

# Labour and Labour Services on the Estates of Canterbury Cathedral Priory in the Fourteenth Century

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The local account rolls of the priory of Christ Church, Canterbury, provide a mass of information relating to wage-rates and labour services, whose surface has so far only been scratched.<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to generalize. Not only are there marked differences between the priory's Essex estates, with a heavy burden of week-work, and those in Kent, but even within Kent there was strong regional variation. On the marsh manors the tenant services were negligible and the wages generally high. In contrast on the manors of east Kent, which supplied the house with much of its grain, villein tenants still performed important services of reaping, mowing, threshing and carrying grain and the paid workers – the ploughmen and carters etc. – received lower money wages, but higher grain liveries than their peers on the marshes. These differences remained throughout the early fourteenth century and were then accentuated in the difficult years after the Black Death.

While it is well-known that Kentish gavelkinders owed their lord just a few days work of ploughing or reaping, it is often forgotten that the cottars were more heavily burdened. These 'jacks of all trades', as Du Boulay describes them,<sup>2</sup> were responsible for threshing, weeding, reaping, stooking, wattle making, brewing and a variety of other tasks. On the archiepiscopal manor of Wrotham, they carried letters, and on the manor of Petham they acted as drover, lay out at night to guard the lord's corn, roofed buildings, sheared sheep and got wood ready for the fire.<sup>3</sup> Similar tasks were demanded from the cottars on the Christ Church estates. Although by 1310 most of these services had been commuted for a money rent, they were commuted 'at the will of the lord', so that in any one year the local serjeant could ask the tenants to perform what he wished.<sup>4</sup> Thus, although the credit side of the account carried the total value of the commuted customs, the debit side often carried the full or a significant portion of this sum, because the services were, in fact, worked. Moreover it is a mistake to assume that because some of the services were commuted that

represented the total value of work owing on the manor. At Meopham some of the brewing services were sold, but from an account of 1384 it is clear that these represented just half the brewing services due and that the other half had been and was still being used to provide the ale for the workers on the manor.<sup>5</sup>

Thus it is not true, as R.A.L. Smith thought, that commutation greatly increased the rent-roll of the priory and led to an economy based 'almost entirely upon a money rent and wage labour'.<sup>6</sup> Most of the marsh manors had been burdened with light or no services at all, so that their commutation did not appreciably add to the value of the rents. At Agney and Orgarswick, for example, the tenants were expected to shear 100 sheep and mow and raise two acres of meadow. These services were commuted for 2s 2d, but, in fact, most years the tenants continued to mow the meadow. At Appledore the works were commuted for 12s 5d and included harrowing five acres, mowing five acres of meadow, roofing the hall, reaping four and a half acres of wheat and carrying the grain for one day in the autumn with fourteen carts.<sup>7</sup> About half were worked in any one year. At Ham no services were owed at all, but if the tenants pastured their sheep on the priory's marshes, they owed one-tenth of the lambs that were born on the marshes and one-tenth of the fleece of all the sheep that were pastured and sheared there.<sup>8</sup> It was only on a few Medway valley manors – Hollingbourne, East Farleigh and Westwell – that commuted customs did form a significant addition to the rent-roll. At East Farleigh, for example, by 1291 the money for plough-shares, honey and eels and the commutation of carrying services, threshing, reaping, mowing and enclosing added up to £17 6s 11½d of which very little, between 67s and 77s was actually worked. So too at Hollingbourne, the commutation of goods – again honey and eels – and services, including driving animals to Canterbury for the larder, brought in, after 1298, £12 3s 4d, of which only the reaping and ploughing was usually demanded of the tenants – valued at 21s – 30s a year.

In contrast on all the large grain producing east Kent manors – Adisham, Ickham, Eastry and Chartham – the works, although commuted for large amounts, were nearly all carried out. Thus at Eastry, where the customs were commuted for £19 13s 5½d, for most years services to the value of £17 3s 6d were actually performed. The most important, and burdensome, were undoubtedly the carrying services performed by all the tenants, but, in addition, the ten cottars were responsible for reaping 55½ acres, harrowing one day for vetch and oats and washing and shearing the sheep.<sup>9</sup> At Ickham the tenants almost every year ploughed 17 acres, reaped 120 acres, collected 1200

sheaves of straw and, as at Eastry, carried most of the grain. In addition if they had the right to put their horses in the demesne pasture, they harrowed the lord's land at the rate of two acres for one horse and three acres for two horses.<sup>10</sup> Consequently the manor did not need to hire a full-time harrower. At Chartham the tenants ploughed and sowed 20 acres and reaped 82 acres 3 virgate of wheat.<sup>11</sup> At Adisham six of the cottars had to reap ten acres each, supply the prior and his officials with food when they visited the manor, gather straw from the fields, thresh the grain in the autumn, wash and shear the sheep and make four hurdles each.<sup>12</sup> Such services cannot fairly be described, as they sometimes are, as "a negligible asset for the monks of Christ Church".<sup>13</sup> True, tenant ploughing took care of just a small fraction of the total acreage, but, as on many of the archiepiscopal estates, reaping was far more significant and roughly one-quarter of the harvest on the east Kent manors was reaped by the tenants.<sup>14</sup>

The reaping and threshing done by the tenants, however, did not take care of all the work that needed to be done. Additional help would come from the year-round employees – the ploughmen and carters etc. – but, certainly on the marsh manors, with few or no tenant services, they could not have been responsible for the whole of the harvest. Yet on none of the Christ Church Kentish estates was reaping regularly paid for with a money wage. Instead it was paid for by the sheaf. The earliest evidence comes from Appledore in 1352/3 when the serjeant paid 16d an acre for reaping and noted that he 'could not have reapers as accustomed to by the sheaf, because of the paucity of men'. By the 1380s the reapers were clearly receiving every tenth sheaf, but, in the late thirteenth century, they may well have been paid at a lower rate as was common elsewhere.<sup>15</sup> Similarly on the bulk of the Kentish estates, the threshing, not performed by customary labour, appears to have been paid for by using a heaped bushel, with the threshers keeping the heaps. At Orpington, where the tenants were responsible for threshing 126 quarters of wheat a year, the serjeant, one time, definitely noted that the rest of the grain was threshed 'by the bushel'.<sup>16</sup> On just a few manors, primarily in north Kent, was some of the threshing paid for in money.<sup>17</sup>

A large part of the agricultural work on the manors in Kent, however, was done by paid labourers, the *famuli*, who served as ploughmen, carters, shepherds, cowmen and pigmen, according to the needs of the manor. They were paid a small money wage and given extensive liveries of grain. The rates, especially for the ploughmen, were higher than those prevailing in many other parts of the country. Whereas, elsewhere, ploughmen often received one

quarter of barley every twelve weeks, or, at the best, every ten weeks, in Kent, ploughmen were paid one quarter every eight weeks, except in the case of the east Kent manors, where they received even more, one quarter every seven weeks. Workers on the archiepiscopal estates in Kent received similar liveries,<sup>18</sup> which suggests that the high rates must have been a common practice within the county and resulted, perhaps, from the free status of the men concerned. Money-wages were also high, although they varied considerably from manor to manor (see Table 1). Throughout most of England ploughholders were paid 4s 6d to 5s a year, but the lowest wage on the Christ Church estates was 6s 6d and on a number of manors, the ploughmen actually received 9s a year.

On its estates outside of Kent, the priory relied on a similar combination of tenant services and paid labour. In Surrey the situation was very like that of north Kent, with, except at harvest time, comparatively light tenant services. So too the ploughmen were paid a high grain livery (one quarter every eight weeks at Walworth and every nine weeks at Merstham), but a slightly lower money wage, 5s 6d. Most of the threshing and winnowing was also paid for in money. Unlike Kent, however, additional reapers were paid, not by the sheaf, but in cash. In contrast, on the priory's Essex and Suffolk estates, tenant labour was more significant. By the early years of the fourteenth century only small amounts of ploughing, harrowing and other works had been commuted and the tenants still performed a large part of the agricultural work on the manors.<sup>19</sup> At Bocking, in Essex, for example, they generally plough 116 acres, harrowed 104 acres and reaped 206 acres. In addition they carried out the manure of the manor with 42 carts, reaped 12½ acres of meadow, turned the hay there and then carried it back to the house. In Suffolk, at Eleigh, then tenants ploughed 182½ acres, harrowed 72 acres and reaped 175 acres. Furthermore on all these manors the tenants performed miscellaneous works – weeding, cleaning out ditches, enclosing and roofing – that had to be paid for in Kent. But the tenants could not do all the necessary work. The priory still needed to hire extra help, both casual labour and permanent year-round employees. Additional reaping was usually paid for by the acre. The ploughmen, on the other hand, received a grain livery – one quarter every twelve weeks – plus a share in the harvest.<sup>20</sup> At Eleigh, for example, the two ploughmen each had one acre of wheat and one acre of oats.

These rates, with just a few exceptions, remained unchanged throughout the inflation of the early fourteenth century. On the marsh manor of Ebony, after 1310, the grain livery of the *famuli* was paid in oats, instead of barley. On a few manors some wages were

cut. Thus as Orgarswick the shepherd's wage went down from 5s to 4s: at East Farleigh the pigman's wage went down from 5s to 4s: at Barksore the pigman's wage was cut from 3s 6d to 2s and at Copton the master ploughman received 9s instead of 9s 6d and the ox-driver 7s instead of 8s 6d. Even on those manors where the money wages remained unchanged, they would, of course, buy less, but the workers were cushioned from the major impact of the inflation by continued payment of the grain liveries, making up the greater portion of their wage. The priory, however, was clearly making every effort to reduce expenses where possible. At Milton, in Essex, the oats had been reaped for money (1½d an acre) but the tenants had been given substantial allowances of bread at the time of the harvest. After 1307, at a time of high grain prices, the tenants were paid more per acre (3½d in 1307 and 4½d in 1313) but the bread allowance was eliminated. Only the wages for mowing, always the most sensitive to changing economic conditions, rose everywhere. The most widespread increase was from 5d to 6d an acre, but on a few manors it went even higher. On the Kentish marsh manors of Lydden and Ruckinge mowers were paid 7d and 8d an acre, respectively and outside Kent, at Walworth in Surrey and Milton in Essex, mowers also received 8d an acre. Mowing, however, was such a seasonal task, that the increased wage bill was in no way a serious drain on the priory's resources and brought but temporary relief to the peasant.

At the time of the abnormally bad harvests of 1315–17 the agricultural workers on the Christ Church estates fared better than some of their peers. On none of the priory's estates were grain liveries actually suspended, as they were on some manors of the bishopric of Winchester,<sup>21</sup> but on a few manors the *famuli* were paid in oats or given mixed grain instead of pure barley. At Orpington, Walworth and Fairfield, as on the archiepiscopal manor of Otford, some of the grain liveries in 1316 were paid in money, at the rate of 1s a week for ploughmen.<sup>22</sup> On the Essex manors the rates paid to reapers went up and almost everywhere the rate for mowing the meadow increased still further to 8d or 9d an acre and at Orpington and Walworth, perhaps because of their closer proximity to London, it actually rose to 1s 1d an acre. Once the agricultural crisis was over, mowing and reaping rates naturally went down, but in most places mowing rates remained above the late thirteenth century level – 8d an acre at Orpington, 7d at Lydden and Milton and 6d an acre on the majority of the estates. When prices fell in the 1330s these workers were obviously better off than their forbears.

No further change took place until the severe mortality after the passage of the Black Death, caused both money wages and grain

liveries in Kent to rise significantly. At Chartham, for example, in 1348/9 one carter and six ploughmen received barley at the rate of one quarter for seven weeks from Michaelmas until the 10th May. For the remainder of the year just two ploughmen and one carter were paid, but at the rate of one quarter for six weeks. The pigman fared even better, being paid for half the year at one quarter for sixteen weeks and the other half at the rate of one quarter for eight weeks. Money wages also rose, although the amount varied from manor to manor (see Tables 1 and 2) and frequently men were employed for just part of the year. Mowing naturally cost more, as the customary rate of 6d an acre went up to 8d, 9d, or 10d an acre. Furthermore on a number of Kentish manors the tenants reaped or threshed for a money wage, instead of being paid by the sheaf or the heaped bushel.

By the mid 1350s, however, money wages had generally fallen, although they still remained well above the pre-pestilence figure. The Christ Church evidence supports the conclusions of B.H. Putnam that the enforcement of the Statute of Labourers kept wages down. Putnam has insisted that parliament, king and council clearly intended that the statute be enforced and were using every means in their power to secure this end. She believed that even though rates did stay higher after the plague, they might have risen even higher without legislation. 'Wages were kept for ten years at a lower level than would have resulted from a regime of free competition'.<sup>23</sup> The fluctuations in the Christ Church wages paid for mowing suggest very clearly the presence or absence of the justices. At Mersham, for example, in 1352 eight acres of meadow were mowed at 5d, the statutory rate, but another six acres were mowed at 7d. The following year six acres were mowed at 9d an acre and the rest by customary labour. By 1357 the rate had dropped to 8d an acre. As always, each manor seems to have made its own agreement with its workers. By the mid 1350s mowers were receiving 7d an acre at Great Chart, Ebony and East Farleigh, 8d an acre at Chartham, Mersham, Loose and Appledore and on the two marsh manors of Ruckinge and Barksore 10d an acre – double the rate of the late thirteenth century.

The *famuli* also received different wages in different parts of Kent, but the spread between the highest and lowest wage was far greater than earlier in the century. In northwest Kent wages were generally lower than in the rest of the county. A shepherd at Meopham was earning 5s 6d in the mid 1350s compared to 6s and 7s on the east Kent manors and 10s to 12s on some of the Romney marsh manors. Similarly a ploughholder at Orpington was paid 8s 6d, compared to the 11s and 12s common on the east Kent and Medway valley manors and

the 17s 6d paid at Agney. For the most part this differential remained unchanged through the mid 1370s, with men in northwest Kent receiving wages comparable to or just slightly above those in other parts of the country and workers on the marsh manors being paid considerably more. Yet there was little difference in the amount of work that they did. Each plough-team at Appledore, where the plough holder was paid 19s a year in the mid 1370s, was generally responsible for about eighty acres of ploughing. At Meopham, where the men received half that sum, a team frequently ploughed ninety acres a year. What can account for such a significant difference? Either the men at Appledore were remarkably assertive and thus able to improve their position or perhaps, the shortage of labour was more acute there. Possibly, of course, both factors were operating simultaneously.

Of all the Kentish *famuli* it was the unskilled labourer, the pigman, who, where he continued to be employed, eventually enjoyed the most marked improvement in his standard of living. Not only did his money wage double or triple (see Table 2), but his grain livery frequently doubled as well. Before 1348 many pigment received the lowest grain livery one quarter every sixteen weeks and by the 1370s this had often increased to one quarter every eight weeks. So long as labour had been plentiful, pigmen had been in a poor bargaining position. At East Farleigh, for example, in the late thirteenth century the pigman had received the same wage and grain livery as the shepherd. Then, in the early fourteenth century, presumably because of the abundance of population and the rising grain prices, the pigman's support was cut. His money wage was reduced from 5s to 4s and his grain livery was extended from one quarter every ten weeks to one quarter every twelve weeks, yet the wages and livery of the shepherd remained unchanged. After 1348, with the drop in population, the pigman's wages went up, but still at a slower rate than his more skilled fellow. In 1350 he was receiving 6s compared to 8s 6d for the shepherd and in 1351 he was paid just 3s for half a year. It was not until the 1370s, when repeated outbreaks of disease had further reduced the labour supply, that his grain livery and his money wage once more equalled those of the shepherd – 8s a year and one quarter of barley every eight weeks. But he still remained in a very vulnerable position, as many serjeants eliminated the job rather than pay the increased wages. More and more often the pigmen were employed just part-time, or the task of keeping the pigs was given to the cowman or the demesne pigs were kept with those of the vill. Thus it was harder for unskilled men to find a permanent full-time position, even though the rewards were greater.

On the Christ Church estates outside of Kent wages and grain liveries also improved, but again, there were marked differences between one region and another and even within a county. In Essex and Suffolk, where the ploughmen received part of their wages in the form of so many acres in the fields, the number of acres did not change at all. The rate of the grain livery also remained the same, but its composition changed significantly, with approximately half now being paid in wheat instead of the cheaper grains. In Surrey at Walworth, on the outskirts of London, both the ploughmen and the carter were able to demand 20s a year in the mid 1360s, far above the wages being paid in Kent, even on the Romney marsh manors. In contrast at Merstham, the ploughmen were being paid much less than most of the Kentish workers and the wages of the pigmen scarcely rose at all (see Tables 1 and 2). Moreover, one year the pigman's grain livery was reduced from one quarter every twelve weeks to one quarter every sixteen weeks, since he was just a boy. Pigmen also suffered on the Sussex estates of Battle Abbey, where both their money wage and grain livery were cut. In discussing this reduction, Professor Searle attributed it to a plentiful supply of unskilled labour. "Pigmen still abounded".<sup>24</sup> But were wages at this time determined solely by economic factors? It is perhaps true that mortality was heavier in Kent than in Surrey or Sussex, thus allowing the survivors to demand more. But it is also possible that the justices were enforcing the Statute of Labourers with less rigour in Kent, so that wages were not kept as artificially low as they were in some other parts of the country. By 1389 the Merstham ploughman was being paid 16s a year, more than double his wage of ten years before and only slightly below the 19s still being paid on the Kentish manor of Appledore. Was not this, perhaps, a truer indicator of the state of the labour market than the lower levels of the 1370s?

Once the immediate crisis was past, however, tenant services were reimposed on nearly all the Christ Church estates. Unlike the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield and the monks of Ramsey Abbey and Durham Cathedral Priory, who began to phase out labour services immediately after the first outbreak of plague, the monks of Canterbury Cathedral Priory successfully maintained their rights on most of their estates through the 1370s.<sup>25</sup> In Suffolk, at Hadleigh, where the acreage under the plough had been greatly reduced, the convent was obviously willing to commute the labour services that were no longer needed, but, in 1377, the tenants reaped fourty three acres, threshed, spread manure, weeded and dug clay for the wall of a building. Similarly at Eleigh in the 1360s, although some of the customary services were commuted, tenants were still doing most of

the reaping, some of the harrowing and the ditching. But in 1380, after a new rental had been made, these services were turned into fixed money payments and the priory, in turn, paid cash for all the reaping and ditching that was needed. In Essex, where at Lawling in 1351 the convent had been forced to let the customary tenants pay a money rent, by 1368, the date of the next account, it had successfully reasserted its authority and only the serjeant paid money for his land. As late as 1388 tenants at Lawling were still threshing, mowing, reaping, weeding and shearing the sheep. The only concession that had been made was that fifty seven acres of ploughing had been commuted for money 'because the tenants did not have the ploughs'. In contrast to these piecemeal or late concessions, on the Essex manor of Bocking, the priory, by 1369, had agreed permanently to commute all the labour services and to allow the cottars to pay a money rent. Yet economically there was no major difference between Bocking and the other Essex and Suffolk manors. They were all situated within easy reach of a flourishing cloth industry that might be expected to compete for labour. Bocking tenants, however, had a long tradition of aggressively maintaining their rights,<sup>26</sup> and this may have helped them to improve their position before tenants elsewhere.

Similarly the priory made very few permanent concessions in Kent. Although the customary services were still technically commuted, on those manors where it had been common for the tenants actually to carry them out, they continued to do so and indeed, on some of the manors where the services had been only partially worked before, they were fully performed thereafter. The payment of reapers with money was just a temporary concession and once the first shock of the pestilence was over, most of the threshing and reaping was carried out as before by a combination of customary labour and payment in kind. At Meopham, for example, in 1384 the serjeant noted that eighty acres of wheat were reaped by the tenants and the rest of the reaping was done by the tenth sheaf. Although the evidence is less explicit, a similar situation appears to have existed on the archiepiscopal estates.<sup>27</sup> The magnitude of the saving to both the archbishop and the priory can be seen when the average cost of the harvest – £1 10s – on the Christ Church Kentish estates is compared with the £9 8s 3d that was paid at Walworth in 1368, when 125 acres of grain were reaped at 18d an acre.

The only place where the priory did give up significant rights was in the Wealden denns. With the rapidly mounting value of fuel and timber, which could be easily sold to foreign shippers and on the home market, men in the denns of both the archbishop and the priory had been cutting down and removing the trees growing there.<sup>28</sup>

Powerless to prevent this, the prior of Christ Church, in the 1360s, accepted the *fait accompli* and negotiated a series of agreements, in which he granted the tenants the right to fell all the trees, large and small, in return for an increase in annual rent. In making this concession, the prior was, ostensibly concerned to save the souls of his tenants, which were being endangered by their activities, but he cannot have been unaware of the financial gain involved.<sup>29</sup>

By the mid 1380s, with most of the priory's manors at farm, it is harder to determine what is happening. As grain prices fell, the rates for mowing, which had reached 1s an acre on some of the marsh manors, dropped back to 10d or, in northern Kent, 8d an acre. The money wages paid to the *famuli*, however, continued to rise, although the marked difference in the rates, according to location, remained. Thus a ploughholder was being paid 12s a year at Chartham and Meopham, 13s at Elvington, 14s 2d and 14s 6d on the two east Kent manors of Monkton and Eastry and 18s 8d and 19s on the Romney marsh manors of Orgarswick and Appledore. Grain liveries also varied, with ploughmen being paid one quarter every eight weeks in northwest Kent (Meopham), one quarter every six or six and a half weeks in east Kent and one quarter every five weeks on the Romney marshes. Very little barley, however, was grown on the marsh manors, so that by the late 1370s, the priory had begun to pay its workers some of their livery (*vadiis*) in money. The proportion of grain and money varied from year to year, but in 1385, when almost all the grain liveries at Appledore were commuted, the total paid in wages was £28 16s 11d. Thus while the position of the *famuli* had improved significantly, the payment of wages was consuming more and more of the resources of the manor.

Clearly the marked fall in population had a tremendous impact on the wages paid to both casual labourers, such as mowers, and the permanent year-round *famuli*. By the 1380s many men were receiving double the money wage that had been paid before 1348 and the *famuli* were generally receiving higher grain liveries as well. Yet not everyone gained equally. When wages were low, almost every manor employed a pigman. As wages and other expenses rose, pigmen were frequently made redundant. Moreover, through the 1370s the priory successfully maintained the bulk of its labour services in Essex and Suffolk, plus, in Kent, its right to pay for most of its threshing and reaping in kind. The tenants would obviously have preferred to commute the labour services and receive a money payment for the harvest, but even at Appledore, where tenants seem to have been the most assertive, they were able to secure just a temporary concession. Finally the Christ Church evidence suggests rather forcibly that wages

in the thirty years after the Black Death were not determined solely by economic factors. The Statute of Labourers, although somewhat spotty in its enforcement, definitely seems to have kept many wages lower than they might otherwise have been.

Table 1

Wage rates of plough holders on the Christ Church estates, 1347-75

|                  | pre<br>1348 | 1349-51 | mid<br>1350s | mid<br>1360s | mid<br>1370s |
|------------------|-------------|---------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| East Kent        |             |         |              |              |              |
| Adisham          | 6s 6d       | 10s 6d  | 8s           | 7s           | 7s           |
| Chartham         | 8s          | 10s     | 11s          | 11s          | 11s          |
| Great Chart      | 8s          | 13s 6d  | 11s          | 11s          | 11s          |
| Ickham           | 6s 6d       | 5s*     | 11s          | 11s          | 11s          |
| Mersham          | 9s          | 13s 6d  | 12s          | 12s          | 12s          |
| Medway Valley    |             |         |              |              |              |
| East Farleigh    | 7s          | 12s     |              | 12s          | 12s          |
| West Farleigh    | 7s          | 15s     |              | 12s          | 12s          |
| Loose            | 7s          | 16s 6d  | 12s          |              |              |
| Hollingbourne    | 8s          |         |              | 10s 6d       | 10s 6d       |
| Romney Marshes   |             |         |              |              |              |
| Agney/Orgarswick | 9s          |         | 17s 6d       | 15s          | 15s          |
| Appledore        | 8s          | 7s 6d*  | 5s*          | 5s*          | 19s          |
| Ruckinge         | 9s          | 10s 6d  | 12s          | 12s          | 12s          |
| Ebony            | 8s          |         | 11s 6d       | 11s 6d       | 12s          |
| Northern Marshes |             |         |              |              |              |
| Barksore         | 7s          | 12s     | 12s          |              |              |
| Elvington        | 9s 6d       | 12s     |              | 12s          | 12s          |
| Copton           | 9s          |         |              | 11s          | 12s          |
| Cliffe           | 6s 8d       |         |              | 9s           | 9s           |
| North West Kent  |             |         |              |              |              |
| Meopham          | 7s          | 11s 6d  | 9s 6d        | 9s 6d        | 9s 6d        |
| Orpington        | 6s 6d       |         | 8s 6d        | 9s           |              |
| Surrey           |             |         |              |              |              |
| Walworth         | 5s 6d       |         |              | 20s          |              |
| Merstham         | 5s 2d       |         |              | 6s 6d        | 7s           |

\*employed just part of the year

Table 2

Wage rates of pigmen on the Christ Church estates, 1347-75

|                  | pre<br>1348 | 1349-51 | mid<br>1350s | mid<br>1360s | mid<br>1370s |
|------------------|-------------|---------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| East Kent        |             |         |              |              |              |
| Adisham          | 5s          | 10s     | 6s           | 6s           | 6s           |
| Chartham         | 3s          | 7s      | 6s           | 6s           | 6s           |
| Ickham           | 2s          |         | 6s           | 6s           | 6s           |
| Mersham          | 3s          | 5s 6d   |              |              |              |
| Medway Valley    |             |         |              |              |              |
| East Farleigh    | 4s          | 6s      | 3s*          | 7s           | 8s           |
| West Farleigh    | 3s          | 6s      |              | 6s           |              |
| Loose            | 2s          |         |              |              |              |
| Hollingbourne    | 4s          |         |              |              | 6s 4d        |
| Romney Marshes   |             |         |              |              |              |
| Agney/Orgarswick | 4s          |         | 10s          |              |              |
| Appledore        | 5s          | 6s      | 10s          | 10s          | 12s          |
| Ebony            | 4s          |         | 4s           | 6s           |              |
| Ruckinge         | 1s 8d       | 2s 6d   |              | 3s 4d*       | 3s 4d*       |
| Northern Marshes |             |         |              |              |              |
| Elvington        | 3s          |         |              |              | 1s 6d*       |
| Copton           | 4s 6d       |         |              |              |              |
| Cliffe           | 6s 8d       |         |              | 9s           | 9s           |
| North west Kent  |             |         |              |              |              |
| Meopham          | 3s 6d       | 4s      | 4s           | 6s           | 6s           |
| Orpingham        | 3s 6d       | 9s 6d   | 3s 6d        |              |              |
| Surrey           |             |         |              |              |              |
| Merstham         | 3s          |         |              | 3s 6d        | 4s           |

\*employed just part of the year

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to the American Council of Learned Societies for providing a grant that made possible the completion of this research. I have also benefited a great deal from the opportunity to discuss these ideas with Andrew Butcher at the University of Kent. John F. Nichols, "Custodia Essexae" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, London, 1930) did not consult the local beadle's rolls at all, but relied on customals. R.A.L. Smith *Canterbury Cathedral Priory: A study in Monastic Administration* (Cambridge, 1943) did not consider the Essex material and consulted only a few of the Kent accounts. More recently a study of one manor has been undertaken, Nigel R. Goose, "Wage Laour on a Kentish Manor, Meopham, 1307-75" *Archaeologia Cantiana*, xcii (1976).

<sup>2</sup> F.R.H. Du Boulay, *The Lordship of Canterbury* (1966), p. 172.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> For records of commutation agreements at Copton and Ruckinge, see Cathedral Archives and Library, Canterbury (hereafter referred to as C.A.L.C.), Register K fo.

128v. At Copton the services included carrying services for the chamber, sacristan and cellarer: repairing and reroofing the grange and the boveria and driving pigs to the woods and to Canterbury. They were commuted for 14s. The services at Ruckinge were commuted for 26s 8d. The agreement between the prior and the tenants of Meopham is recorded in Cambridge University Library MS Ee V 31 fo. 120 and printed in Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory*, p. 120.

<sup>5</sup> In addition the lord received malt rents i.e. for each measure of malt brewed in the vill, the lord received three pottles of ale (6 quarts) valued at 1½d. C.A.L.C. Register J fo. 120.

<sup>6</sup> Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory*, pp. 119–127.

<sup>7</sup> C.A.L.C. Register J fo. 36.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. fo. 90.

<sup>9</sup> These ten cottars held between them 26 acres of land British Library Additional MS 6159 fo. 27v., 28. See also C.A.L.C. Register C fo. 36 and Register J fo. 26.

<sup>10</sup> C.A.L.C. Register J fo. 36. British Library, Additional MS 6159 fos. 30–31.

<sup>11</sup> C.A.L.C. Register C fo. 149; Register J fo. 36.

<sup>12</sup> C.A.L.C. Register J fo. 36. See also Sarah Campbell, "Some Aspects of Social and Economic History of the Manor of Adisham from 1200 to the Dissolution" (unpub M. Phil thesis, Univ. of Kent, 1982), p. 125.

<sup>13</sup> Edward Miller and John Hatcher, *Medieval England: Rural Society and Economic Change* (1978), p. 220.

<sup>14</sup> On the archiepiscopal manor of Northfleet about half the reaping each year was performed by customary service, Du Boulay, *The Lordship of Canterbury*, p. 170.

<sup>15</sup> On the royal manor of Cleton, in Holderness reapers received every 16th sheaf, P.R.O. SC6/1081/8 m. 5. At Oseney Abbey they received every 17th–20th sheaf, David Postles, "Grain Issues from some Properties of Oseney Abbey, 1274–1348", *Oxoniensia*, xlv (1979), p. 32.

<sup>16</sup> Beadle's roll for Orpington 26–27 Edward I.

<sup>17</sup> Cliffe, Barksore, Elvington, Leysdon, Loose, Fairfield and Peckham.

<sup>18</sup> Lambeth Palace Library ED 832.

<sup>19</sup> A complete list of both the assized rents and the commuted customs on the priory's Essex manors can be found in C.A.L.C. Register 0 fos. 285v–287v. and Register K fo. 108.

<sup>20</sup> This system of payment in sown acres was also used on the estates of Ramsey Abbey, J.A. Raftis, *Estates of Ramsey Abbey* (Toronto, 1957), p. 52.

<sup>21</sup> Ian Kershaw, "The Great Famine and the Agrarian Crisis in England, 1315–22", *Past and Present*, 59 (1973), p. 12.

<sup>22</sup> For Otford, see Lambeth Palace Library ED 832.

<sup>23</sup> B.H. Putnam, *The Enforcement of the Statute of Labourers* (New York, 1908), I, pp. 56–221.

<sup>24</sup> E. Searle, *Lordship and Community: Battle Abbey and its Banlieu, 1066–1538* (Toronto, 1974, p. 309.

<sup>25</sup> R.A. Lomas, "Developments in Land Tenure on the Prior of Durham's Estates in the late Middle Ages", *Northern History*, XIII (1977), p. 37; E.B. Fryde, "The tenants of the Bishops of Coventry and Lichfield after the plague of 1349" in *Medieval Legal Records* ed. R.F. Hunnisett and J.B. Post (1978), p. 232.

<sup>26</sup> J.F. Nichols, "An Early Fourteenth Century Petition from the tenants of Bocking to their manorial lord", *Econ. Hist. Rev.* II (1930), pp. 300–307.

<sup>27</sup> On the archiepiscopal manor of Otford in 1356 nothing was paid for threshing because it was "ad granum" (Lambeth Palace Library ED 834). Nor is there any reference to the payment of a money wage to reapers. For the continuation of tenant reaping, see Du Boulay, *The Lordship of Canterbury*, p. 175. At Northfleet, for example, in 1366–7, 102 acres were reaped by gavelrip.

<sup>28</sup> Neither Winchelsey nor Islip had been above to prevent local settlers from felling the archbishop's woods, Du Boulay, *The Lordship of Canterbury*, p. 249.

<sup>29</sup> The agreements are written down in C.A.L.C. Register C. The increased rents ranging from 3s 4d to 6s 8d appear in the beadle's rolls for the manors concerned.