

Profitable Fourteenth-Century Legal Practice and Landed Investment: the case of Judge Stonor, c. 1281 to 1354

P.J. JEFFERIES

John Stonor was born about 1281, the eldest son of Richard, a prosperous Oxfordshire freeholder. During the thirteenth century the Stonor family had built up a collection of at least eight separate free tenements totalling perhaps 150 acres at Stonor in the parish of Pyrton and in neighbouring parishes.¹ Stonor is on a spur of the Chiltern Hills bordering Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. The land was only moderately fertile, but had the advantage of being near the prosperous Thames Valley.²

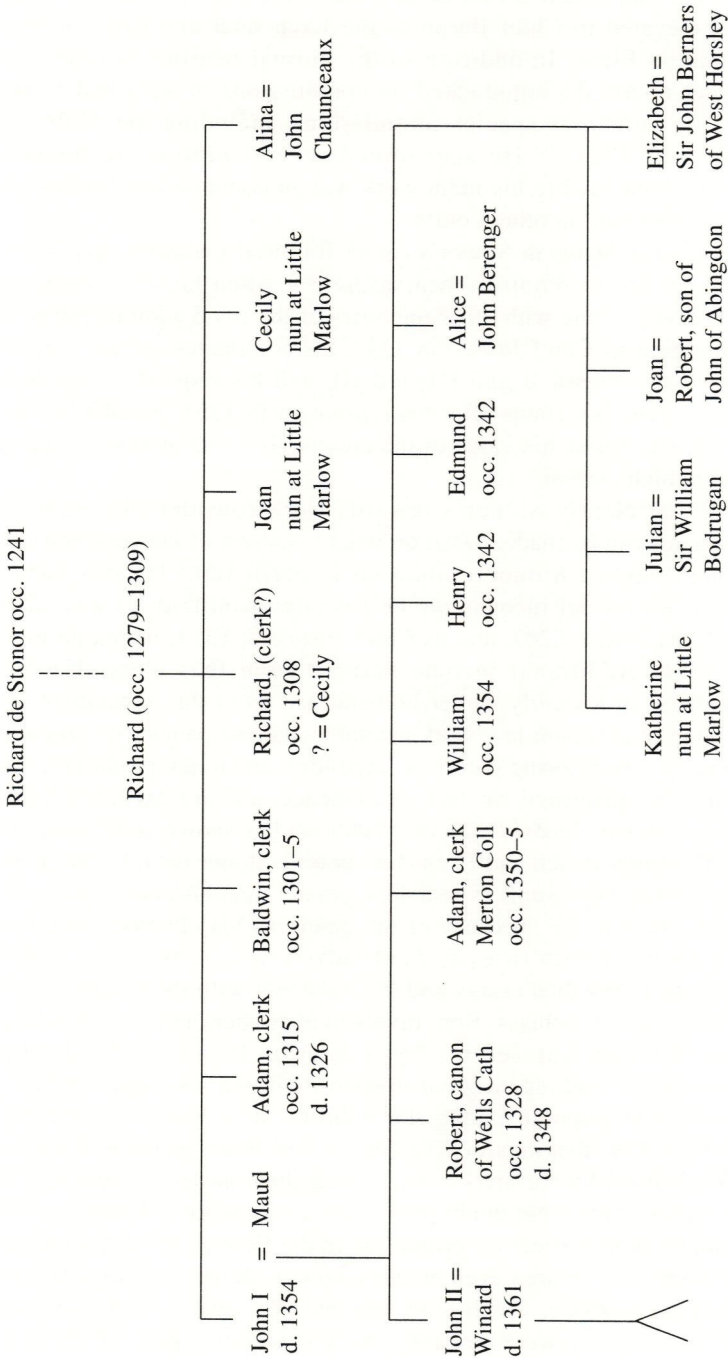
Although it is accepted that early fourteenth century lawyers came mostly from the lesser landowners, rather than from mercantile or magnate ranks, in fact their origins varied considerably. At one end were men like Knyvett and the Scropes, from established families owning several manors and armigerous, who went in for law.³ At the other extreme were families like Stonor's, with far less wealth and status; they were without manorial rights; they did not bear arms, and they represented the recent efforts of self-made men. Richard's aspirations for social status are reflected by his investment in house and chapel building, and also the education of his four sons. The younger three became beneficed clerks, after patron-facilitated Oxford educations, but little is known of either John Stonor's patron or education; as a pleader his main training was vocational.⁴ Stonor came from a socially upwardly mobile family on the threshold of the gentry.

When he became a practising lawyer in about 1300, he entered an expanding profession, which was losing its clerical dominance, owing to organic change and increased litigation, and creating unprecedented opportunities for laymen; Stonor progressed rapidly, being made serjeant-at-law in 1311 at the age of thirty, the earliest age for such appointments, much speedier progress than the four others called to the bar with him in 1311.⁵ His outstanding qualities were symbolised by his appointment as king's serjeant in 1315, and for four of the five years he held this office he also acted as Justice of

Assize. Appointed a Justice of Common Pleas in 1320, in 1329 he was elevated to Chief Baron of the Exchequer and Chief Justice of Common Pleas. In addition to the normal hearing of cases in the higher courts, he adjudicated on commissions of oyer and terminer, and on numerous special commissions, including the trials of the rebels of 1321–2. He also joined several diplomatic missions.⁶ Throughout his life his main work was in common law but, as usual, he also worked in other courts.

The only hiatus in Stonor's career followed the crisis of 1340 – too well known to require rehearsal here – when he was arrested and imprisoned along with other members of the royal administration.⁷ His restoration as Chief Justice in 1342, his continuous service across the reigns of Edward II and Edward III, and his requested retention of privy councillor status after his retirement in 1354, months before his death, emphasise his value to the crown. His contemporaries also held him in high esteem.

Whilst clearly Stonor's rewards were considerable, only loose estimates can be made, based on what is known of lawyers' rewards in general and of Stonor's situation in particular.⁸ On this basis his minimum annual income can be roughly quantified: as a serjeant at £150, as Justice £247, and as Chief Justice at £373, increased to £413 in 1346. Additional income derived from fees from clients and retainers. In his early career he benefited from this specialism in the volume of common law work available and the paucity of serjeants to do it, factors ensuring plenty of large fees, and quick promotion. These cannot be quantified for lack of evidence, and are excluded from the figures above. Secondly, as Dr Maddicott has shown, whilst serving at the Common Bench and Exchequer courts, Stonor would have received particularly large sums as retainers, greater than his counterparts on the King's Bench side, because of the nature of his clientele. In common law he dealt with titles to land, advowsons, actions for debt and trespass, rather than crime, and in Exchequer with the King's revenues, scutage, and franchises. Both involved the richer landholders, who paid well for constant service by a lawyer. In 1335 Christ Church Canterbury, seeking 'a great man to maintain our right', noted that Stonor was popular among the nobility: here were the rich paying clients.⁹ The identities of five certain and three probable landowners who retained Stonor are known, among them no less a personage than the Black Prince. No doubt there were many more.¹⁰ Moreover during Stonor's time Justices on promotion to the Bench kept their connection of clients and secured even bigger retainers, despite attempts at reform. The figures above, which omit fees and give only a rough estimate of the retainers that were probably the most lucrative parts of his income,

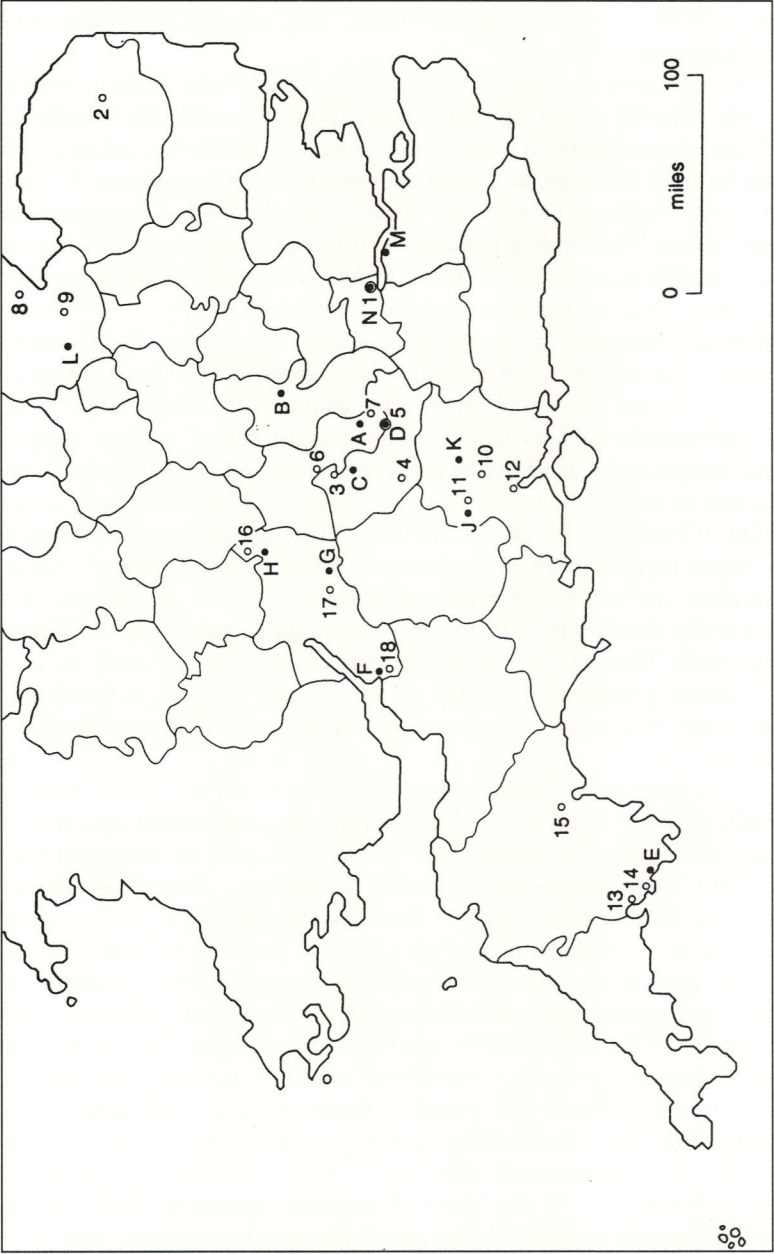


are therefore very conservative. In addition Stonor received grants of three profitable keeperships from the crown and possibly a wardship, though these were probably rewards for his administrative and diplomatic work.¹¹

The best indicator of the wealth acquired by lawyers such as Stonor is their expenditure, using ready money to buy land and other goods. In Stonor's case this is an even better indicator because he acquired no land through marriage, unlike for example Sir John Knyvet and his son, who both married heiresses.¹² Stonor bought land throughout his professional life, and had large sums of money available even when he was a king's serjeant. For instance in 1317, in exchange for the manor of Didcot, Berkshire, he paid the vendor's huge debts of £740 plus expenses; there are other examples of similar transactions on a smaller scale.¹³ This early wealth, before he was promoted to the Bench, implies that the missing element in the estimate of income – fees from private clients for advocacy – was very lucrative, with a modest addition for acting as an assize judge. Geoffrey and Henry Scrope (later justices of King's Bench) also bought much land in their early years while in Common Pleas; Sir Richard Willoughby II at Kings Bench increased his purchases dramatically on appointment as judge.¹⁴ These examples are too few for generalisation, but they at least modify McFarlane's observation that in the later middle ages it was the judges who made fortunes, not the advocates.¹⁵ Stonor, at least, earned considerable sums early in his career largely through common law work, and with ready money he opportunistically engaged in the land market.

In his later career, from about 1330, after he became Chief Justice, Stonor seems to have bought less land, not because he had less money (his loan of £100 was among the bigger contributions to the forced loan in 1346),¹⁶ but because he spent it on other things. About this time he extended his house and chapel. This was also the period when his six sons and five daughters needed launching in careers and marriages.¹⁷ It is also possible that serious demographic disturbance may have made land a less attractive investment for some – it was about 1330 that some big landowners, instanced by the bailiwick of Clare, ceased buying land.¹⁸ Stonor's policy on purchasing suggests that such perceptions were not universal. He bought eleven manors (including four reversions), and fifteen other estates, plus premises in the cities of London and Westminster. The lands were situated in nine counties widely scattered over the South of England, including Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Kent, Devon, Hampshire, and also extended to Gloucestershire and Lincolnshire.

The monetary value of Stonor's estates is elusive. The survival of



account rolls is patchy and their information incomplete: in particular they omit income from wool sales, and involve payment of wages in kind. It is generally accepted that some transactions in estate management by-passed the accounts. The valuations in inquisitions *post mortem* are too low because they are based on assumed rentals whereas Stonor kept nearly all his land in demesne. The 1354 inquest for Sir John Stonor gave a total income of £101 9s. 3d.¹⁹ This is slightly less than the valuation made in considerable detail for one manor – Bierton – in 1388. This totalled £111 6s. 3d., based exclusively on rental values, and though the figure may have been inflated commensurately with a claim for compensation, it cannot have been too implausible.²⁰ Family estate records give what may be more realistic figures. In 1324 Ermington was fermed for £45 a year and in 1370 most of the other Stonor estates (excluding two) were valued as pledges at a total of £180 a year.²¹ This gives a rough minimum of £225 a year and it can be compared to a valuation in 1431 in the sum of £262 13s. 4d. This covered all the then current estates, omitting land sold since 1370, but including another estate of about equal value, and was made by the Stonors' receiver in connection with a will.²² By this date we must assume a significant fall in incomes from land from Sir John's time, but even assuming it remained constant, if it is added to Stonor's income from legal practice as Chief Justice, we arrive at a total of about £635 a

KEY TO MAP

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. London | A. Stonor, etc |
| 2. Norwich | B. Aylesbury, Bierton, etc |
| 3. Abingdon | C. Didcot |
| 4. Newbury | D. Reading and Tilehurst |
| 5. Reading | E. Ermington |
| 6. Oxford | F. Hembury-in-Saltmarsh |
| 7. Henley-on-Thames | G. Harnhill |
| 8. Boston | H. Bourton-on-the-Hill and Condicote |
| 9. Spalding | J. Penyton Mewsy and Foxcott |
| 10. Winchester | K. Ash, Church Oakley, Overton, etc |
| 11. Andover | L. Rippingale |
| 12. Southampton | M. Lesnes |
| 13. Plymouth | N. La Mote, Westminster and City of London |
| 14. Plympton | |
| 15. Exeter | |
| 16. Chipping Campden | |
| 17. Cirencester | |
| 18. Bristol | |

year from 1329–46, and £675 a year thereafter – figures close to the thousand marks a year reckoned by one historian to be the minimum to support an earldom from about 1337.²³ Stonor was never formally ennobled. But he was on a rough par with the nobility, as revealed by Bishop Drokensford's reference to one of Stonor's children, as the 'son of the nobleman Sir John Stonor'.

Medieval lucrative earners like Stonor clearly wanted to buy land, to solidify their upward social mobility, to establish power and prestige in their own neighbourhood, to secure additional income, and to provide for their children. But so far detailed studies of lawyers whose careers paralleled Stonor's have not enquired as to why an individual bought a particular estate. Willoughby, Scrope, and Shareshill, all seemed to have bought land first in their home neighbourhood, and then extended purchases further afield, sometimes in conjunction with land they acquired through marriage. Claims are even made that the locations of estates bought by judges mattered little because they had no time for demesne farming.²⁴ Given their wealth and their opportunities, did they just snap up whatever came their way, or were specific lands identified and purchased as part of a more refined strategy?

In Stonor's case, the evidence permits a close examination of his landed purchases, and reveal that whatever circumstances determined sales by vendors, Stonor's decisions to buy indicate the implementation of a decided policy. An analysis of the location and quality of the lands he purchased, and the precise use he made of them, suggest a three dimensional strategy; establishing Stonor as his local power base; securing food supplies for his household; and to acquiring demesnes commensurate with market-oriented, profitable farming.

The former consisted of separate free tenements without manorial rights held of different lords. He consolidated this estate by exchange and purchase, running it as a large demesne. He gradually assumed manorial rights so that by his death – having done the same with the neighbouring estates in Oxfordshire – the crown acknowledged the formation of three manors with courts, including Stonor.²⁵ All this was made easier by the fact that on these lands there were no villeins, and few customary tenants. He obtained a grant of free warren in his demesne lands in 1317, and from about 1330 he extended and elaborated his house and chapel, secured a licence to found a college of priests, building a wing to accommodate them. He also became a patron of the nunnery of Little Marlow, near Stonor, where his two sisters and his daughter were nuns.²⁶ Thus he established local lordship and prestige. A recent historian of the well-known Paston family, has described how William Paston – another parvenu – needed to acquire both 'senery' and a 'manor-place'.²⁷ Stonor's house, La Mote in

Westminster, was doubtless obtained as a London base for his legal work, and for socialising, another expression of his rising status.

Much of the land at and near Stonor was on poor soil, chalk and silica, with a lot of thick woodland, which did not provide pasture because it had little underbrush. Food supplies from the Stonor group of lands were inadequate to his household needs, especially in grain. Provision for the household included food for the inmates, payment in kind to employees both in and outside, fodder for beasts, plus further supplies for the judge's London house.²⁸ He solved the supply problem by buying land in Buckinghamshire in the fertile Vale of Aylesbury, especially at Bierton, a few miles north-east of Stonor. Bierton was highly valued in the 1334 tax assessment. The contrast to Stonor is seen most starkly in a 1388 valuation wherein arable land at Bierton was worth 10d. an acre against Stonor's 2d.²⁹ Bierton supplied John with grain, meat and poultry, fattened its beasts for market, and surplus wool for sale. John ran these complementary estates on the most up-to-date, mixed farming techniques, characteristic of this area of the Chilterns, namely a three course rotation, including legumes, with yields enhanced by marling. Self sufficiency was also bolstered by horse-breeding, providing the motive power for ploughing, and for carting produce from one manor to another, all comprising a mixture of methods found by Biddick in the household provisioning of Peterborough Abbey.³⁰ The absence of villeins also pre-empted some of the labour problems common in his time, as John was enabled to pay most of his employees in kind.

The third purpose was profit farming. Although there was some overlap with production from estates used to supply the household, this analysis of market-oriented farming pivots on Stonor's lands in Berkshire, Devonshire, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Kent and Lincolnshire. It is significant that the period when Stonor was buying land – the first half of the fourteenth century, before the Black Death – was, for agriculture, in the words of Professor Postan, 'a watershed between the expansive demographic and economic trends of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the contraction and stagnation which characterised the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries'. Central to this thesis is that inadequate use of fertiliser, generated soil exhaustion, and a radical decline in cereal yields. More marginal lands were abandoned, and many estate owners either gave up demesne farming, or turned to rearing sheep. Although the Postan thesis has increasingly been qualified by further estate and regional studies, it has recently been more fundamentally challenged by Dr Campbell and other historians.³¹ It is argued that around 1300 the population of some big towns – notably London, Winchester and Norwich – was much larger

than previously estimated; urban demand for food and other agrarian products, stimulated flexible responses, especially the more intensive farming facilitated by technical advances, and directed to supplying the market. Thus land management and use varied across the regions. Stonor's policies reveal not only their market-orientation, but also that the acquisition of further lands intensified his profits from such agriculture.

The proof derives from the locations of the land purchased. Even where he bought land as part of a 'package' he soon sold that surplus to his precise requirements, for instance land in Suffolk which came from the seller of his Westminster premises.³² However, his strategy of purchases, spread the risk of murrains and poor harvests, particularly serious and recurrent problems in this period. Moreover even here precision is evidenced. The lands (listed in detail in the appendix) had one or more significant attributes: proximity (between one and nineteen miles distance) to an important, much more than local, market, and/or port; easy access to waterborne transport or a main road; within the catchment area of a major centre of consumption. Major markets for wool include the staple towns of Winchester (serving Ash, Penton Mewsey and Foxcotte), and Bristol (Hembury). Spalding (Rippingale) in the early fourteenth century was the most important centre of denizen trade in England next to Lincoln. Other important wool markets were Andover, and Alresford (Ash and its neighbouring estates), Newbury (Reading and Tilehurst), and Chipping Campden (Bourton and Condicote). This last wool market exported via London, England's principal port.³³ Here Stonor bought commercial property in the City, namely Paul's Wharf on the Thames, and eighteen miles eastward he purchased an estate at Lesnes on the Thames estuary, lying on a principal route for exports. The other major ports were Bristol (Hembury), Boston (Rippingale), Plymouth, and Plympton (Ermington). Several other properties were on or near rivers: the Severn (Hembury), the River Erme (Ermington), the Thames (Didcot, Reading and Tilehurst). The importance of the river Thames cannot be overstressed because it was the means of conveying supplies to London with numerous staging posts within its ambit. One of these, Henley-on-Thames, was a major collecting point for London merchants sending grain from the Thames Valley region by river to the capital.³⁴ Though Stonor and its associated manors were not primarily concerned with the market they lay only four miles from Henley. However nearly all Stonor's estates either had their own market or were near a middling-sized market or fair, whence goods were forwarded: thus Rippingale had its own market, Spalding, nine miles away; Spalding also had a fair. Overton, a planted town of the thirteenth century, where Stonor

had eight burgages, had prospered so much that by 1334 it had two markets and two fairs, comparable in value to Henley.³⁵ Very close, strung out along the main road from London to Exeter via Andover, were Stonor's manors of Ash, Penton Mewsey and Foxcotte. It goes without saying that the other ports and major markets were, like London, significant centres of consumption in their own right. Thus the locations of Stonor's land purchases – with the exception of those in Gloucestershire – were commensurate with market-oriented production, and within that critical metropolitan hinterland and the economic catchment area of regions containing prosperous centres of population in the South and East, as demarcated by Dr Campbell.

Other features reinforce this conclusion. One common and striking feature of most of these estates, is that they were within areas which the lay subsidy assessment of 1334 ranked highest in their county – in some cases in the whole country – and in areas famous for good pasture and for high quality wool.³⁶ Some of these were on the Cotswolds (Bourton), in the Lincolnshire Fens (Rippingale) near Spalding (one of the highest rated places in England), and on reclaimed salt marsh by the Severn estuary (Hembury). Others were on chalk downland (Ash and Didcot), while Tilehurst was in an area supplying wool to two local but important cloth producing centres, Reading itself, and the Kennet Valley.

From the estate accounts it is clear that wool production was organised on an inter-manorial basis, a common feature.³⁷ For instance in 1336–7 Stonor was the collecting depot for wool from some, though not all, of its estates, Bierton (Buckinghamshire), Condicote (Gloucestershire) and Rippingale. Evidently some estates sold their wool locally. Unfortunately, as with other landowners, the wool accounts were kept separately and have not survived, but we do know that Stonor (possibly as one of a crown syndicate) exported wool via Antwerp in 1338, no doubt from his own premises at Paul's Wharf in the City of London.³⁸

Stonor bought two places at low valuations in 1334 which serve to suggest considerations he had in mind in deciding on a particular purchase. Condicote was a bare and windy place 720 feet up in the Cotswolds, and with only seven inhabitants the manorial rights cannot have been worth much. Superficially Condicote seems rather unpromising. However it was suitable for mixed farming, notably growing oats, and sheep grazing. Moreover, it was used as a satellite to his nearby manor at Bourton, producing wool for sale, and also sending oats to Stonor to feed the animals. By 1381 thirty-two people were liable for the poll tax, demographic evidence that it seems to have been a good bargain after all.³⁹ Ermington in Devon was very differently

situated, and its purchase reveals Stonor's far-sightedness and good judgement in agrarian matters. Ermington was one of his most valuable properties having seven knights' fees, fisheries, gardens, a park, the profits of courts of the manor and hundred, advowsons, a market, proximity to another market and fairs, and positioned on the River Erme estuary, eight miles east of Plymouth in the South Hams district. Though the latter was the most highly rated in the county in 1334, it was only at a fifth of the value of the Fens, for Devon was a very low rated county.⁴⁰ W.G. Hoskins attributed this to agricultural backwardness, but the judge doubtlessly recognised Ermington's potential, and probably he introduced the advanced farming techniques already in use at Stonor and Bierton, through his eldest son, who after a few years in charge of Bierton, lived at Ermington for two decades. Some idea of his running of this estate emerges from the complaint in 1351 that sheep, horses and cattle worth nearly £900 had been rustled. The list of stolen property also shows that in addition to grain and dairy production, there were at least six hundred sheep, cattle and horse breeding, flocks of poultry, and finally a park stocked with deer. These activities occupied enclosed premises, and it is very likely that Stonor, like his neighbours, kept further large numbers of animals on the plentiful common grazing in the area.⁴¹ Apart from the local markets two major outlets for their produce were close at hand: Plymouth was currently developing rapidly as a depot for provisioning the army and navy, and nearby Plympton had replaced Tavistock as a commercial port by 1328.⁴²

The underlying political and economic factors peculiar to this period – confiscations, ruin through failing crops and falling profits – which fed the land market are not examined here, as they were outside Stonor's control. But his practice in common law with its emphasis on land gave Stonor three advantages – liquid capital, opportunity and expertise. The first has been discussed. Opportunity arose from his travel, his contacts and his legal work. His widespread land-purchases in the South of England were all in areas where he had no other connections, except knowledge through travel in the course of his work, on the South-Western circuit, comprising some southern counties, together with Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Herefordshire. Although as a judge he also went much further afield including York while the Exchequer was there, to Wales and even Spain, his purchases of land were limited to regions in or supplying the most prosperous and populous areas in England. His opportunities arose not just because he visited all these places, but because of the type of work done by a common lawyer. His cases gave him privileged access to information about the affairs of litigants – forfeitures,

wardships, bankruptcies, quarrels and other misfortunes – recurrent reasons behind property coming on the market. Stonor could study litigants' land deeds and family papers at leisure. Added to this he had a vast network of contacts in government and law, colleagues, clients, landholders and stewards in the shires who, eager to cultivate his goodwill, would give him the benefit of their multifarious local knowledge, for example the quality of a piece of land, the recent growth of a market, family quarrels, the poverty or state of health, and age of the owner. Stonor's comprehensive inside information outclassed mere hearsay, to give him exceptional opportunities to learn of a bargain; the series of transactions carried out when he acquired estates demonstrates his opportunism, as he first acted as mortgagee, lent money, bought wardships and so on.

The third advantage was the knowledge and judgement which decided his choices. He evidently ensured that the titles were faultless for none of his estates were later claimed by rival heirs; this security was not always ensured by lawyers, as evidenced by the Willoughbys.⁴³ The very modesty of his background gave him further practical advantages. His father, as a successful small landowner, had a closer knowledge of the qualities of the soil, and of market opportunities, than some long-established gentlemen. But the major contribution came from his work by which he gained both theory and practice. As a common lawyer and adviser to big landowners Stonor knew the Seneschaucy, Walter of Henley, and the other treatises on estate management, that contained essential knowledge, and probably formed part of his training, bound in the same volume as the Statutes.⁴⁴ As a retainer Stonor was one of the counsel of great landowners and, besides advising them on legal matters, was involved in discussing the broader aspects of estate management and thus learnt from practical men. As a lifelong adviser to Christ Church Canterbury, he must have learnt much from such a capable and enterprising landlord as Henry of Eastry (1285–1331).⁴⁵ Unencumbered (as he was) by a large inheritance, Stonor could apply his expertise to go straight for land with qualities likely to be profitable in the conditions of his time, whether to establish his status, to feed his household or to farm for profit. The last was the most important, for it underpinned all the rest.

It could be argued that any single one of these advantages was also enjoyed by others. The receiver knew about estate matters, the clerk read the legal papers, rich men like Dick Whittington got property through mortgages, Sir John Fastolf instructed agents to seek land to invest in. All men had informants. But it is the sum of all these advantages which Stonor derived from being a common lawyer that gave him so much power in the land market.

Through his career and by amassing lands Stonor placed his family economically at the top of the gentry class. No member of his family ever afterwards acquired so much. Two points emerge from this case study. Stonor's career shows the excellent opportunities for economic and social advancement offered by legal practice in the fourteenth century, confirming the findings of case studies of Shareshill, the Scropes, *et al.* But these were exceptionally able men who rose to the top. The profitability of this profession also needs confirmation by looking at a plodder's profile. Such was Edmund Chelrey, a nobody from Berkshire with a background much like Stonor's. He became a King's Serjeant only when he was almost sixty, and a Justice of King's Bench at nearly seventy. Yet he managed to buy four manors and three other estates in his own county, endow a chantry and marry his children to comfortably off local gentry.⁴⁶

Stonor's case also has implications for the land market and for agricultural developments in the first half of the fourteenth century. He chose lands to suit the situation as he saw it. He could not foresee the catastrophic effects of the Black Death (he died in 1354) but perhaps his criteria suited the long term as well. Barbara Harvey, R.A.L. Smith and others have argued that the Black Death only accelerated a demographic process already in train.⁴⁷ Whilst (as was general) most of the Stonor lands were leased out by the 1380s, their quality and locations made them adaptable to changed economic conditions in the later fourteenth century, and enabled his descendants to live like gentlemen. Within twenty years of Stonor's death, his grandson, Edmund, was an MP, and a sheriff.⁴⁸ Shrewd land purchases facilitated by occupational skills, large fees, and experience, with profits as large, if not a larger concern than social status, made across a relatively short period, saw ready capital heavily invested in a buyer's market, to underpin a stable landed dynasty able to survive the economic vicissitudes emanating from the demographically driven crises of Judge Stonor's time. Even more remarkable is that the family, unbroken in the male line for almost seven hundred years, still live in the – albeit altered – medieval house at Stonor.

Notes

I would like to thank Dr M.A. Hicks of King Alfred's College, for constructive criticism of an earlier draft, and Nicci Shepherd who translated Professor Ulanov's articles.

¹ *Stonor L[etters and] P[apers] 1290–1483*, ed. C.L. Kingsford, Camden 3rd series xxix & xxx (1919) and in *Camden Miscellany* xiii (1923). This evidence relates mainly to the fifteenth century, but documentary material of the family begins in the thirteenth.

² A list of Stonor lands and dates of acquisition and a map are in appendix 1.

³ M.R. Bloom, 'The Careers of Richard II de Willoughby and Sir Richard III de Willoughby, Chief Justice of the King's Bench (1338–40) and the Rise of the Willoughbys of Nottinghamshire' (unpublished Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1985), 9; D.M. Higgins, 'Judges in Government and Society under Edward II' (unpublished Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1986), 145; B. Vale, 'The Profits of the Law and the "Rise" of the Scropes: Henry Scrope (d. 1336) and Geoffrey Scrope (d. 1340), Chief Justices to Edward II and Edward III', *Profit, Piety and the Professions in Later Medieval England*, ed. M.A. Hicks (Gloucester 1990), 92; R. Virgoe, 'The Earlier Knyvetts: The Rise of a Norfolk Gentry Family', *Norfolk Archaeology* xli pt i (1990), 2–4. These works will be referred to as Bloom, Higgins, Vale and Virgoe.

⁴ [*Calendar of the Reg[ister of John de] Drokensford [Bishop of Bath and Wells, AD 1309–29]*, ed. H. Hobhouse, Somerset Record Society i (1887), 104–69; *Register of Simon de Gandavo 1297–1315*, ed. C.T. Flower and M.C.B. Dawes, ii, Canterbury & York Society (1937), 698; *Register of Thomas Corbridge, Lord Archbishop of York, 1301–4*, ed. W. Brown, Surtees Society cxxxviii (1925), 60, 67, 90; *The Thame Cartulary*, i, ed. H.E. Salter, O[xfordshire] R[ecord] S[ociety] xxv (1947), 51; *A Collection of Charters relating to Goring, Streatley, and the neighbourhood 1181–1546*, ed. T. Gambier-Parry, ORS xiii (1931), 95.

⁵ J.H. Baker, *The Order of Serjeants at Law*, Selden Society supplementary series v (1984), 24–5, 40, 152, 239; *C[alendar of] P[atent] R[olls] 1327–30*, 2, 365, 439; 1330–4, 78, 102, 510; 1334–8, 151; 1338–40, 542.

⁶ *CPR 1313–17*, 580; 1317–21, 508; 1321–4, 9, 155, 249, 308; 1324–7, 1, 64, 66, 68, 84, 88, 103, 287, 292, 331; 1327–30, 2, 365, 439; 1330–4, 78, 102, 510; 1334–8, 151; 1338–40, 542; *C[alendar of] C[lose] R[olls] 1323–7*, 417, 456, 652; *Select Cases in the Court of King's Bench*, ed. G.O. Sayles, Selden Society i (1936), pp. cxxix–cxli; iv, Selden Society lxxiv, pp. lxxxvii–xcv; vi (1965), Selden Society lxxxii, pp. li–lxxxii; *Memorials of St Edmunds Abbey*, ed. T. Arnold, Rolls Series (3 vols. 1890–6), ii, 348, 353; iii, 302; *C[alendar of] I[n]quisitions P[ost] M[ortem]*, x, no. 192.

⁷ *Chronique de London*, ed. G. Aungier, Camden Society xxviii (1844), 84–5; *R. Holinshed: Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, ed. J.F. Johnson and others (1807–8), ii, 618; *CPR 1340–3*, 110–11, 427.

⁸ This section on lawyers is based on Baker, *Serjeants*, 8–66; Sayles, *Select Cases* iv, pp. xxiv–xxv; B.H. Putnam, *The Place in Legal History of Sir William Shareshull, Chief Justice of the King's Bench 1350–61* (Cambridge 1950); J.R. Maddicott, *Law and Lordship: Royal Justices as Retainers in Thirteenth and Fourteenth-Century England*, Past and Present supplement 4 (1978).

⁹ *Litterae Cantuarienses*, ed. J.B. Sheppard, Rolls Series, 3 vols. (1887–9), ii, 84–5, 87.

¹⁰ *Reg. Drokensford*, 169; F. Pegues, 'A Monastic Society at Law in the Kent Eyre of 1313–14', *E[nglish] H[istorical] R[evue]* lxxxvii (1972), 548–64; M. Sharp, 'The Household of the Black Prince', *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England*, ed. T.F. Tout, 6 vols (Manchester 1926–33), v, 322; L.B. Larking, *The Knights Hospitallers in England*, Camden Society lxxv (1857), pp. xxxviii, xli–ii, 193–7.

¹¹ *CPR 1324–7*, 331; 1330–4, 146; *CCR 1323–7*, 456, 652; *C[alendar of] F[ine] R[olls] 1327–37*, 236.

¹² Virgoe, 2–4.

¹³ *C[atalogue of] A[ncient] D[eeds]*, iii, C3598; *CPR 1317–21*, 534; see also C.E. Moreton, *The Townshends and their World: Gentry, Law and Land in Norfolk c. 1450–1551* (Oxford 1992), ch. 4.

¹⁴ E.L.G. Stones, 'Sir Geoffrey le Scrope (c. 1285–1340), Chief Justice of the King's Bench', *EHR* lxxix (1954), 2–4; Vale, 99; Bloom, 95.

- ¹⁵ K.B. McFarlane, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England* (Oxford 1973), 12.
- ¹⁶ *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, Rec. Com. ii (1777), 453.
- ¹⁷ See genealogical table.
- ¹⁸ G.A. Holmes, *The Estates of the Higher Nobility in Fourteenth-Century England* (Cambridge 1957), 113.
- ¹⁹ *CIPM* x, no. 192.
- ²⁰ *C[alendar of] I[n]quisitions M[iscellaneous]*, v, no. 50.
- ²¹ *CCR* 1369–74, 196–200; *CFR* 1319–27, 277.
- ²² *Stonor L & P*, ii, 48–9.
- ²³ M.V. Clarke, *Medieval Representation and Consent* (1936), 197–8.
- ²⁴ Bloom, 70–81; Virgoe, 4; Vale, 99. There is a parallel to the argument employed here in Moreton, *Townshends*, 116 sqq, 164.
- ²⁵ *CIPM* x, no. 192.
- ²⁶ *Calendar of Charter Rolls, 1300–26*, 283; *CPR* 1348–50, 290; *VCH Oxon.* viii, 155; *Register of Edmund Lacy, Bishop of Exeter, 1420–55*, ed. G.R. Dunstan, 2 vols., Devon & Cornwall Record Society new series (1963–6), ii, 192.
- ²⁷ C. Richmond, *The Pastons in the Fifteenth Century: The First Phase* (Cambridge 1990), 3–7.
- ²⁸ R. Ulanov, 'The Economic Development of Stonor Manor in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries', *The Middle Ages* 49 (Academy of Sciences, Moscow, 1986), 59–81; R. Ulanov, 'The Genesis and Structure of the Berton and Stoke Manors in the Fourteenth Century', *ibid.*, 42 (1983), 49–63 [translated by Nicola Shepherd].
- ²⁹ *CIM*, v, nos. 50, 52.
- ³⁰ D. Roden, 'Demesne Farming in the Chiltern Hills', *Ag[ricultural] H[istory] R[evue]* xvii (1969), 2–21; K. Biddick, *The Other Economy: Pastoral Husbandry on a Medieval Estate* (Los Angeles 1989), 100–31.
- ³¹ B.M.S. Campbell and others, 'Rural Land Use in the Metropolitan Hinterland 1270–1339: The Evidence of the Inquisitions post mortem', *AgHR* xl (1992), 1–22; 'Towards an Agricultural Geography of Medieval England', *AgHR* xxxvi (1988), 87–98; 'Agricultural Progress in Medieval England: Some evidence for Eastern Norfolk', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series xxxvi (1983), 26–46; D. Keene, 'Medieval London and its Region', *London Journal* 14.2 (1989), 99–111; J.A. Galloway and M. Murphy, 'Feeding the City', *ibid.*, 16 (1991), 21.
- ³² Sulham and Riggleshall, see appendix 1.
- ³³ T.H. Lloyd, *The English Wool Trade in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge 1977), 50–3, 115, 131–3.
- ³⁴ Keene, 104.
- ³⁵ M. Beresford, 'The Six New Towns of the Bishops of Winchester 1200–55', *Medieval Archaeology* iii (1959), 187–215; *New Towns of the Middle Ages* (Lutterworth 1967), 261.
- ³⁶ H.C. Darby, *The Medieval Fenland* (Cambridge 1940), 137–9; R.E. Glasscock, 'The Distribution of Wealth in East Anglia in the Early Fourteenth Century', *Transactions & Papers of the Institute of British Geographers* xxxii (1963), 113–23; 'The Distribution of Lay Wealth in Kent, Surrey and Sussex in the Early Fourteenth Century', *Essays in Kentish History*, ed. M. Roake and J. Whyman (1973), 75–83; G. Platter, *Land and People in Medieval Lincolnshire: History of Lincolnshire*, iv (1985), 1, 34–5, 125 & appendix 1; R.E. Glasscock, *The Lay Subsidy of 1334*, British Academy Records of Economic & Social History new series 2 (Oxford 1975); 'England c. 1334', *A New Historical Geography of England before 1600*, ed. H.C. Darby (Cambridge 1976), 136–85.
- ³⁷ E.g. Eynsham and the Lacy estates, E. Miller and J. Hatcher, *Rural Society and Economic Change 1086–1348* (1978), 226.

³⁸ *CFR* 1337–47, 107.

³⁹ *VCH Gloucs.* vi, 66; *CIPM* x, no. 192.

⁴⁰ W.G. Hoskins and H.P.R. Finberg, 'The Wealth of Medieval Devon: The Tax Assessment of 1334', *Devonshire Studies* (1952), 212–49; F.W. Morgan, 'The Domesday Geography of Devon', *Transactions of the Devonian Association* lxxii (1940), 221–3, 320–1.

⁴¹ *CPR* 1350–54, 205–6; 1354–8, 221; *CCR* 1364–8, 139.

⁴² F. Mace, 'Devonshire Ports in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 4th ser. viii (1929), 99.

⁴³ Bloom, 311–13.

⁴⁴ D. Oschinsky, *Walter of Henley and other Treatises on Estate Management and Accounting* (Oxford 1971), 61–5, 266–74, 291–5; P.D.A. Harvey, 'Agricultural Treatises and Manorial Accounting in Medieval England', *AgHR* xx (1972), 170–80; M. Mate, 'Agrarian Practice: The Determining Factors', *AgHR* xxxiii (1985), 22–31; D. Postles, 'The Perception of Profit before the Leasing of Demesnes', *AgHR* xxxiv (1986), 12–28; M.P. Hogan, 'Clays, Cultura, and Cultivation Wisdom: Management Efficiency at Fourteenth Century Wistow', *AgHR* xxxvi (1988), 117–31.

⁴⁵ R.A.L. Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory* (Cambridge 1942), 116–23.

⁴⁶ P.J. Jefferies, 'Social Mobility in the Fourteenth Century: The Example of the Chelreys of Berkshire', *Oxoniensia* xli (1976), 324–36.

⁴⁷ *Before the Black Death: Studies in the Crisis of the Early Fourteenth Century*, ed. B.M.S. Campbell (Manchester 1991).

⁴⁸ *CPR* 1377–81, 356, 466, 513.

Appendix. The Lands of Sir John Stonor

The lands are listed under counties, with a brief description and date, where known. This is the date of first acquisition as, in most cases the lands were acquired in stages, i.e. the land was first leased to Stonor or held at farm or as security for a loan, and later acquired in fee. He had possession of all the lands except where 'Reversion' is stated.

Oxfordshire

Pyrton, Pishill, Watlington and Assendon (including Stonor), free tenements. 1202–91. *Pipe Roll Society*, N.S. xviii, 111; *Feet of Fines*, ORS xii (1930) 112 *VCH Oxon* viii, 154; *CAD*, i C221, 294; *Rotuli Hundredorum* ii (Rec. Comm. 1812–18) 812–17; *CIPM*. ii, no. 420, 241.

Warnescombe, Bixbrand, Bixgebwyn, Brounsden and Watcombe, free tenements, before 1315, *CChR* 1300–26, 283.

Pishill Venables, 4½ knights fees, before 1315, *VCH Oxon* viii. 132; *CCR* 1333–7, 499.

Bix, 100 acres and 20 acres of woodland exchanged for Pyrton, 1316, *CPR* 1313–17, 569.

Watlington manor, grant of keepership from the crown 1331, *CFR* 1327–37, 236.

Warpsgrove and Easington, lease for ten years, 1324, purchased later (*CAD* vi, C6183).

34 P.J. Jefferies

Berkshire

Didcot manor, Reversion, 1317, but possession of part during John Stonor's lifetime, *Return of MPs* 10, 24, 39; *CIPM* xi no. 12; *VCH Oxon* viii, 24; *CAD* iii, C 3598; *CPR* 1317–21, 534.

Tilehurst a) land, 1317, *Reg. Drokenstord*, 169; b) so-called manor of Beansheaves, 1317, *CAD* i, C1710.

Sotwell, a messuage and 2 carucates, 1342, *VCH Berks* iii, 509–10.

Buckinghamshire

Bierton-by-Aylesbury, land, 1323, *CAD* i, C 1311.

Stoke Mandeville, land, 1323; Aylesbury, land 1330, and more in 1354, *CAD* i, C231.

Devonshire

Ermington, manor and hundred, 1324, *CFR* 1319–27, 277; *Year Book for the Reign of Edward II and III, AD 1309–10*, Selden Society xx (1905) Legal calendar, no pagination; *CPR* 1330–4, C146; *CIPM*, no. 192; vii nos 542, 568.

Gloucestershire

Condicote, the manor, 1303–15, *VCH Gloucs.* vi, 63–6; *Feudal Aids* ii, 291.

Hembury-in-Saltmarsh, the manor, 1307–29, *CAD* i, C581, 1185; vii, C5740.

Bourton-on-the-Hill, the manor, reversion, *VCH Hants* iv, 199, 227.

Harnhill, the manor, reversion, by a settlement of 1343, *VCH Hants* iv 382.

Hampshire

Foxcott, the manor, reversion, as Harnhill.

Penton Mewsey, the manor, reversion, as Harnhill.

Ash manor; Church Oakley, land; Overton, 8 burgages; Polehampton, land, all 1334, *VCH Hants*, iv, 382; *CIPM* x no. 192.

Kent

Lesnes, land, 1316, *Abstracts of Kent Fines*, 9 Ed

II, ed. J. Greenstreet, *Archaeologia Cantiana*, xiii (1880), 307; *CAD* ii, C3213.

Lincolnshire

Rippingale, the manor; Lands in Walcote, Haconby and Kirkby, 1327, *CCR* 1333–7, 163; *Feudal Aids*, iii, 203.

Middlesex

Westminster, La Mote, by 1334, *CCR* 1333–37, 339; *CCR* 1337–39, 327.

City of London

Tenement in the lane of St Peter the Little by Paul's Wharf, by 1354, *CIPM* x, no. 192.

Temporary Holdings

Sulham and Ringeshall (Suffolk), *CCR* 1337–39, 327.

South and East Coker (Somerset), *CCR* 1337–39, 327.

Pecham (Surrey), *CCR* 1349–54, 582, 584.

Wylden land (Beds), *CIPM* x, no. 192.