkey, 'Ightham Mote', 156, 162 n. 34; B. Burke, *The General Armory* (1884), 34–5 [Aungier], 771 [Pakenham].

[19] Goring circle connections are illustrated in the following visitations and wills: Bannerman, *op. cit.*, 38, 44–6, 65 (Dering, Bramshott, Goring, Shurley); PRO, PROB11/10 fos. 208v–209v (John Goring II), 11/15 fos. 73v–74 (Elizabeth Massey/Dyke), 11/20 fos. 31v–32v (John Goring III), 11/23 fos. 98v–101 (John Shurley), 11/37 fos. 278–279v (William Goring), 11/23 fos. 23–25 (Richard Broke). The connection between Broke and the Gorings is unclear, but see: (Ed.) J.P. Rylands, *The Visitation of Cheshire in the Year 1580 . . .* (Harleian Society 18, 1882), 51; E. Lloyd, 'Leedes of Wappingthorne', *Suss. Arch. Coll.*, liv (1911), 54. Sir William Sidney was married to Anne, daughter of Hugh Pagenham. Hugh is generally shown as Edmund Pagenham's son. However, Edmund Pagenham only had two daughters, Constance and Elizabeth. Hugh was probably the son of Edmund's brother, Thomas: W. Berry, *County Genealogies: Pedigrees of the Families in the County of Sussex* (1830), 298; Bannerman, *op. cit.*, 44; PRO, PROB11/22 fos. 285–285v.

[20] J.C. Wedgwood and A.D. Holt, *History of Parliament: Biographies of the Members of the House of Commons, 1439–1509* (1936), 104–5; *D[ictionary of] N[ational] B[iography]* sub Sir Reginald Bray.

TABLE 2. GORING CONNECTIONS



Gray's Inn, under-sheriff on London between 1497 and 1502, and had succeeded Bray as the head of the Council-learned in 1506;[21] Broke had been a member of Middle Temple, served as under-sheriff of London from 1502–10, and became a serjeant-at-law and recorder of London in 1510.[22]

The Goring-Bray connection seems to have been close and stretched back to at least 1495 when John Goring II made Sir Reginald Bray the overseer of his will.[23] There was also a kinship connection between the Gorings and Brays. Bray had married Catherine Hussey, daughter of Nicholas Hussey. Through the Husseys, Bray was linked to the Pagenhams and the Gorings.[24] This link was reinforced by the marriage of Clement's cousin, John Goring III to Constance, daughter of Henry and Elizabeth Dyke. After the death of her first husband, Elizabeth Dyke married on two further occasions: first, to Catherine Hussey's father, Nicholas Hussey; second, to Ralph Massey.[25] Although Bray

[21] Wedgwood and Holt, *op. cit.*, 285; *DNB* sub Edmund Dudley.

[22] Broke quitted the recordership in 1520 to become a judge and in 1526 was chosen to be chief baron of the Exchequer: (Ed.) S.T. Bindoff, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1509–1558* (3 vols, 1982) i, 503–4.

[23] PRO, PROB11/10 f. 209v.

[24] Bannerman, *op. cit.*, 121. Bray also had lands at Harting and Rogate in Sussex and at Fryfolk in Hampshire which were close to the lands of the Gorings and Clements: PRO, PROB11/13 fos. 219–220; *VCH Sussex*, iv, 11, 15.

[25] Mrs. Davidson-Houston, 'Sussex Monumental Brasses', *Suss. Arch. Coll.*, lxxvi (1935), 103, (Goring-Dyke connection); PRO, C1/57/290–1, (Hussey-Dyke connection); PRO, PROB11/15 fos. 73v–74, (Will of Elizabeth Massey, formerly Dyke).

died in 1503, it is possible that he was responsible for Clement's entry into royal service and promotion to the Privy Chamber by 1500.[26]

Members of a gentry circle would generally co-operate on most personal matters. It was usual to find them participating together in land transactions, acting as feoffees, and serving as executors and witnesses in wills. Goring circle co-operation is reflected in a number of examples: in 1495, Richard Broke and William Stafford, Richard Clement's brother-in-law, acted as executors of the will of Clement's uncle, John Goring II;[27] in 1497, Edmund Dudley, Richard Broke, William Covert, Richard Covert and others acted as feoffees for John Covert I;[28] in 1500, Richard Broke was involved with John Shurley in a transaction concerning Shurley's manors of Lyons and Wykes;[29] in 1506, Richard Broke, John Goring III, John Shurley and Edmund Dudley took part in another transaction concerning Shurley's manor of Ifield;[30] and, in 1508, Richard Clement acted in a recognizance with his nephew, John Palmer.[31]

Despite his connections in the south, Clement moved to Northamptonshire early in Henry VIII's reign. Although he had become a groom of the Privy Chamber between 1503 and 1508, after the new king's accession his career in royal service had stagnated.[32] The new reign saw him eased out of his lucrative position and he became instead one of the many supernumerary gentlemen ushers without wages.[33] Yet, Clement's time at court had not been wasted. He used his contacts to forge a new career as an active member of local gentry society. By 1510, with the aid of a royal loan, he had married Anne Whittlebury, widow of Robert Whittlebury of Milton in Northamptonshire.[34] He had then begun serving in local government as a commissioner of sewers.[35]

[26] For Clement's date of entry into the household, see Starkey, 'The King's Privy Chamber', 52.

[27] PRO, PROB11/10 f. 209v.

[28] *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem, Henry VII* (3 vols, 1898–1954), iii, no. 821.

[29] PRO, CP25(1)/241/96/82.

[30] PRO, CP25(1)/241/97/125. Broke later served as supervisor of Shurley's will: PRO, PROB11/23 f.99.

[31] *C[alendar of] C[lose] R[olls]*, 1500–1509, no. 930.

[32] PRO, LC2/1 f. 62v; *CCR*, 1500–1509, no. 930, where Clement is referred to as a groom of the Household. This would appear to indicate that Clement did become, after all, a groom of the Privy Chamber: see above, note 2.

[33] It is not known how long Clement held onto his position as a gentleman usher, although he still appeared to be one in 1533: *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, 1509–47* (Ed.) J.S. Brewer *et. al* [Hereafter cited as *LP*], II ii, 2735 (c. 1533); IV i, 1938/9 (c. 1520).

[34] *LP* II ii, p. 1485; Addenda I i, 96.

[35] *LP* II i, 495, 695.

Unfortunately, Clement's chances of creating a strong position for himself in Northamptonshire were hindered by the dispersal of the Whittlebury lands. The principal estates at Marholm and Milton had already been sold by Robert Whittlebury to Cardinal Wolsey's treasurer, Sir William Fitzwilliam. His wife had continued this policy even after her marriage to Clement. While Clement managed to retain some of the property and even attempted to hold onto Marholm, the odds were stacked against him and he was soon forced to relinquish the manor to Fitzwilliam.[36] Clement's ability to hold onto Marholm for a time suggests that he had powerful connections of his own, although not powerful enough to compete with one of the cardinal's chief clients.

Clement therefore decided to seek a permanent base elsewhere. It was not long before his court contacts sent him word that Ightham Mote in Kent was on the market. The manor had previously been in the possession of the Haute family.[37] However, the last owner, Edward Haute, had sold it in 1519. He had been in financial trouble since the beginning of the decade. In 1512, his title to Ightham Mote had been challenged by Robert Lamb and Ralph Tylghman but he had managed to hold onto the property.[38] By 1514, Haute had mortgaged Ightham Mote to Henry Saunder and William Holgill, Master of the Savoy.[39] Yet, his financial position had continued to deteriorate. In July 1518, he had entered into another indenture with Saunder and Holgill.[40] Six months later in December, Haute then agreed that Thomas Welles, clerk, could redeem the mortgage now held by Holgill alone.[41] With a trail of debt behind him, Haute finally gave up the struggle in March 1519, selling the manor outright to Welles.[42] Two years later, in March 1521, Clement purchased Ightham Mote from Welles using the money from the sale of his wife's Northamptonshire lands.[43]

Clement quickly strengthened his position at Ightham Mote and in the surrounding area. Between April and June 1521 Welles's feoffees

[36] Starkey, 'Ightham Mote', 153–4.

[37] It is even possible word reached Clement through a branch of the Haute family with Northamptonshire interests. James Haute, son of Martin Haute, had been appointed steward of Hanslap in 1485: *C[alendar of] P[atent] R[olls]*, 1485–94, 14.

[38] CKS, U947 T2/1 Bundle A, dated 26 June, 1514.

[39] *Loc. cit.*

[40] CKS, U947 T2/1 Bundle A, dated 5 July, 1518.

[41] CKS, U947 T2/1 Bundle A, dated 21 December, 1518. Haute also increased the size of his mortgage from £360 to £400.

[42] CKS, U947 T2/1 Bundle A, dated 31 March, 1519.

[43] CKS, U947 T2/1 Bundle A, dated 10 March, 1521.

transferred Ightham Mote to Clement's feoffees.[44] With the manor of Ightham Mote had come lands in the parishes of Ightham, Shipbourne, Seal and Wrotham, but Clement also purchased other parcels of land in Shipbourne, Seal and Wrotham in 1524 and 1529.[45] Clement's Goring circle connections were much in evidence in these transactions. His feoffees in 1521 were William Stafford, Richard Broke, Sir William Sidney,[46] Edward Warner and Robert Palmer;[47] and his land purchases in 1524 and 1529 involved Richard Broke, Sir William Sidney, Edward Warner, Robert Palmer, Sir Richard Weston, Richard Covert,[48] Covert's son, John Covert II, and John Palmer.[49]

Although Stafford, Broke, Sidney, the Palmers, and the Coverts were connected to the Goring circle, Warner and Weston were not. Warner and Clement had probably become acquainted when Clement was resident in Northamptonshire.[50] Weston, on the other hand, had been Clement's colleague in Henry VII's Privy Chamber.[51] He had successfully transferred into Henry VIII's service where he served as a knight of the Body, master of the wards, treasurer of Calais and under-treasurer of the Exchequer.[52] His participation in Clement's 1529 transaction demonstrates that their association had continued after Henry VIII's accession in 1509.

Having secured his position at Ightham Mote, Clement next sought to entrench himself in local gentry society. He was fortunate to have the

[44] CKS, U947 T2/1 Bundle A, dated 29 April and 29 June, 1521.

[45] CKS, U947 T2/1 Bundle A, dated 3 February 1524; Bundle B, dated 3 February, 1529.

[46] Like the Clements, the Sidneys were originally from Sussex but had relocated to Penshurst, close to Ightham Mote: Hasted, *op. cit.*, iii, 249. Sidney, an esquire of the Body, was a very close friend of Clement, acting as the supervisor of his will in 1538: *LP* I i, 1172 (2); PRO, PROB11/27 f. 183v. Sidney was also a distant kinsman of Richard and John Covert II of Slaugham in Sussex: Berry, *op. cit.*, 298, 322.

[47] Robert Palmer, a mercer of London, was the uncle of Clement's nephew, John Palmer: Bannerman, *op. cit.*, 24. Apart from their Sussex lands, the Palmers also held property in Otford, close to Ightham: Hasted, *op. cit.*, iii, 28.

[48] A Goring-Covert alliance was formed when Elizabeth, daughter of Richard Covert's cousin, John Covert I, married William Goring. William Goring was the son of Clement's cousin, John Goring III: Davidson-Houston, *op. cit.*, 105; PRO, PROB11/14 fos. 22v–24; 11/37 fos. 278–279v. For contact between the Gorings and Coverts, see *Inquisitions Post Mortem*, iii, no. 1134.

[49] John Palmer became an esquire of the Body in 1528: *LP* IV ii, 4896 (12).

[50] Warner was active in Northamptonshire and Leicestershire: *LP* III ii, 3282, 3504; IV i, 547, 961 (12), 2002; IV ii, 3587, 4993 (4), 5083 (11), 6490 (20); V, 166 (10), 278 (17), 838, 1694.

[51] Starkey, 'The King's Privy Chamber', 45–50, 53–4.

[52] Bindoff, *op. cit.*, iii, 590–2.

Sidneys close by at Penshurst. That link could be used to speed up his acceptance by other families in the area. Nevertheless, Clement also established connections of his own. He did this by following the traditional method of forming marriage alliances with local families. Clement had not had any children by Anne Whittlebury. She died in 1528. His second marriage to Lady Anne Grey, sometime before 1530, was also childless. However, Clement had three bastard daughters: Elizabeth, Anne and Margaret. Elizabeth married Thomas Lovelace of Kingsdown;[53] Anne married Ralph Bosville of Bradbourne;[54] and Margaret married Nicholas Edwards of Withyham in Sussex.[55]

The Lovelaces were a long-established, middle-ranking Kentish family. Their principal residence at Kingsdown was close to Ightham Mote. So, too, was the Bosville property at Bradbourne. Unlike the Lovelaces, the Bosvilles were a Yorkshire family. Ralph Bosville was the first of his family to settle in Kent.[56] Although Nicholas Edwards was a member of the Sussex gentry, his residence at Withyham was only just over the Kent-Sussex border and was therefore still close to Ightham Mote.

With a network of contacts already in place, Clement's chances of establishing himself in Kentish political society were good. Clement, however, wanted to become more than just another local gentleman. Frustrated in his attempts to become a substantial figure in Northamptonshire, he had signalled his intention to create a strong position in Kent soon after his arrival at Ightham Mote. Between 1521 and 1529 he embarked on a major programme of reconstruction. The work included the reglazing of the hall windows, the rebuilding and refronting of the private apartments and the construction of a long gallery. Clement was not only displaying his wealth; he was publicizing his status as a royal servant. The decorative scheme used throughout the house incorporated the badges of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, demonstrating for all to see his political allegiance to the Tudor dynasty.[57]

[53] PRO, PROB11/40 f. 150; 11/61 f. 89.

[54] PRO, PROB11/40 f. 150; (Ed.) R. Hovenden, *The Visitation of Kent: taken in the years 1619–1621 by Dr J. Philipot . . .*, (Harleian Society 42, 1898), 170.

[55] PRO, PROB11/40 f. 150; 11/48 f. 329.

[56] Bosville had probably first purchased Blackhall in Bradbourne. By the reign of Elizabeth I he had also acquired the manors of Bradbourne and Brittons in the same parish: Hasted, *op. cit.*, iii. 83–4, 86, 91.

[57] Starkey, 'Ightham Mote', 154–9. It was previously thought that Clement built a new chapel to replace the old fourteenth-century chapel. However, the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England now believes that Clement originally built a long gallery to connect the two halves of the family quarters. Only later was it fitted out as a chapel: *Ightham Mote* (The National Trust, 1988), 24–5.

The monarchy had gradually monopolized the bastard feudal system during the late medieval period. With memories of the upheavals of the second half of the fifteenth century acting as an inducement, the crown had continued its efforts to weaken the ties between the nobility and gentry and to promote the benefits of membership of the royal affinity. By Henry VIII's reign the royal affinity had become the principal means through which communication between centre and locality was maintained. On the one hand, it dominated the local administrative machinery and network of crown offices; and on the other hand, as an integral element of local political society, it was able to enforce royal authority by exerting private, behind-the-scenes pressure.

The royal affinity had become particularly influential in Kent. After the political instability of 1469–71, Edward IV had established its predominance in local politics by eliminating noble influence in the county.[58] Following Henry Tudor's victory at Bosworth in 1485, the leading role in the Kentish royal affinity had passed to the Guildford family. Sir Richard Guildford had been one of Henry VII's closest associates, becoming controller of the Household between 1493 and 1505. Despite Guildford's fall in 1505, the family's influence at court and in Kent revived quickly during Henry VIII's reign. Guildford's youngest son, Sir Henry, had been one of Henry VIII's earliest group of associates at court. He had subsequently become a knight of the Body, master of the Horse and controller of the Household. Guildford's eldest son, Sir Edward, had also done well, becoming a knight of the Body and succeeding his father as master of the Armoury.[59]

Clement's decision to relocate to Kent had no doubt been encouraged by its proximity to the court, by his personal connections in the south-east, and by the strong royal affinity in the county. Given his recent tussle in Northamptonshire with the cardinal's servant, Sir William Fitzwilliam, Kent was a particularly interesting choice. Relations between several of the chief political figures in the county and Wolsey were particularly tense. Clement's neighbour at nearby Otford, for instance, was William Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury. Warham had been on bad terms with the cardinal since he had been replaced by Wolsey as Lord Chancellor in 1515 and forced into an unwilling retirement in Kent.[60]

Of greater significance, however, was the recent antagonism between Wolsey and the principal members of the Kentish royal affinity, Sir

[58] Mercer, *op. cit.*, 118–25.
[59] *Ibid.*, 152–202.
[60] *Ibid.*, 195.

Henry Guildford and Sir Edward Guildford. The Guildford family had been battling with an increasingly powerful Lord Abergavenny for control of the county since the beginning of the sixteenth century. Yet, in 1516, Sir Edward Guildford and Abergavenny had been made examples of by the cardinal and prosecuted in King's Bench for illegal retaining. The Guildford brothers had suffered at the hands of Wolsey for a second time in May 1519 when they had been expelled from court along with other royal favourites. Although Sir Henry Guildford was back at court by October 1519, Sir Edward Guildford, who had been appointed marshal of Calais, did not actively return to Kentish politics until 1523–24.[61]

While Clement's rough treatment by a Wolsey client probably ensured him a sympathetic reception in Kent, his rapid assimilation into local political society must also have been helped by the instability that affected the county during the mid-1520s. The economic slump, coupled with the severe financial demands placed on the county by the collection of the Amicable Grant in 1525, had generated much discontent in the shire. This resentment had boiled over in 1528. Fears of widespread riots prompted the government to use the royal affinity, principally Sir Henry Guildford, Sir Edward Guildford and Sir Thomas Boleyn, Viscount Rochford, to discover local plots and to punish the conspirators.[62] Clement had probably participated in these operations as well.

By the late 1520s Clement had emerged as a substantial figure in west Kent. In April 1528 Clement, Sir Edward Wotton, Sir Henry Guildford's brother-in-law, and Thomas Willoughby, were in attendance on Warham at Knole when a host of belligerent Kentishmen descended on the archbishop's residence demanding the repayment of their contributions to the Amicable Grant.[63] Warham had been secretly alerted about their arrival and it is likely that this had prompted him to ask Clement and the others to attend him. Whatever the precise reason, Clement's presence at Knole marked a turning-point in his career. In 1529, he was knighted;[64] in February 1531, he was appointed to the commission of the peace;[65] and, in November 1531, he was chosen to be sheriff.[66]

[61] *Ibid.*, 195–8, 200–1.
[62] *Ibid.*, 207–11.
[63] PRO, SP1/47 fos. 229–30 (*LP* IV ii, 4188); SP1/47 f. 343 (*LP* IV iii, 4236).
[64] W.A. Shaw, *The Knights of England* (2 vols, 1906) ii, 48.
[65] *LP* V, 119 (13).
[66] *List of Sheriffs for England and Wales*, PRO Lists and Indexes 9 (1898), 69.

Local conditions had undoubtedly favoured Clement's entry into Kentish political society. Nevertheless, such a swift rise to power during the 1520s and 1530s based on a very modest landed stake in the county implies that Clement had significant backing at court. Due to the shortage of firm evidence, there is always going to be an element of doubt about the identity of Clement's patrons. However, through a process of elimination it is still possible to venture a guess. John Shurley, cofferer of Henry VIII's household, is a possible, but unlikely candidate.[67] His wife, Elizabeth, was John Goring III's sister, and therefore Clement's cousin.[68] Despite their kinship connection, there is no evidence of contact between Clement and Shurley. Furthermore, Shurley was dead by 1529. At this stage, Clement had only just finished consolidating his local position.[69]

Given Clement's previous clash with Fitzwilliam and his subsequent move to a county where relations between the political elite and the cardinal were poor, it is equally doubtful that he was connected to the cardinal's network. Yet, the cardinal's early patrons, the Greys, might have provided him with some support. Thomas Grey, second marquess of Dorset had been one of Henry VIII's early favourites. His friendship with the king had lasted and he had been appointed to the Privy Chamber in 1521. Clement had become connected to the family after his marriage to Lady Anne Grey between 1528 and 1530. She was the widow of Lord John Grey, the second marquess's younger brother. The marriage, however, only created a peripheral connection with the Greys. And, in 1530, the marquess died, robbing Clement of future patronage. Although the marchioness chose to spend much of her time at Ightham with her son who was still a minor, there is little to suggest that she and the Greys were ever able to exert much influence on Clement's behalf.[70]

Despite the circumstantial nature of the evidence, there are good reasons for thinking that the Boleyns were Clement's patrons. In fact, there is a close correlation between Clement's advancement on the one hand, and the rise of the Boleyns on the other. Like the marquess of Dorset, Sir Thomas Boleyn had also formed part of Henry VIII's earliest group of associates. He had steadily worked his way up through the court hierarchy to become treasurer of the Household between 1521

[67] Shurley had been chief clerk of Henry VII's kitchen before becoming cofferer of the Household in 1509: *CPR*, 1494–1509, 15, 185; *LP* I i, 82.

[68] Bannerman, *op. cit.*, 65; PRO, PROB11/15 f. 74; 11/23 f. 98v.

[69] PRO, PROB11/23 f. 101.

[70] Starkey, 'Ightham Mote', 159; *LP* V, 926; VII, 153; X, 236.

and 1522. Yet, Boleyn influence at court increased dramatically after 1527 when Sir Thomas Boleyn's daughter, Anne, became the king's mistress.

There had been a Boleyn presence at Hever, near to Ightham Mote, since the late fifteenth century. The Boleyns, like Clement, were related to a number of families in the south-east, including the Cheynes of Kent, the Carews of Surrey, and the Copleys and Hoos of Sussex.[71] Although in 1522 Sir Thomas Boleyn had been granted lands around Tonbridge and Penshurst in west Kent and the office of master forester of Ashdown Forest in Sussex, Boleyn influence in the south-east had remained modest.[72] The family's success at court in the late 1520s, however, was matched by a corresponding expansion of their influence – and Clement's – in Kent. This had been particularly noticeable when the county was hit by a wave of disturbances and protests associated with the repayment of the Amicable Grant.[73]

Clement had probably become a Boleyn associate soon after he settled in Kent. Some of his Sussex relatives already had ties with the Boleyns. The Parkers, for instance, were related by marriage to the Boleyns. John Parker subsequently became lieutenant of Dover during the mid-1530s for George Boleyn, warden of the Cinque Ports.[74] The Coverts, on the other hand, had a service connection to Anne Boleyn's uncle, the Duke of Norfolk.[75] As Boleyn influence increased during the late 1520s and early 1530s some of Clement's other friends likewise moved into their orbit. Sir Richard Weston, Clement's former colleague in the royal household, had been one of Cardinal Wolsey's principal clients.[76] His son, Francis Weston, who had been the king's page, became a Boleyn client and was made a gentleman of the Privy Chamber.[77] Sir William Sidney, resident at Penshurst, lived near to the Boleyns at Hever. He had probably become acquainted with the

[71] Mercer, *op. cit.*, 87, 176, 206.

[72] *LP* III ii, 2214; R. Somerville, *History of the Duchy of Lancaster* (2 vols, 1953–70) i, 621. In 1524 he was also appointed bailiff of Pagham in Sussex by Warham: Historic Manuscripts Commission, *9th Report* (2 vols, 1883–4) i, 120.

[73] Mercer, *op. cit.*, 207–11.

[74] Bannerman, *op. cit.*, 22; Berry, *op. cit.*, 300; *LP* VIII, 687; X, 526. Rochford's previous lieutenant was Sir Richard Dering, nephew of the Goring associate, William Dering of Petworth in Sussex: Hovenden, *op. cit.*, 207.

[75] Bindoff, *op. cit.*, i, 719–20.

[76] *LP* III i, 235, 246.

[77] *LP* IV i, 1939 (p. 863); II i, 2735. Weston had been knighted at Anne Boleyn's coronation on 1 June, 1533: *LP* VI, 562.

Boleyns through the network of his cousin, Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk.[78]

The rise of Anne Boleyn and her family at court soon destroyed Wolsey's supremacy. In its wake were left several factions competing for power. Spurred on by Anne's refusal of sexual favours unless they were married and by the queen's inability to give him a male heir, Henry VIII had decided to seek a divorce in the summer of 1527. Three factions had emerged: those opposing the divorce and supporting Queen Catherine; those supporting Anne and the divorce, but opposed to Wolsey; and those working for Wolsey and the divorce in order to preserve the cardinal's influence.

Wolsey had staked everything on securing a papal dispensation to enable Henry to marry Anne. However, after the king's French allies had been defeated in 1529 by the Imperialists at Ladriano in Italy and both sides had made peace at Cambrai, there was no possibility that the Pope would agree to Henry's wishes. The Boleyns and Aragonese had then combined to turn Henry against his minister. Wolsey was disgraced but died the following year before his enemies could arrange his execution. With the cardinal dead, the Boleyn-Aragonese alliance soon collapsed. Within a couple of years the Boleyns had formed an alliance with Wolsey's successor, Thomas Cromwell, to defeat Aragonese opposition to the divorce. Henry VIII and Anne were secretly married in January 1533; while Cromwell pushed the Act in Restraint of Appeals through parliament which severed England's ties with Rome and allowed the divorce to be settled in England.

The emergence of court faction during the late 1520s and early 1530s in turn led to fundamental changes in county management. The close connection between politics and religion created by the debate over the divorce and the legislation passed in the Reformation Parliament generated new ties and loyalties in the localities. In Kent, for example, Guildford domination was brought to an end. Until the mid-1520s they had worked successfully with the Boleyns. This co-operation had finished when Henry announced his intention to divorce Catherine. Despite carrying out the king's wishes, Sir Henry Guildford had suffered a bitter, personal attack from Anne Boleyn who thought his sympathy was with the queen. However, a serious clash between the Guildfords and Boleyns was avoided by the deaths of Sir Henry Guildford in 1532 and Sir Edward Guildford in 1534.

[78] For the Sidney-Brandon connection, see S. Gunn, *Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, c. 1484–1545* (1988), 3, 30, 32, 45, 46, 70, 71. However, Brandon's relations with the Boleyns were not close: Gunn, *op. cit.*, 119.

The fragmentation of the royal affinity established a system of local politics similar to that which later emerged under Elizabeth I. The royal affinity no longer had a unitary structure in which its members were dominated by a single family such as the Guildfords. The local gentry, particularly members of the royal affinity, now looked for leadership from a variety of patrons who combined central and local influence. In many cases their choice was dictated by a combination of political and religious considerations. Supporters of Anne Boleyn, Cromwell and the divorce often shared evangelical sympathies; their opponents, however, tended to oppose the divorce, radical religious reform and the split from Rome.

Another important effect of the disintegration of the royal affinity during the early Tudor period was to give relatively minor royal servants more scope to exert their influence in local politics. The royal monopoly of the bastard feudal system had already created a more distant lordship in the localities. The practical outcome was irregular supervision of the royal affinity and the magnification of its influence in the localities. The central law courts and the Council provided a mechanism for correcting royal servants who abused their authority, but for the most part their activities went unchecked. Faction at court, combined with a fragmented royal affinity, made attempts to bring wayward royal servants to justice that much harder.

The greater freedom and power now enjoyed by members of the royal affinity is clearly demonstrated by Clement's conduct in 1534. Following Sir Edward Guildford's death there was a protracted struggle for the family's lands. Guildford had not left a written will and his wishes were bitterly disputed by two parties: on the one hand, Sir John Dudley and his wife Jane, Guildford's daughter; on the other hand, Guildford's nephew, John Guildford. Each side had looked to their patrons for help: Dudley to Cromwell; Guildford to Sir John Gage and the Duke of Norfolk.[79] While this conflict was raging, however, Clement took the opportunity to strengthen his position in west Kent still further by intervening in the dispute between Sir John Crosse, parson of Shipbourne, and Robert Brenner of Hadlow.

Crosse and Brenner had been at loggerheads since the early 1530s. Crosse claimed that the lands had been granted to him for life by the prior of St. John of Jerusalem in England back in July 1524; Brenner, a Guildford servant, asserted that Crosse had granted the lands to Sir Edward Guildford sometime in 1530 or early 1531. Guildford had then let the property to Brenner. Violence had flared up in March 1531 when Brenner had expelled Crosse's curate, Robert Sympson, from the

[79] Mercer, *op. cit.*, 221–3.

parsonage. Crosse had managed to re-enter the property in July 1534, ejecting Brenner's curate, Edward Tutsam. However, he had been dispossessed for a second time by Brenner on 4 September, 1534.[80]

After his second expulsion, Crosse had adopted a new course of action. He made a complaint to his local justice of the peace, Sir Richard Clement, and demanded 'to see the king's peace observed'.[81] Clement must have been aware that this property was the subject of an on-running legal battle. Shipbourne was, after all, in the heart of his territory. Nevertheless, without a second thought he took it upon himself to settle the affair. His first action was to take advantage of his status as a member of the royal affinity. He sent several of his servants to Ightham, Kemsing, Seal and Brasted, instructing villagers to assemble at Ightham Mote 'to serve the king'. After gathering about two hundred men, he then set out for Shipbourne.

Once there Clement had surrounded the house held by Brenner and about ten of his followers. He claimed to have attempted to persuade Brenner to surrender but had received the answer that 'they would first piss above their navel'. Shots were exchanged, one hitting Clement's supporter, William Dawson, on the nose. Clement then ordered a full-scale assault and Brenner's company was swiftly overcome. Three of Brenner's followers were also sent to Maidstone gaol. However, Brenner was not prepared to give in. He submitted a bill of complaint against Clement to the Council in Star Chamber.[82]

Clement was summoned to account for his conduct. His defence demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the law. Crosse claimed that Brenner had held the property by force for two and a half years; Brenner, that he had been in possession quite legally for over three years.[83] Clement rejected Brenner's title to the property and the claim that *he*, not Brenner, had acted in a riotous manner at Shipbourne. He had merely followed the letter of the law laid down in 15 Richard II c.2. According to this statute, when a case of forcible entry occurred justices of the peace were empowered to raise a force sufficient to tackle those illegally holding the property and to commit them to gaol.[84] Even the principal legal handbook available to justices of the peace in 1534, *The Boke of Justices of Peas*, directed their attention to this statute.[85]

[80] PRO, STAC2/6/57–8; 11/55–6.

[81] PRO, STAC2/6/55.

[82] PRO, STAC2/6/55; 18/321; 20/385.

[83] PRO, STAC2/6/55; 11/55–6.

[84] PRO, STAC2/6/55; 18/321; *Statutes of the Realm*, (Ed.) A. Luders *et. al.* (11 vols, 1810–28) ii, 78.

[85] *The Boke of Justices of Peas*, (Ed.) P.R. Glazebrook (Classical English Law Text Series, 1972), fos. A 2v, B2.

Yet, Clement had failed to take into account the modifications to 15 Richard II c.2 contained in 8 Henry VI c.9.[86] This statute sought to correct the failings of 15 Richard II c.2. The new provisions not only required justices of the peace to enforce 15 Richard II c.2; it also obliged them to inquire into which party was holding the land by force and to restore possession to the rightful owners. Clement had not made any inquiries, arbitrarily deciding that Crosse was in the right as well as interpreting the use of 'sufficient force' in very broad terms. Despite his defence, Clement's arguments failed to impress the Council and he was dispatched to the Fleet.

Nevertheless, powerful forces soon intervened on Clement's behalf. In a letter written to Cromwell on 10 October, 1534, Sir John Dudley expressed his concern about the efforts of Clement's friends at court to secure his freedom:

> Furthermore as touching Master Clement's matter I beseech your mastership not to give too much credence to some great men who peradventure will be intercessors of the matter and to make the best of it for Master Clement, because peradventure they themselves be the greatest bearers of it, as by the time I have showed you how hotly the sending of Master Clement to the Fleet was taken by some that may chance you think to be your friend, you will not a little marvel.[87]

The reason for Dudley's concern is not clear. His principal purpose in urging Cromwell to exercise caution in Clement's case appears to have been the threat to his efforts to secure the Guildford inheritance and establish his own authority in the region. Dudley had already asked Cromwell to protect his interests against John Guildford 'as also for other matters which touch me near' while he was in Sussex attempting to repair breaches to the sea walls that protected the Guildford marshes and neighbouring villages. It could well be that Dudley was concerned about Clement interfering in his dispute with John Guildford in order to enhance his local standing.[88]

Although Dudley failed to identify Clement's backers, he was probably referring to the Boleyns. Clement seemed to have been associated with them for some time. Along with Cromwell they were dominant at court and, following the decline of the Guildfords, they had inherited the leading position in Kent. Their local supremacy had

[86] Luders, *op. cit.*, 244–6. *The Boke of Justices of Peas* had not included this statute among its collection. However, it is mentioned in another manual compiled shortly afterwards in 1538: Sir Anthony Fitzherbert, *The Newe Boke of Justices of the Peas*, (Ed.) P.R. Glazebrook (Classical English Law Text Series, 1972), fos. 97, 106v–107.

[87] PRO, SP1/86 f. 30v (*LP* VII, 1251).

[88] PRO, SP1/86 fos. 30–30v.

recently been confirmed by the appointment of Anne Boleyn's brother, George Boleyn, Viscount Rochford, to the vacant wardenship of the Cinque Ports.[89]

Clement's connection to the Boleyns in 1534 saved him from serious punishment. Nevertheless, for the next two years he kept a low profile; and, following the downfall of Anne Boleyn in early 1536, he was left without a patron at court or in Kent. Cromwell, dominant at court, now promoted the interests of his own clients in Kent.[90] Clement, however, managed to retain a degree of local influence. Later that year he contributed twenty men to the force raised against the Pilgrimage of Grace.[91] His rehabilitation was confirmed in 1537 when he was re-appointed to the county bench.[92] Clement was soon actively participating in local government. In February 1538, for example, he helped investigate cases of manslaughter and hunting on the Earl of Wiltshire's estates.[93] During the following month, Clement and Sir William Sidney were visited by John Baker. Baker had come to acquaint them with Cromwell's letter dated 4 March. This probably concerned the rumours of a poll tax being levied in Kent.[94] The Earl of Southampton had already reported similar rumours of discontent in Surrey and Sussex to Cromwell.[95] However, this appeared to be the last occasion Clement was involved in county affairs: by December 1538 he was dead.[96]

This article set out to do three things: first, solve the mystery of Clement's origins; second, demonstrate the impact of central politics on the development of Clement's position in Kent; and third, use Clement's career to illustrate the fundamental changes taking place in county management during the early Tudor period. Clement's background has now been comprehensively investigated and it is clear that he was a member of the minor Sussex gentry. As a young man he entered royal service, probably with the help of his family connections. His time spent in the royal household enabled him to forge the contacts that led to his first marriage in 1510 and his attempt to become a

[89] *LP* VII, 922 (16).

[90] P. Clark, *English Society from the Reformation to the Revolution: Religion, Politics and Society in Kent, 1500–1640* (Hassocks, 1977), 50–4.

[91] *LP* XI, App 8.

[92] *LP* XII ii, 1311 (28).

[93] *LP* XIII i, 318.

[94] *LP* XIII i, 483.

[95] *LP* XIII i, 392, 440, 475.

[96] Clement died sometime between 28 October and 2 December, 1538; PRO, PROB11/27 f. 183v.

Northamptonshire gentleman. While this was unsuccessful, his court contacts contributed to his move to Ightham Mote in 1521 where he again used his status as a royal servant to work his way into local political society.

Clement was obviously aware of the importance of court patronage. His rise to prominence in Kent was facilitated by his connection with the Boleyns. Their ascendancy and the disintegration of Guildford power presented Clement with a perfect opportunity to enhance his own position. Unfortunately, his luck ran out after he intervened at Shipbourne in 1534. Cromwell and the Council were unimpressed by his defence and sent him to prison. Yet, Clement did not suffer disgrace for long because his patrons quickly intervened on his behalf. He was soon at liberty and able to resume his place in local affairs. Yet despite his adaptability, he was caught out by the downfall of the Boleyns in 1536. His failure to cultivate Cromwell's favour meant that he was never as influential as he had been in the early 1530s.

Sir Richard Clement's career has also served as an important reminder of the bastard feudal nature of early Tudor politics and the extent to which the royal monopoly of the bastard feudal system had increased the local influence of royal servants. Many other royal servants besides Clement sought to exploit their positions in the localities. Sir William Compton and William Brereton are two notable examples. Sir William Compton of Warwickshire was Henry VIII's groom of the Stool. He acquired a substantial number of local offices and lands throughout the southern Midlands. This gave him tremendous local influence which he ruthlessly exploited for his own benefit. During the mid-1520s, however, he became embroiled in a dispute over the Grey inheritance with Sir Henry Grey, half-brother and heir to Richard Grey, Earl of Kent. The dispute rapidly escalated into violence, but Compton easily outmanoeuvred Grey and retained his acquisitions from the Grey patrimony.[97]

William Brereton of Cheshire was a groom of Henry VIII's Privy Chamber. By exploiting his position at court, he had acquired the most important offices in Cheshire and north Wales. Such was his power that he used it without compunction to pursue a long-standing quarrel with John Eyton. The Eytons had suffered at Brereton's hands on numerous occasions. Two Eytons, including John Eyton's uncle, had been murdered by Brereton's servants; Brereton himself had tried to pin the

[97] G.W. Bernard, 'The rise of Sir William Compton, early Tudor courtier', *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xcvi (1981), 765–71.

murder of his servant, William Hanmer, on John Eyton. Brereton was especially vindictive, pursuing his feud with Eyton to the bitter end. In 1534, he used his influence with the queen to secure a warrant for Eyton's arrest; he obtained another to try him in Flintshire where he packed the jury to secure a conviction; and hanged Eyton at Holt Castle.[98]

Nevertheless, royal servants could also experience strong opposition to their local ambitions. Edward Ryngeley, a native of Staffordshire and gentleman usher of the Chamber, had settled at Knowlton in east Kent in 1518.[99] Like Clement he tried to consolidate his position through a combination of marriage, land acquisition and the exploitation of his status as a royal servant.[100] But Ryngeley experienced problems asserting his authority in this part of the shire. In 1521, he had been granted the reversion of the stewardship of Dover Castle and the keepership of the nearby warren. Yet, his entry to these offices was blocked by Sir Edward Guildford, warden of the Cinque Ports.[101]

In 1524, Ryngeley was appointed bailiff and verger of Sandwich.[102] However, his heavy-handed attempts to assert the fiscal rights of the Crown sparked a violent showdown with the Sandwich authorities. Between December 1526 and May 1527, the mayor and several close associates conducted a campaign of violence and intimidation against Ryngeley and his servants. They prevented his entry into Sandwich, attacked his town house, attempted to apprehend him in Sandwich, and even waited to ambush him as he made his way to London. Despite resorting to force himself, Ryngeley complained that he was unable to perform his duties for two and a half years.[103]

While Clement, Compton, Brereton and Ryngeley illustrate the bastard feudal nature of early Tudor period politics, Clement's case is

[98] E. Ives, Letters and Accounts of William Brereton of Malpas, *Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire.*, cxvi (1972), 36–8.

[99] *LP* III i, 1081; III ii, 1928.

[100] Hovenden, *op. cit.*, 66; C1/563/40; *LP* III i, 1081.

[101] *LP* III i, 1928; PRO, STAC2/32/135.

[102] *LP* IV i, 86 (28); IV i, 2002 (11).

[103] British Library, Lansdowne Ms 276 fos. 167–75; CKS, Sa/AC 2, fos. 368v–9v. Ryngeley's servants demonstrated a similar propensity for violence. During the 1530s Thomas Cockes complained that Ryngeley had poached his harvest workers contrary to the Statute of Labourers. Cockes had approached a justice of the peace, Sir William Haute, to direct a warrant ordering the constable of Eastry to enforce the Statute. The constable had arrested Cockes's former servants but had been attacked by Ryngeley's servants. Haute had then directed several local gentlemen to assist the constable but they were attacked by Ryngeley's servants when they arrived at Knowlton to arrest the malefactors: PRO, STAC2/10/88; 10/92–9; 25/105.

especially significant because it also highlights an important transitional stage in the structure of early Tudor local politics. The rise of court faction and the breakdown of the traditional unitary structure of the royal affinity enabled him to make a greater impact in Kent during the early 1530s. Now, as the repercussions of the divorce and the Reformation started to be felt, local politics in Kent and elsewhere became more fluid and existing allegiances were replaced by new loyalties based on a combination of political and religious considerations. And Clement, ever the opportunist, had taken full advantage of this period of readjustment by seeking to establish a more prominent position, albeit unsuccessfully, for himself in the shire.

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