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A MARITIME COMMUNITY IN WAR AND PEACE: KENTISH PORTS, SHIPS AND MARINERS, 1320-1400

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In the summer of 1364 the *Margarete*, commanded by John Frensh, sailed out of Sandwich harbour. As she headed for the Bay of Brittany to collect a cargo of salt she collided with another ship, sank and took with her £60.¹ Undeterred by this experience in September Frensh was back in England requesting permission to take a further £40 in gold and £20 worth of cloth to Gascony in order to purchase wine.² Six years later Frensh reappears in the records as commander of another *Margarete*.³ Clearly the owners had reasoned that, despite the obvious risks, maritime commerce was too profitable to ignore and had promptly commissioned a new vessel, poignantly naming her the *Margarete*. That Frensh was willing to continue his commercial activities after such an accident highlights the resilience of Kent's seafarers. Indeed, in the following decade Frensh would serve in no fewer than six naval expeditions as commander of five ships.⁴

What the above vignette shows is that the later medieval ship-board community, that is shipowners, shipmasters and mariners, was a vibrant and dynamic section of medieval society, acutely aware and experienced in both the dangers and rewards of maritime enterprise. Indeed, coastal settlements and the ship-board communities they produced were central to England's lifeblood. Mariners, through fishing, provided food to eat and freighted goods and other necessities by established coastal and deep sea trade routes. They were also the vehicles that drove the martial and diplomatic ambitions of medieval kings, a subject at the heart of this article.

*Shipping in the Anglo-Scottish and Anglo-French Wars, 1320-1400*⁵

The need for English shipping in the Anglo-Scottish and Anglo-French wars rested on three factors. Firstly, soldiers and horses had to be transported to theatres of operations. Secondly, English forces had to be supplied and the easiest and cheapest way to do this was by sea. Finally, English ships were used to pursue active naval operations such

as blockades, patrols and occasionally sea battles.⁶ When Edward I began his Scottish expeditions in the 1290s he raised large fleets of requisitioned merchantmen to transport supplies to his forces.⁷ This continued into the next century when his son, Edward II, inherited his father's ambitions in Scotland. Only after 1314, and then intermittently, were periods of truce agreed that spared English merchant ships from requisition. All this changed when Edward III came to throne in 1327 and within six years of his accession Edward began a series of expeditions to Scotland that continued with intermittent intensity for much of his reign. When, in 1337, Edward III declared war against France a period of warfare began that ensured the English merchant fleet became central to every military expedition.

As there was no Royal Navy to speak of to achieve its military aims the crown needed to requisition ships from the English merchant fleet.⁸ Normally it would take between two to nine months to requisition a large fleet, during which time a series of complex administrative processes were undertaken. In the first instance the king needed to know how many suitable vessels were available for service. This was achieved in two ways. Firstly, local port bailiffs and others would be told to inform the royal council of the state of shipping.⁹ Secondly, the admiral or sheriff of a maritime county would compile a list of shipowners and the numbers of ships they had agreed to supply.¹⁰ Although it is argued that such documents were ship censuses a better explanation is that these 'ship lists' were produced to record the provisional number of vessels that port authorities had agreed to provide to the crown.¹¹

After a series of negotiations between the crown's officers and local shipowners, which no doubt included occasional outright impressment of ships, a written record of each ship, its master, its home port and the size of its crew was compiled, after which the ship and its crew were permitted to continue their commercial duties. It was expected that the arrested ships would appear at the embarkation port some months later. To guarantee their appearance the master and crew were issued an advance on their wages and the name of an influential person (usually the owner) was recorded who would ensure the ships' crew honoured their agreement.¹² During the time that any requisitioned fleet remained in royal service several bureaucratic stages were conducted, each one designed to simplify the final accounting procedure. The end of the administrative process involved handing a full set of accounts to the exchequer for audit. The bureaucratic task involved was immense: in 1342 Edward III put to sea three fleets numbering 675 vessels, 661 of which were supplied by the English merchant fleet.¹³ **Tables 1 and 2** below provide an indication as to the numbers of merchant ships that were requisitioned for service in the Anglo-Scottish and Anglo-French wars.

The system employed by the crown to record and pay wages to serving

TABLE 1. NUMBERS OF SHIPS INVOLVED IN SCOTTISH CAMPAIGNS,
1322-1360

Campaign Year	No. of Ships	No. of Mariners
1322*	284	6,000
1327*	154	2,500
1333	228	5,000
1334 Winter exped.	25	372
1335	189	6,000
1336	231	4,187
1337-60	96	3,000

mariners has bequeathed to the historian a marvellous collection of source material. The most important records are naval payrolls, which were drawn up as fleets were being assembled or when the time came to account for mariners' wages.¹⁴ The importance of these naval records derives from two key characteristics. The first is the consistency of format. The fleet payrolls usually supply for each ship its name and home port, the master's name and crew numbers, and the period of its service. The second factor, as revealed by Tables 1 and 2, is just how much data is available. By combining the quantitative and qualitative information provided by the navy payrolls with economic data contained in fourteenth-century tax assessments we can undertake two related investigations. Firstly, we can analyse the numbers of ships Kentish ports contributed to naval operations, and secondly, we can undertake a prosopographical and socio-economic survey of Kent's shipmasters and mariners.

Kentish Ports and Shipping in the Anglo-Scottish and Anglo-French Wars, 1320-1400

Before we assess the shipping contributions of Kentish ports to the wars in this period the nature of the evidence needs to be set in context. As this article is concerned mainly with naval operations the ship numbers and related manpower figures given here represent only a proportion, albeit a sizeable one, of the available manpower and shipping capacity of Kentish ports. If this piece were to take as its subject the merchant fleet of Kent we would have to add more ships to the tables.¹⁵ For example, of the seventeen ships sailing out of the port of Cliffe only four were used in naval operations, only one of Stonar's five ships served in a naval capacity and Sarre's only recorded vessel never participated in a naval expedition.¹⁶ Nevertheless, as the naval sources document requisitioned merchant ships they permit us to assess both the contribution of Kentish ports to the war effort and provide the most consistent evidence as to

TABLE 2. MAJOR FLEETS SAILING TO FRANCE OR ON NAVAL OPERATIONS, 1324-1400

Year (Place of Campaign)	No. of Ships	No. of Mariners	No. of Ports
1324/25 (Gascony)	301	4,488	52
1338 (Flanders)	403	13,346	
1340 (Flanders)	71	3,220	{78
1342 (Brittany)	675	10,420	80
1345 Gascony)	148	2,866	43
1346 (Normandy)	747	15,917	84
1347(Calais)	107	6,529	35
1355 (Gascony)	187	2,937	31
1359 (France)	446	6,149	87
1362 (Gascony)	151	3,677	31
1363 (Gascony)	113	2,373	29
1373 (Calais; Gaunt and Buckingham)	430	2,500	73
1377 (naval)	250	4,500	39
1378 (Gascony; Cherbourg and naval)	286	4,600	71
1379 (naval)	158	3,845	44
1380 (naval)	230	1,357	44
1386 (naval)	216	6,580	36
1386 (Spain)	105	3,080	28
1388 (naval)	80	3,203	28
1400 (naval)	71	-	24

Note. Four large royal fleets that sailed in 1345, 1350, 1355 and 1372 have left little or no trace in the records. Many smaller fleets that transported diplomatic embassies or king's lieutenants to various theatres of war have been omitted, such as the fleets sailing to Portugal and Brittany in 1381, and the fleet going to Ireland in 1399. Over 150 foreign ships are included in the totals. The figures for the tables come from Lambert, *Shipping* and the author's database. Data is incomplete for the number of ships in 1340 (more likely 240 English ships formed this fleet); 1359 and the numbers of mariners in 1340, 1359, 1373, 1380-1400. The fleets of 1373 are complex: many ships sailed with both John of Gaunt and the earl of Buckingham, while several ships are repeated in the final records.

the size of Kent's merchant fleet. This is not to say that naval records are free of interpretative issues and they do have weaknesses, the most prominent being that several Kentish ports were members of the Cinque Port confederacy. The Cinque Ports were obliged, when called upon to do so, to provide, at their own costs, the crown with fifty-seven ships, each manned by twenty-one mariners for fifteen days. In return for providing

these ships the Ports held legal and fiscal privileges which conveyed upon them a certain level of self-governance. After 1320 the crown rarely called upon the Cinque Ports to perform their traditional ship service and the crews provided by the Ports were paid wages commensurate with their service. There were occasions, however, when the Ports did provide ships in accordance with their obligations and as a result there are several naval operations that Kentish ships and mariners participated in for which they were paid no wages and are thus absent from any documentation.¹⁷

Even with the above caveats examining the shipping contributions of Kentish ports to the wars of this period permits a more nuanced analysis as to how the burdens of the war fell on a particular community. Kentish ports provide an ideal case study because they served as embarkation points for expeditions, were central to the kingdom's defences and functioned as supply depots.¹⁸ The preparations for Edward III's invasion of France in 1359 neatly highlights the scale of the involvement of Kentish ports in the French war: stationed at Sandwich by late summer there were over 400 ships manned by over 6,000 mariners waiting to transport 10,000 soldiers to Calais.¹⁹

Over the fourteenth century the involvement of Kent's ports in England's wars against Scotland and France owed much to the fact that, with the exceptions of Hastings, Winchelsea and Rye, six of the most prominent Cinque Ports and limbs lay within Kent. Although the importance of the Cinque Ports to English naval operations has been doubted, this argument has been challenged.²⁰ Indeed, the numbers of ships possessed by the Cinque Ports and their strategic location in relation to northern France ensured that successive kings turned to them for ships and advice in maritime matters. In 1325 when Edward II needed a fleet to patrol the sea along the south-east coast it was to the ports of Kent and Sussex that he turned.²¹ In the following year Sandwich and New Romney supplied eleven vessels (8%) to a fleet of 132 ships that put to sea to prevent the landing of Roger Mortimer and Edward II's estranged wife.²² When the Hundred Years War began in 1337 Kentish ports were at the forefront of aggressive naval operations. In the late summer of 1339 the Cinque Ports repulsed a French fleet near Rye, pursued it back to Boulogne, captured many ships in the process, burnt the town and issued some summary justice in the form of a series of hangings.²³

Turning to the evidence contained in the navy payrolls they reveal that in the period 1320 to 1400 twenty-five Kentish ports supplied ships to the king's wars. Geographically these ports were located along the whole length of Kent's seacoast (see **Map 1**), or were situated on important river estuaries and were obvious targets for requisition officials. Over the period under investigation here Kentish ships undertook 490 ship-voyages in various naval expeditions, ranging from sea battles to mundane supply operations. However, in order to evaluate the true



Map 1 Kentish ports supplying ships for the king's wars, 1320-1400. (Headports of the Cinque Ports Confederation shown in caps.)

shipping contributions of Kentish ports to the wars in this period we have to deploy a methodology that allows us to distinguish individual ships from ship-voyages. Put simply, we have to take account of the number of ships that served in more than one expedition.

The applied method minimises the usual nominal record linkage problems of 'double counting' (failure to link references to the same ship) and 'conflation' (incorrect linkage of references to separate ships).²⁴ It uses three key pieces of information, or identifiers, as provided by the sources: the ship's name, the home port and the master's name. Within a twenty-year time-frame, records of ships that are identical according to these three 'identifiers' are deemed to be referring to the same vessel; otherwise, they are counted as different ships. In the period 1370-80 Thomas Bolle of Sandwich, for example, served six times in a naval capacity.²⁵ On two occasions he commanded the *Peter* while for the other four he was in charge of the *James*. So although Bolle undertook six voyages he did so in only two unique ships. This is the methodology in its simplest form and it negates some of the problems associated with double counting.

Nevertheless, there still remain some weaknesses with this approach. Perhaps the best way to address them – and thereby make the methodology more robust – is to analyse the repetition of ship names from certain ports. Those ships with the same name, sailing in the same fleet, and originating from the same port, provide a minimum number of vessels with that name, regardless of who commanded them. Between 1325 and 1347 eight ships called the *Seintemariecog*, all with different commanders, sailed out of Sandwich, two of which sailed in the same fleet. It follows therefore that at least two (28%) of these vessels were unique, whereas the methodology applied in this article would argue that there were eight. While applying this approach reduces the number of *Seintemariecogs* sailing out of Sandwich from eight to two, and may indicate that the method adopted in this article is overestimating ship numbers, it is worth noting that results vary from port to port. Faversham supplied seven ships in this period, two of which were called the *Seintemariecog* and both of these sailed in the same fleet. It is also worth pointing out that two-thirds of shipmasters who served more than once did so in command of the same ship. This suggests that when we see two ships with the same name commanded by two different masters and serving in two separate campaigns they were likely to be two unique ships and not the same vessel skippered by two different men. Consequently, although the 'three identifier' methodology has some weaknesses at present it seems to be the best way of estimating the shipping contributions of Kentish ports. Applying this methodology to the 490 ship-voyages undertaken by Kentish ships in this period reveals that Kent's ports supplied 329 unique ships to naval operations (**Table 3**). These vessels in turn were manned by 7,821 masters and mariners.

As Table 3 clearly shows Sandwich was by far the most important

TABLE 3: KENTISH PORTS THAT SUPPLIED SHIPS TO THE NAVAL OPERATIONS, 1320-1400

Port	No. of unique ships	(1346) [see note]	No. of mariners
Aylesford	1		n.a
Canterbury	3		n.a
Chalk	3		n.a
Cliffe	4		28
Ditton	1		n.a
Dover*	51	(16)	1,050
Faversham*	7	(2)	207
Folkestone*	1		n.a
Gillingham*	3		84
Gravesend	2		32
Greenwich	10		286
Hoo	7	(2)	50
Hythe*	29	(11)	588
Lydd*	1		53
Maidstone	4	(2)	57
Margate*	10	(15)	134
New Hythe	5		79
Northfleet	3		53
Reading Street	4		46
Rochester	1		10
Romney*	23		1,087
Sandwich*	118	(22)	3,371
Small Hythe*	20		403
Stonar*	7		64
Strood	10		119
Wouldham	1		20
Total	329	(70)	7,821

* denotes a member of the Cinque Ports. Small Hythe was a limb of Rye (Sussex), but as it is located in Kent it has been included.

Note 1. The number in brackets represents the ships these ports supplied to the 1346 transport fleet. The payroll for the 1346 fleet has been lost and our only evidence is a series of early-modern transcripts that provide overall totals for the numbers of ships each port contributed to the fleet. Consequently, we cannot apply the methodology to these ships and they have not been included in the overall totals. There are several of these lists (published and non-published), but one of the most useful is: British Library Harleian Ms 3978, fols 132r-133v.

Note 2. One of the vessels from Northfleet also sailed out of the recently-built Royal castle/town of Queenborough in 1379 (source for Queenborough: TNA E 101/37/14 m. 2).

supplier of vessels to the king's wars, providing over a third of all Kentish ships and contributing nearly half of the total manpower. The dominance of Sandwich is not surprising as this port anchored the annual Italian galley fleets and thus maintained a strong presence in the trade of rich and expensive goods. The most striking point to emerge from Table 3 is the prominence of the Kentish Cinque Ports: they provided over two-thirds of Kent's ships to naval operations. A comparative with the Sussex Cinque Ports is interesting. Over the same period the Cinque Ports of Sussex contributed 213 ships to naval fleets, while those of Kent supplied 246 to the war effort.²⁶

The naval sources occasionally record the tonnage of ships, allowing us to estimate the size of the vessels Kentish ports supplied to naval operations. Estimating the size of ships from medieval records does not come free of interpretative issues and we can be certain that clerical officials allocated different tonnage figures to the same ship. In 1378 The *Christofre* of Hythe, commanded by Richard Bowe, was recorded at 60 tons, but in 1379 at 40 tons.²⁷ Consequently, we have to accept that the navy payrolls provide only approximations of tonnage based upon several factors, such as the testimony of the shipowner/master or the reckoning made by a royal official. For Kent we know the size of 132 of the 323 ships. This evidence reveals that Kent's ports contributed 9,049 tons of shipping to the wars over this period, an average of 68 tons per ship (Table 4). Kingdom-wide tonnage figures reveal that Kentish ships were, on the whole, no different to those of other ports. For the period 1320 to 1400 we have the registered tonnage for 2,214 unique ships that combined totalled 176,170 tons, an average of 79.5 tons. In truth the size of Kent's ships varied considerably. The largest vessel was the enormous 300 ton *Marie* from Sandwich commanded by John Parys, while the smallest was the 20 ton *Seinte John Bot* of Margate commanded by John Zacarie.²⁸

Recruitment of Kentish Mariners and Impact on Coastal Communities

Careful interpretation of the sources reveals that the crown relied on a series of methods to recruit mariners for naval service. In the first instance as the ship needed a crew to sail it from its home port to the embarkation point the shipmaster and owner would have ensured the vessel was sufficiently manned for this voyage.²⁹ In most cases the crown then used this crew. Occasionally the crown would need to supplement the original crew of the ship. This was achieved in one of four ways. Firstly, if the ship was to be used in offensive or defensive operations royal officials could add extra mariners before the ship set out from its home port.³⁰ Secondly, once the ships arrived at the port of embarkation extra mariners could be gathered from the surrounding coastal settlements.³¹ Thirdly, officials could transfer the crew of one vessel that had arrived at the muster port to

TABLE 4: TONNAGE OF KENTISH SHIPS, 1320-1400

Port	No. of ships with known tonnage	Total tonnage	Average tonnage
Aylesford	1	21	21
Canterbury	0	0	0
Chalk	2	48	24
Cliffe	0	0	0
Ditton	0	0	0
Dover*	20	1,300	65
Faversham*	2	130	65
Folkestone*	1	24	24
Gillingham*	2	90	45
Gravesend	2	60	30
Greenwich	5	568	114
Hoo	0	0	0
Hythe*	16	937	59
Lydd*	0	0	0
Maidstone	0	0	0
Margate*	6	191	32
New Hythe	1	39	39
Northfleet	1	60	60
Reading Street	3	164	55
Rochester	1	30	30
Romney*	12	953	79
Sandwich*	40	3,320	83
Small Hythe*	14	934	67
Stonar*	0	0	0
Strood	2	160	80
Wouldham	1	20	20
Total	132	9,049	68

another.³² Finally, shipmasters were sometimes given powers that enabled them to press mariners for service. We must be careful here not to assume that all shipmasters were automatically given these powers and in the majority (though not all) of cases such orders were only issued to royal officers involved in coastal defence, royal shipmasters or shipmasters undertaking duties that directly pertained to the crown.³³

It is also conceivable that admirals and other officials worked alongside commissions of array to recruit extra mariners for some fleets.

Any settlement that was located within eighteen miles of the coast was designated maritime lands by the crown and any male between the ages of 16 and 60 that resided in this area was eligible to perform coastguard duties.³⁴ The question is whether or not the men raised by such means were placed aboard ships? It seems certain that while the majority of these men performed beacon and coastguard duties, in times of great need some would naturally be placed aboard vessels.

Broadly the sources reveal that in order to raise extra naval manpower the crown pressed mariners into service from coastal settlements that stretched only some five miles from the coast and along important rivers and estuaries. In this 'coastal zone' dwelled mariners that not only engaged in deep sea commerce but also men known to historians as 'fisher-farmers' because they fished on a part time basis, while for the rest of the time they undertook relatively short coastal voyages and farmed smallholdings.³⁵

When trying to analyse the number of serving mariners the first thing to acknowledge is that we can never be wholly accurate about manpower. Naval payrolls reveal that, kingdom-wide, between 1320 and 1400 over 190,000 mariners served aboard requisitioned ships, but the proportion of unique individuals amongst this group will never be known. What the sources do allow is an assessment of the numbers of seamen assembled at particular moments in time. In 1342, for example, over 10,000 mariners served aboard requisitioned merchantmen, while four years later 16,000 seafarers manned the largest transport fleet of the fourteenth century.³⁶ Bearing in mind that navy payrolls only reveal a fraction of the ships at sea at any time the numbers of working seamen must have been much larger than this. For example, coastal shipping, which amounted to two-thirds of all maritime traffic and the fishing fleet, the largest employer of maritime labour, are largely unrecorded in the sources.³⁷ Consequently, we must assume that, kingdom-wide, the pool of available mariners in any given year fluctuated between 30,000 and 40,000.

Fortunately, because shipmasters are named, we are on firmer ground. In the period 1320 to 1400 approximately 6,000 shipmasters served aboard requisitioned ships, of which 262 were from Kentish ports.³⁸ At the same time over 7,000 Kentish mariners were recruited for naval service. **Table 5** uses man:ton ratios to highlight the numbers of men that were required to crew requisitioned Kentish ships. As a comparative the average kingdom-wide ratio was 3.3:1. Interestingly, the Kentish ports situated closest to the River Thames had a higher ratio of men per ton of vessel, perhaps because they had access to a larger pool of manpower.

As the majority of mariners aboard requisitioned Kentish ships would be recruited from the five-mile coastal zone it is worth devoting some time to the demographics of settlements located in this area to gauge the availability of manpower and what impact naval recruitment had on

TABLE 5. DATA ON KENTISH SHIPS' TONNAGE AND CREW SIZES

Port	Tonnage of ships with recorded crew sizes	Manpower of ships with recorded tonnages	Men per ton
Dover	1,249	517	2.4
Faversham	130	86	1.5
Gillingham	90	22	4.0
Gravesend	60	16	3.7
Greenwich	568	218	2.6
Hythe	646	318	2.0
Margate	191	76	2.5
Northfleet	120	36	3.3
Reading Street	164	46	3.5
Rochester	30	10	3.0
Romney	926	332	2.8
Sandwich	3,010	1,101	2.7
Small Hythe	904	339	2.6
Strood	160	54	2.9
Wouldham	20	9	2.2

the coastal communities of Kent. In fourteenth century Kent there were sixty-four settlements situated within the five-mile coastal zone, or along river estuaries that would be targets for requisition teams. We know that from 1320 to 1400 over 7,000 Kentish mariners' crewed requisitioned merchantmen, but these served across several decades and we will never be sure how many served more than once.

To better understand the impact naval recruitment had on Kent's coastal settlements an examination of a shorter period will prove more fruitful. This means exploiting demographic sources that are consistent in format. National taxation records are the most satisfactory sources to use here. Earlier tax records such as the lay subsidies do not provide as much comprehensive demographic information as the later poll taxes, and so limit our ability to determine what impact of naval recruitment had on maritime communities before 1377. For example, while the 1334 lay subsidy shows that in Kent 11,016 people were assessed to pay tax, what proportion of the county's overall population they represented is difficult to determine.³⁹ Indeed, rather than as a demographic source the value of the 1334 lay subsidy lies in its use as a means of understanding the social and economic lives of Kentish shipmasters and mariners. We can, however, use the later poll tax records as a demographic indicator and work back from these to establish an approximate population for Kent's

coastal zone for the earlier period.⁴⁰ According to the 1377 poll tax the sixty-four settlements located within the coastal zone were inhabited by 12,378 individuals.⁴¹ The poll tax of 1379 reveals a further 599 individuals not recorded in 1377 as they resided in the Cinque Ports liberties. Thus, in the latter fourteenth century approximately 13,000 individuals lived in Kent's coastal settlements. If we estimate that by 1377 half the population of Kent had perished in the plague outbreaks of 1348 and 1360/1, and also take into account that several thousand people would not have been listed in the poll tax records, we can broadly estimate that in 1334 30,000 people resided in Kent's coastal zone.⁴²

Not all the 30,000 inhabitants would be eligible for naval service, only males aged between sixteen and sixty would have served. Estimating the ratios of men and women is not without difficulties either, but coastal communities tended to have low sex ratios, with men accounting for a smaller proportion of the population: as low as 92.7:100.⁴³ Consequently, it is likely that of the 30,000 people who lived in the coastal zone approximately 10,000 would have been men of military serving age. By comparing the 1334 lay subsidy returns with naval records allows us to identify fifty-one shipmasters from five ports (Dover, Sandwich, Margate, Hythe and Faversham), while a further sixty-four other men have surnames that connect them to shipmasters.⁴⁴ As such shipmasters, and their families, accounted for one per cent of the coastal zones adult male population. In the same decade that the 1334 assessments were drawn up 1,605 Kentish mariners served aboard requisitioned merchantmen. It is not unreasonable to assume, therefore, that in the decade before Black Death that over a tenth of the military able population of Kent's coastal zone served in naval operations. We can be confident that these estimates are reasonably accurate because the limited evidence we have shows that mariners remained with the same ship, meaning that we are probably looking at the service records of 1,600 individual mariners.

Before the 1370s the impact naval recruitment had on Kent's coastal towns is difficult to establish. However, by using the poll tax returns in conjunction with contemporary naval records we can analyse the impact of naval recruitment more fully for the 1370s using a series of sources that provide consistent demographic data. Given the argument above we can assume that of the 13,000 inhabitants of Kent's coastal communities approximately 5,000 were male of which perhaps 4,000 were of military serving age. In the same decade that the Poll Tax records were compiled 1,384 Kentish mariners served aboard requisitioned merchantmen. These manpower totals are based on unique ship service, which only takes account of the largest crew that sailed aboard any vessel. Taking these manning figures at face value suggests that a third of the male population residing in the coastal zone sailed aboard a requisitioned ship. Unfortunately, as we are not provided with the names of the mariners it is impossible to

discern the proportion of repeat servers amongst this group. What we can do is examine the manpower levels of a single fleet. In 1373 a fleet of 127 English ships transported the earl of Buckingham's army to France.⁴⁵ Six Kentish ports provided sixteen ships manned by 274 mariners to this armada. Consequently, nearly seven per cent (6.8%) of the military able population of Kent's coastal zone was at sea in 1373.

Even more striking than manning levels for individual fleets is the manpower requirements of single vessels. In 1370 the town barge of Faversham was at sea with a complement of forty-three mariners.⁴⁶ According to the poll tax returns of 1377 the taxable population of Faversham was ninety-six. If women accounted for over fifty of these individuals it would mean that almost all the men of Faversham were aboard this vessel. However, it is more likely that the men aboard this barge were recruited from the Hundred of Faversham and particularly settlements such as Preston next Faversham (67 taxpayers), Stone next Faversham (50 taxpayers), Davington (26 taxpayers) and Buckland (5 taxpayers). Indeed, overall the Hundred of Faversham had a taxable population of 1,466.⁴⁷ Accounting for the ratios of men to women it is likely that in the 1370s recruitment officials working in Faversham Hundred had access to a pool of manpower numbering some 600 men, meaning that in 1370 seven per cent of the military able male population of Faversham Hundred manned the town barge.

As the Hundred Years War progressed and naval warfare placed heavier demands on manpower a shift occurred in the dynamics of recruitment. What the sources (particularly surviving crew lists) are revealing is that men-at-arms and archers recruited for naval campaigns, combatants previously thought of as land-based forces, also served as mariners.⁴⁸ From 1360-1375 889 men served aboard Kentish ships as men-at-arms, armed men or archers, and 689 of these served from 1370-75.⁴⁹ It is entirely plausible that at least a quarter of these men were recruited from coastal settlements and had some experience of working at sea. Indeed, as Table 2 shows during the 1370s naval operations became more frequent. Moreover, as the population had shrunk after 1348 but just as many mariners served in the period 1372-1388 two things are immediately obvious. Firstly, that port towns had their populations bolstered by new arrivals, probably from rural settlements and, secondly, that a greater proportion of the remaining population of the coastal zone experienced war as both mariners and other combatants. Considering that chroniclers singled out coastal settlements as particular hotbeds of discontent during the Peasants' Revolt we should perhaps see the increasing naval and military demands placed on these communities as one of the major causes of the uprising.⁵⁰

Socio-Economic Position of Kentish Shipmasters

In addition to permitting analysis of the numbers of ships supplied by port towns to the wars, the navy payrolls also provide the core data for a prosopographical and socio-economic investigation of England's medieval seafaring community. It has been argued that such studies have limitations.⁵¹ This is not entirely true and recently great strides have been made in piecing together the collective lives and experiences of fourteenth-century seafarers. Indeed, while little is known about the lives of ordinary mariners at this time research into shipmasters has recently gathered pace and we now better understand their legal responsibilities, seamanship skills, business acumen, the dynamics of their working lives and their social, religious and economic position within both urban and rural maritime communities.⁵² By correlating and combining the information contained in the navy and commercial documents with fourteenth-century tax returns we can undertake a socio-economic analysis of Kentish shipmasters.

To begin with the information offered by the naval and commercial records allows us to reconstruct collective career biographies of the working lives of shipmasters. Such biographies provide a prism through which the rest of this occupational group can be examined. John Hardheved of Dover had a naval career that spanned nearly two decades.⁵³ He first appears in 1324 commanding the *Blithe* when he freighted supplies to English soldiers serving in Gascony. Nine years later he commanded the *Seintmariecog* during Edward III's great expedition to Scotland, before finally ending his service in the Brittany campaign of 1342 as commander of the *Cog John*. Hardheved's career neatly highlights the geographical range covered by shipmasters performing naval service in this period. It is worth emphasising that the naval records only show an exceptional part of any masters' career. Robert Champeney of Strood, for example, commanded the *Welfare* in 1373 when he transported part of the earl of Buckingham's army to France, but one year later he was in command of the same vessel as it loaded up with wine at Bordeaux.⁵⁴ Similarly, from May to October 1378 Richard Hore of Northfleet served under the earl of Arundel as commander of the *James*, but on the 3 November 1378 we find him docked in Bordeaux loading a cargo of wine as commander of this same vessel.⁵⁵ Where it exists evidence suggests that the shipmasters that worked out of more than one port did not stray too far. In the 1330s and 1340s Robert Frend commanded three ships out of Hoo and Strood, ports separated by only some four to five miles.⁵⁶ In the 1370s John Yol predominately worked out of Hythe, but also operated from New Romney, a port several miles to the west of Hythe.⁵⁷

Exploiting taxation records and naval sources also means we can take our investigation of Kentish shipmasters a step further and locate

seafarers more accurately in their communities, glimpse their kinship groups and assess their social position and levels of wealth. The method is quite simple: we compare the names of shipmasters for whom their ships' home ports are specified in the naval records with the names of taxpayers listed for those same ports. Of particular relevance is the 1334 lay subsidy assessment for Kent.⁵⁸ It is true that the lay subsidies have been criticised as an unreliable source.⁵⁹ Close inspection of the 1334 lay subsidy from Kent, however, does show it to contain a high level of accuracy. Peter Barde of Sandwich, one of the richest merchants of the Cinque Ports, was assessed at 12*s.* (converted: £9)⁶⁰ on his movables in Preston Hundred, 6*s.* 8*d.* (converted: £5) on those in the Hundred of Eastry, and £1 12*s.* 7½*d.* (converted: £24 9*s.* 4½*d.*) for those in the Hundred of Wingham.⁶¹ Interestingly, in the 1340s a special roll was compiled that listed the properties possessed by men of the Cinque Ports that lay outside their liberties. This roll records Barde's property in Wingham, but none of his other holdings.⁶² Obviously, the 1334 lay subsidy assessments provide us with more, not less, information on Barde's wealth than does the later roll. In fact, despite their weaknesses one of the leading scholars on the lay subsidies has suggested that used carefully they are a useful source.⁶³

As with most of Kent's mariners we are heavily reliant on the names of shipmasters that commanded the vessels of the Cinque Ports. Although technically the Cinque Ports were exempt from the 1334 lay subsidy, the assessors in Kent still recorded their names and the amount they would have paid if they had been required to do so.⁶⁴ As noted above we can identify fifty-one shipmasters in the 1334 lay subsidy (see **Table 6** and **Map 2**). Converting their tax assessments into valuations reveals that their combined wealth in movables was £188 12*s.* 7*d.*, which was over half a per cent (0.6%) of the county's converted assessment and two and half per cent of the Cinque Ports' converted assessment.⁶⁵ Including the combined payments of the extended shipmaster families (115 individuals) in this analysis reveals that the wider seafaring community of Kent contributed approximately one per cent of the county's converted assessment.

In terms of movable wealth Kentish mariners were a mixed group. At one end of the spectrum was John Mayheu assessed at £1 3*s.* 1*d.* (converted: £17 6*s.* 3*d.*), who held property in Chart, Malling, Toltingtrough, Dartford and Shepway, while at the other was Robert Newynden, assessed at just 8*d.* (converted: 10*s.*)⁶⁶ Of course this is what we would expect from

TABLE 6. WEALTH OF THE 51 RECORDED KENTISH SHIPMASTERS AS GIVEN IN THE 1334 LAY SUBSIDY

No. assessed at under £1	£1-2	£2-5	£5 +
12	9	17	13

an occupational group comprising both shipmaster/owners and hired shipmasters at varying stages of their careers. By 1334, for example, one of richest masters, Peter Seman, was half way through his career. Seman's wealth can be accounted for by the fact that on five separate occasions he commanded the *Katerine* of eighty tons, suggesting that he was either the owner or part-owner of this vessel.⁶⁷

Individual wealth of a particular shipmaster is only one part of the story and the combined wealth of families that produced shipmasters indicate that some seafaring families held positions of socio-economic leadership within the wider county community. The Lythere's of Ringslow Hundred are one such example. Simon Lythere, commander of the *Luke* of Margate in 1342, was relatively wealthy possessing over £4 in movables.⁶⁸ Yet his combined family's wealth was £12 10s.⁶⁹ The wealthiest family group were the Mayheus with a combined wealth of £27 1s. 3d.⁷⁰ Not far behind were the Seman family whose assessed wealth amounted to £26 7s.⁷¹ Another master from an important family that produced royal shipmasters was John Loveryk, a man who possessed £5 in movables.⁷² In the 1340s Richard Loveryk was ranked as one of the richest men in Sandwich. What relation John was to Richard is unclear but the evidence suggests that younger members of merchant families began their careers as shipmasters to learn the business from the sharp end before retiring to the quayside later in life.

The wage rates paid to seamen at this time shows clearly that shipmasters were not from the poorer sections of local society. The crown paid shipmasters 6d. per day, ordinary mariners 3d., and ship's boys 1½d. By the 1370s the wages of mariners in the service of the crown was supplemented by an extra 6d. per week through a payment known as *regard*.⁷³ As a comparative agricultural labourers earned between 1d and 5d per day.⁷⁴ Wages probably increased after the Black Death and where we have evidence it shows that seafarers' wages followed this upward trend, although whether wages rose in real terms is still debatable.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, comparing the lay subsidy assessments of Kent's seafarers with other members of the county community reveals that before the Black Death Kentish shipmasters were of middling economic rank within Kentish society.⁷⁶

While wealth probably counted for much there were other ways to achieve status. Converting the assessed wealth of Thomas Sprynet, for example, shows he had movables valued at £6 8s. 1d. Yet, by 1334 Thomas had been at sea for nearly twenty years and was a royal mariner, a rank which conveyed upon him the equivalent status as a sergeant-at-arms.⁷⁷ For many shipmasters royal appointments and wider familial connections gave them an important status within their local communities, regardless of their actual economic wealth. John Condy of Sandwich was a skipper who shipped wine and participated in some of most momentous naval

expeditions during the reigns of Edward II and Edward III.⁷⁸ Yet with £5 of movable wealth he was not amongst the richest of Kent's mariners.⁷⁹ However, John's father had been town mayor, a post which John occupied in 1326 and 1338 and which Peter Condy held in 1343.⁸⁰ It was perhaps John's participation in the battle of Sluys that ensured rewards followed. In 1341 he was granted the bailiwick of Sandwich in hereditary and in that same year he was appointed as a member of a commission that investigated shipments of smuggled wool.⁸¹ Commissions such as these, along with his naval service and kinship connections, conveyed a local importance on John Condy that allowed him to punch above his economic weight within Kentish society. This is no better evidenced than his founding in 1345 of a chantry in St Mary's church in Sandwich, which he supported with a grant of £4 from property in Sandwich.⁸² Condy's career perfectly exemplifies a younger member of a seafaring family beginning his career at sea shipping wine, actively participating in naval operations and through this gaining favourable royal grants and appointments. In many respects John's involvement in naval operations provided the foundation of the family's advancement into the higher echelons of the Kentish seafaring and mercantile community. In 1355 John's son William resigned the bailiwick of Sandwich but in return he and his heirs were granted the farm of Canterbury with a yearly value of £30.⁸³ Moreover, by 1378 Lawrence Condy was sitting as MP for Sandwich as was his son, Peter, in 1388.⁸⁴ While Lawrence and Peter were from a separate line of the family the rise in the importance of the Condy family, from men of local importance to county significance can certainly be traced to John's naval activities in the 1340s.⁸⁵

Moving to the poll tax returns of the later fourteenth century these too can be exploited to analyse the socio-economic status of Kentish mariners. Unlike the earlier lay subsidies the 1379 Poll tax was measured against a schedule of charges that reflected the 'estate and degree ... and property, lands, rents, possessions, goods and chattels' of the taxpayer'.⁸⁶ So while the poll taxes do not allow us to estimate the movable wealth of individuals they do provide us with evidence of occupational stratification, which in no small part indicates social position. In 1379 among the taxpayers of Ringslow hundred we find the adventurous John Frensh of Sandwich. As noted above, Frensh commanded at least five ships in a maritime career that spanned over fifteen years. That Frensh was assessed at the lowest rate of 4*d.*, however, may come as a surprise. This placed him in the category of a married, or single, man that belonged to no established estate. Yet, we know he was described as a vintner who had the capacity to raise (or be given) £60 to buy wine, while his association with the two ships' called the *Margarete* suggests he was the owner, part owner or the contracted master of these vessels. It is difficult to square the evidence. But as the lowest assessment of established merchants was 6*d.* two

TABLE 7. WEALTH OF KENT, ESSEX AND DORSET SHIPMASTERS AS REVEALED BY THE 1327, 1332 AND 1334 LAY SUBSIDIES

County	No. assessed under £1	£1-2	£2-5	£5 +
Kent	12	9	17	13
Essex	9	15	9	0
Dorset	6	15	4	2

conclusions can be drawn.⁸⁷ Either the poll tax collectors under-assessed him or he was a hired hand rather than a shipmaster/owner. The latter seems more likely as, in comparison with his contemporaries, Frensh's assessment was not unusual: 402 (67% of the total) of the individuals recorded for Ringslow paid this amount.⁸⁸ As three other members of Frensh's family also paid *4d.* John's payment seems to have reflected his family's general economic position.⁸⁹

It is worth comparing Kentish shipmasters at this point with their contemporaries from other counties. As **Table 7** reveals, before the Black Death Kentish masters were wealthier than both their Essex and Dorset shipmates. Their relative wealth compared with Essex seafarers is particularly interesting. The proximity of Essex and Kent to the Thames Estuary probably meant that Kentish and Essex mariners competed for the lucrative London, south-east and east coast trades. It may well be that rivalries developed between these two seafaring communities. Yet, with just under half (45%) of Essex mariners assessed with movables valued at £1 to under £2 and none with any valued at over £5 the majority of Essex mariners were poorer than their Kentish counterparts. Indeed, nearly two-thirds (59%) of Kent's seafarers had movables valued at £2 and over. Dorset's mariners compared favourably with those of Essex with over half assessed on movables valued at £1 to under £2, but were less wealthy than their Kentish shipmates. Overall cross county comparisons show that before the Black Death Kentish shipmasters occupied an economic position that provided them with a comfortable living and made them, on average, richer than many of their contemporaries. For example, the 1332 lay subsidy reveals that in Great Yarmouth the average wealth of its inhabitants was £3 13s. *4d.*, meaning that the majority of our Kentish shipmasters sat comfortably in this bracket.⁹⁰ Of course, as residents of the Cinque Ports many Kentish seafarers probably enjoyed exemptions from taxes that allowed them to accrue more wealth than their shipmates from less privileged ports.

As the century progressed there is evidence that the wealth of Kentish masters declined. As noted in the 1379 poll tax John Frensh paid *4d.* as did two-thirds of the residents of the Ringslow Hundred, a sum that

placed them in the poorest section of that Hundred. Given that in 1334 the largest group (9) of identifiable Kentish shipmasters resided in Ringslow Hundred the 1370s seem to mark a period of economic decline for Kentish seafarers. In the same year King's Lynn shipmasters paid 12*d.*, three times the rate of their Kentish counterparts, and one that placed them in the top six per cent of the kingdom's population.⁹¹ The evidence from the 1381 poll tax shows that York mariners were even richer: of the seven identified seafarers only one paid less than 12*d.*⁹² In 1381 the seasoned mariner William Duffeld who commanded the *Peter* out of York in 1369 and 1377, was assessed at 2*s.*, the same as the shipwright William Robinson.⁹³ Indeed with four shipmasters assessed 2*s.* and one, William Derlynd, at 3*s.* York's seafarers sat within the middle to higher economic sectors of that community, much like the position Kentish masters had held in the period before the Black Death.⁹⁴

Examining Kentish shipmasters as a socio-economic group, taking account of a variety of source evidence, we can paint a prosopographical portrait of a typical career for a Kentish master during years of frequent warfare. The picture that emerges is one in which masters are pressed into royal service on a regular basis, but their mainstay of activity was the wine trade, and the re-export of wine via coastal voyages. John Condy, Richard and Robert Champeneys, Thomas Bolle, John Prison and John Andreu were all active in the cross Channel and coastal wine trade.⁹⁵ As a socio-economic group Kentish shipmasters were also varied and contained at one end wealthy shipowning individuals and at the other men of much poorer stock, but in most cases occupied the middling socio-economic bracket within the wider county community. After 1360 the evidence, albeit limited, seems to point to some economic decline amongst Kentish seafarers. It may well be that in the period before the Black Death Kent's proximity to London allowed its mariners to prosper, but once London began to dominate much of the trade of the south-east this became a disadvantage. We can perhaps see the evidence of London's growing dominance in the service patterns of Kentish masters. In the 1370s some Kentish shipmasters started to operate out of London. Thomas Baker, for example, sailed out of Wouldham in 1372, but by 1374 he was working out of London.⁹⁶ In 1377, 1378 and 1379 Richard Hore commanded the *James* and *Alice* out of Northfleet, but by 1383 he was sailing out of London as commander of the *Margrete*.⁹⁷

Nevertheless, throughout the fourteenth century the Kentish ship-board community played an important economic role within the wider county community. Not only did they bring in goods that enhanced the economic vibrancy of Kent, but a significant proportion of the county's capital wealth was invested in shipping. Estimating the value of a ship is not an easy task and depending on the type of ship, its age and its size prices could range from £2 to over £4,000.⁹⁸ Boats used in fishing, which

were generally under thirty tons, cost less.⁹⁹ However, as the average recorded size of Kentish ships was 68.5 tons it seems for most part we are dealing with ships and not fishing boats. Scrutinising the available evidence shows that an acceptable, but conservative, mean value of a ship at this time was £50.¹⁰⁰ The value of the capital invested in a ship was obviously dependant on the current economic state of the kingdom. Without wishing to oversimplify economic developments, and the theories underpinning these, after a series of high prices in the early fourteenth century, which would impact on the cost of raw materials and wages, the mid-1330s saw a return to more economically stable conditions before a series of crises arose that saw a reduction in the number of coins in circulation.¹⁰¹ What impact this had on capital investment in shipping is unknown, but merchants were able to offset some of these problems through the use of credit.¹⁰² Whether it cost more to build a ship in the latter half of the century than it did in the first half is not an easy question to answer. Rising wages after the Black Death may have increased the cost of building a ship, but the evidence of high wage rates is uneven.¹⁰³ In addition, the rise in wages in the later fourteenth century was offset by a rise in inflation. In real terms therefore purchasing power remained the same as it had before the Black Death.¹⁰⁴ Interestingly, the value of a ship remained uniform throughout the century, although undoubtedly the relative value of the capital invested in shipping fluctuated.

Of course £50 was a considerable sum at any time in the fourteenth century. The cost of a quarter of wheat (enough to feed up to 270 men) at this time was approximately 5s.¹⁰⁵ Returning to investment in Kentish ships we find that in the same decade that the lay subsidy was collected there were sixty-seven individual Kentish ships recorded in both naval and custom accounts.¹⁰⁶ We should remember that as our sources only reveal perhaps a third of Kent's ships there were probably over 150 Kentish vessels sailing the seas in the 1330s. In 1334 the assessors in Kent found that the fifteenth and tenth raised £1,927 6s. 1½d. Converting the county's assessment into an overall value means that Kentish folk possessed approximately £27,800 in movable wealth. If we suggest that each ship was worth £50 in the 1330s Kentish shipowners invested approximately £3,350 of capital in ships.¹⁰⁷ As a comparative this was over an eighth of the converted assessed movable wealth for the whole county. Kingdom-wide from 1330 to 1349 there were approximately 2,500 unique ships in operation, meaning that nationally £125,000 was invested in shipping. Consequently, over this same period, Kentish shipowners contributed over two and a half per cent (2.7%) of the total capital invested in English shipping.

Obviously this is a somewhat crude exercise because the lay subsidies record only a proportion of the wealth of a small number of individuals.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, if we accept that townsfolk, apart from some exceptions,

had most of their movable wealth assessed we can examine a hundred that had a port town situated within it in order to compare the capital invested in ships with the totals for the 1334 lay subsidy. This exercise reveals some striking comparatives. Faversham Hundred was assessed at £60 13s. 9d. (converted: £910 6s. 3d.) while Maidstone Hundred was assessed at £59 1s. 3d. (converted: £885 18s. 9d.).¹⁰⁹ Faversham's shippers possessed at least one unique ship in the 1330s and Maidstone's had two, meaning Faversham's shipowners had at least £50 and Maidstone's at least £100 invested in shipping: five per cent and eleven per cent respectively of each hundred's movable wealth. Moving from the county to the kingdom we can examine the value of exported woollens in the 1330s and expand our comparison. From Michelmas 1329 to Michelmas 1336 215,742 sacks of wool were exported from England.¹¹⁰ At an average price of £10 per sack this amounted to £2,157,420 in value.¹¹¹ This means that the capital invested in Kentish shipping in the 1330s was under half a per cent (0.16%) of the value of the kingdom's exported wool. We also have to accept that we are probably only seeing a third of the actual amount invested in ships. Put simply, capital investment in shipping has been a hitherto ignored but extremely important part of the medieval economy, both regionally and nationally.

Neither should we assume that having ships requisitioned was entirely detrimental to the Kentish economy. From 1320 to 1400 the crown paid out over £6,500 in wages to Kentish seamen. This should be seen as the absolute minimum because many payrolls are damaged and the evidence of ship service enrolled on the chancery records rarely provides wage details. Until 1380 the crown did not pay shipowners for requisitioning their vessels, but for the crews who were paid, and the local businesses that received the custom of Kentish mariners, there may have been some economic benefits to be gained from serving the crown.

Decline of Kentish Ports

While the fragmented survival of Kent's later fourteenth-century taxation returns make it difficult to assess the level of decline in the socio-economic standing of Kent's seafarers, the naval records do permit us to assess the shipping contributions of Kentish ports to the war after 1360. 1360 provides a convenient divide as in this year the English and French agreed to the Treaty of Brétigny. Also few mariners serving before 1360 continued in their duties after this date, meaning after 1360 we are dealing with an almost entirely new group of shipmasters. In Sandwich, for example, only Hamon Bollard commanded a ship in the period before and after 1360.¹¹²

As **Table 8** shows Kentish shipping contributions were reduced in the second half of the fourteenth century. This reduction, which has been

TABLE 8: UNIQUE SHIPPING CONTRIBUTIONS OF KENTISH PORTS BEFORE AND AFTER 1360

Port	1322-1360		1361-1395	
	No. of ships	No. of mariners	No. of ships	No. of mariners
Aylesford	-		1	n.a
Canterbury	3	n.a	-	
Chalk	-		3	n.a
Cliffe	3	n.a	1	28
Ditton	1	n.a	-	
Dover*	34	609	17	441
Faversham*	6	164	1	43
Folkestone*	-		1	n.a
Gillingham*	1	62	2	22
Gravesend	-		2	32
Greenwich	7	161	3	125
Hoo	3	50	4	n.a
Hythe*	16	384	13	204
Lydd*	-		1	53
Maidstone	4	57	-	
Margate*	4	58	6	76
New Hythe	4	79	1	n.a
Northfleet	1	12	2	41
Reading Street	-		4	46
Rochester	-		1	10
Romney*	12	501	11	586
Sandwich*	67	2,150	51	1,221
Small Hythe	7	87	13	316
Stonar*	4	n.a	3	63
Strood	7	56	3	35
Wouldham	-		1	20
Total	184	4,430	145	3,362

linked to an apparent decline in the English merchant fleet, has been blamed on the destruction of shipping because of the war, the Black Death and environmental changes.¹¹³ The picture, however, is more complex. In the first instance Sandwich's harbour did not suffer from silting until the mid-fifteenth and early sixteenth century, and even beyond it was still

attracting a large number of ships.¹¹⁴ At this time rather than environmental factors being the cause of the decline of the shipping contributions of some Kentish ports more plausible reasons can be postulated. In the first instance after 1360 the geographical focus of the French war shifted from North-Western France and Flanders to Aquitaine, Brittany and Iberia. The ports of Hampshire, Devon and Cornwall were much better placed to act as points of embarkation. Just how much the geographical focus of the war could directly influence ship requisition can be seen by looking at the shipping contributions of Chester. Of the thirty-two unique ships that Chester contributed to naval operations in the fourteenth century three-quarters (24) sailed in the 1360s.¹¹⁵ That this was also the decade when a series of Irish campaigns were launched is not a coincidence. It was simply easier to requisition the greater proportion of ships from the ports nearest the embarkation point.

The impact of the Black Death is also more complex than first imagined. Estimates of mortality vary widely but it is estimated that kingdom-wide a third to a half of the population perished, while Sandwich lost half its population.¹¹⁶ Although serious it must be noted that the impact of the disease was not uniform and some communities were relatively unscathed or recovered quickly.¹¹⁷ The figures presented in Table 9 certainly show that Kentish ports were still able to find enough manpower: the average crew size after the Black Death (23) was much the same as it was prior to the arrival of the disease (25). Indeed, it is surprising how easy the crown was able to recruit large numbers of men for naval service after the Black Death.¹¹⁸ Put simply, many port towns recovered quickly, no doubt having their populations replenished by newcomers from rural areas.

One of the most important factors for the decline in some Kentish ports was the increasing commercial dominance of London.¹¹⁹ From 1360 to 1380 London's shipping contributions to naval operations increased by a third. While other large ports in the south-east and south, such as Southampton, also began to provide more ships, it was the scale of London's increase that is surprising.¹²⁰ In terms of naval operations London contributed the same number of ships in the 1370s than it had in the 1330s and 1340s combined. Although increased naval service does not necessarily indicate that London's merchant fleet grew in size, it may be that in the later fourteenth century London merchants, eager to participate in the growing cloth trade, invested more capital in shipping. As a result of London's growth many Kentish shipowners may have gravitated towards the capital to exploit this commercial development. We know, for example, that London's growing domination of cloth exports had a negative impact on other port towns and that by the fifteenth century London had control of sixty-one per cent of the kingdom's overseas trade.¹²¹ On the other hand it may be that the sources distort our view of the size of London's merchant fleet. In the first half of the century

London's shipowners occasionally provided money instead of ships to royal campaigns, with the result that London's merchant fleet is not fully revealed by the naval records.¹²²

Turning to the size of Kentish ships we do see evidence that they had become smaller in the thirty-five years after 1360 (Table 9). From 1320 to 1360 Kentish ships sailing in naval operations averaged 87 tons, whereas from 1361-95 their mean tonnage was 60. Tonnage figures do not come free of interpretative problems and it should be remarked that the size of Kent's ships followed national trends. Nevertheless, as the fourteenth century progressed Kent's ports contributed fewer and smaller ships. This probably reflects the change in some of the trade of Kentish ports. After

TABLE 9: TONNAGE OF KENT'S SHIPS, 1320-1400

Port	1320-1360		1361-1395		Average	Average
	Ships	Tons	Ships	Tons	tonnage 1320-1360	tonnage 1361-1395
Aylesford	n/a		1	21	n/a	21
Chalk	n/a		2	48	n/a	24
Dover	12	830	8	470	69	59
Faversham	2	130	n/a		65	n/a
Folkestone	n/a		1	24	n/a	24
Gillingham	n/a		2	90	n/a	45
Gravesend	n/a		2	60	n/a	30
Greenwich	2	240	3	328	120	109
Hythe	7	522	9	415	74	46
Margate	n/a		6	191	n/a	32
New Hythe	n/a		1	39	n/a	39
Northfleet	n/a		1	60	n/a	60
Reading Street	n/a		3	164	n/a	55
Rochester	n/a		1	30	n/a	30
Romney	5	600	7	353	120	50
Sandwich	11	1,190	29	2,130	108	73
Small Hythe	4	220	10	714	55	71
Strood	n/a		2	160	n/a	80
Wouldham	n/a		1	20	n/a	20
Total	43	3,732	89	5,317		
				Average	87	60

NB. The table only takes account of those ships with recorded tonnages.

1360 Sandwich, for example, attracted fewer larger ships and instead concentrated on coastal and cross-Channel trade using smaller vessels.¹²³ As one of the most important ports in Kent any change in Sandwich's shipping resources would have an impact on the county's overall naval contributions.

Yet we must be careful to overstate the decline of some of the major Kentish ports. Of the 445 ships that sailed in three fleets over 1404, 1417 and 1423 Sandwich and Dover contributed just under a tenth (37) of these vessels.¹²⁴ In the fleet of 1423 out of the sixty-three ships that transported Thomas Beaufort and his forces to France, Sandwich provided just under a sixth of these (11), although at an average of 37 tons these were smaller vessels than the port had previously provided for naval service.¹²⁵ Sandwich maintained its contribution to naval operations and in the following year contributed eleven ships to the fleet of sixty-three vessels that freighted the forces of Robert Lord Willoughby to Calais, a fleet that also sailed from Sandwich.¹²⁶ Indeed, Sandwich maintained its position as an embarkation port for English expeditionary armies throughout the Hundred Years War.¹²⁷ Additionally, shipbuilding remained prominent in Kentish ports. Between 1416 and 1420 Henry V's balingier the *George* was built at Small Hythe and in 1489 Henry VII's ship the *Regent* was constructed at Reading Street.¹²⁸

Conclusion

In terms of shipping contributions the ports of Kent performed a central role in the wars conducted by Edward II, Edward III and Richard II. In the period 1320-1400 they sent 300 unique ships on various naval expeditions. It is worth pointing out that at this same time over 220 English ports supplied over 5,000 unique ships to the maritime dimension of the war. Thus Kentish ports contributed six per cent of all the naval forces that put to sea. Within Kent's maritime community the prominence of the Cinque Ports is evident. They supplied a third of all Kent's ships and nearly half the manpower to naval operations. It was the 1330s and 1340s, however, which witnessed the apogee of the involvement of Kent's ship-board community in the wars of the fourteenth century. Yet, it would be misleading to suggest there was a significant decline in the involvement of Kent's ports in the wars in the latter part of the century. It is true that after 1360 Kent's ports provided fewer ships to expeditions, but the decline was not dramatic and while some ports contributed fewer ships others supplied more.

Economically, compared with other members of the ship-board community, Kentish shipmasters and mariners were broadly of middling status, although wealth was affected by a master's main economic activity and whether he owned or was part owner of a ship. What is striking is that

based on our source material Sandwich shipmasters, a port long associated with an active trade in rich goods, nevertheless compared unfavourably to King's Lynn and York shipmasters. This can be partly explained by suggesting that a large proportion of Sandwich's trade in rich goods, particularly from Italy, remained in the hands of foreign merchants. There is evidence, for example, that a large proportion of the profits that accrued from the trade entering Southampton did not enrich denizen traders, but favoured alien merchants who maintained a stranglehold over the control of some goods.¹²⁹ If a similar situation existed at Sandwich this would explain why Kentish shippers lacked the same wealth as their King's Lynn and York counterparts. There is still much needed research to be undertaken on fourteenth-century mariners and in particular a kingdom-wide investigation. What we must not do, however, is fail to recognise the important contribution that regional maritime communities made to naval operations in a period scarred by spells of intensive warfare.

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ENDNOTES

¹ *Calendar of Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office: Edward III*, 16 vols [hereafter CPR] (London, 1891-1916), 1364-67, p. 13.

² *Ibid.* French was no stranger to the voyage to Bordeaux having sailed there in 1362 as commander of the ill-fated *Margarete*, see The National Archive of England [hereafter TNA] Exchequer (King's Remembrancer, Accounts Various) E 101/28/24, m. 1.

³ TNA E 101/30/24, m. 1.

⁴ TNA E 101/30/24, m. 1; TNA E 101/31/22; TNA E 101/31/29, m. 6; TNA E 101/34/9; TNA E 101/36/14, m. 5.

⁵ At the heart of this article is the author's database that records approximately 17,000 ship-voyages undertaken by English vessels (and foreign ships in English waters) in the period c.1320-c.1430. The information in the database is garnered from navy records (chancery and exchequer series), custom accounts, both local and national (including prisage records and Bordeaux customs), inquisitions, and printed collections. To save on the repetition of long references individual documents will only be cited when referring to the service of individual masters or ships.

⁶ See, for example, C.L. Lambert, *Shipping the Medieval Military: English Maritime Logistics in the Fourteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 2011); G. Cushway, *Edward III and the War at Sea: the English Navy, 1327-1377* (Woodbridge, 2011).

⁷ On the naval element of Edward I's wars, see M. Prestwich, *War Politics and Finance under Edward I* (London, 1972).

⁸ The crown could use several methods to assemble a fleet, but requisitioned merchant ships were the most numerous component of any armada. For a more detailed analysis of fleet raising procedures, see Lambert, *Shipping*, Chapter 1.

⁹ See, for example, *Foedera, Conventions, Litterae etc.*, ed. T. Rymer, revised edition by A. Clarke, F. Holbrooke and J. Coley, 4 volumes in 7 parts (London, 1816-69), vol. III, I, pp. 105-6.

¹⁰ See, for example, TNA (Chancery Miscellaneous) C 47/2/46, mm. 15-18; TNA (Gascon Rolls) C 61/36, m. 17d.

¹¹ Cushway, *Edward III and the War at Sea*, p. 82, interprets these lists as ship censuses. In 1336 he argues that one such census found that the northern admiralty could supply 104 ships over 40 tons (TNA C 47/2/32). It is beyond doubt that the northern ports had more ships than this. This list of ships was probably drawn up by Robert Causton as part of a series of investigations undertaken to discover whether or not any Norfolk ships had disobeyed the king's orders not to trade with enemy powers, see *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous Preserved in the Public Record Office* [hereafter *Cal. Inq. Misc.*], 8 volumes (London, 1916-2003), vol. II, pp. 366-67. Perhaps, the only true shipping census was that ordered by Edward III in 1353, which was probably undertaken to see the state of the merchant fleet after the years of plague with a view to invading France, see *Calendar of Close Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office: Edward III*, 14 vols [hereafter *CCR*] (London, 1891-1916), 1350-54, pp. 419-20. There is no surviving documentation that shows this survey was ever completed. There are later 'censuses' recorded in C 47/2/46, mm. 15-18, but again these documents are recording the numbers of vessels that shipowners had agreed to provide for planned naval operations, not true indicators of the numbers of ships in each port.

¹² See, for example, *CCR*, 1339-41, p. 246; *CPR*, 1345-48, p. 109; *CPR*, 1354-58, p. 52; *Foedera*, II, ii, p. 941; TNA E 101/27/16.

¹³ TNA Exchequer (Treasury of Receipt, books) E 36/204, pp. 221-40; TNA E 101/22/39; TNA E 101/24/9 (b); TNA Exchequer (Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer, Pipe Rolls) E 372/187, mm. 42, 45; *CCR*, 1343-46, pp. 129-32. Ten vessels were the king's own ships and four were from Bayonne.

¹⁴ The 'naval' records are mainly to be found in The National Archives (E 101; E 36; E 372; E 403; C 47).

¹⁵ As part of an ESRC funded project a forthcoming article by Dr Andrew Ayton and Dr Craig Lambert will be investigating the size and geographical distribution of the national fourteenth-century merchant fleet more fully. It is expected this will be published in 2014/15.

¹⁶ Cliffe TNA E 101/38/18, m. 2; TNA E 101/78/9, mm. 1-2; TNA E 101/78/14, m. 1; TNA E 101/80/19, m. 1; *CCR*, 1330-33, p. 42; *CCR*, 1341-43, p. 504; *CPR*, 1327-30, p. 514; *CPR*, 1334-38, p. 525; *Calendar of Memoranda Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office*, 1326-27 [hereafter *Cal. Mem.*] (London, 1968), p. 131; *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, II, p. 308.

Sarre: Exeter Local Port Custom Records (housed in Devon County Record Office), Michaelmas 1339 to Michaelmas 1340, m. 1d.

Stonar: TNA E 101/21/36, m. 4; TNA E 101/78/13, m. 12; TNA E 101/79/10, m. 1; TNA E 101/79/14, m. 8; *Cal. Mem.*, p. 131. Many of the custom accounts that record Kentish ships fail to name either the ship or the master. For example, of the ninety-six Sandwich ships that appear in custom accounts only eighteen have a recorded master and seventy-eight records only provide the names of the ships, of which sixty-one share several names: meaning shipping recorded in custom accounts cannot be consistently included in the methodology that is used here to discover unique ships. In total there were 127 Kentish ships that appear *only* in the custom accounts and which for the above reasons have not been included. Nevertheless, the 303 unique ships that are visible in the naval payrolls should be seen as the minimum number of Kentish ships in this period: a good estimate would be that the merchant fleet of Kent numbered approximately 400 ships.

¹⁷ On the Cinque Ports and ship service, see C.L. Lambert, 'The Contribution of the Cinque Ports to the Wars of Edward II and Edward III', *Roles of the Sea, in Medieval England*, ed. R. Gorski (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 59-78.

¹⁸ See, for example, TNA E 101/40/7, which shows the involvement of Kentish ports in the supply operations for John of Gaunt's invasion and raids into Scotland over 1383/4; TNA E 101/51/7 which records eight ships that were used to transport the horses of John Mowbray's retinue from Sandwich to Calais in 1423 and TNA E 101/51/10, nos 14-19, 21-26, 28-52, 55-64, 72-75, 82-83 and m. 97, which shows a fleet of fifty-seven ships that transported Robert Lord Willoughby's forces from Sandwich to Calais in 1424. A.Z. Freeman, 'A Moat Defensive: The Coast Defence Scheme of 1295', *Speculum* 42 (1967), pp. 442-62, highlights the important role played by Kent's coastal communities in the defence of the realm.

¹⁹ This expedition is discussed in detail in Lambert, *Shipping*, Chapters 4 and 5.

²⁰ N.A.M. Rodger, 'Naval Service of the Cinque Ports', *English Historical Review* 111 (1997), pp. 631-51, who plays down their contributions; Lambert, 'Cinque Ports', is more positive.

²¹ TNA E 101/17/10.

²² TNA E 101/17/24.

²³ E. Searle and R. Burghart, 'The Defence of England and the Peasants Revolt', *Viator* 3 (1972), pp. 365-88, p. 373.

²⁴ A more detailed explanation of this methodology can be found in Lambert, *Shipping*, Appendix 2. A new elaboration of this methodology, drawing on a vast array of sources, is currently in production (authored by Dr Andrew Ayton and Dr Craig Lambert) and will be published shortly.

²⁵ TNA E 101/30/24, m. 1; TNA E 101/31/32, m. 1; TNA E 101/33/31, m. 6; TNA E 101/36/14, m. 5; TNA E 101/37/25, m. 3.

²⁶ Comparing the shipping contributions of the Kentish Cinque Ports with those of Sussex is complicated by the fact that some Kentish ports (i.e. Grange with Hastings) were limbs of ports located in Sussex, while Brightlingsea in Essex was a limb of Sandwich. For the purposes of shipping comparatives Small Hythe, which was the riverine port of Tenterden and technically a limb of Rye, has been added to the totals for Sussex, while Brightlingsea's shipping contributions to naval operations has been added to those of Kent (Brightlingsea contributed 14 unique ships to naval operations in this period). However, as Small Hythe was also a port located in Kent it has been included in the overall analysis.

²⁷ TNA E 101/37/25, mm. 7, 9, 10, 14; TNA E 101/42/21, m. 5.

²⁸ TNA E 101/40/36, m. 2; TNA E 101/30/24, m. 1.

²⁹ For example, in 1452 the crown indentured with eighty-three shipmasters and shipowners in order to raise a fleet to transport Earl Rivers and his retinue to Bordeaux. In the indentures the crew size for each ship is specified and the shipmaster is given an advance on the crew's wages. The indentures were made several days before the fleet sailed. The payroll linked to these indentures survives and on this the clerks subtracted the initial payment recorded in the indentures from the final wage bill, see TNA E 101/54/15 for the indentures and TNA E 101/54/14 for the payroll.

³⁰ In 1377, for example, Thomas Durant recruited 100 seamen from ten towns and villages located on the Yorkshire and Norfolk coast. It is likely that these men were added to the thirty-three ships sailing from Hull, Hedon, Paull, Faxfleet, Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn in that year. TNA E 101/34/25; TNA E 101/36/14; TNA E 101/37/7; TNA E 101/37/13; TNA E 101/37/14; TNA E 101/37/15; TNA E 101/37/17; TNA E 101/37/18; TNA E 101/37/22.

³¹ During the preparations for the Saint Sardos campaign of 1324 the chief clerk, Nicholas Huggate, noted in his accounts that the crew aboard the *Richegayne* of Weymouth, then

docked at Southampton, had its crew increased from twenty-eight to thirty-five mariners, adding that it was done *'pro dupplici eskippamento'*, see British Library [hereafter BL] Add. Ms 7967, fol. 94r. *Duplici eskippamento* is a phrase employed by clerical officials to show they had supplemented a ship's crew by adding more mariners. This does not mean the crew was doubled. Ships that were raised for naval patrols or offensive naval actions could have their crews supplemented. For transport fleets (such as that of 1324) only the ships used as convoy protection would have supplemented crews. Neither were the largest ships used solely as convoy protectors: these were probably more useful for shipping horses. Similarly, in 1372 in Essex, the sheriff and the constable compiled a list of mariners who resided in several coastal settlements. On the list are the names of 422 mariners (There are in fact 484 names recorded but sixty-two men are repeated in the document) from twenty-one towns and settlements located within five miles of the coast, or situated on important rivers and estuaries. It is likely these mariners were expected to serve in the large fleet the king assembled in 1372; see TNA C 47/2/46, mm. 6-14. A forthcoming article by Dr Andrew Ayton and Dr Craig Lambert will be analysing in greater detail the manning of requisitioned fleets.

³² In 1360, for example, Nicholas de Wyllyngton, commander of the *Rodecogg*, arrived at the port of embarkation only to find that the crown did not require his vessel but instead took his crew and shared it amongst the other ships of the fleet, see *CPR, 1358-61*, p. 351.

³³ *CPR, 1324-27*, pp. 7, 14, 266; *CPR, 1334-38*, pp. 525, 559; *CPR, 1361-64*, p. 350. In 1375 several London masters were given the right to press men into naval service from the counties of Essex and Kent, but this was a rare occurrence and relates more to the increased use of naval forces at this time; see TNA C 61/88, m. 7. Royal shipmasters could hold the status of sergeant-at-arms, which meant they possessed powers of arrest, see *CPR, 1324-27*, p. 276.

³⁴ See, for example, *CPR, 1358-61*, p. 411; *CPR, 1370-74*, pp. 88, 109 and Lambert, *Shipping*, pp. 184-86; J. R. Alban, 'English Coastal Defence: some Fourteenth-Century Modifications within the System', in *Patronage, the Crown and the Provinces in Later Medieval England*, ed. R.A. Griffiths (Gloucester, 1981), pp. 57-78. In 1338 Kent's maritime lands were extended to twelve leagues (36 miles) from the sea coast.

³⁵ M. Kowaleski 'Working at Sea: Maritime Recruitment and Remuneration in Medieval England', in *Ricchezza del mare, ricchezza dal mare. Secoli XIII-XVIII*, ed. S. Cavciocchi. *Atti delle Settimane di Studi e Altri Convegni*, Prato, 11-15 aprile, 2005 (Florence, 2006), pp. 907-36, pp. 912-13; C.L. Lambert and A. Ayton, 'The English Mariner in the Fourteenth Century', in *Fourteenth Century England*, vol. VII, ed. M.W. Ommrod (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 153-76; this practice was still the case in the sixteenth century and crews manning Hull, Bristol and Ipswich vessels usually came from those towns or nearby settlements, see K.R. Andrews 'The Elizabethan Seaman', in *Mariner's Mirror* [hereafter *MM*] 68 (1982), pp. 245-62, p. 249.

³⁶ TNA E 36/204, pp. 221-40; TNA E 101/22/39; TNA E 101/24/9 (b); TNA E 372/187, mm. 42, 45; BL Harleian Ms 3968, fols 132r-133v.

³⁷ M. Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade in Medieval Exeter* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 5, 33; *idem*, 'The Commercialization of the Sea Fisheries in Medieval England and Wales', in *International Journal of Maritime History* 15, no. 1 (June, 2003), pp. 177-231, pp. 185-86. Kowaleski estimates some 6-7,000 men were employed in the fishing industry; *idem*, 'Shipping and the Carrying Trade in Medieval Dartmouth', in *Von Nowgorod bis London: Studien zu Handel, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft in Mittelalterlichen Europs: Festschrift für Stuart Jenks zum 60 Geburtstag*, ed. M. Heckmann, J. Röhrkasten (Gottigen, 2008), pp. 465-95, pp. 477-78; R.H. Britnell, *Growth and Decline in Colchester, 1300-1525* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 70; S.H. Rigby, *Medieval Grimsby: Growth and Decline* (Hull, 1993), pp. 15-19; D. Martin and B. Martin, with contributions by J. Eddison, D. Rudling and D. Sylvester, *New Winchelsea, Sussex: a Medieval Port Town* (London, 2004), p. 12;

G.V. Scammell, 'English Merchant Shipping at the End of the Middle Ages: some East Coast Evidence' in *Economic History Review* [hereafter *EHR*] 13 (1961), pp. 327-41; D. E. Robinson, 'Half the Story of the Rise of the English Shipping Industry', in *The Business History Review* 41, no. 3 (1967), pp. 303-08.

³⁸ Thirty-seven Kentish masters' commanded more than one ship and four sailed out of more than port.

³⁹ Hanley and Chalklin, 'Kent', p. 58.

⁴⁰ *The Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381*, ed. C. C. Fenwick, 3 vols (Oxford, 1998-2005).

⁴¹ Not everybody was recorded in the poll tax. Those under fourteen years of age and beggars were exempt and it is likely that many people evaded the payment. However, this article is concerned only with the militarily able proportion of the overall population. Put another way, children, beggars and those rich enough to bribe the assessors were unlikely to participate in naval operations and would thus not be classified as part of the military serving population. The overall population of the county according to the poll tax records was approximately 90,000.

⁴² For the use of lay subsidy returns and the poll taxes in estimating population size, see N. Goose and A. Hinde, 'Estimating Local Population Sizes at Fixed Points in Time', Part I – General Principles, in *Local Population Studies* 77 (2006), pp. 66-74; and *idem*, Part II – Specific Sources, in *Local Population Studies* 78 (2007), pp. 74-88.

⁴³ M. Kowaleski, 'The Demography of Maritime Communities in Late Medieval England', in *England in the Age of the Black Death. Essays in Honour of John Hatcher*, eds. M. Bailey and S.H. Rigby (Turnhout, 2012), pp. 74-97.

⁴⁴ Extracted from H.A. Hanley and C.C. Chalklin, 'Kent Lay Subsidy of 1334/5', *Kent Archaeological Society*, 1961. These masters did not necessarily reside in the ports from which they sailed.

⁴⁵ BL Add. Ms 37494, fols. 18r-31v. In 1373 there were many foreign ships involved in the crossing of both Gaunt and Buckingham. These are not included.

⁴⁶ TNA E 101/29/39, m. 4.

⁴⁷ *Poll Taxes*, I, pp. 391-92.

⁴⁸ Mariners' serving as men-at-arms and archers seems only to occur in a naval context. As most 'traditional' men-at-arms would not be seafarers, and as certain skills were needed to crew a ship, the men who served in various combatant roles aboard ships were most likely mariners (or inhabitants of port towns and the coastal zone). The evidence we have suggests that these service patterns occurred before and after the Black Death, so it is not linked to manpower shortages.

⁴⁹ TNA E 101/27/37; TNA E 101/31/32; TNA E 101/34/9; TNA E 101/40/7; BL Add. Ms 37494, fols 25d, 26v.

⁵⁰ Maidstone and Gravesend in Kent were singled out as centre points of the rebellion, as were Essex coastal communities such as Fobbing. See *Anonimale Chronicle, 1333-1381*, ed. V.H. Galbraith (Manchester, 1927), pp. 133-40; *Knighton's Chronicle, 1337-1396*, ed. and trans. by G.H. Martin (Oxford, 1995), pp. 208, 209 n. 3.

⁵¹ See, for example, N.A.M. Rodger, *The Safeguard of the Sea. A Naval History of Britain, 660-1649* (London, 1997), p. 140, who states that 'we can say very little about the ordinary seaman.'

⁵² R. Ward, *The World of the Medieval Shipmaster: Law, Business and the Sea, c.1340-c.1450* (Woodbridge, 2009); C.O. Frake, 'Cognitive Maps of Time and Tide Among Medieval Seafarers', in *Man, New Series* 20 (June, 1985), pp. 254-70; G.W. Coopland 'A Glimpse of Late Fourteenth Century Ships and Seaman', *MM* 48 (1962), pp. 186-92; M. Kowaleski, 'The Shipmaster as Entrepreneur in Medieval England', in *Markets and Entrepreneurs in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of Richard Britnell*, eds. B. Dodds

and C. Liddy (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 165-82; *idem*, 'The Demography of Maritime Communities'; *idem*, 'Working at Sea'; Lambert and Ayton, 'The Mariner'; R. Miller, 'The Man at the Helm: The Faith and Practice of the Medieval Seafarer, with Special Reference to England, 1000-1250 AD', unpubl. PH.D. thesis, University of London, 2003.

⁵³ TNA E 101/16/34, n. 17; TNA E 101/19/22, m. 3; TNA E 36/204, p. 225; *Foedera*, II, ii, p. 1226.

⁵⁴ BL Add. Ms 37494, fol. 20v; TNA E 101/180/2, p. 7r.

⁵⁵ TNA E 101/37/25, m. 14; TNA E 101/ 182/6, p. 6r.

⁵⁶ *The Wardrobe Book of William de Norwell, 12 July 1338 to 27 May 1340*, ed. M. Lyon, B. Lyon, H.S. Lucas and J. de Sturler (Brussels, 1983), p. 370; TNA E 36/204, p. 230; TNA E 101/25/9.

⁵⁷ TNA E 101/26/37, m. 2; TNA E 101/30/24, m. 2; TNA E 101/36/14, m. 5.

⁵⁸ Hanley and Chalklin, 'Kent', pp. 58-172.

⁵⁹ See, for example, S.H. Rigby, 'Urban Society in Early Fourteenth-Century England: The Evidence of the Lay Subsidies', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 72 (1990), 169-84; *idem*, *Medieval Grimsby: Growth and Decline* (Hull, 1993), pp. 24-9. Cf. E. Miller and J. Hatcher, *Medieval England: Towns, Commerce and Crafts, 1086-1348* (London, 1995), pp. 336-9; *Dorset Lay Subsidy Roll of 1332*, ed. A.D. Mills (Dorset Record Society, 1971), p. viii.

⁶⁰ The number in the brackets represents the converted value of the movables that each person was assed at. This is achieved by multiplying the recorded assessment by 10 or 15, depending on what rate the individual was assessed at. Residents of boroughs and ancient demesne were assessed at a tenth and those residing in rural areas at a fifteenth of their total movable wealth, although individuals could be assessed in more than place. In 1334 Kent was unusual in that it retained the original system of assessment (that of 1327 and 1332), particularly for those that lived within the liberties of the Cinque Ports: in other words the assessments were based on true tenths and fifteenths of total movable wealth, see Hanley and Chalklin, 'Kent', p. 62.

⁶¹ Hanley and Chalklin, 'Kent', pp. 82, 87, 92.

⁶² H. Clarke *et al.*, *Sandwich: The Completest Medieval Town in England, a Study of the Town and Port from its Origins to 1600* (Oxford, 2010), p. 62.

⁶³ J.F. Hadwin, 'The Medieval Lay Subsidies and Economic History', in *ECHR* 36 (1983), 200-17, pp. 201, 214. See also, C. Biggs, 'Taxation, Warfare, and the Early Fourteenth Century 'Crisis' in the North: Cumberland Lay Subsidies, 1332-1348', in *ECHR* 58 (2005), pp. 639-72, pp. 656-61, who is broadly optimistic about the lay subsidies as are Lambert and Ayton, 'The English Mariner'.

⁶⁴ The Canterbury moneyers and the men of the liberty of the Cinque Ports were exempt from paying the tax. It is argued that the need to take account of these exemptions ensured that Kent's assessors followed the 1327 and 1332 procedure of recording each taxpayer. See Hanley and Chalklin, 'Kent', pp. 60-61. However, the assessment recorded by the assessors related only to the movables they owned that lay outside the main boroughs of the Cinque Ports, hence the valuations offered here reveal only part of each shipmaster's wealth.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-78, 82-84, 90, 99, 146, 153-54.

⁶⁷ There is no evidence that ships were classified as 'movables' by the assessors so Seman's wealth assessment did not include the value of his ship. He first served in a naval capacity in 1326 and his last appearance was in 1342, see TNA C 47/2/35; TNA E 101/17/24, m. 4d; TNA E 101/19/38, m. 7; TNA E 101/19/39, m. 3; *Norwell*, p. 368.

⁶⁸ CCR, 1343-46, p. 129.

⁶⁹ Hanley and Chalklin, 'Kent', pp. 74-75.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 126, 129, 143, 145, 136, 155. In 1347 John Mayheu of Sandwich commanded the *Katerine* during the siege of Calais, TNA E 101/21/36, m. 5.

⁷¹ Hanley and Chalklin, 'Kent', pp. 72, 73, 75, 105, 130, 137, 139, 164. In 1342 Peter Seman commanded the *Katerine* of Faversham, CCR, 1343-46, p. 130.

⁷² Hanley and Chalklin, 'Kent', p. 76. Between 1325 and 1339 John Loveryk commanded the *Loger*, *Simon* and *Trinity* of Sandwich (he also commanded a ship out of New Hythe that is not named), as well as the royal ship the *Edmund*. In 1335 Thomas Loveryk commanded the *Marie* out of Sandwich. In 1337 William Loveryk commanded the *Godbyete* out of Sandwich. John: TNA E 101/17/10, m. 2; TNA E 101/20/39, n.1; TNA E 101/20/39, n.17; *Norwell*, p. 364; Thomas: BL Nero C.VIII, fol. 265r; William: TNA E 101/19/39, m. 3. For William, see also *Norwell*, p. 363; TNA E 101/20/39, n. 35, which show his service on the king's ships.

⁷³ See, for example, TNA E 101/17/3; TNA E 101/19/38; TNA E 101/25/9; TNA E 101/39.17. These provide a spread of accounts from the 1320s to the 1380s that show mariners were paid 3d. per day. On *regard*, see BL Add. Ms 37494, fol. 23v; TNA E 101/30/29. In 1377 the crown paid *regard* to mariners of 6d. per week and 3d. per week to ship's boys. In 1370 some mariners at sea with Guy Brian were paid 4d. per day but this was unusual; see TNA E 101/30/29. For a commercial voyage from London to Calais mariners would receive 5s. for the outward journey, although mariners could be paid in several ways some of which included offsetting wages against carried cargoes, see Ward, *Shipmaster*, pp. 107-10, 208-9.

⁷⁴ As a comparison Hampshire carpenters were earning anywhere between 2½d. and 5d. per day, roofers 1½-4d. per day and agricultural labourers 1-5d. per day, see P.A. Arthur, 'The Impact of the Black Death on Seventeen Units of Account of the Bishopric of Winchester', unpubl. PH.D thesis, University of Southampton, 2005, pp. 147, 154.

⁷⁵ D. Burwash, *English Merchant Shipping, 1460-1540* (Newton Abbot, 1969), p. 52; A.R. Bridbury, 'The Black Death', in *ECHR* 26, no. 4 (1973), pp. 577-92.

⁷⁶ Hanley and Chalklin, 'Kent', p. 68. Average assessments varied and ranged from 9d. (11s. 3d.) to 6s. 1d. (£4 11s. 3d.). Only three of our masters were assessed at, or just fell under, the lowest average payment, while thirteen were assessed over the highest.

⁷⁷ For his naval career, see *CPR*, 1313-17, p. 547; CCR, 1333-37, p. 692; TNA E 101/19/3, m. 8; BL Ms Stowe 553, fol. 76r; BL Ms Nero C.VIII, fol. 264r.

⁷⁸ TNA E 101/78/4a, m. 2; TNA E 101/17/24, m. 4d; TNA E 101/21/36, mm. 4; TNA E 36/204, pp. 222, 239. In 1326 he participated in the fleet that put to sea to prevent the landing of Roger Mortimer; in 1340 he fought at the battle of Sluys and in 1347 he served at the siege of Calais.

⁷⁹ Hanley and Chalklin, 'Kent', p. 76.

⁸⁰ *CPR*, 1343-45, p. 91.

⁸¹ *CPR*, 1340-43, p. 213.

⁸² For the Condy family, see H. Clarke *et al.*, *Sandwich*, pp. 62-63, 81.

⁸³ *CPR*, 1354-58, p. 326.

⁸⁴ *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1386-1421*, eds J.S. Roskell, L. Clark and C. Rawcliffe (Stroud, 1993). The biographical information on the Condy's (or Cundy as sometimes spelled) is available on line through the History of Parliament website (<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1386-1421/member/cundy-peter>), accessed 24/02/2013.

⁸⁵ Clarke *et al.*, *Sandwich*, p. 62, give 1345 as the date of John Condy's death. However, in 1347 John Condy served at the siege of Calais (TNA E 101/21/36, m. 4). Given that the *Patent Roll* entry tells us John was dead by 1355, his date of passing must have been after the date his service at the siege of Calais ended (24 June) and the 1 October 1355 when the king's letters patent were issued.

⁸⁶ *Poll Taxes*, I, pp. xiv-xv.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. xv.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 417.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* These were Richard, Henry and Stephen.

⁹⁰ P. Nightingale, 'Norwich, London, and the Regional Integration of Norfolk's Economy in the First Half of the Fourteenth Century', in *Trade, Urban Hinterlands and Market Integration*, ed. J. Galloway (Institute of Historical Research, 2000), pp. 83-101, p. 90.

⁹¹ Lambert, Ayton, 'The Mariner', p. 173.

⁹² *Poll Taxes*, III, pp. 140, 141, 152, 156.

⁹³ TNA E 101/29/36, m. 1; TNA E 101/42/22, m. 3; *Poll Taxes*, III, pp. 152, 156.

⁹⁴ Of the 4,015 taxpayers recorded in York in 1381 989 have damaged returns. 259 people paid 4*d.*; seventy 6*d.*; eighty-six 8*d.*; 212 12*d.* and 277 over 2*s.* The overall average was 12*d.*

⁹⁵ TNA E 101/78/4a m. 2; TNA E 101/78/9 m. 3; TNA E 101/78/9 m. 1; TNA E 101/180/2 p.3v, 7r; TNA E 101/182/6 p. 32r; TNA E 101/182/11 p. 44v.

⁹⁶ TNA E 101/32/22; TNA E 101/180/2, fol. 7r; *CCR*, 1369-74, p. 467; *CCR*, 1374-77, p. 387.

⁹⁷ TNA E 101/37/14, m. 2; TNA E 101/37/25, m. 14; TNA E 101/182/6, fol. 6r; TNA E 101/38/30, m. 2; TNA E 101/40/8, m. 3; TNA E 101/40/19, m. 4.

⁹⁸ See, for example, TNA (Coroner's Rolls) JUST 2/74, m. 1r, which shows the case of the confiscation of a ship at Boston worth 100*s.* (the author would like to thank Professor Chris Woolgar for pointing out this source); *CPR*, 1343-45, p. 402; *CPR*, 1348-50, p. 61; *CPR*, 1408-13, p. 139; *CCR*, 1346-49, p. 242-43; Rigby, *Medieval Grimsby*, p. 18; W. J. Carpenter Turner., 'The Building of the *Grace Dieu*, *Valentine* and *Falconer* at Southampton, 1416-1420', in *MM* 40 (1954), pp. 55-72.

⁹⁹ *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, vol. II, pp. 365, 407; A. Saul, 'Great Yarmouth in the Fourteenth Century', unpubl. D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford (1975), p. 183. At this time Yarmouth port bailiffs valued the fishing boats of Holland and Zeeland between £2 13*s.* 4*d.* and £26 13*s.* 8*d.*

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, *CCR*, 1307-13, p. 358; *CCR*, 1313-18, p. 73; *CCR*, 1339-41, pp. 29-30; *CCR*, 1346-49, pp. 242-43; *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, vol. II, pp. 395, 437; *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, vol. III, pp. 404, 342, 675. In one case the investigators noted that a ship was still valued at 100*s.* even though it 'was old and nearly a wreck' (*Cal. Inq. Misc.*, vol. III, p. 675) and even the salvage of a ship could be worth 50 marks (*Cal. Inq. Misc.*, vol. II, p. 437).

¹⁰¹ M. Mates, 'High Prices in the early Fourteenth-Century', in *EcHR* 28 (1975), pp. 1-16, p. 14; M. Allen, 'The Volume of English Currency, 1158-1470', in *EcHR* 54 (2001), pp. 595-611, Table 1, p. 603. Trade through Sandwich was particularly buoyant in the 1330s; see Clarke *et al.*, *Sandwich*, pp. 65-66.

¹⁰² P. Nightingale, 'Monetary Contraction and Mercantile Credit in Later Medieval England', in *EcHR* 43, no. 4 (Nov. 1990), pp. 560-575.

¹⁰³ Arthur, 'The Impact of the Black Death', pp. 174, 249.

¹⁰⁴ Bridbury, 'The Black Death'.

¹⁰⁵ In 1337 the crown was buying wheat at 5*s.* per quarter, see TNA E 101/20/7. For the number of men that could be fed from a quarter of wheat, see Lambert, *Shipping*, pp. 60-61.

¹⁰⁶ In the 1330s eleven Kentish ships appear *only* in the commercial records but have been included in this section because they still represent invested capital. It is worth pointing out that the Kentish ports that were members of the Cinque Ports were exempt from many national custom charges and are not well documented in commercial sources.

¹⁰⁷ Not all owners of a Kentish ship would necessarily reside in Kent. However based on our limited evidence ownership does seem, for the most part, to have been a localised investment. See, TNA E 101/24/9 (b), which is a list of shipowners who were given compensation in 1342 for the damage their ships suffered during the Brittany expedition. Apart from a few exceptions it shows that most owners resided in the ships' home ports.

¹⁰⁸ Included in the assessments were foodstuffs, animals, wool, linen, tools, dye, and some silver or valuable household goods, see Rigby, *Medieval Grimsby*, p. 18. Apart from money, property, rents and other sources of income it would seem that each person did have a considerable amount of their movable wealth assessed. The major problem associated with the lay subsidies is manipulation of the charges and evasions. For Cumberland, however, Biggs, 'Taxation', pp. 656-61 is optimistic about the assessment procedure.

¹⁰⁹ Hanley and Chalklin, 'Kent', pp. 100, 120.

¹¹⁰ E.M. Carus-Wilson and O. Coleman, *England's Export Trade, 1275-1547* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 44-45.

¹¹¹ For the price of a wool sack, see A.R. Bell *et al.*, 'Advance Contracts for the Sale of Wool in Medieval England: an Underdeveloped and Inefficient Market', in *ICMA Centre Discussion Papers in Finance*, pp. 1-23, p. 5. Wool prices fluctuated depending on quality and on the contracts that had been agreed; however £10 is an acceptable mean value.

¹¹² TNA E 101/27/36; TNA E 101/30/24, m. 1; TNA E 101/36/14 m. 5.

¹¹³ A. Saul, 'Great Yarmouth and the Hundred Years War in the Fourteenth-Century', in *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 52 (1979), pp. 105-115; J. Williamson, 'The Geographical History of the Cinque Ports', *History* 11 (1926), pp. 97-115, pp. 98, 101; Rodger, 'Naval Service', p. 640; F.W. Brooks, 'The Cinque Ports', in *MM* 15 (1929), pp. 142-91.

¹¹⁴ Clarke *et al.*, *Sandwich*, pp. 58, 121; H.S. Cobb, 'Local Port Customs Accounts Prior to 1550,' in *Prisca Munimenta: Studies in Archival and Administrative History Presented to Dr A. E. J. Hollaender*, ed. F. Ranger (London, 1973), pp. 215-28, p. 217, n. 24; Burwash, *English Merchant Shipping*, p. 157; J.H. Andrews, 'Geographical Aspects of the Maritime Trade of Kent and Sussex', unpubl. PH.D thesis, London School of Economics, 1954, pp. 50-51, 110-12. The 'eastward drift' was more problematic for Sussex ports.

¹¹⁵ TNA E 101/16/7; TNA E 101/16/21; TNA E 101/19/16; TNA E 101/28/21; TNA E 101/28/22; TNA E 101/28/23; TNA E 101/29/10; TNA E 101/29/33; TNA E 101/30/29; BL Add. Ms 7967, fol. 97r; BL Ms Nero C.V111, fol. 265v; *Norwell*, p. 374.

¹¹⁶ P. Ziegler, *The Black Death* (London, 1969), pp. 244-46; Clarke *et al.*, *Sandwich*, p. 58.

¹¹⁷ C. Platt, *King Death: the Black Death and its Aftermath in Late Medieval England* (London, 1996), pp. 9-10.

¹¹⁸ J.W. Sherborne, 'The Hundred Year's War: The English Navy: Shipping and Manpower 1369-1389', in *Past and Present* 37 (July, 1967), pp. 163-75.

¹¹⁹ Clarke *et al.*, *Sandwich*, p. 58.

¹²⁰ London provided 142 ships from 1360-1380. In the earlier period (1330-59) it supplied 92 vessels.

¹²¹ Bonney, 'The English Medieval Wool and Cloth Trade'; Clarke *et al.*, *Sandwich*, p. 124. From 1203 to 1482 London went from handling 17 to 61 per cent of the kingdom's overseas trade.

¹²² See, for example, *Calendar of Letter Books of the City of London: Book F*, ed. R. R. Sharpe (London, 1904), p. 5.

¹²³ Clarke *et al.*, *Sandwich*, p. 121.

¹²⁴ TNA E 101/44/20, this document is dated to 1404 by the author from his database using the service records of the serving masters recorded on the account. 1417: *Rotuli Normanniae in Turri Londinensi Asservati: Johanne et Henrico quinto, Angliæ Regibus*, ed. Sir T. Duffus Hardy (London, 1835), pp. 320-29; 1423: TNA E 101/51/7.

¹²⁵ TNA E 101/51/7, mm. 1, 1d, 3. After the capture of Calais in 1347 and of the conquest of France by Henry V smaller ships could be used to transport forces to northern France: this was cheaper for the crown as smaller crews meant lower wage bills. Hence, that we see smaller ships in the naval sources may not be indicative of overall changes to the merchant fleet.

¹²⁶ TNA E 101/51/10 nos, 16, 21, 32, 44, 45, 47, 50, 51, 56, 57, 97.

¹²⁷ See, for example, Exchequer (Exchequer of Receipt: Issue Rolls) E 403/746, m. 16, which records the shipment in 1439 of Richard Woodville (Earl Rivers), William Peyto and William Chamberlain from Sandwich and Winchelsea to Calais.

¹²⁸ S. Rose, *Southampton and the Navy in the Age of Henry V* (Southampton, 1988, issue number 14), p. 3; D. Loades, *The Tudor Navy: An Administrative, Political and Military History* (Aldershot, 1992), p. 39.

¹²⁹ O. Coleman, 'Trade and Prosperity in the Fifteenth Century: Some Aspects of the Trade of Southampton', in *EcHR* 16, no. 1 (1963), pp. 9-22.