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## THE MEDIEVAL TILE-MAKERS OF BOROUGH GREEN

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In medieval times Borough Green was called *Le Berghe* and was a hamlet in the borough of Wrotham on the Archbishop of Canterbury's manor of Wrotham.<sup>1</sup> There was a community of tile-makers living and working at Borough Green in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and probably earlier. Their houses and kilns were situated near clay and sand deposits beside a main road. As well as being tile-makers they were agriculturalists with above average holdings for the manor. One of the medieval tilers' houses still stands at Borough Green cross-roads.

Borough Green lies below the North Downs in Holmesdale (Fig. 1). The 'Green' was common land, part of a wide belt of common beside the road from Sevenoaks to Maidstone. There were extensive sand and clay deposits with plentiful supplies of water and wood; all the requirements for tile and pottery working. The clay and sand were less than half a mile from the tile-makers' kilns. If the common land failed to furnish enough wood for fuel, fire-wood could be bought in the Archbishop's parks nearby or in Bechinwood, a mile or so away.

The existence of this tile-making community has been pieced together from documentary sources most of which were found in the Centre for Kentish Studies (CKS) in Maidstone. Three rentals and surveys of the manor of Wrotham were the starting point for locating

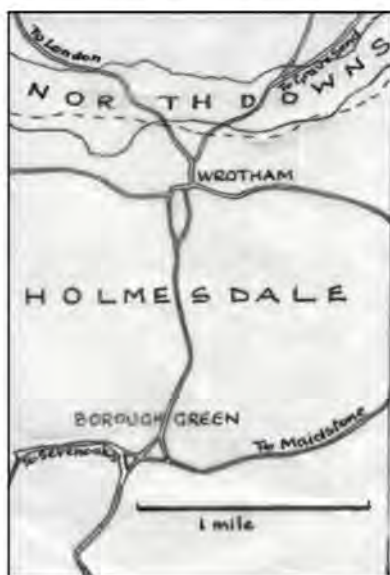


Fig. 1. Borough Green near Wrotham in Holmesdale.

the premises and establishing tenancies or virtual ownership.<sup>2</sup> These documents date from 1495, 1538 and 1568 and describe properties, their locations and neighbouring properties in some detail, along with the clay pits and their owners. Where these same dates occur in the following paper they refer to these rentals and surveys. The maps in this paper are based on the rental and survey descriptions and matched to the tithe map of 1840 where possible.

Court rolls also furnished material and many survive for the manorial courts of Wrotham from 1407 to 1924.<sup>3</sup> Tiles were being made on the manor from at least 1407 when there are references in the court rolls to debts in respect of tiles. Changes of property ownership are recorded and there are a few court cases involving tilers and their associates.

Manorial officers, or 'ministers' as they were called, kept accounts which sometimes dealt with building construction or repairs. The parker in charge of the two deer parks, the farmer or lessee of the manor and the reeve or estate manager were all involved from time to time with roofing materials. Ministers accounts are in the Centre for Kentish Studies at Maidstone and The National Archives at Kew as well as some relevant taxation returns for the fourteenth century.<sup>4</sup> However, wills and inventories for Wrotham tilers are lacking as only a few Wrotham wills survived a fire in the early seventeenth century.

### *Roofing materials*

From the few prices (see below) for tiles in the court rolls and parkers' accounts it seems that the tiles made in Borough Green were mainly roofing tiles, not floor tiles. On Wrotham manor, roofs were commonly covered with peg tiles or thatch. There is no medieval evidence for stone roofs. Thatch was the commonest and cheapest material. Oak shingles were also used, made in a workshop in the deer parks, and elsewhere in the area, oak being plentiful.<sup>5</sup> They cost about the same as tiles at 3s. per thousand. The tilers of Borough Green must have been catering for a local market as there were other kilns, or 'tilecosts' as they were called, in neighbouring villages.

Scraps of information tell us about specific roofs. In 1445/6 we learn of the existence of a deer house in the park, which was in need of roofing.<sup>6</sup> The thatching straw cost 14d. Three hundred shingles were used on the same roof for 7d. and 800 lath nails cost 8d. A tiler and his servant took 6 days to roof the house, costing 5s. Two hooks and two doorbands and 100 nails costing 10d. were bought for the door of the house. A carpenter worked on the deer house and the door for two days for 6d.

In 1456 farmers Thomas and Peter Bryght accounted for 42s. worth of repairs to the manor barn, carpenters worked for 23 days, masons for three days and tilers for nine days using 1,500 tiles at a cost of 5s. which were

transported from 'le Barow' for 6d. The barn needed more maintenance in 1491 when farmer William Hunt undertook the repair of the barn and cow house. The end of the barn seems to have collapsed. Guy ffynnor, tiler, laid tiles and new lead on the roof at the end of the barn. Burnt lime and shingles cost 6s. 4d. In the same account, 3,000 tiles cost 10s. and 150 angle tiles cost 5s. The lodge in the East Park was repaired with timber from the West Park and with thatch.

In 1588 Robert Rychers died at *Nysells*, now Wrotham Place, and an account of his property is in the court rolls. It included *Goodwyns Barns* in Wrotham Town, 'the north barn now covered in tiles and the west barn now covered with thatch which west barn formerly had within it an apple mill'. Rychers held shops which stood in the market square of Wrotham. They were not thriving. One was called *Nysells shop* which 'along with *Vyells*, in his lifetime, Richard Rychers wilfully threw down and destroyed and removed the timber and tiles for his own use with no lord's licence. Property forfeit to the lord'. Clearly the shops, which were small, were tiled not thatched.

The impression is that tile was a common roofing material in the manor due to its availability and affordability and was interchangeable with thatch. Tile must have been the preferred material for houses with open halls where open hearths burned with no chimneys. Sparks would present an ever-present fire hazard to a thatched roof.

### *Legislation and manufacture*

National legislation regulated the manufacture, quality and sizes of tiles. An ordinance of 1477 stated that 'earth (was) to be digged by November 1st before making [and] that the same Earth be stirred and turned before the First Day of February and not wrought before the First Day of March next following ... and that the same Earth before it be put to making of Tile shall be truly wrought and tried from Stones; ... and also that the Veins called Malm or marle and Chalke ... shall be cast from the said Earth whereof any such Tile may be made'.<sup>7</sup> Exposure to the winter weather helped to condition the clay.

The standard measurement for flat, or plain, roof tiles was to be 10½ x 6¼in. and at least 5/8in. thick. Ridge roof, or crest, tiles were to be 13½ x 6¼in. and gutter tiles 10½in. long. The seller of faulty tiles had to recompense the buyer at double the value of the tiles and might be fined by the Justices of the Peace. Defective roof tiles carried the highest fine at 6s. 8d. per hundred. Knowledgeable people were to be appointed as searchers to inspect tiles and present defaults before JPs. The searchers were to be paid for their efforts at a rate of one penny for a thousand plain tiles, a halfpenny for a hundred ridge roof tiles and a farthing for a hundred corner tiles. Negligent searchers could be fined ten shillings. The



first recorded tile searchers for Wrotham appear in 1592 when Reginald Pelsoy and John Knoller were appointed.

Tiles were shaped in a wooden 'form' on a sanded table. Surplus clay was trimmed off the form with a knife or wire. The tile was then dried in a 'hackstead' or drying shed, an open sided, roofed, timber-framed structure. When they had dried to the consistency of leather they were ready to be burnt in the kiln. Tile-making was a seasonal occupation. Kiln firing took place in the summer months of June, July and August.

### *Kilns or Tileosts*

Medieval tile kilns, or tileosts, certainly did not resemble the oast houses for hop drying which are still so familiar in the Kentish landscape. The tile kiln was a rectangular or square semi-underground structure made of tiles, bricks or stone, measuring roughly 6 x 8ft (Fig. 2). At the base

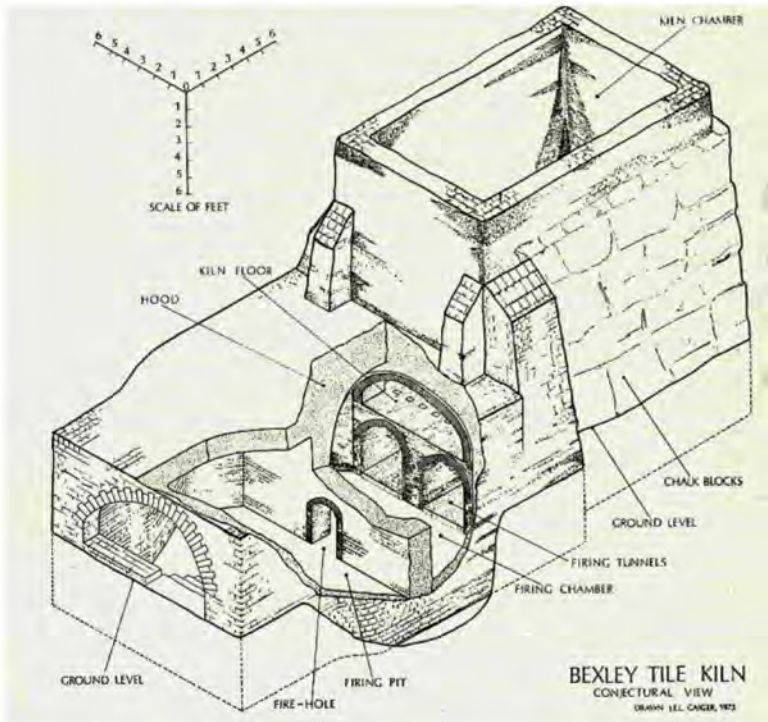


Fig. 2. Conjectural drawing of a tile kiln from Bexley, c.1700, based on the excavated ground plan. Drawn by J.E.L. Caiger 1973.<sup>8</sup>

were semi-circular furnace tunnels where wood was burnt to heat the kiln. These tunnels were accessible to the tilers for loading fuel and open to the air to create a draught through the kiln. Above the furnace tunnels was a floor where the tiles were stacked for firing. Earth was piled up around the kiln for half its height to insulate the kiln as high temperatures had to be achieved. The earth was banked to make a platform for the tilers to load the kiln from the top (there was no lateral doorway) and then to roof over the kiln for firing. It was roofed, but not sealed, with old tiles and clay and burnt for about four days.

What passers-by would have seen was a building about four feet high with a temporary clay roof exuding noxious fumes at a temperature which peaked at 1000-1100° centigrade. It was in the interests of the local community to group tile kilns in one area, as they are at Borough Green, to mitigate the nuisance. Such grouping would tend to occur naturally because of the need to be as near the raw materials as possible. Large groupings of kilns could be a public nuisance.<sup>9</sup> Firing glazed tiles produced lead fumes. When the firing was completed the kiln roof was destroyed in order to unload the tiles.

No kiln remains have been reported at any of the Borough Green sites. If anything has survived it is likely to be the arched firing tunnels, well below present day ground level, as in the post-medieval tile kiln at Bexley (Fig. 2).

Bricks are not mentioned in Wrotham documents until the late sixteenth century, but pottery was made from an early date in a community at Platt, east of Borough Green. There is no evidence that the crafts of potter and tiler overlapped.

#### *Location of tilers' properties*

The map of tile-making sites (Fig. 3) is based on the tithe map of 1840 and the three rentals. It shows the location of six medieval tile-making firms and the claypits from which they took their raw material. The sites were:

- 1 *Cappys*<sup>10</sup>
- 2 *also Cappys*
- 3 *Winchers*<sup>11</sup>
- 4 *Studfold*<sup>12</sup>
- 5 *Chepstedstenement*<sup>13</sup>
- 6 *The Tileost in Itam*<sup>14</sup>

Five of the sites were dwelling houses with kilns close by.

All the tilers had land to cultivate when they were not making tiles. Using both the 1495 and the 1568 rentals one can deduce that *Cappys* had 13½ acres for which the rent was 4s. 9d.; *Winchers* paid 2s. 1½d. for 10½

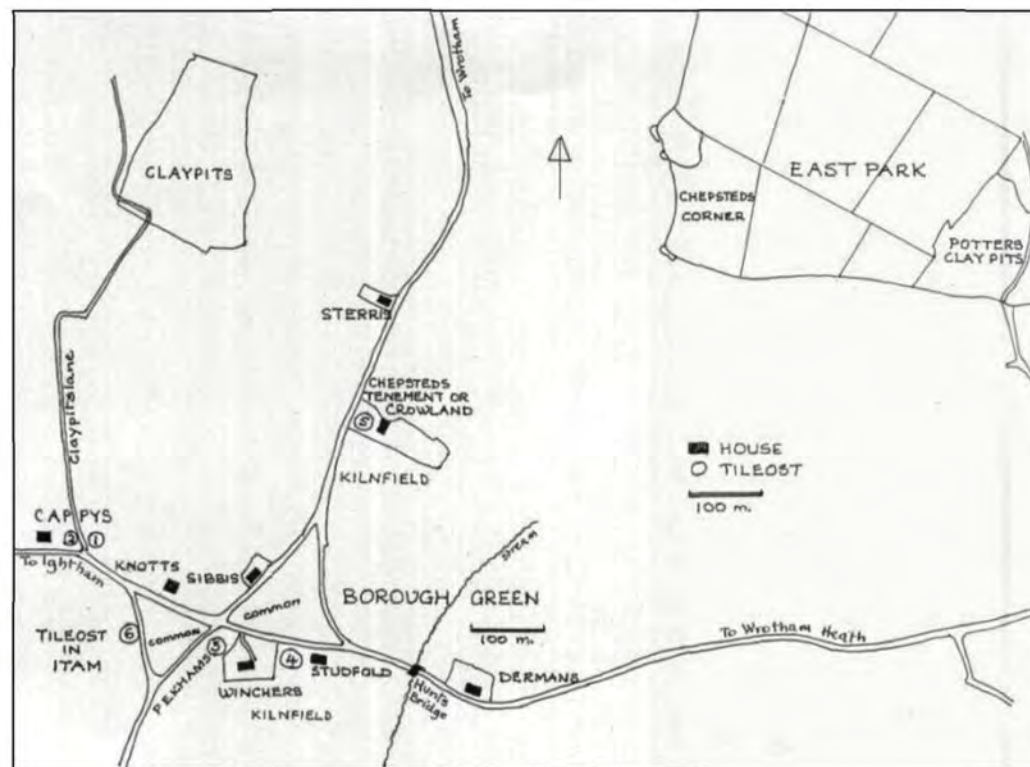


Fig. 3. Tile-making sites at Borough Green in Wrotham.

acres; *Studfold* had 20½ acres for 3s. 4d.; and *Chepstedstenement* paid 3s. 4d. for 22 acres. These rents were in line with other rents paid on the manor, but why the rent for *Cappys* should be twice as expensive per acre as the other three is difficult to understand. Perhaps the rent incorporated unwritten rights to clay-digging as the property is near the clay pits.

### *Tile-making families*

The families who lived in these houses formed a small but enduring community which probably included employees, most of whose names are unknown. Eight principal tile-making families can be tied down to individual premises. Their names were Cappe, Knokker, Staley, Sexteyne, Campayne, Hadlo, Chepsted, and Pelsoyt. By 1568 they were supplying tiles in Wrotham manor for at least 200 houses and their associated farm buildings. There were also six owners, who were not working tilers, called Pekham, Hastlyn, Myller, Doge, Willoughby and James.

### *Cappys* Tileost 1: the Cappe, Knokker and Sexten families (1407-1538)

The Cappe family house, *Cappys* (Fig. 3), is the earliest site for which there is documentary evidence. Its recorded history starts in 1407 with a dispute between two families, the Quyntrells and the Knokkers.

In August 1407 Robert Knokker was pursued in court for debts and trespass by Richard Quyntrell, senior. Knokker was alleged to owe him 3s. 4d. for 1,500 tiles, as well as 3s. 4d. to a wheelwright for work on a cart, 3s. for rented pasture and 15d. for cheese. Also outstanding was the matter of 12d. which should have been paid into the lord's court at Easter 1405. Knokker pleaded not guilty to this but he seems to have pleaded guilty to entering Quyntrell's land at *Newlond* (an ancient potting site beside The Napps, south of Platt in Winfield borough) and carrying away 1,500 bundles of chopped wood worth 40d., in the course of which he trampled down animal fodder, peas and beans in a field called *Edole*. The rights and wrongs of the case do not concern us but it shows Richard Quyntrell involved in the tile trade either as a tile-maker or merchant. The 1,500 tiles were probably plain roof tiles at roughly 2s. 2d. per 1000. This was cheap as the standard price for plain tiles in the parkers' accounts between 1420 and 1507 was 3s. 4d. per 1000. Glazed paving tiles were more expensive, between 6s. and 8s. per 1000.<sup>15</sup> It may be that Robert Knokker was also in the tile industry and may have taken the 1,500 bundles of chopped wood from Quyntrell's land for kiln fuel. If one accepts that making tiles was thirsty work, it may also be significant that in 1409 Robert Knokker paid a 'fine' for brewing (in effect a licence to brew).

Knokker must have been unable to pay his debts because in the same

year he sold his lands and tenements by charter to Henry Cappe of *Cappys* and William Campayne, a neighbour who lived to the north of *Cappys*.<sup>16</sup> The relief paid by Cappe and Campayne for Knokker's property was 2*d.* which meant the annual rent was 8*d.*<sup>17</sup> If we then jump ahead 130 years to the rental of 1538 we find that there is a tileost, belonging to the heir of Walter Sexten, to the east of *Cappys* for which the rent is 8*d.* These identical rents are too much of a coincidence. The Knokker property of 1409 and the Sexten property of 1538 must be the same, as rents were static over the period. Knokker must have been a tile-maker and in 1409 Cappe added Knokker's tileost (tileost 1, Fig. 3) to his own existing tile-making business in tileost 2.

The Richard Quyntrell who took Knokker to court was in business with his son Richard. The Quyntrells had land between Ightham and Borough Green. We know this because in 1409 the ditches alongside their property there needed scouring and they were fined. They were thus close neighbours of Knokker and Cappe with land near the claypits, but if they were also running a tileost its site is unknown.

Richard Quyntrell, junior, was sued for debt by William Janyn in 1407. He owed 3*s.* for 500 tiles and 1*s.* for 2½ quarters of burnt lime. At 6*s.* per thousand these were likely to have been floor tiles and the burnt lime was for mortar in which to bed them. Janyn was a former reeve and evidently a tile-maker. The sum had been owed for thirteen years since 1394. Whether the Quyntrells were tile-makers or not, they were closely associated with people like the Knokkers and Cappes who were. The Quyntrells could have been builders purchasing tiles from the tile-makers. Richard Quyntrell was the reeve of Wrotham in 1428/9, a post that demanded business acumen.

#### *Cappys* Tileost 2: Cappe, Hadlo and Staley families (1409-1568)

The Cappe family gave their name to their property in Borough Green, west of *Claypitslane*. From what date they held it and for how long the property was called *Cappys* is unknown. There were family members living in Wrotham in the fourteenth century. A Thomas Keppe paid tax in 1352 and Thomas Cappe was a witness to an enfeoffment in 1364.<sup>18</sup> Thomas was succeeded by Henry and in 1409 (the same year he bought tileost 1 from Knokker), he enfeoffed John Sexteyne and John Sterre in all his lands and tenements.<sup>19</sup> These two men were neighbours; local witnesses who would safeguard the descent of the *Cappys* property from father to son.

We know from later rentals that his son, John Cappe, inherited *Cappys* from Henry. John appears in the court rolls between 1433 and 1463 and was an active buyer of coppice wood in the 1430s in the parker's accounts that survive.<sup>20</sup> This could have been fuel for tileosts.



In 1495 *Cappys* and its tileosts were in the hands of John Hadlo and by 1538 the tenant was Thomas Staley.<sup>21</sup> He died in 1561 and there was a partition of the property among his three sons. William and Walter inherited *Cappys* with tileost 2 and Richard held tileost 1 next door in 1568 for a rent of 16*d.* (Fig. 3).

Tile-making at *Cappys* continued apparently uninterrupted until at least the late sixteenth century. In spite of ownership by Hadlos and Staleys the property was still called '*Cappys*' in 1568, about a hundred years after the departure of the last Cappe.

### *Cappys* Tileosts 1 and 2: the Staley family (1538- c.1600)

The three Staley brothers, who inherited tileosts 1 and 2 in 1561, featured prominently in the court rolls. William Staley was a colourful, trouble-making member of the tiling community. In 1564 he had a fight with brother Walter and was fined 12*d.*; the same year he attacked John Rygnall with a stone, drawing blood, and was fined 20*d.* John Rygnall was a tiler who worked for Reginald Pelsoyt from 1559-65 (see below). In 1567 Staley erected a fence 6 rods (33 yards) in length on the lands of Walter Pelsoyt, his neighbour at *Sibbis* (Fig. 3), for which he was fined 2*d.* Staley was ordered to take it down and fix it in its old place or face a further fine of 5*s.* In 1574 his neighbour, Reginald Pelsoyt of *Studfold*, distrained 4 sheep from him and, while taking them to the common park at Wrotham, William attacked Reginald for which he was fined 3*s.* 4*d.* He was obviously unpopular with the Pelsoyts and in 1580 Nicholas Pelsoyt attacked William and was fined 12*d.* In 1583 he was sued for debt. William's new wife, Cicilia Penystone, brought with her to the marriage a debt for 20*s.*, outstanding since 1576. Cicilia denied owing anything. The outcome of the case does not appear in the court rolls but, with William's track record, one's sympathies lie with the plaintiff, John Beeche, a dealer of Stansted.

Richard Staley, William's brother, who owned tileost 1, had a juvenile criminal record. About the year 1546, he and a companion, Richard Thrupp of Ightham, were 'accused and detected for stealing of certain shepe of the Lady Grayes (of Ightham Mote) and one Nicholas Hastelyn and others ... and that thereupon they were sent to Bullen (Boulogne) as labourers and there continued a certain space'.<sup>22</sup> They were home in 1549 when Richard Staley attended the hundred court as a representative from Ightham. From that time on he led a decorous life being guilty only of routine offences such as overgrown hedges, wandering sheep and grazing too many animals on the common of Borough Green.

After their return to England Thrupp confessed that, apart from the crime for which they had been transported, he and Richard Staley had stolen from one John Dodge, 'at several tymes forty hennes and capons



and two fat weathers ... The said Mr Dodge heringe his confessions said that for those matters because they were past long before, he would forgive him and his companye so that he and they were not hereafter taken with the like ...'.

Richard Staley died in 1589, dividing his property between his two sons Walter and George. He left tileost 1 to George who sold it for £15 to Edward Doge, gent. (the son of the John Dodge who was relieved of his chickens). George became a lime burner and died in 1624.<sup>23</sup>

Young Walter Staley took as part of his inheritance a piece of land at Borough Green called *The Acre*, close to 'The Tileost in Itam' (Fig. 3). He sold it to William Staley of *Barrowe Greene* who must be our old friend from *Cappys*, Walter's uncle. They struck a curious bargain. It was agreed that Walter should sell the land to William and that William should pay £20 for it and should also find and allow Walter 'meete and convenient meat, drinke and lodgeing dureinge his natural life'. William did not give Walter £20 at once but gave him 40s. down and created in his favour a rent charge of 20s. for a term of eighteen years. Walter 'toke his meate drink and lodging at the house of the sayd William Staley according to the said agreement'. William 'having gotten the sayd parcel of land ... did also shortly after grow weary of Walter's company and did utterly deny him to take any more meat or drinke in his house or to take his lodging there saying that he was a cumbersome guest and troublesome unto him protesting that he never promised any sutch thing'. The business ended in the Lord Chancellor's court where both parties painted as bad a picture of each other as possible. Walter seems to have lost the case. William still held *The Acre* at his death in 1606.

In 1596 a William Staley, 'labourer' was working for William Waters of Ightham, 'tilemaker'. William Staley must have been a provoking employee because Waters was bound over in the sum of £10 to keep the peace towards William.<sup>24</sup>

#### *Cappys and Winchers* Tileosts 2 and 4: the Sexteyne family (1409-1491)

In the fifteenth century *Cappys* was surrounded by land owned by the Sexteyne family.<sup>25</sup> In 1409 John Sexteyne was a feoffee for the *Cappys* property and 'John Sexteynes' continue to appear in the court rolls throughout the fifteenth century. Generations came and went but because eldest sons were always called John it is impossible to differentiate one from another. John Sexteyne was the reeve in 1430, a job that required some business ability. In 1445 we have the first indication that a Sexteyne was involved in the tile trade. The parker's account for that year records the payment of 3s. 4d. for tiles bought from John 'Sekeston' for repairing the roof of the hay-store in one of the Wrotham deer parks.

In 1450 John Sexteyne of Wrotham was among those pardoned for his

part in the Cade rebellion. He is described as a yeoman not a tiler. He may not have been a rebel himself and may have sought a pardon as an insurance against future accusations. No other rebels from Wrotham or Ightham were given the occupation of 'tiler'. This may indicate that the tilers were doing well economically. Rebels were typically from depressed trades such as the cloth industry.

In 1460 John Sexteyne paid the parker 83s. 4d. for firewood and in 1467 he bought 500 carts of fuel at 2d. a load. [This was set down as 73s. 4d. but should also be 83s. 4d.] From 1468-1482 John Sexteyne, perhaps the son of John 'Sekeston', each year bought firewood from the parker to the value of 63s. 4d. per 100 cartloads.<sup>26</sup> Clearly, loads varied in size. This John Sexteyne was either a firewood dealer or a tiler buying fuel for a tileost, or both.

He was categorised as 'deceased' in a deed of 1486.<sup>27</sup> In the same deed his son, Walter, was described as 'yeoman'. He died in 1491 leaving a will in which no occupation was recorded.<sup>28</sup> He left nearly all his property to his wife, Alice, and after her death to a nephew, John ffenn. He bequeathed 40 marks to the church of Wrotham and 40 marks to 'le brother prest'. (Forty marks was £26 13s. 4d., a substantial sum.) He also left 40s. for the repair of the 'Cawsey' (causeway) between Wrotham and 'the Barow' (Borough Green), a road he would have constantly used when travelling to his Borough Green properties. Walter Sexteyne was comfortably off and not dependent on tile-making for his living. All the land around *Cappys* was his including *Knotts* and *Sibbis* to the east and *Studfold* on the common at Borough Green, about 91 acres in all (Fig. 3). He also held about 60 acres of land in Winfield borough.

The rental of 1494 mentions three tileosts, John Hadlo's at *Cappys*, William Hadlo's lying to the east of *Winchers* (tileost 4) and James Pekham's, 'at le Bergh a cottage with a kiln called the Tyleost' (tileost 3). William Hadlo's tileost is also referred to as the 'messuage of the heirs of Walter Sexten called the tileost'. The rentals contain some confusion over Sexteyne property following the death of Walter Sexteyne in 1491. Fifty three years after his death, in the 1538 rental and survey, the tenant of Sexteyne property is still referred to as 'the heir of Walter Sextayne'. So in 1538 'the heir of Walter Sexteyne' held two tileosts. One, 'late Hadlowe', is *Cappys*' tileost 2, the other is a 'messuage called Tylehost', presumably tileost 4 between *Winchers* and *Studfold*. The rentals prove that Walter Sexteyne was the owner of two tile kilns and his will shows he could afford to employ tilers to work the kilns for him.

#### *Winchers* Tileosts 3 and 4: Hadlo and Pekham families (1474-c.1530)

The Hadlos of Wrotham were tile-makers at *Winchers* at Borough Green cross-roads (Plate I). On the Wrotham tithe map of 1840 the house had



*Winchers, Whiffens Farm.* Photo J. Semple

beside it a field called 'Kilnfield', implying a long history of tile-making on the site. Tiles were probably being made here from the 1430s.

The first reference to a Hadlo at *Winchers* comes in 1474 when the property was surrendered back to William Hadlo by John Poole. With his partner John ate Welle, Poole had been leasing the premises from Hadlo but in that year John ate Welle died. It is likely that, Poole and ate Welle were in business together as tile-makers. Poole actually lived at *Clakkers Hall* in Crouch, which he built in 1452.<sup>29</sup> This was near the lord's great wood of *Bechinwood* where Poole was a frequent named buyer of wood in the 1430s. He may also have bought wood in other years when buyers were not named. The likely purpose of his wood buying was to fuel the tileost at *Winchers*. John ate Welle presumably lived and worked as a tiler at *Winchers*.

In 1491 William Hadlo, doubtless thinking of retirement, made over all his lands and tenements in the manor to Thomas Hadlo and Robert Chapman. Thomas was presumably a son and Robert Chapman was an associate who lived at *Sterris* (Fig. 3) close to the claypits. In the same year Chapman's business relationships involved pursuing John Hadlo of *Cappys* for a debt of 15s.

William Hadlo was still the tenant on the rental of 1495 when we have the first description of the *Winchers* property. It said that William

Hadlo held in the borough of Wrotham at the *Borgha* (Borough Green) a messuage (house) and a croft of land called *Winchers* with a property to the east called a tylehost (tileost 4), not part of Studfold at this time. He held four other scattered parcels of land, one of which was a croft of two acres at *Claypitslane*. The total rent was 2s. 1½d.

Immediately to the west of *Winchers* was another tile kiln (tileost 3) belonging to James Pekham of Yaldham Manor, a gentleman owner, not a tile-maker. William Hadlo probably worked Pekham's kiln as well as his own. John Hadlo, his son, held *Cappys*. At this date the Hadlos would seem to be the leading tile-making family in Borough Green.

The house that stands on the *Winchers* site today is of two periods. William Hadlo built the first house, which was end-jettied at the upper end, in a style popular in the area from 1440-75.<sup>30</sup> It was a plain house with an unmoulded dais beam and little surviving decoration from this first period. William Hadlo disappears from the records after 1496. In 1538 the property is referred to as 'Winchers late John Hadlo'. William Hadlo had a son John, who owned *Cappys* with its tileost, and it could be assumed that John succeeded his father and ran *Winchers* and *Cappys* together.

In 1503 John Hadlo of Wrotham, leased to John Pyers of Ightham and William Stawley a messuage called 'a Tylost' on land adjacent to his to be used by William James of Ightham. The tileost in question could have been at *Cappys* or *Winchers*.

There are two John Hadlos in the records at this period: one a tile-maker and one a carpenter and it could be that John Hadlo, tile-maker, ran *Cappys* and John Hadlo, carpenter, lived at *Winchers*. Carpenters were the house builders of the middle ages and he may have been running a building business and leasing off an asset he was unable to exploit himself.

John Hadlo, carpenter, was the son of Richard and Anne Hadlo who held property near High Cross in Winfield.<sup>31</sup> If the successor to William Hadlo at *Winchers* was this carpenter, John, it would explain the alterations which took place to the house in the early sixteenth century. The lower service end was removed and replaced with a three bay, jettied, cross wing of superior workmanship and status.

The new service-end beam flanking the cross passage was moulded in a fashion quite unlike any other on the manor. Modern alterations have obscured the layout of this ground floor wing but three doorways led to three rooms here with a staircase in the rear south bay giving access to the first floor. At the head of the stair there was a small parlour which was partitioned off from a large retiring room or solar. The amenities included sliding shutters to the windows of parlour and solar and the entire suite was lined with timber walls made either of plank and muntin construction or feather edged boards.

The cross-wing surpassed the former upper end in comfort and importance reflecting either the profits of tile-making or the pride in workmanship of a carpenter/ builder working on his own home. In the later sixteenth century the house was known as *Hadlowes*, rather than *Winchers*, which reinforces the probability that the Hadlo family built it. By the 1560s *Hadlowes* was owned by one branch of the Hastlyn family and another branch ran the tileost at *Chepstedstenement*.

*Chepstedstenement* Tileost 5: the Chepsted, Hastlyn and Myller families (1490-c.1622)

The first named tile-maker here between 1490 and 1508 was 'William Chipstede of Wrotham, tylemaker', recorded in Harrison's list of Ightham court roll names. Was he at one time working for an Ightham tile-maker or leasing a tileost from an Ightham owner? In 1505/6 he came before the Wrotham court charged with poaching at various times. He was fined 6*d.* for using nets at Ightham to capture rabbits worth 20*s.* from William Stawley, the lessee of the manor.

*Chepstedstenement*, also known as *Crowland*, lay north of Borough Green, well placed for the claypits (**Plate II**). In 1503 William Chepsted was fined 2*s.* and Walter Chepsted 4*s.* for attacking Derman with a stave, a bill and a knife, ill treating him so badly that his life was despaired of. In 1505 both brothers were in court again, William charging his brother Walter with taking and keeping his animals. In 1505 Walter attacked Thomas Newington and was fined 12*d.* Just after this Walter was elected tithing man, responsible for reporting on the good behaviour of his fellow Wrotham residents. In 1506 William attacked Thomas Chapman and Agnes, his wife, with stave and knife and was fined 12*d.* They were close neighbours who lived opposite the Dermans.

In 1507 William Parker took animals from Walter Chepsted at *Le Ryde*, near *Chepstedstenement*, as compensation for some misdemeanour. Walter attacked Parker's servant with a stave and a knife, beat him and took the aforesaid animals from the servant and broke the enclosure to free the animals. He was fined 3*s.* 4*d.* In 1511 Walter Chepsted was fined 6*d.* for attacking John Baker with a bowl from a bowling alley. (The drunkenness associated with games was one reason why the authorities took such a strong line against them later in the sixteenth century.)

In spite of all his misdemeanours, William Chepsted was a solid citizen financially. In the Wrotham tax returns for 1524, out of 56 people assessed on goods, only 12 exceeded Chepsted's assessment of £8.

No tileost is mentioned at *Chepstedstenement* in either the 1495 or the 1538 rental. Chepsted may have been working a tileost in Ightham. What is curious is that 500 yards from the house at *Chepstedstenement*, in the south-western corner of the East Park, is a five acre field, shown



The Manor House, *Crowland* or *Chepstedstenement*. Photo J. Semple

on a map of the park of 1620, called *Chepsteds corner* (Fig. 3).<sup>32</sup> It is woodland with a pond on the northern boundary and a spring. The name *Chipsted corner* survived on a map of 1759 which shows the woodland contracted to its present extent, circling the pond and deeply pitted from clay digging.<sup>33</sup> The place-name evidence implies clay-digging and tile-making in *Chepsted*'s time at *Chepstedstenement* even though there is no documentary evidence to prove it.

At some time between 1538 and 1565 the *Chepsteds* sold the property to Nicholas Hastelyn, a prosperous yeoman, who died in 1565. The list of his property, which appeared in the court rolls, included 'le tileost'. His sons George and Nicholas Hastelyn inherited the property and in the 1568 rental they are the tenants of *Chepstedstenement* and 'unum le Tyleoste cum fundo'. The tileost was still there in 1591 when George Hastelyn sold it to Nicholas Myller snr. In 1622, in a fine after the death of Nicholas Myller, the property had a barn, cottage, stables, edifices and 'structures', and an orchard, a garden and land planted with *lupulis*, English hops.<sup>34</sup> Could 'structures' mean tile works or are they the hop pole 'wigwams' of the early seventeenth century? How long tile-making continued on this site is unknown but, as at *Winchers*, the field beside the house on the



tithe map of 1840 is called 'Kilnfield', which suggests a long continuity (Fig. 3).

At some time in the late sixteenth century, Chepsted's old house was replaced by the house now known as 'The Manor House'. George Hastlyn and Nicholas Myller were both men of means so either could have been responsible. The exterior and interior walls were close-studded at a time when timber was becoming scarce, so economy was not a consideration. It is built on an early modern plan with an entrance hall leading to a one-storey hall/kitchen with a heated parlour beyond. The house was comfortable and of some standing but it is hard to say if it reflects the prosperity of the tile trade or the already well-off property owners Hastlyn or Myller.

*Studfold Tileosts 3, 4 and 6: the Pelsoyt, Pekham, Willoughby and James families (1547-1612)*

In the second half of the sixteenth century the Pelsoyt family occupied the properties once owned by the Sexteynes (see above). Walter Pelsoyt had acquired the former Sexteyne property in 1547. He died in 1550 leaving his three sons holding about 100 acres of land between Borough Green and the Ightham boundary and the circumstantial evidence for them all being involved in tile-making is strong. All three brothers lived within 500 yards of a tileost (Fig. 3). Walter jnr lived at *Sibbis*, with 32 acres at *Claypitslane* which secured a regular supply of clay for a business. Robert had *Knotts* with 14 acres, of which six lay close to *Claypitslane*. Reginald at *Studfold* lived next door to three tileost sites, 3, 4 and 6, and was possibly working all three, perhaps with the aid of his brothers.

Reginald was active in Wrotham affairs from 1550 when his father died. He was a pillar of respectability compared with some of the tile-makers. In 1564 he was described as a 'freeholder of the lord of Wrotham ... chosen this last year one of the sessors for the subsidie dewe to the queens majestie in the parish of Wrotham'.<sup>35</sup> The appointment implies honesty and some financial solidity. Nevertheless, he took a robust attitude to the law. In 1557 he defied the statute that enjoined landholders of more than 1 carucate (about 120 acres) of land to do four days work a year maintaining the roads. He held 50 acres of land in 1568 and may well have felt himself not to be liable.

We know that he employed five work people because in 1565 he failed to register their residence in Wrotham at the court.<sup>36</sup> Other court appearances concerned the ever-recurring offences of failing to maintain hedges and ditches. In 1582 and 1583 he was presented at court for digging holes in the highway at *Westwallwaye* on Wrotham hill to procure marl and chalk. His companions in crime were William Garland, tiler, and his son Richard. Nicholas Pelsoyt, Reginald's son, and John Cornford

a potter from Ightham were also involved. A brawl at *Barrowegrene* in 1578, when Reginald wounded Richard Dennys so that he bled, cost him a fine of 12*d*. For a man who led a public life for fifty-five years this was not a bad record. He died in 1605.<sup>37</sup>

During Reginald's working life three tileosts were recorded in the rental and survey of 1568. One was Richard Staley's tileost 1 at *Cappys*. The second was at *Chepstedstenement*, tileost 5, and the third was James Peckham's tileost 3 (Fig. 3). Reginald Pelsoyt lived at *Studfold* from 1563, when his brother John died and left it to him. As tileost 4 is not on the 1568 rental it may have been disused since the Hastelyns bought *Winchers* from the Hadlos some time in the 1520s. Or Reginald might have extinguished it himself on moving into *Studfold*. It is probable that Reginald was running Peckham's tileost 3 as he lived next door but one. Peckham, as a gentleman, would not be running it himself.

Across the common, west of Pekham's tileost 3 was the '*Tileost at Borough Green in Itam*', tileost 6, owned by Reginald Pelsoyt (Fig. 4). Because it was in 'Itam' manor it did not appear in the rental and survey of Wrotham manor. The Ightham/Wrotham parish boundary, which was the same as the manorial boundary, runs along the triangle of land west of tileost 3. We know Reginald Pelsoyt owned it because in 1587 he and his son Nicholas sold it to Thomas Willoughby, lord of the manor of Ightham.<sup>38</sup> For how long the '*Tileost at Borough Green in Itam*', had been in operation and for how many years the Pelsoyts had owned it is unknown. Nicholas Pelsoyt could well have continued to run it after the sale to Willoughby, who, as a gentleman, would need a lessee to exploit it. After the sale of 1587 Reginald lived on to become, in 1592, inspector of tiles with a John Knoller.

In 1600 the '*Tileost at Borough Green in Itam*', was sold by the Willoughbys for £170 to William James, gent., of London, the new lord of the manor of Ightham.<sup>39</sup> The property consisted of a tilehouse, houses, edifices and buildings at *Barrowe Green* in the parish of *Itam* with 3½ acres of land; and two pieces of land in Wrotham, *Upper Highfield* and *Gorsehyll*, 9½ acres in all.

The deed of sale included:

one other freeway and passage by and over the lands and grounds of the said Reginald and Nicholas Pelsoyt ... in Wrotham called 'Rough' or Gorsehyll, the way or passage to be from a place called Stangate Bourne unto ye fore bargained premises called Upper Highfield and Gorsehyll with full and free liberty for the aforesaid William James his heirs etc ... farmers, servants as well to have use and enjoy and occupy the said way with plough, cart, horse and carriage ... also all such liberty and free power as said Thomas Willoughby and his assigns ... at any time ... have had to overflowe with watter from time to time upon such of the foresaid grounds of the said Reginald and Nicholas Pelsoyt called



Fig. 4. Tileost at Borough Green and its mill.

Gorsehyll and the Roughts and so far as shall be needful and necessary for the maintenance of any such myll or other work as is nowe (at this time) of these presents is sett up there or with the said William James his heirs etc ... shall hereafter sett up. And the same to be continued and suffered so long as the said myll or other work shall have continuance and be used.

At some date before the sale to Willoughby in 1587, Reginald and Nicholas Pelsoyt had set up a water-mill on their land south of *Winchers*

which bordered the River Bourne. Evidently the mill was not in full time use and, while the Pelsoyts owned the surrounding land, the occasional flooding of some of it to fill the mill pond to get a head of water was not a problem. Only after the sale to Willoughby did a right of way over Pelsoyt land and legal provision for flooding become necessary. These rights were passed to James in 1600. The mill and the tileost were sold together and the mill perhaps had a role in tile-making. It does not appear to have been a corn mill or a fulling mill. Reginald and Nicholas Pelsoyt do not appear in the court rolls with other millers of corn. Nor is there anything in the records to connect them with a cloth fulling mill. Could the mill have been a water-driven pug mill for the heavy task of conditioning clay: a seasonal task that took place in the spring?<sup>40</sup>

The 1600 deed of sale describes a further property being bought by William James; a messuage called *Bounds* in Ightham. This had been held by William Waters, the tile-maker who was bound over to keep the peace with William Staley in 1596. Harrison thought *Bounds* was probably Trycewell Farm on the eastern edge of Ightham village.<sup>41</sup> A public footpath today links the farm with the site of the 'tileost at Borough Green in Itam'.

In 1612 William James of Ightham, esq., sold to Nicholas Myller the elder, gent., 'All that Tylehost with the houses, edifices and buildings thereto belonging situated at Burroughe Greene in Ightham etc ... with the Upper Highfield and Gorsehyll 9 acres'.<sup>42</sup> The price was £120, £50 less than in 1600. This may reflect the fact that the mill was not mentioned in the sale.

#### *Town House, Ightham: the Campayne family (1407)*

It can be seen in **Fig. 5** that Borough Green and Ightham were physically close. They shared the same sand and clay and the families who worked them were resident in both. In the early fifteenth century the first John Sexteyne had a neighbour to the north of his Wrotham properties called William Campayne. He was a co-feoffee with Henry Cappe in Robert Knokker's sale of Tileost 1 in 1409. His association with Cappe and Knokker makes it likely that he was involved in the tile trade. He appears in the court rolls thirteen times from 1407-11, associating with men from Wrotham town. A Walter Campayne was on the grand jury in 1410. In 1352 a Robert Campayne was assessed for taxation at 2s.<sup>43</sup> A lane that linked Wrotham and Ightham bore this family's name and was still called after them in 1568 (Fig. 5).

The route passed Ightham Park and the claypits and was a thoroughfare for tilers collecting sand and clay. At the Wrotham end were William and Walter Campayne. At Ightham lived Robert Campayne 'of West Malling'.<sup>44</sup>

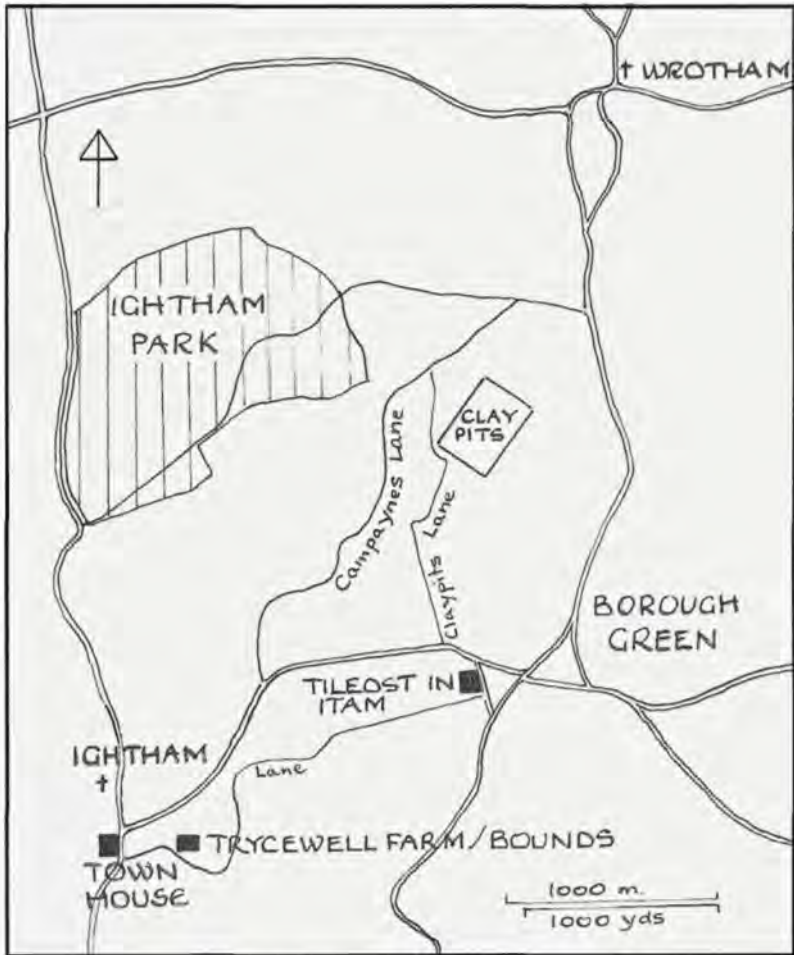


Fig. 5. Campaynes Lane.

In 1407 Robert Campayne leased to John Watt of Ightham lands in the parish of Ightham, a house 'cum fundo' (with a kiln) and a garden adjacent, the river flowing to the south and the highway lying to the east. The rent was to go to Robert and his heirs. The location identifies a house on the site of today's *Town House* south of the church (Fig. 5).

Robert seems to have been a reluctant landlord. He reserved to himself annually from the garden two bushels of apples and half a bushel of pears

called 'Wardens' and fish from the pond in the garden. He reserved a room in the house, whether John liked it or not. If he failed to pay the rent Robert would resume ownership. One of the witnesses was 'Hugh Frewterer' who perhaps had a professional interest in the apples and pears.

The house that John Watt leased had a kiln. Perhaps he had taken a short lease for tile or pottery making purposes. The very kiln is perhaps the one described in 1897 in a paper in vol. XXII of *Archaeologia Cantiana*. This is a detailed account of the discovery of a pottery kiln at Town House, Ightham, in a nut platt (plantation) in the garden between the house and Ightham church. The kiln could have been used for making tiles, bricks or pots. The account suggests the kiln is sixteenth- or seventeenth-century but the site may well be early fifteenth-century.

Campaynes Lane was a link between the tile-makers of Borough Green and the tile-makers of Ightham and the fact that the name endured for so long after the Campayne family ceased to appear in the records hints at a long and early involvement of the family in the tile trade.

### *The Claypits*

The tile-makers dug their raw material from the claypits which lay to the north-west of Borough Green. Claypits are marked on the tithe map of 1840 and are shown on Fig. 3. In medieval times the claypits probably extended further south, as far as the tile-makers' premises. Extensive modern sand pits have swallowed up the old clay pit sites and only the southern end of *Claypitlane* still exists.

Digging for clay in Wrotham manor was organised in two ways. In the East Park, clay for pottery was dug by licence of the parker for a typical fee of 3s. The claypits which produced clay for the tile-makers were on tenanted lands near the claypits north of *Cappys*. In 1495 James Pekham, esq., 'holds 1 parcel of land called Claypit lying at Claypits'.<sup>45</sup> He was in the advantageous position of owning a tileost as well as a claypit. There are two other holdings of claypits in the same area in the 1495 rental. These were *Moreclaypitts*, and *les claypitts*, owned by Reynold Wreight and John Kyng.

In 1538 James Peckham was not alone in owning the materials and the means of production. William Hastelyn also held a claypit and a possible tileost at *Chepstedstenement*. The churchwardens of Wrotham held *Moreclaypits* for a rent of 3s. 5d.

In 1568 the claypit owners were James Pekham, great grandson of the earlier James Pekham, still owning a tileost, Hugh Cornford and Walter Pelsoyt. Walter's tile connections have been dealt with above. Hugh Cornford was the farmer (lessee) of Wrotham manor. As the tile-makers were all local agriculturalists, they must have had opportunities for clay digging on their own land as well.



### Conclusion

Documentary evidence exists for tile-making in Borough Green from 1407 to 1622 and it is likely that tiles were made there both earlier and later than those dates. Whether tile-making or agriculture was the main occupation is impossible to say. No accounts survive for the Wrotham tile-making businesses because they were not run by institutions such as Christ Church Priory, Canterbury where some accounts do survive.<sup>46</sup>

The tile-makers were either artisans who manufactured the tiles on their own properties, or yeomen and gentlemen who employed workmen. In the late fifteenth century, James Pekham was the only gentleman in the business, owning a tileost and a claypit. In the second half of the sixteenth century, ownership seems to have passed entirely into the hands of gentry, such as Willoughby, and James, lords of the manors of Ightham and Wrotham, or monied men, such as George Hastelyn and Nicholas Myller, the wealthiest man in the manor. These men judged the tile-making business to be worthy of investment. House building was expanding as the population increased. The new fashion for brick chimneys, along with the modernisation of medieval houses, involved roof disturbance and re-tiling.

The houses left by the tile-makers reflect the prosperity of the business. *Winchers*, a tile-maker's house, was above average in quality and style and is still standing. The Manor House, *Chepstedenement* (Plate II) was a successor to a tile-maker's dwelling and probably owed some of its lavish use of timber to income from its tileost.

There was a significant difference in the amount of tax paid by the gentlemen owners on the one hand and the working tile-makers on the other. In 1598, Nicholas Myller was assessed at £35 on lands and James Pekham, esq., at £15 on lands. The working tile-makers were assessed on goods not lands. Nicholas Pelsoyt (tileosts 3 and 6) and William Waters (Trycewell Farm, Ightham) were both assessed on goods at £3 on which they paid tax of 8s. The minimum assessment on goods was £3 and nineteen out of thirty two taxpayers listed had a similar assessment. The remaining thirteen taxpayers all had higher assessments.

A fuller picture of the tile-making industry in the area might come from a detailed study of the Ightham court rolls and other Ightham documents. Borough Green and Ightham are one area geologically and the artificial manorial division of the documents hinders a more comprehensive view.

The two hundred years covered in this paper may be a fraction of the time in which tiles were made in the area. At the Romano-British villa at Allens Farm in Plaxtol, two and a half miles to the south of Borough Green, a tile-kiln was discovered in 2001 dating to the second century AD.<sup>47</sup> We know that the tile-maker was called Cabriabanus because he impressed his name into the soft clay with a roller. Many tile fragments

with his name on have been found in Plaxtol and at other Roman sites in the south-east of England. He was the first named tile-maker in a long line of local entrepreneurs.

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# ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century names are in italics.
- <sup>2</sup> CKS 1495 - U55 M59; 1538 - U55 M60; 1568 - U830 M25.
- <sup>3</sup> CKS U55 M13 - M45.
- <sup>4</sup> CKS U55 M63 - M72, TNA:PRO SC6 1130/1-10, SC6 Hen VII 332-337, SC6 Hen VIII 1685-1698, E179/123/24, E179/126/424.
- <sup>5</sup> TNA: PRO E179/124/187. In 1524 'Herry Page, shyngler', of Shipbourne, was assessed at £7 on goods, the third highest tax assessment out of twenty four.
- <sup>6</sup> CKS U55 M70.
- <sup>7</sup> Statutes of the Realm, Vol. 2, MDCCCXVI, 17 Edw. IV, c. 4, p. 464.
- <sup>8</sup> Dale, L.C., 'A post medieval tile kiln at Bexley', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, LXXXIX (1974), 27, 30.
- <sup>9</sup> In Beverley, East Yorkshire, regulations passed in 1461 controlled location: 'on account of the stench, fouling the air and the destruction of fruit trees no one is to make a kiln to burn tile nearer to the town than the kilns now are, penalty of a fine of 100s'. Salzman L.F., *English Industries in the Middle Ages*, Oxford, 1923, p. 126.
- <sup>10</sup> *Cappys*. TQ 65 605/574.
- <sup>11</sup> Known as 'Hadlowes' in the mid sixteenth century, 'Whiffins Farm' in modern times. TQ 65 6080/5720.
- <sup>12</sup> TQ 65 6085/5720.
- <sup>13</sup> Known as 'Crowland' in mid sixteenth century, 'The Manor House' in modern times. TQ 65 6110/5770.
- <sup>14</sup> TQ 65 6070/5715.
- <sup>15</sup> Blair J. and Ramsay N. (eds), *English Medieval Industries*, The Hambledon Press, p. 193.

- <sup>16</sup> CKS U55 M13.
- <sup>17</sup> When a property changed hands the lord of the manor was paid a relief, or entry fine, by the incoming tenant, of a quarter of the annual rent.
- <sup>18</sup> TNA: PRO E179/123/24. Enfeoffment means placing one's property in the hands of trustees to ensure its descent according to the wishes of the owner. CKS Cobham MSS U601 T170.
- <sup>19</sup> CKS U55 M13.
- <sup>20</sup> CKS U55 M70.
- <sup>21</sup> CKS U55 M59, 60.
- <sup>22</sup> Harrison Sir E., 'The Court Rolls and other records of the manor of Ightham as a contribution to Local History', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, XLIX (1937), 88.
- <sup>23</sup> CKS Shoreham w/14/230.
- <sup>24</sup> CKS QM/SRc, p. 370 38A & B.
- <sup>25</sup> CKS U55 M59.
- <sup>26</sup> TNA: PRO SC6 1130/1-10.
- <sup>27</sup> Catalogue of Ancient Deeds in the PRO, Vol. II, pp. 371, 372, London, 1890, HMSO.
- <sup>28</sup> TNA: PRO PROB 11/8q.30.
- <sup>29</sup> Pearson, S., Barnwell, P.S. and Adams, A.T., *A Gazetteer of Medieval Houses in Kent*, p. 99, RCHME, 1994.
- <sup>30</sup> Pearson, S., *The Medieval Houses of Kent*, RCHME, 1994, p. 69.
- <sup>31</sup> CKS U55 M17.
- <sup>32</sup> CKS U681 P31.
- <sup>33</sup> CKS U681 P8.
- <sup>34</sup> CKS U31 T53 U4
- <sup>35</sup> Harrison, *op. cit.* (see note 22), 87.
- <sup>36</sup> Richard Gough, John Reynolde, John Dorman, John Rygnell and Robert Arnold.
- <sup>37</sup> CKS P406 1/1. Register of births, marriages and deaths for Wrotham.
- <sup>38</sup> CKS U55 T241.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>40</sup> No evidence for water-driven pug mills in Wrotham or elsewhere has so far been found.
- <sup>41</sup> Harrison, *op. cit.* (see note 22), 82.
- <sup>42</sup> CKS U55 T241.
- <sup>43</sup> TNA: PRO E179/123/24.
- <sup>44</sup> CKS U55 T241 Bundle 1.
- <sup>45</sup> CKS U55 M59.
- <sup>46</sup> Adams, M., 'The development of roof-tiling and tile-making on some mid-Kent manors of Christ Church priory in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, CXVI (1996), 35-59.
- <sup>47</sup> Davies, M., 'Cabriabanus – a Romano-British tile craftsman in Kent', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, CXXIV (2004), 163-182.